

INTERMEDIAL ENCOUNTERS

Studies in Honour of Ágnes Pethő

INTERMEDIÁLIS TALÁLKOZÁSOK

Tanulmányok Pethő Ágnes tiszteletére

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TARTALOMJEGYZÉK

- 11 **TABULA GRATULATORIA**
15 **FOREWORD**
21 **ELŐSZÓ**

PERSONAL ENCOUNTERS [SZEMÉLYES TALÁLKOZÁSOK]

- 29 **GERÉB Anna**
Kolozsvári élmények [Cluj-Napoca Experiences]
33 **JAKAB-BENKE Nándor**
Mint akinek halkán felvágták a szemét [Like Someone Whose Eyes
Were Silently Cut Open]
37 **Jens SCHRÖTER**
Intermediality–Persona–Becoming [Intermedialitás–személyiség–
kibontakozás]
41 **Dorel GĂINĂ**
Imago Mundi

AN ARCHAEOLOGY OF INTERMEDIALITY [AZ INTERMEDIALITÁS ARCHEOLÓGIÁJA]

- 57 **Ruggero EUGENI**
Discourses, Marks, Experience. An Archaeology of Intermediality
[Diskurzusok, nyomok, tapasztalat. Az intermedialitás archeológiája]

- 65 **Jürgen E. MÜLLER**
A Re-visiting of Some (Pre-)Historical Intermedial Playgrounds of Cinema [A mozi néhány prehisztorikus intermediális játéktérnek áttekintése]
- 77 **Mircea Valeriu DEACA**
Intermedial Correspondences in *The Seventh Continent* (Michael Haneke, 1989) [Intermediális összecsengések a *Hetedik kontinensben* (Michael Haneke, 1989)]
- 95 **ORBÁN Jolán**
A filmírás retorikája – Derrida szó(ki)forratása [The Rhetoric of *Cinécriture* – Derrida's *Tourner les mots*]

CINEMA IN-BETWEEN MEDIA

[A FILM A MÉDIUMOK KÖZTESSÉGÉBEN]

- 109 **Yvonne SPIELMANN**
Electronic Vocabulary in the Audiovisual Medium Video [Elektronikus szókincs a videó audiovizuális médiumában]
- 117 **Susan FELLEMAN**
A Parenthetical Story about Art: Between the Lines of Hollis Frampton's (*nostalgia*) [Zárójeles történet a művészetről: Hollis Frampton (*nostalgia*)-jának sorai között]
- 125 **Ivo BLOM**
The Pictorial Turn: Intervisuality and Recycling in *Fabiola* (Enrico Guazzoni, 1918) [A festői fordulat: vizuális köztesség és újrahasznosítás a *Fabiolában* (Enrico Guazzoni, 1918)]
- 137 **Orsolya MILIÁN**
“One Centimetre of Real Poetry and Three Thousand Metres of Silliness” – Silent Movies and Hungarian Ekphrastic Poetry [„Egy centiméter valódi költészet és hárromezer méter bolondság” – némafilm és magyar ekphrasztikus költészet]

INTERMEDIALITY AND AUTHORIAL REFLEXIVITY

[INTERMEDIALITÁS ÉS SZERZŐI REFLEXIVITÁS]

- 149 **Fátima CHINITA**
Specular Affinities: From (Self-)Reflexivity to Intermediality via *Mise en Abyme* [Tükrök vonzásában: az (ön)reflexivitástól az intermedialitásig a *mise en abyme*-en keresztül]
- 157 **Teréz VINCZE**
In-Between Written Text and Moving Image – The Intermediality of Hong Sang-soo [Az írott szöveg és a mozgóképek között – Hong Sang-soo intermedialitása]

- 165 Ying ZHU**
Regulating Morality on Chinese Screen: From *A Sigh* (2000) to *Cell Phone* (2003) [A moralitás szabályozása a kínai filmben: az *A Sigh*-től (2000) a *Cell Phone*-ig (2003)]
- 171 Ewa MAZIERSKA**
A Hole in the Head: Between Theatre and Cinema [Színház és film között]
- 177 FERENCZ Zsófia**
Dühöngő bikaborjak. Egy korai Fellini-klasszikus tovább élései az 1970-es, 1980-as évek amerikai férfi *coming-of-age* filmjeiben [Raging *Vitelloni*. The Afterlife of an Early Fellini Classic in the American Male *Coming-of-Age* Films of the 1970s and 1980s]
- 187 LÁNG Orsolya**
Pethő Ágnes 60

THE ALLURE OF PAINTING IN CINEMA
[A FESTÉSZET CSÁBÍTÁSA A MOZIBAN]

- 195 Joachim PAECH**
Jump at Last, Boy! [Ugorj végre, fiú!]
- 203 Brigitte PEUCKER**
In the Picture: Immersion as Intermedial Strategy [A képen: az immerzió mint intermediális stratégia]
- 211 Judit PIELDNER**
Sensations of In-Betweenness, Intermedial Transgressions in Martin McDonagh's *In Bruges* [A köztesség impressziói, intermediális átjárások Martin McDonagh *Erőszakik* című filmjében]
- 221 TURNACKER Katalin**
Epizódok egy színésznő életéből, avagy a pikto-film egy esete: *Shirley – A valóság látomásai* [Episodes from the Life of an Actress, or an Example of the Picto-Film: *Shirley – Visions of Reality*]

SCREENS OF MEMORY IN POST-1989 ROMANIAN CINEMA
[AZ EMLÉKEZET KIVETÜLÉSEI AZ 1989 UTÁNI ROMÁN FILMBEN]

- 237 Andrea VIRGINÁS**
Polaroids from Our Past: Lucian Pintilie's *The Oak (Balanța, 1992)* [Polaroidok a múltunkból: Lucian Pintilie: *A tölgy* (1992)]
- 243 Christina STOJANOVA**
The Intermedial Passions of the “New” New Romanian Cinema [Az „új” román újhullám filmjeinek intermediális szenvedélyei]
- 249 Katalin SÁNDOR**
“Excavations” – An Intermedial Approach to Corneliu Porumboiu's *The Treasure* (2015) [„Feltárások.” – Corneliu Porumboiu: *A kincs* (2015) című filmjének intermediális megközelítése]

- 259 Mónika DÁNÉL**
Past in Process. Strategies of Re-collection and Re-enactment in Radu Jude's "*I Do Not Care If We Go Down in History as Barbarians*" (2018) and *The Dead Nation* (2017) [Folyamatban levő múlt. Az emlékezés és az újrajátszás stratégiái Radu Jude „*Bánom is én, ha elítél az utókor*” (2018) és *Halott ország* (2017) című filmjeiben]

THE POETICS AND POLITICS OF INTERMEDIALITY IN HUNGARIAN CINEMA [AZ INTERMEDIALITÁS POÉTIKÁJA ÉS POLITIKÁJA A MAGYAR FILMBEN]

- 273 GELENCSÉR Gábor**
Messzi ég. A paraszti világ melodramái és a *Csempészek*
[Distant Sky. Melodramas of the Rural World and the *Smugglers*]
- 281 Miklós SÁGHY**
Afterlife of the Holocaust in a Small Hungarian Village.
The Intermedial Encounter of Ferenc Török's *1945* and Gábor T. Szántó's *Homecoming, 1945* [A holokauszt utóélete egy kis magyar faluban.
Török Ferenc *1945* és Szántó T. Gábor *Hazatérés, 1945* című műveinek intermedialis találkozása]
- 289 VARGA Balázs**
Moccanatlanul. Török Ferenc *Koccanás* című filmjéről [Motionless.
On Ferenc Török's *Pile-Up*]
- 297 Mira MARINCAŞ**
Timeless Travels [Időtlen utazások]

EMBODIED VISIONS [MEGTESTESÜLT VÍZIÓK]

- 309 László TARNAY**
A Critique of Intermediality: On Contemporary Polish Cinema
[Adalékok az intermedialitás kritikájához: a kortárs lengyel filmről]
- 319 Laura U. MARKS**
A Queasy Sensation: Intermediality in *Neighboring Sounds*
[Egy émelyítő érzés: intermedialitás a *Neighboring Sounds*-ban]
- 325 Hajnal KIRÁLY**
Guilty Landscapes and Landscapes of Guilt in Contemporary
Cinema [Bűnös tájképek és a bűn tájképei a kortárs filmben]
- 335 Beja MARGITHÁZI**
Trauma behind the Scenes. The Creation of Female Authorship and
Agencies through Rehearsal in *The Euphoria of Being* (2019) [Trauma
a színpalack mögött. A női szerzőiség és ágencia próbafolyamat általi
létrehozása *A létezés eufóriájában* (2019)]
- 343 György KALMÁR**
The Invisible Body of Cinema [A film láthatatlan teste]

- 351 Zsófia FERENCZ and Előd TÖRÖK**
5 x 5 Dedicated to Ágnes Pethő

THE REAL AND THE INTERMEDIAL

[A VALÓS ÉS AZ INTERMEDIÁLIS]

- 359 Lúcia NAGIB**
The Reality of Art: An Intermedial Analysis of *Ossessione*
[A művészet valósága: a *Megszállottság* intermediális elemzése]
- 373 Cecília MELLO**
Jia Zhangke and Liu Xiaodong: An Intermedial Encounter with Reality
[Jia Zhangke és Liu Xiaodong: intermediális találkozás a valósággal]
- 381 Anne GJELSVIK and Jørgen BRUHN**
A Cinematic Mediation of the Anthropocene. Zhao Liang's Intermedial Strategies in *Behemoth* (2015) [Az antropocén mozgóképes mediációja. Zhao Liang intermediális stratégiái a *Behemoth*-ban (2015)]
- 393 Melinda BLOS-JÁNI**
Getting in Touch. (Un)Framing Reality in Jonas Mekas's and José Luis Guerín's *Filmed Correspondences* (2011) [Kapcsolatot teremteni. A valóság átkeretezése Jonas Mekas és José Luis Guerín filmes levelezésében (2011)]
- 407 Mihály LAKATOS**
Memory Roll: Godard's Personal (Film) History through an iPhone Screen [Memóriatekerics: Godard személyes (film)története egy iPhone képernyőjén keresztül]
- 415 Mihály LAKATOS**
Faire Bande à Part. Running through the Historical Axis (Plus Two or Three Things) [Különbandázni. Átszaladni a történelmi axison (és még két-három dolog)]

SCENES OF THE L'ENTRE-IMAGES

[KÖZTES KÉPEK HELYSZÍNEI]

- 425 Laura MULVEY**
Mark Lewis's *Rear Projection: Molly Parker* (Canada, 2004). Reflection on "In-between-ness" and a Work of the Inter-Medial Picturesque
[Mark Lewis *Rear Projection: Molly Parker* (Kanada, 2004) című videóinstallációja. Reflexiók a köztességről és intermediális festőiség működéséről]
- 435 ÁRMEÁN Otília**
Mozgóképek vetített mozaikja [A Projected Mosaic of Moving Images]

- 447 Zsolt GYENGE**
Between Screens: Bodies, Frames, and Spectators in Moving Image Installations [Képernyők között: testek, keretek és nézők mozgóképes installációkban]
- 457 Asun LÓPEZ-VARELA**
[Plat]forms of Intermedial Poiesis. From the Holodeck to Mez Breeze's *V[R]erses* [Az intermedialis poiészis formái és platformjai. A Holodecktól Mez Breeze *V[R]erses*-éig]
- 465 Ágnes Karolina BAKK**
Theatrical Simulations: New Experiments with Gamification Mechanics Using Intra-ludical Communication for Creating New Audiences [Színházi szimulációk: új közönségek bevonására irányuló intraludikus kommunikációt használó játékmecanizmusokkal zajló kísérletek]

CURRICULUM VITAE

- 477 LIST OF PUBLICATIONS AND ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES**
[PUBLIKÁCIÓK ÉS TUDOMÁNYOS TEVÉKENYSÉGEK LISTÁJA]
- 489 CONFERENCES**
[KONFERENCIÁK]
- 517 ZSIZSMANN Erika**
„Építőmunka volt, amelyet igyekeztem elvégezni a legjobb tudásom szerint.” Interjú Pethő Ágnessel, a Sapientia EMTE film szakának professzorával [“It was a constructive work, which I tried to accomplish to the best of my knowledge.” Interview with Ágnes Pethő, Professor in Film Studies at Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania]
- 547 A CAREER IN PICTURES**
[KARRIERTÖRTÉNET KÉPEKBEN]
- 581 ABSTRACTS**
[KIVONATOK]

TABULA GRATULATORIA

AJTONY Zsuzsanna
ÁRMEÁN Otília
BAKK Ágnes Karolina
BAKÓ Rozália-Klára
BALÁZS Imre József
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BERSZÁN István
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BLOS-JÁNI Melinda
Jørgen BRUHN
BUGLYA Sándor
Fátima CHINITA
CSERGŐ Zsuzsa
Adriano D'ALIOIA
DÁNÉL Mónika
Mircea Valeriu DEACA
DOBOS Piroska
Cristian Eduard DRĂGAN
Dana DUMA
EGYED Emese
Lars ELLESTRÖM †
Ruggero EUGENI
FARKAS Csaba
FAZAKAS Emese
FEKETE Ibolya
Susan FELLEMAN
FELMÉRI Cecília
FERENCZ Zsófia
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GYÓRI Zsolt
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HORVÁTH Ágnes
HUBBES László-Attila
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A Sapientia EMTE és a Kolozsvári Kar volt és jelenlegi munkaközössége

FOREWORD

Ágnes Pethő has provided a comprehensive overview of her career in two detailed interviews, which would be hard to match. This is not what we, her disciples and colleagues, are striving to do, but rather to characterize, interpret, and evaluate her work, of which we have been part to varying degrees, by resorting to a shift in perspective, in cinematic terms. It becomes clear from the interviews that this is an exceptionally consistently built career, inspired by a single passion, an unquenchable interest in the art of film, discovered at a very young age. Western colleagues may have little understanding of what it meant to have a good film or cinematic experience, which rarely occurred in the very limited TV and cinema programmes in Ceaușescu's Romania. The only freedom that could be experienced was the inner freedom of the mind, and beauty was one of the rare sources of pleasure that could not be limited. Besides, dealing with films was a novelty despite the fact that specialist literature was scarcely accessible. While in the West feminist film theory and desire-based spectatorship theory were in decline, giving way to poststructuralist theories, in the countries of the Eastern Bloc semiotic approaches to film, which connected the arts as sign systems, compared them and recognized their interrelationships, were still more prevalent. This is one of the solid pillars of Ágnes's interest in filmic intermediality, on which the theses of the new discipline of intermediality could be safely built later, after the regime change and the opening to the West. For Ágnes, film itself became the object of desire as *Gesamtkunstwerk*, as a both sensual and intellectual composition – as a teacher of Hungarian language and literature, it offered the opportunity for her not only to incorporate literary adaptations as intermedial interfaces into teaching but also to analyse the cinematic na-

ture of literary images as well as the poetics of literary features in film. This expanded interpretation of style became the first model for film education at Babeş–Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca, not surprisingly, within the Department of Hungarian and General Linguistics. The film poetics seminars, which initially started as an optional subject, became legendary in the first years of the period after the regime change due to the now available cinematic works and theoretical framework, as well as the possibility of thinking together in a mutually inspiring way. The communist education system had not in the least supported free opinion forming and debate, and this resulted in a lot of inhibition at university seminars – this was also dissolved by the liberating experience of the discussions.

Photography, filmmaking, visuality in general were still a field of research for few in Romania in the late 1990s. Ágnes benefitted from the huge visual turn accompanying the regime change, the world of changeable TV channels, to enrich her knowledge on film, later incorporating her considerable video library of films recorded on VHS into the educational process, screening in her classes, on TV and video player, works that were often unusual even for students of humanities. It seemed a bold, innovative gesture to watch films in class as a student of literature. The seminar discussions on films such as *Vertigo*, *My Life to Live*, *Charlotte and Her Boyfriend*, *The White Sheik*, *The State of Things*, or *Prospero's Books* led students to see beyond the story and discover *mise en abyme*, metalepsis or reflexivity, image–text relationships in films. Those who got the hang of film analysis as an intellectual game wrote an enthusiastic seminar paper or presented a paper in the special film section of the 1998 and 1999 Students' Scientific Conference, became disciples, and after the exam was over, they received further reading material (a small library of photocopies), advice and sometimes even the opportunity to watch rare films from the sofa of their teacher's living room. Ágnes's pedagogical method was primarily to encourage us that even small ideas are worth investigating, even if we were watching a pirated film in a post-socialist Eastern European city where literature and books were much more appreciated in local cultural consumption than film. It is worth noting down every brainstorming and maturing it into a text – that is how many of us wrote our first studies growing out of seminar papers, which then she as a rigorous editor polished into a publication. Her first edited volumes published by Scientia Publishing House (*Képatvitelék* [Image Transfers], *Köztes képek* [Images in Between], and *Film. Kép. Nyelv* [Film. Image. Language]) mostly consisted of the first writings born in the inner circle of her students. At the first colloquium on film studies at the Faculty of Letters of Babeş–Bolyai University, no one was an experienced researcher; we were enthusiastic beginners, self-taught amateurs. The pedagogical trick in Ágnes's lessons on cinematic intermediality was that one could freely think about films, no one had to be a “full-fledged” film scholar, one could fumble and explore, and writing seemed more like creation than work. After all this, it was clear that many of us were applying for PhD courses with film-related topics.

However, while the students' formation was in progress, film poetics as an autonomous subject encountered many structural obstacles and existed within the subject of stylistics at Babeş–Bolyai University, Hungarian Linguistics and Literary Studies, so when the possibility of founding a Hungarian university in Transylvania arose, Ágnes recognized the possibility of institutionalization: first by establishing research groups, then by elaborating the practical and theoretical training of the specialization in film studies, simultaneously with the foundation of Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania. This also required enthusiastic disciples, whom she managed to keep in her intellectual circle, under the spell of a broadly understood cinematic intermediality, and who later became her colleagues and fellow researchers. In the period to come, Ágnes did not give up her mentoring role; she continued to provide her colleagues and fellow researchers with numerous opportunities for professional development: she organized research programmes, conferences, international conference and research trips, and provided numerous publication opportunities for all of them.

The conference and research trips were also special in that Ágnes demonstrated how intermediality works “in practice:” in addition to the well-trodden tourist attractions, the collections of various museums and galleries, as well as the cinematic locations already well known from the screen, were important points of reference for exploring a city. Paris was equally about the Eiffel Tower, the Louvre, the Pompidou Centre, Godard, Varda, Delacroix, Sartre, and even Endre Ady. London in the same way: the Big Ben, the Westminster Abbey, Tate Britain and Tate Modern, Antonioni's *Close Up*, Joanna Hogg's *Souvenir*, Banksy, Shakespeare and Dickens, as all shaped the Experience simultaneously and in dialogue with each other.

The workshops and conferences held regularly since the 2000s had already laid the foundations for an increasingly important intermediality workgroup in the region, which later joined the international intermediality society as an equal partner. Ágnes did not regard intermediality in film as a technical gift, as a matter of course but as an extended, infinite possibility of artistic expression in cinema: the conference announcements formulated the always up-to-date topics as scientific hypotheses, which attracted an ever-larger international circle of researchers, creating opportunities for professional dialogue, networking, and joint reflection. The broadest theme, intermediality in the digital age, which was announced as the theme of a conference jointly organized by the International Society for Intermedial Studies and Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania, Faculty of Sciences and Arts, Cluj-Napoca, Department of Media, was not limited to the medium of film but extended to the other arts, providing space for an exciting interdisciplinary exchange. Other internationally renowned events were specifically devoted to film-related topics, from the more general problems of film and media studies to the more particular issues of intermediality in film, in line with the research projects underway. This has led to a joint exploration of topics such as film in the post-media age, the cinema of sensations, the

figurations of intermediality in film, the relationship between the real and the intermedial, intermediality in contemporary Central and Eastern European film, intermediality and the notion of in-betweenness, the picturesque in contemporary film, art and digital culture. The conferences, with a strong theoretical focus and a unique voice in Eastern Europe, were also significant in that they brought to Cluj-Napoca renowned representatives of the field as plenary speakers, including Martine Beugnet, Lars Elleström, Thomas Elsaesser, Steven Jacobs, Henry Jenkins, Laura U. Marks, Ewa Mazierska, Jürgen E. Müller, Laura Mulvey, Lúcia Nagib, Joachim Paech, Brigitte Peucker, Eivind Røssaak, Marie-Laure Ryan, Yvonne Spielmann, and Christina Stojanova. In a few words, we can also peek behind the scenes of the conferences, these collective – and literally intermedial – intellectual achievements, where, while printing the programme booklet, setting up the conference banners, adjusting the colour contrast of the projectors, and expertly moderating the current panel, there was always time for a chat with Ágnes, for snapshots and silent, joint contemplation, in which representation and reality were forever intertwined. The conferences have always resulted in major publications in the English-language journal *Acta Universitatis Sapientiae, Film and Media Studies* and in volumes of studies edited by Ágnes and published by Scientia Publishing House, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, and Edinburgh University Press.

The aforementioned directions mark the stages of Ágnes's research career, the formation of her view along the paradigms of intermediality research, to which she has contributed with her research results, publications with prestigious publishers, in journals and volumes of studies, and especially with her book *Cinema and Intermediality: The Passion for the In-Between*, now in its second, enlarged edition with Cambridge Scholars Publishing. It is thanks to Ágnes's school-founding, theoretical grounding work applied in film analysis, known and cited worldwide, that we can now talk about her disciples in a much wider context than just those whom she taught at the university. For researchers of cinematic intermediality, her writings are not only foundational works but also texts that capture and subtly analyse the medial layering of the live film image and its nuanced interart connections, pointing at the in-betweenness of the painterly, the photographic, and the cinematic and inspiring further reflection.

Ágnes regards scientific research not only as a way of creating knowledge but also as an opportunity for community building based on joint professional thinking – this recognition and persistent practice of hers contributed to the formation of an intellectual environment of film studies at the Department of Media at Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania, Cluj-Napoca, which was an important argument for many of us to return to, or stay in, Romania, Transylvania. During the recent period of the pandemic, when the conditions of everyday and professional contact and work have changed, we have experienced, along with constant virtual interconnectedness, also loneliness, isolation, a kind of atomization. Again, Ágnes responded to this situation by

taking stock of the possibilities of professional and personal interaction: by creating a research group and research centre that focuses on the phenomena of cinematic intermediality and visual culture, while creating a formal and also informal environment for encounters, in the hope that this would soon move from online surfaces to more tangible, lively spaces of interaction. At one of the online meetings of the research team, but also on several other occasions, the inevitable question of the personal and social benefits of what we research and teach was raised. Ágnes's answer, in summary, was that research on (socially embedded) media use and intermedial relations can help us to see the world in its complexity and thus to orient ourselves in it, to approach issues of art, culture, and social reality in its broadest sense in a critical, (self-)reflexive way, with greater empathy and sensitivity.

And the story continues... While working on this collective volume, the editors became recipients of a new research grant initiated by Ágnes Pethő (Exploratory Research Project entitled *Affective Intermediality. Cinema between Media, Sensation, and Reality* – Code: PN-III-P4-PCE-2021-1297 – funded by the UEFISCDI / Executive Unit for Financing Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation, Romania, 2022–2024).

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ELŐSZÓ

Pethő Ágnes két részletes interjúban nyújtott átfogó képet szakmai pályájáról, amivel nehéz lenne versenyezni. Nem is erre törekszünk tanítványaiként és munkatársaiként, hanem arra, hogy filmes kifejezéssel élve, nézőpontváltással jellemezzük, értelmezzük és értékeljük munkásságát, amelynek különböző mértékben részeseivé váltunk. Már az interjúkból is kitetszik, hogy kivételesen következetesen felépített pályáról van szó, amelyet egyetlen szenvedély, a már nagyon fiatalon felfedezett filmművészet iránti töretlen érdeklődés, megismerési vágy inspirált. A nyugati kollégák talán kevésbé értik, mit is jelentett egy-egy jó film vagy moziélmény, ami ritkán becsúszott a nagyon behatárolt tévé- és moziprogramokba Ceaușescu Romániájában. Az egyetlen megtapasztalható szabadság a szellem belső szabadsága volt, a szépség pedig a ritka, nem korlátozható örömforrások egyike. Emellett pedig filmekkel foglalkozni újdonságként hatott, annak ellenére, hogy szakirodalomhoz alig lehetett hozzáférni. Miközben Nyugaton a feminista filmelmélet, a vágyalapú nézőelmélet már lassan lecsengett, és a posztstrukturalista elméleteknek adott teret, a keleti blokk országában még a filmek szemiotikai szempontú, a művészeteket jelrendszerekként egymással összekapcsoló, összehasonlítható, kölcsönhatásaikat felismerő megközelítések voltak elterjedtebbek. Ágnes filmes intermedialitás iránti érdeklődésének ez az egyik szolid tartópillére, amelyre később, a rendszerváltást és nyugati nyitást követően biztonságosan épülhettek az intermedialitás új diszciplinájának tézisei. Ágnes számára a vágy tárgya maga a film mint ösztönművészet, mint egyszerre érzéki és intellektuális kompozíció lett – magyar szakos tanárként lehetőséget nyújtott nem csupán az irodalmi adaptációk mint intermedialis kapcsolódási pontok oktatásba való beemelésére, hanem az irodalmi képek filmszerűségének, illetve

a film irodalomszerűségének poétikai elemzésére is. Ez a kitágított stílusértelmezés lett a kolozsvári egyetemi filmoktatás első mintája, nem meglepő módon a Babeş–Bolyai Tudományegyetem Magyar és Általános Nyelvészeti Tanszékén belül. A kezdetben fakultatív tárgyként induló filmpoétika szemináriumok legendássá váltak a rendszerváltást követő időszak első éveiben, az immár hozzáférhetővé vált filmes anyag és elméleti keret, az inspiráló együttgondolkodás lehetősége miatt. A kommunista oktatási rendszer a legkevésbé sem támogatta a szabad véleményalkotást és vitát, és ez az egyetemi szemináriumokon nem kevés gátlást eredményezett – ezt is segítette feloldani a filmes szemináriumok élményszerűsége.

A fotózás, filmezés, általában a vizualitás még kevesek számára jelentett kutatási terepet az 1990-es évek végének Romániájában. A rendszerváltás hozta óriási vizuális fordulatot, a váltogatható tévécsatornák világát Ágnes a filmes műveltségének gyarapítására használta fel, a VHS-eken rögzített filmekből álló tekintélyes videotékáját később az oktatási folyamatba is beépítette, óráin tévében, videolejátszóról vetítette a bölcsész fejek számára is sokszor szokatlan alkotásokat. Merész, formabontó gesztusnak tűnt irodalom szakosként órán filmet nézni. A szemináriumi beszélgetések az olyan filmekről, mint a *Vertigo*, *Éli az életét*, *Charlotte és a pasija*, *A fehér sejk*, *A dolgok állása*, *Prospero könyvei* rávezették a hallgatókat arra, hogy a történeten túl *mise en abyme*-ot, metalepsziszt vagy reflexivitást, kép-szöveg kapcsolatokat lássanak meg filmekben. Akik ráéreztek a filmelemzésre mint intellektuális játékra, egy lelkesebb szemináriumi dolgozatot írtak, vagy az 1998-as és 1999-es TDK külön filmes szekciójában dolgozatot mutattak be, tanítvánnyá váltak, és a vizsga lejárta után, tantárgyon kívül is további olvasmányokat (kisebb könyvtárnyi fénymásolatot), tanácsokat kaptak, olykor pedig ritkább filmeket nézhetek meg tanáruk nappalijának kanapéjáról. Ágnes pedagógiai módszere elsősorban a bátorítás volt, hogy a kis ötleteknek is érdemes utánaolvasni, tovább kutatni, még akkor is, ha egy posztszocialista, irodalomcentrikus kelet-európai városban néztünk filmet kalózmásolatban. Minden ötletelést érdemes leírni, szöveggé érlelni – többen így írtuk meg első, nem szemináriumi dolgozatként megszülető tanulmányunkat, amit szigorú szerkesztőként majd publikációvá csiszolt. Első szerkesztett kötetei a Scientia Kiadónál (*Képvittelek*, *Köztes képek*, *Film. Kép. Nyelv*) többnyire a tanítványok szűkebb körében született első írásokból, zsenékből álltak össze. Az első filmtudományi kollokviumon a Babeş–Bolyai Tudományegyetem Bölcsészkarán senki sem volt tapasztalt kutató, lelkes kezdők, autodidakta amatőrök voltunk. Ágnes filmes intermedialitás leckéiben az volt a pedagógiai csel, hogy szabad volt filmekről gondolkodni, senkinek sem kellett „kész” filmtudósnak lennie, lehetett bukdácsolni, keresgélni, az írás inkább alkotásnak tűnt, mint munkának. Mindezek után egyértelmű volt, hogy sokan a doktori iskolába is filmes témával jelentkezünk.

A tanítványok felnőtté válásának története közben azonban a filmpoétika mint tárgy önállósodása számos strukturális akadályba ütközött, és a stilisztika tárgyon belül létezett a Babeş–Bolyai Tudományegyetem magyar nyelv és irodalom

szakán, ezért amikor felmerült az erdélyi magyar egyetem alapításának lehetősége, Ágnes felismerte az intézményesedés lehetőségét: először kutatócsoportok létrehozásával, majd a Sapientia Erdélyi Magyar Tudományegyetem megalapításával egy időben a filmes szak gyakorlati és elméleti képzésének kidolgozását. Ehhez azonban szükség volt lelkes tanítványokra is, akiket sikerült szellemi vonzaskörében, a tágan értelmezett filmes intermedialitás bővületében megtartania, és akik később kollégái, illetve kutatótársai lettek. Ágnes továbbra sem adta fel a mentori szerepet, számos lehetőséget biztosított minden kollégájának és kutatótársának a szakmai továbbfejlődésre: kutatási programokat, konferenciákat, illetve nemzetközi konferencia- és kutatóutakat szervezett, valamint számos publikációs lehetőséget biztosított mindenkinek.

A konferencia- és kutatóutak abból a szempontból is különlegesek voltak, hogy Ágnes azt is demonstrálta, hogyan működik az intermedialitás a „gyakorlatban”: egy-egy város felfedezésében a jól bejáratott turisztikai látványosságok mellett fontos támpontot jelentettek a különböző múzeumok és galériák gyűjteményei, illetve a filmvászonról már nagyon is jól ismert helyszínek. Párizs egyaránt szólt az Eiffel-toronyról, a Louvre-ról, a Pompidou Központtól, Godard-ról, Vardáról, Delacroix-ról, Sartre-ról, sőt még Adyról is. London ugyanígy: a Big Ben, a Westminster Abbey, a Tate Britain és a Tate Modern, Antonioni *Nagyítása*, Joanna Hogg *Szuvenírje*, Banksy, Shakespeare, Dickens egyszerre és egymással párbeszédet folytatva formálták az Élményt.

A 2000-es évektől rendszeresen tartott workshopok, konferenciák már a régió egyre jelentősebb intermedialitás-iskoláját alapozták meg, amely később egyenrangú partnerként kapcsolódott be a nemzetközi intermedialitás-társaságba. Ágnes a filmes intermedialitást nem technikai adottságnak, magától értetődőnek tekintette, hanem a filmes művészi kifejezőmód kiterjesztett, végtelen lehetőségét látta benne: a mindig naprakész témákat tudományos hipotézisekként fogalmazták meg a konferenciafelhívások, amelyek egyre nagyobb nemzetközi érdeklődőtábort vonzottak, lehetőséget teremtve a szakmai dialógusra, kapcsolatépítésre, együtt gondolkodásra. A legtágabban megfogalmazott téma, az intermedialitás a digitális korban, amely az Intermediális Tanulmányok Nemzetközi Társasága (International Society for Intermedial Studies), valamint a Sapientia EMTE Kolozsvári Karának Média Tanszéke által közösen szervezett konferencia témájaként került meghirdetésre, nem korlátozódott a film médiumára, hanem a társművészetekre kiterjesztve izgalmas interdiszciplináris eszmecserének adott teret. A további nemzetközi rangú események specifikusan filmes témák körüljárását szorgalmazták szűkebb vagy tágabb nyitásban, a film- és médiatudomány napjainkban előtérbe kerülő általánosabb problémaköreitől a filmes intermedialitás partikulárisabb kérdéséig, összhangban az épp folyamatban lévő kutatási projektek kérdésirányaival. Így került sor olyan témakörökben való közös elmélyülésre, mint a film a posztmédia korában, az érzékek moziája, az intermedialitás alakzatai a filmben, a valós és az intermediális viszonya, az

intermedialitás a kortárs közép- és kelet-európai filmben, az intermedialitás és a köztesség fogalma, a festőiség a kortárs filmben, művészetben és digitális kultúrában. A kelet-európai szinten egyedi hangot képviselő, erős elméleti felütésű konferenciák jelentősek voltak abból a szempontból is, hogy elhozták Kolozsvárra a szakma neves képviselőit: többek között Martine Beugnet, Lars Elleström, Thomas Elsaesser, Steven Jacobs, Henry Jenkins, Laura U. Marks, Ewa Mazierska, Jürgen E. Müller, Laura Mulvey, Lúcia Nagib, Joachim Paech, Brigitte Peucker, Eivind Røssaak, Marie-Laure Ryan, Yvonne Spielmann, Christina Stojanova plenáris előadásait hallgathatták a résztvevők. Néhány szó erejéig bepillantathatunk a konferenciák, e kollektív – és a szó szoros értelmében inter-mediális – szellemi teljesítmények kulisszáiba is, ahol a programfüzet nyomtatása, a konferenciabannerek felállítása, a projektorok színkontrasztjának beállítása és az épp aktuális panel szakszerű moderálása közben mindig akadt idő az Ágnessel való csevegésre, pillanatfotózzkodásra és a szótlán, közös szemlélődésre is, amely praxisban reprezentáció és valóság örökre összefonódtak. A konferenciák nyomán minden alkalommal jelentős publikációk láttak napvilágot az *Acta Universitatis Sapientiae, Film and Media Studies* című angol nyelvű szakfolyóiratban, valamint a Scientia, a Cambridge Scholars Publishing, az Edinburgh University Press kiadóknál megjelent, Ágnes által szerkesztett tanulmánykötetekben.

Az említett kérdésirányok jelzik Ágnes kutatói pályájának állomásait, szemléletének alakulását az intermedialitás-kutatás paradigmái mentén, amelyhez jelentős mértékben hozzájárultak kutatási eredményei, rangos külföldi kiadóknál, szakfolyóiratokban és tanulmánykötetekben közölt írásai, kiemelt módon a Cambridge Scholars Kiadónál immár második, bővített kiadást is megért *Cinema and Intermediality: The Passion for the In-Between* című könyve. Ágnes iskolateremtő, szellemi műhelyt létrehozó, szerte a világon ismert és hivatkozott, elméletileg megalapozó és a filmelemzésben kamatoztatott munkásságának köszönhető, hogy tanítványairól immár jóval szélesebb körben beszélhetünk, mint csupán azokról, akiket az egyetemen oktatott. A filmes intermedialitás kutatói számára írásai nemcsak alapmunkák, hanem ugyanakkor az élő filmkép mediális rétegzettségét, finom művészetközi kapcsolódásait, a festőiség, fotografikusság és filmszerűség köztességeit megragadó és árnyaltan elemző, továbbgondolásra inspiráló szövegek is.

Ágnes a tudományos kutatásban nem csupán a tudáslétrehozást, hanem a szakmai együtt gondolkodáson alapuló közösségépítés lehetőségét is látja – ez a felismerése és kitartó gyakorlata pedig egy olyan szellemi, filmtudományos közeg létrejöttéhez járult hozzá Kolozsváron, illetve a Sapientia EMTE Média Tanszékének erőterében, amely sokunk számára fontos érv volt a Romániába, Erdélybe való visszatérést avagy az ittmaradást illetően. A pandémia recens időszaka alatt, amikor megváltoztak a mindennapi és szakmai kapcsolattartás és munkavégzés feltételei, a folytonos hálózatba kapcsoltsággal, összekapcsoltsággal egy időben egyedüllétet, elszigeteltséget, egyfajta atomizálódást is megtapasztalhattunk. Ágnes erre újra a szakmai és személyes együttlét

lehetőségeit számba véve válaszolt: olyan kutatócsoport és kutatóközpont létrehozásával, amely a mozgóképi intermedialitás és vizuális kultúra jelenségeire fókuszál, miközben formálisabb és informálisabb találkozások közegét teremti meg. Annak reményében, hogy mindez hamarosan átköltözhessen az online felületekről az együttlét tapinthatóbb, élettől telibb tereibe. A kutatócsoport egyik online találkozásánál, de számos más alkalommal is felmerült az a megkerülhetetlen kérdés, hogy mi a személyes és társadalmi haszna annak, amit kutatunk, oktatunk. Ágnes válasza – összefoglalva – az volt, hogy a (társadalmilag beágyazott) médiahasználat és a médiumközi viszonyok kutatása segíthet abban, hogy a világot a maga összetettségében lássuk, és így tájékozódjunk benne, hogy kritikailag, (ön)reflexív módon, nagyobb empátiával, érzékenységgel közelítsünk a művészet, a kultúra és a legtágabban értett társadalmi valóság kérdéseire.

A történet folytatódik... E gyűjteményes kötet munkálatai során a szerkesztők kedvezményezettjei lettek egy Pethő Ágnes által benyújtott újabb sikeres kutatási pályázatnak (*Affektív intermedialitás. Mozgóképek a médiumok, érzékek és valóság között* című Feltáró Kutatási Projekt – kód: PN-III-P4-PCE-2021-1297 –, amelyet a romániai UEFISCDI / Felsőoktatás, Kutatás, Fejlesztés és Innováció Finanszírozásáért Felelős Végrehajtó Egység finanszíroz 2022–2024 között).

Blos-Jáni Melinda
Király Hajnal
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Sándor Katalin
Virginás Andrea

PERSONAL ENCOUNTERS
SZEMÉLYES TALÁLKOZÁSOK

Geréb Anna*

Kolozsvári élmények

Régen volt, igaz sem volt.

Dehogynem!

2001 őszétől 2018 májusáig jártam kedvenc Kolozsváromra. Mit jártam! Vonnattal száguldottam lelkesen és boldogan, dugig pakolt bőröndömmel a jól összetömörített (terminus technicus: tömbösített) filmtörténeti előadásaimra. Évente egyszer, tavasszal vagy ősszel. És minden egyes alkalommal a peronon ott állt és várt rám Ági (alias dr. Pethő Ágnes) és Vili (alias dr. Tánczos Vilmos), hogy a szállásra kísérjenek. A szállás pedig nem volt akármilyen! Egyenesen közös történelmünk ősi helyszíne, a híres-nevezetes Bocskai-ház, ahol egyébként az óráimat is tartottam. Mert Ági erre is ügyelt, hogy ne kelljen messzire csámrognom. Sőt! Úgy hallottam, hogy a liftet is miattam szereltették be, és kezdetben csak én használhattam! (Drága kapusok – portások –, barátaim lettek mind!)

Most is érzem azt az örömet, ahogy megérkezésem napján, a padlástérben kialakított miniapartmanban (amelynek hűtőszekrényét Ági előre megpakolta), a franciaágy egyik felét teleraktam az előadások anyagaival és képi-lusztrációival, amelyek aztán sorra eltűntek onnan a kurzus végére. (Visszabújtak a bőröndbe.)

A Bocskai-házban két teremben tanítottam, többnyire az Óváryban, de volt, hogy a másik alkalmas helyiségben, a 2-esben is. Az Óváry melletti kis szobában lévő szekrényekből vittem az órákra kazettákat (vagy DVD-eket), ha nem hoztam magammal Budapestről. (Ilyen esetben persze mindig ott is hagytam a felvételeket, legalább könnyebb volt a csomagom visszafelé. Illetve nehezebb – mert megpakoltam a Röser Antikváriumban beszerzett könyvekkel, fotókkal és a piacon vásárolt népművészeti tárgyakkal.)

Hogy pontosan hogyan született az ötlet, hogy engem meghívjanak, nem tudom. Talán Buglya Sándor kollégám regélhetett rólam, hiszen dolgoztunk együtt. Úgy emlékszem, hogy Margitházi Beját ismertem meg előbb, és a vendégtanárprogram keretében ő kötött össze Ágival, mint aki a Sapientia Alapítvány Kutatási Programok Intézetének megbízásából szervezte az egészet, és gyakorlatilag az ő filmelméleti kurzusába illesztették be az én óráimat *A filmtörténet nagy korszakai* címmel. Aztán (vagy előtte) összejöttem Blos-Jáni Melindával és Bajkó Árpival is, akikkel együtt izgultunk, vajon megkapják-e ideiglenes hajlékukat állandó lakásnak? (Remélem, így lett.)

* Filmtörténész, a Magyar Nemzeti Filmarchívum egykori munkatársa.



Az első alkalommal (2001. október 1-jén) még a Babeş–Bolyai Tudományegyetem Bölcsészettudományi Karának Magyar Irodalomtudományi Tanszékével szerződtem, ahol Ági már szervezte a filmtudomány önálló műhelyét. Ha jól emlékszem, akkor ez még csak néhány órát jelentett a Bölcsészkar Brassai termében.

A következő tanévben már a Sapientia hívott, amely ekkor magyar alapítványként működött, és a nevét adta a Kutatási Programok Intézetnek. Témám – és örök bálványom – Szergej Eisenstein volt, annak is „festői filmművészete”. Aztán tágult a téma és az oktatás ideje is: 2003. október 13-tól 20-ig beszélhettem *A mozgókép kezdetéről az orosz montázsiskolákig* tárgykörben. És ez maradt az állandó tan-

tárgyam a továbbiakban a Sapientia Erdélyi Magyar Tudományegyetemen is. Időközben ugyanis az egyetem film-történeten belül a pre-cinema és a korai film korszakai is a specialitássommá váltak. Nagy kedvvel meséltem a mozgókép előzményeiről, a barlangrajzoktól a 24 fényképezőgéppel mozgásfázisokat lefotózó, örült Eadweard Muybridge-on, a nyomtalanul eltűnt, ám néhány sorozatképet hátrahagyó Le Prince-en és a „fotópuskás” Étienne-Jules Marey-n át a valódi mozi megteremtőig, Edisonig és a Lumière testvérekig, és tovább, rámutatva, hogy a folyamat párhuzamosan zajlott egy sor országban, köztük Magyarországon is. Arra törekedtem mindig, hogy a közkézen forgó lexikonokhoz és filmtörténetekhez képest valami újat mutassak a diákoknak. Ezért évről évre „hozzáakutattam” a tananyagomhoz, igyekezve minden alkalommal új „felfedezéssel”, filmritkasággal frissíteni a demonstrációt. Ebben kezemre játszott az, hogy a mozizás kezdetének, a Lumière-féle első nyilvános, rendszeres és fizetős előadások beindulásának 100. évfordulóján, 1985–86-ban egy sor érdekesebbnél érdekesebb filmtörténeti összeállítással kedveskedtek a televíziók, amelyeket buzgón VHS-re rögzítettem. És milyen jól tettem! Sok érdekes „ősi” filmjelenet azóta sem bukkant föl sehol, sem a YouTube-on, sem másutt!

Még egy nagy fogást említek a korban: az azóta rég megszűnt Filmmúzeum magyar televíziós csatorna 365 napon keresztül vetített egy-egy Lumière-film-tűdöt. Akkor fedeztem fel, mennyire sommás az az állítás, mely szerint Méliès a játékfilmek, Lumière-ék pedig az élőképek, a látképek (alias dokumentumfilmek) képviselői. Mennyi viccet állítottak elő az utóbbiak is pici trükkjeikkel, nem beszélve egy sor történelmi „műfilmükről”, *Jeanne D'Arc*-ról vagy a sokrészes *Jézus életéről*. (Utóbb ebben is szerencsém volt: ráleltem



az egész sorozat DVD-kiadására! Igaz, japán gyártásban!) Természetes, hogy mindezt lelkesen tártam romániai diákjaim elé is.

Egyébként én azt vallom magamról, hogy a szisztematikus, kiegyensúlyozott egyetemi előadás nem az erősségem. Én lelkendezni szeretek! Így próbálom a némafilmek iránti lelkesedést is átadni az ifjaknak. Nem mondom, hogy mindig szerencsével jártam. De minden csoportban akadtak erre nyitott tanítványok, akik közül néhányan elkötelezett híveivé és tudósaivá váltak a korai filmeknek. Rájuk nagyon büszke vagyok.

A filmtörténet későbbi korszakainak remekeivel kapcsolatban is a kevésbé ismertekre fordítottam nagyobb figyelmet. A korai dán, svéd, olasz és francia melodramák (például Asta Nielsen művészete) és komédiák (Max Linder jelentősége) iránt igyekeztem érdeklődést kelteni. Persze a német expresszionisták, a francia avantgardisták és az amerikai nagyságok, Griffith, Stroheim és Chaplin sem maradhatott ki. Ez utóbbi életművéből is a kevésbé ismert korai rövidfilmekben kerestük zsenialitásának előremutató jeleit.

Kurzusaimban mindig a végére hagytam igazi kedvencemet, az orosz némafilm történetét. A nálunk teljesen ismeretlen cári orosz film világot, értékeit prezentáltam, izelítőt adva a folytatás nélkül maradt polgári orosz filmművészetből a maga sztárjaival (Ivan Mozzuhin, Vera Holodnaja) és mesterrendezőivel (Jevgenyij Bauer, Jakov Protazanov). Itt a legnagyobb sikere a ma is élvezetes animációs „bogárfilmnek”, Vlagyiszlav Sztarevics szatírjájának, *A filmoperatőr bosszújának* volt, 1912-ből. Aztán egyszer csak kiderült, hogy a szakkönyvekkel ellentétben nem Sztarevics az első orosz animátor! Időközben ugyanis előkerült egy vasláda, benne különböző szélességű és hosszúságú filmszalagokkal, bábukkal, papundeklidíszlettel és

egy Paul felvevőgéppel! Kiderült, hogy mindez Alekszandr Sirjajevé, a szent-pétervári Mariinszkij Színház kiiregedett balett-táncosáé volt, aki az általa eltáncolt koreográfiákat varázsolta bábfilm-színpadára tülpszoknyába és gatyába csomagolt drótfiguráival. (Ezeket hajlítgatta fázisról fázisra, elképesztő precizitással!) Át kellett tehát írni az orosz filmtörténetet!

A szintén elhanyagolt, a forradalmat követő, átmeneti polgárháborús idők orosz mozija is felfedezés volt néhány eredeti agitka és híradó előhozásával. De nem sok idő jutott erre, mert belépett Dziga Vertov (alias Abel Kaufman), Lev Kulesov, Vszevolod Pudovkin és Szergej Eisenstein. Őket (az általam velük egyenrangú óriásnak tartott Alekszandr Dovzszenkóval együtt) újításaik, elméleti és gyakorlati munkásságuk mellett személyes sorsukkal igyekeztem közelebb hozni a mai diákokhoz. (A három Kaufman fiú balladája, Eisenstein tragédiája és az ukrán Dovzszenko drámai magányossága.) Mindezt bizonyítani az a néhány filmrészlet volt hivatott, ami belefért az időbe. Ráadásul szerettem volna legalább futólag megismertetni a híres szovjet klasszikusok mögötti ragyogó „másodvonalat”, az emberközeli, szelíd humanista, mondhatni *polgári* szovjet rendezőt, Borisz Barnetet, vagy a példa nélküli merész satirikusokat, Alekszandr Medvedkint és Kote Mikaberidzét, de a leningrádi avantgárd bandáról, a FEX-esekről (Grigorij Kozincev, Leonyid Trauberg rendezők, Alekszandr Moszkvin operatőr, Jenei Jenő expresszionista díszlettervező) sem feledkezhettem meg.

Mindezt kezdetben két (14x2), aztán egy hét alatt, 7x4 órában.

Az órák után boldog fáradtsággal siettem az Agapé önkiszolgáló étterembe elfogyasztani a finom csorbámat. Képes voltam mindennap azt enni! Séta közben megcsodáltam a Főteret a Mátyás-szoborral és a Szent Mihály-templommal, és letelepedtem a román nemzeti padokra a szeméttartók közelében, amelyek szintűgy nemzeti színekben pompáztak. Az Uránia-sarkot sosem mulasztottam el megszemlélni, és beleképzelni, hogy valahol a mélyén, a pincében vagy a padláson ott lappanganak *A táncz* 1901-ben forgatott pici tekercei...

Az élvezeteket fokoztam azzal, hogy minden este elgyalogoltam a Magyar Színházba. Sajnos nem tettem el a szórólapokat vagy a jegyeket, ezért nem emlékszem, milyen előadásokat láttam. Csak egyre: a *Rigolettóra*. Azt viszont kétszer is megnéztem! (Egyszer a nagy operába is elvetődtem, a *Toscát* láttam.)

Nem volt olyan vendégtanításom, hogy Ági meg ne hívott volna vasárnapi ebédre. Ilyenkor néha filmesztétikai fejtegetésbe kezdtünk. Ági műveltsége és az ebből kivirágzó szintetizáló képessége, elméleti összefüggéseket teremtő, tiszta logikája lefegyverzett. Ugyanakkor ámultam, hogy mint kétgyermekes családanya, miként győzi mindezt. És még remek főztjét is megismerhettem a családi asztalnál!

Örök hálával tartozom tehát Pethő Ágnesnek, aki életem legemlékezetesebb periódusához, legsikeresebb szakmai kalandjához hozzásegített!

Köszönöm, drága Ági!

Jakab-Benke Nándor*

Mint akinek halkán felválták a szemét

Nemrég alkalmam nyílt egy filmes pótfoglalkozást, úgymond extrakurrikuláris órákat – a filmklub és az egyetemi kurzus közötti senkiföldjén lévő valamit – tartani egy tehetséggondozó szervezet diákjainak. Nem filmeseknek, hanem mindenféle más szakokról – „filó”, „infó”, bank- és pénzügyek stb. – összerverbuválódott hallgatóknak, egy finomvegyes társaságnak, a *Harry Potter*, a *Marvel*, a *Netflix* és a *Trónok harca* generációjának. A legtöbben arra a kérdésre, hogy miért jöttek oda, olyasvalamit válaszoltak, hogy „másképp” akarnak filmet nézni. Nem *másféle* filmeket, hanem *másképp*.

Az egész „kurzus” már csak hossza miatt sem pályázhat semmiféle kimerítő jellegű, mély filmelméleti, pláne filmtörténeti címkékre, igazából többé-kevésbé véletlenszerűen (vagy legalábbis nem mozgóképes tematikák alapján) ug-rálok velük filmről filmre, mégis úgy döntöttem, hogy legelső alkalommal két filmtörténeti fontosságú alkotást mutatok meg nekik, hiszen valószínűleg úgysem látták, ám talán hallhattak róluk. Az első a Méliès-féle *Utazás a Holdba*, már csak azért is, hogy lássák, mi az origója mindegyik ma általuk fogyasztott filmes-tévés műfajnak, a másik pedig a Buñuel-Dalí féle *Andalúziai kutya*. Az első választott film még akár felcserélhető is lett volna bármilyen más Méliès- vagy Lumière-féle ősfilmre, azt viszont már réges-rég tudtam, hogy a „filmbe való bevezetésbe való bevezetéshez” mindenképp szükségem lesz a szurrealista „programfilmre”. Nem kis mértékben azért, mert az én beavatási rítusomnak is megkerülhetetlen része volt az *Andalúziai kutya* valamikor a kétezres évek legelején, amikor a Sapientia EMTE, de főleg annak a film szaka még csak tervként létezett, mi viszont a BBTE újságírás szakirányának hallgatóiként megkaptuk az első oltást filmtörténetből és -esztétikából.

Őszintén, már a kurzus nevére se emlékszem. Talán valami esztétikához volt köze, vagy netán irodalomelmélethez. Az évre is csak halványan, 2000 és 2002 között történhetett. Mindenesetre Pethő Ágnes – közöttünk már akkor is csak „Pethőági” – filmeket nézetett velünk. Az ilyesminek kezdetben jó híre volt: a középiskolában akkor indítottak el végtelenségig nyúzott, bolhás VHS-eket nekünk, lurkóknak, amikor a tanárnak jobb dolga is volt annál, mint hogy épp leadjon valamit. Így láttuk a suliban pár irodalmi klasszikus filmes adaptációját (még mindig jobb, mint egyoldalú cselekmény-rezüméből készülni érettségi-

* Főszerkesztő, *Filmtett* (Kolozsvár, Románia).

re!), természetfilmeket meg másféléket a magyar-, angol-, sőt biosz- vagy történelemóra jótékony leple alatt. Nem így az egyetemen, Pethő Ágnes szubverzív óráin (amelyekhez akkor még a filológiáról jött át a politikatudományok karra hetente egyszer): nem elég, hogy „fura”, akár „kínos” filmeket néztünk, még beszélgetni is kellett róluk. Hallatlan!

Egyik ilyen órán kaptam meg a *klasszikus hollywoodi elbeszélésmód* elleni vakcina legerősebb adagját, az *Andalúziai kutyát*. Fáj, amikor felválták a szemem, felszisszentem, mint ahogy többen is felszisszentek a közönségből. Ocsúdás után nem a többiek reakcióját lestem, hanem a tanárét: halvány, de mindentudó mosoly volt rajta. Akkor gögnek olvastam ezt a mosolyt, és mérges voltam. Nem szerettem, hogy provokáltak. Pedig most már tudom, hogy egy jó tanárnak – főleg, ha nem „reál” dolgokat, hanem tapinthatatlan, kvantifikálhatatlan, épp csak körülményezhető, „humán” tanokat tanít – a legfontosabb feladata a provokálás. (Csakúgy, mint a jó újságírónak, jegyzem meg halkán, ha már azon a szakon kaptam ezt a dózist, és szereztem nem sokkal később az első diplomámat.) Kaptunk még Hitchcockot és francia újhullámot is, de ahogy a vakcinák általában, ez sem hatott egyből, sokkal később érett be, kellett egy kis idő a *Csil-lagok háborújához* szokott immunrendszerünknek.

(Személyes történetemben fontos pillanatnak bizonyult az is, amikor ennek az egyébként több féléves kurzussorozatnak az egyik óráján a Tanárnő elhozta egy akkori diákújságban, a *Campusban* megjelent egyik szövegemet, és szétosztotta, hogy beszéljünk róla. Nem mondanám filmkritikának azt a szöveget, az épp akkoriban futó *Gyűrűk ura* filmsorozat valamelyik – talán épp az első – részéről van szó benne, pontosabban annak adaptációs problémáiról. *Film és könyv között*, efféle alcíme lehetett. Gyerekes szöveg. El sem merem olvasni. Talán meg sem találom. Eredetileg e köré a történetmorzsa köré akartam írni ezt a szöveget, de egyrészt túl patetikus lett volna – máris az –, másrészt akkor arra kellett volna kifutnia az egésznek, hogy mit jelent 2021-ben filmkritikusnak lenni Erdélyben. Ahhoz a darázsfszerekhez pedig most nem akarok nyúlni.)

Viszont beérni tagadhatatlanul beért, amihez persze hozzájárultak a további *booster* oltások – további provokációk – is a *Bolond Pierrot*-tól az *Országútonon* keresztül egészen a *Prospero könyveiig*, immár a 2003-ban elindított Sapin, film szakon, lenni, a Bocskai-ház dohos-penészes pincéjében, egyelőre még mindig VHS-ről.

Ma is úgy érzem és úgy gondolom, hogy bizonyos sokkhatások nélkül lehetetlen az ember szemének felnyílania. Lehetetlen ennek az intenzitását pontosan bemérni: kicsit tompább a kés, és egyből beheged a seb – kicsit erősebb a vágás, és a páciens hanyatt-homlok menekül mindentől, ami nem a kényelmes, őszög ok-okozatiság megnyugtató logikája által működtetett történetmesélés. A rozsdás békanyúzókról nem is beszélve.

Apropó *Prospero* – alkalmam nyílt beszélgetni filmes újságíróként Peter Greenawayjel egy fesztiválon pár éve. A humoránál lévő huncut öreg így fogalmazott az interjúban: „még több és még több embert kell rávenni, hogy nézzék őket [a filmeket] és hogy beszéljessenek róluk. Ön egy kapuőr, én is kapuőr vagyok. Mi vagyunk a közönség és a kreativitás közti közvetítők. Ez

pedig nagy felelősség. Sőt, az öné nagyobb, mint az enyém: én csak egyetlen filmkészítő vagyok, ön viszont több száz filmkészítővel beszélget.”¹ Természetesen nem beszélgetek több száz filmkészítővel (lusta vagyok az interjú műfajához), viszont kritikusai tevékenységemmel párhuzamosan, Greenaway előtt is, és azóta is többször tarthattam ilyen-olyan kurzust, beszélgetést, de leginkább filmklubot (legyen az egyetemi vagy épp egyetemen kívüli, a kanonizált tananyagot kiegészítő, filmtörténeti „B oldal” bemutatása – mint amilyen a Lugosi Béla filmklub volt). Számomra az ilyen filmklubos beszélgetéseken (főleg amikor „laikusoknak”, tehát nem film szakosoknak tartom) működik a legjobban a Greenaway által emlegetett *kapuőr-éthosz*. Kritikusi munkámra ugyanis nagyon ritkán érkezik érdemi visszajelzés, s ha igen, akkor is nagyon közvetett vagy erősen késleltetett – egy-egy filmklubos beszélgetésen (vagy órán) viszont nagyon közvetlenül lehet hatni az arra fogékonyakra, azonnal mérhetőek a reakciók, legyen az kacagás *A szabadság fantomján* vagy felszisszenés az *Andalúziai kutya* miatt.

Igen, felszisszentek. Tudtam, hogy fel fognak szisszenni. Sőt, biztos vagyok benne, hogy volt olyan a közönségben, aki ocsúdás után az én tarkómra pillantott egy másodperc töredékéig. Na mármost, naivság lenne azt hinni, hogy ezekből az egyébként imádnivaló első- és másodévesekből valamiféle filmsznobok, fennkölt Bergman-idézetekkel kommunikáló, Criterion Channelre előfizető, még a legújabb *Dűne*-adaptációt is a varratelmélet obskúrus szempontjai alapján boncolgató urambocsá kapuőrök lesznek. Sokan még kopogtatni sem fognak. De talán néhányuknak sikerült felvágni-kinyitni a szemét. És azok hátha *más-képp* látnak majd, és ezzel együtt majd az is eljön, hogy *mást* is nézzenek.

1 Jakab-Benke Nándor. 2018. „Kapuőrök vagyunk.” Villáminterjú Peter Greenaway-jel. *Filmtett – erdélyi filmes portál*. <https://www.filmtett.ro/cikk/kapuorok-vagyunk-villaminterju-peter-greenawayjel/>. Utolsó megtekintés: 2021. 12. 11.

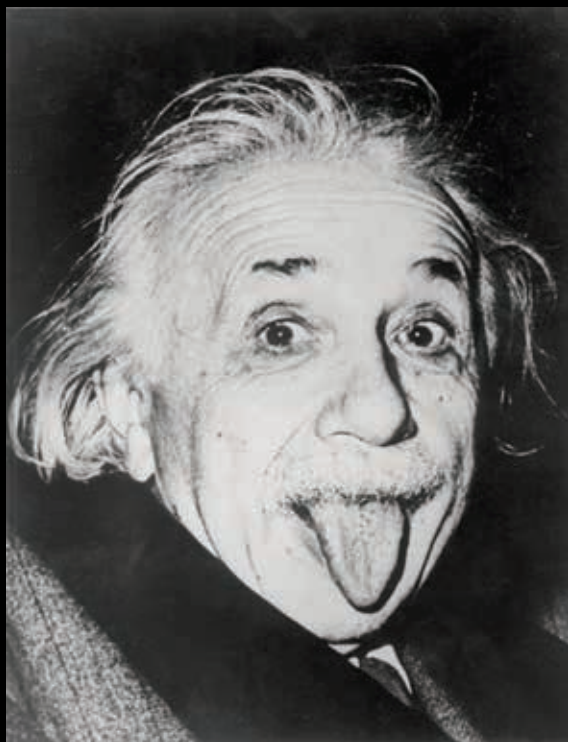


Figure 1.

Jens Schröter*

Intermediality–Persona–Becoming

My work on intermediality started with my magister’s thesis, from which an article developed, published in 1998 in the German journal *montage AV*, which – to my surprise – is now translated into different versions, at least into English, Portuguese, and Chinese.¹ I am known, at least in certain parts of the world, as some kind of “intermediality guy.” And this text brought me in contact with Ágnes Pethő, from whom I learned so much. I was a few times at her legendary conferences – a big honour for me. In this essay, I will develop some ideas on the correlation of persons and concepts and what this means for the canonization and the future of the notion of “intermediality.”

Discourses in the sciences are attached to names. So, if we hear “general relativity,” we immediately associate it with Einstein, although his biography has no necessary connection with the content of the theory of relativity (you do not have to have the name “Einstein” to formulate such a theory). But the “Einstein” we associate with this theory is, of course, not the real person of whom we mostly do not know anything. “Einstein” is a figurative image of thought we associate with “genius” and a bunch of world-changing insights, which are very hard to understand for the layman. We also associate it with iconic images [see Fig. 1] that point to Einstein’s funny and slightly eccentric personality.

The first thing we can note is that “Einstein” is itself an assemblage of texts and (iconic) images. Not surprisingly, the first season of the television series *Genius* (GB 2017), which performatively reinstates the problematic concept of genius, is centred on “Einstein.” So, there is not only a given set of notions (like “relativity”) and a real, empirical person whom these concepts are associated with but also an intermedial–person–assemblage (= IPA), which is the figuration of the theoretical concepts. This IPA is a punctualization or black boxing in the sense of actor–network theory (Law 1992), reducing complexity and allowing to refer to a whole set of possibly unrelated concepts with a word-and-image constellation. The complexity reduction is, of course, always reductive and unjust since concepts always grow in networks – therefore always in retrospect (e.g. reducing relativity to Einstein faces criticism because there were also Minkowski, Poincare, Lorentz, and many others). But it seems problematic to narrate the history of science as a network of pure concepts, if only because the “discoveries” always have a contingent point in time and are therefore connect-

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1 See Jens Schröter 1998, 2011, and 2021.



Figure 2.

ed with a contingent historical person. In that sense, Einstein is a “founder of discursivity” (Foucault 1998), a primordial semiotic event that produces an infinite variety of texts. Secondly, the theory of relativity also contains “persons” – in the sense that Einstein describes observers that measure times with clocks and are in train stations and on trains and compare their measurement (Einstein 2009). Similarly, in philosophy – as Deleuze and Guattari have analysed – texts are crowded with personae that embody and enact concepts: “The conceptual persona is not the philosopher’s representative but, rather, the reverse: the philosopher is

only the envelope of his principal conceptual persona and of all the other personae who are the intercessors [*intercesseurs*], the real subjects of his philosophy” (Deleuze and Guattari 1994, 64). Einstein would not be “Einstein” if he were not “the envelope of his principal conceptual persona,” the persons running around and measuring time in his texts, with whom he figuratively represents abstract concepts. On several levels, concepts and personae are intertwined.

Ágnes Pethő is also a “founder of discursivity.” She is one of the central authors in the field of intermediality studies. And there is also the difference between the real, empirical Ágnes Pethő and the IPA “Ágnes Pethő,” which will endure as a figuration of the discourse of intermediality long after we are all gone. “Ágnes Pethő” is also an image/text assemblage that punctualizes a certain part of the discourse – namely, the field of cinema and intermediality, which is the topic of her magisterial book (Pethő 2020). Her main conceptual persona is “Godard,” whose actions Pethő analyses as representative for the working of intermediality in cinema.

Let us take a short look at the intermedial construction of “Ágnes Pethő” [see Fig. 2]. It shows her website at Sapienza Hungarian University of Transylvania. We can see the headline of the university’s Department of Film, Photography and Media, the font alluding to certain modernist traditions in avant-garde art. Then the structure of the department’s website is given in the following line. To begin with, the website explicates the institutional position and structural features of “Ágnes Pethő:” she is Professor of Film Studies – and an image/text combination, an IPA, juxtaposes the visual features of the empirical person with central concepts: “intermediality and self-reflexivity in the cinema, theory of word and image relations, film and the other arts (film and painting, film and photography, film and literature, etc.), film in the postmedia age, the poetics of modern and postmodern cinema.” Words and images are related on the website, and therefore indicating “word and image relations” as a research

interest is highly self-reflexive. Then, there is the list of publications, starting, of course, with the second edition of her masterpiece, *Cinema and Intermediality*.

Let us take a look at the *academia.edu* website [Fig. 3]. We can see that the same image has migrated to another website, the text is basically the same as on the website, and the first publication is, of course, *Cinema and Intermediality*. We can see: “Ágnes Pethő” is in itself a circulating word and image relation that self-reflexively and figuratively stands for research on word and image relations. This reflexivity ties “Ágnes Pethő” very close to her central conceptual persona, Jean-Luc Godard, who also reflects in the medium of film on film and its intermediality (see Pantenburg 2015). In the German translation of Deleuze and Guattari’s book *Was ist Philosophie?*, there is a sentence that is not included in the English translation: “Die Begriffsperson hat nichts mit einer abstrakten Personifizierung, einem Symbol oder einer Allegorie zu tun, denn sie lebt, sie insistiert” (1996, 73).² “The conceptual persona has nothing to do with an abstract personification, a symbol or an allegory, because it lives, it insists.” Nothing could be more true of “Ágnes Pethő.”

Happily, I did have the opportunity to meet Ágnes in real life. Behind the word and image relation, there is a heartwarmingly friendly, nice, and generous person, who inspired generations of students and colleagues with her pathbreaking and wonderfully written work. She organized the impressive series of conferences in Cluj, some of which I attended. I wish Ágnes all the best!

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Figure 3.

2 The sentence is also in the French original.

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Dorel Găină*

Imago Mundi

Buchetul de sentimente

Pentru mine Doamna Pethő Ágnes este o mirabilă magiciană. Am cunoscut-o în perioada celor câțiva ani în care am funcționat ca și cadru didactic asociat la Universitatea Sapientia, Facultatea de Științe și Arte, Cluj-Napoca, la Departamentul Cinematografie, fotografie, media. Am cunoscut-o ca om, specialist, teoretician, profesor, șefă, colegă, activistă complexă, energică și entuziastă inițiatore, organizatoare și amfitrioană de evenimente științifice de largă însemnătate și respirație națională și internațională. I-am admirat înțelepciunea, calmul, empatia, generozitatea, altruismul, discreția, toate aceste calități fiind inteligent și magic legate și întrepătrunse și eliberate întru dragostea și pasiunea pentru cei din Sapientia, studenți, profesori, personalul administrativ și tehnic și desigur pentru tot ceea ce o înconjură ca lume, de la dimensiunile fizice la cele metafizice. Mi-e greu să detaliez amănuntele acestor calități, la care am fost și eu îngăduit așa că mă voi opri la una din cele pe care nu le-am pomenit. Este vorba despre dragostea și pasiunea ei pentru fotografie. Am urmărit-o în anii în care am activat la Sapientia cu câtă discretă, dar eficientă magie aduce împreună, aparatul fotografic cu ceremoniile fotografierii și meta-comunicarea și dialogul, tăcut și delicat cu care se conecta prin nenumitev dar elective fluxuri energetice și la subiectele înregistrării fotografice. Astfel, recunosc cu bucurie cum că Domnia sa a devenit unul din profesorii, mentorii și antrenorii mei în a-mi exersa și ameliora reperele de celebrare a pasiunii și dragostei mele pentru fotografie. Recunosc cum că nu i-am mărturisit niciodată despre acest dar pe care fără să știe mi l-a oferit. Mă bucur că iată am acum ocazia să-i mărturisesc despre acest aspect al relației noastre, oricum, de intensă prietenie, de mirabilă admirație și de ales respect. Astfel, profit de această ocazie ca să-i dăruiesc, ei mirabilei magiciene, un imens buchet de alese sentimente și să-i mai dăruiesc și imaginile ce constituie seria de fotografie performativă și de complexă agregare artistică – performance, arta instalației progresive, fotografie, prezență în diferite forme de prezentare, de la serie de imagini statice la precum-pretender animație – având ca generic titlul, sensul și specularitatea de *Imago Mundi*. O rog să privească această *Imago Mundi* ca pe o oglindă în care te vezi, vezi și te regăsești, mirific, deodată și copil și adult.

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**AN ARCHAEOLOGY OF
INTERMEDIALITY**
AZ INTERMEDIALITÁS
ARCHEOLÓGIÁJA

Ruggero Eugeni*

Discourses, Marks, Experience. An Archaeology of Intermediality

An Archaeology of Intermediality

From the very moment of its appearance, the concept of “intermediality” showed its theoretical and analytical productivity, particularly in the field of cinema and audiovisual media studies (Pethő 2020). By detaching from the works on intertextuality and launching those on transmediality, intermediality made it possible to reconsider some critical theoretical issues such as the concept of “medium;” the aesthetic regimes of modernity; the semiotic and poetic construction of films, or the relationships between films and other works of art.¹

My paper will take up some theoretical issues of this debate – particularly the relationship between multimodality, intermediality, and intertextuality –, and it will do so from a specific point of view: that of *the material and cognitive archaeology of expressive artefacts*. There are two basic ideas in the paper: multimodality, i.e. the simultaneous use of expressive materials addressed to different sensory channels, contributed to the establishment of specific practices and skills of the genus Homo starting from 400,000 years ago; however, the current concept of intermediality derives from a set of transformations in expressive practices that matured between 50,000 and 30,000 years ago and involved the spring of both the concept of medium and that of (inter)textuality.²

Discourses, Bodies, Narratives

Over the last twenty years, the origins of expressive activities and their connections with our species’ biological, cognitive, and cultural evolution have been relentlessly analysed by several disciplines: cognitive archaeology and palaeoanthropology; evolutionary psychology, narratology, and aesthetics; Darwinian theory of art and literature; and so on. Unfortunately, an intermedial approach has struggled to establish itself: consequently, the study of the origins

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1 For recent surveys and systematizations, see Zecca 2020 and Elleström 2021; particularly on the medium specificity, see Houwen 2017.

2 For all the palaeoanthropological data of this period, see Dunbar 2020, Condemi and Sautier 2021.

and early developments of language, music, dance, performance, pictures, and narrations have generally followed autonomous paths. Although the situation is rapidly changing, adopting a radically intermedial perspective still requires a certain interdisciplinary effort: here, I will sketch some starting hypotheses for such a project.

According to Michael Tomasello (2008 and more recently 2019, 10–22), about 400,000 years ago, the representatives of the genus *Homo* began to obtain their food through forms of active collaboration: by this way, they passed from the *individual* intentionality of the great apes to forms of *joint* intentionality and agency. Things changed about 150,000 years ago: the increase in the population created a stronger dependence of the individual on the group; consequently, hominids moved from joint to *collective* intentionality. These practices implied specific performances consisting of pointing and pantomiming and some pre-linguistic and proto-musical vocal productions. Even the expressive tools became more and more refined, particularly with the introduction of articulated language.³

The consequences of these behaviours are numerous. First, a *shared attentionality* was born, that is, the ability to concentrate one’s attention for prolonged periods on the same object together with other partners. Then, *symbolic thought* was taking shape, that is, the ability to mentally and jointly represent the same materially absent objects, situations, portions of the world. Again: a *complex narrative thought* was emerging, based on the non-random logical and temporal succession of actions and reactions. Finally, the capacity of a *hypothetical and counterfactual (narrative) thought* was rising, which implies (according to Tooby and Cosmides 2001) a “decoupling” between observed actions and actual reactions: hence the possibility of carrying out “offline” experiences and that of distinguishing between different degrees of the reality of the narrative worlds.⁴

While Tomasello primarily considers foraging and hunting settings, other scholars have valued different social situations in the same vein. For example, Ellen Dissanayake (2000) insists on *mother–infant interactions* in the first months of life – a period that is made particularly long and decisive in the genus *Homo* by neoteny, linked in turn to bipedalization and encephalization. These relations are based not just on a specific protolanguage, the “motherese” (Falk 2009), but rather on using a multisensory range of communicative and relational tools: voice, gestures, facial expressions, touch, smell, proxemics, etc. The mother can consciously and aptly modulate the child’s expectations through repetitions, dynamic variations, and exaggerations. In turn, Robin Dunbar (1996) considers the setting of *grooming*, a practice that strengthens friendship, loyalty, and mutual trust between individuals: even though humans initially

3 For the debate on the emergence of articulated language, see at least Tallerman and Gibson (2012), and Arbib (2020).

4 This theory of practical origins of narrative and storytelling contrasts with those deriving them from play and performance as, for instance, in Boyd (2009).

shared it with great apes, they developed in time-specific forms of proto-conversation and gossip; these practices, in turn, contributed not only to linguistic development but also to the elaboration of storytelling skills, and by this way to the maturation of mind-reading capacities.⁵ Other scholars have instead emphasized the importance of the *construction of technological objects*: appropriately sculpting a flintstone implied temporal coordination and, therefore, a narrative scheme to be respected (the *chaîne opératoire*, according to the pioneering Leroy-Gourhan 1964); moreover, this temporal pattern was expressed in a “material engagement” of the humans with the objects, which both entailed and determined specific gestures and rhythms (Malafouris 2013). Finally, still following an indication of Dissanayake, these expressive abilities arising within practical settings were gradually reused within specific contexts: through “making special” operations, they gave rise to *ritualized behaviours* and specialized dispositives of storytelling, dance, singing, performance.⁶

To sum up, a decisive turning point in the development of the genus Homo occurred with the introduction of a practice consisting in the use of all the resources of the human body for expressive purposes, to grab the attention of other subjects and therefore shape a portion of their experience in perceptual, cognitive, narrative, emotional terms. This practice was multimodal (it engaged, as I said, all the expressive resources of the body at the same time): in this sense, it preceded and prepared the emergence of language. This appropriation/delegation of experience allowed Homo to plan or learn practical intervention on the environment without actual risks; moreover, it strengthened the internal coordination of social groups (Scalise Sugiyama 2016). I call this practice *discoursing*.

Marks, Surfaces, Gazes

In the same period of the Pleistocene in which Tomasello places the birth of *discoursing*, other scholars situate the start of another type of human practice: the use of tracing a series of abstract signs on bones, shells, rocks: straight, oblique, or zigzag lines variously arranged and intertwined; circles and spirals; “cupules,” i.e. small hollows with a regular shape that require their author’s expertise, precision, persistence, and the use of special tools. These primitive petroglyphs or pictographs refer to a more general attitude to mark making (Dissanayake 2016), also expressed by early abstract paintings made with or-

5 However, Dunbar anticipates the transition from grooming to conversation, which he believes occurred from 2,000,000 years ago to 400,000 years ago. In other terms, according to him, language evolves not so much because Homo was a good hunter but because he was an even better gossiper.

6 The settings of negotiations for “political” solutions or commercial bargaining are less explored, hence the delays in evolutionary rhetoric reported by Parrish (2014). I cannot touch, in this context, the issue of the birth of art – for a survey of theories on this topic, see Davies (2012).

ganic materials (such as the other traces found at the Blombos site, dating back to around 100,000 years ago). The origins and functions of these behaviours are neither defined nor definable; nor is it clear whether they are relevant for their symbolic values (Henshilwood and d’Errico 2011) or their agentive and enactive implications (Malafouris 2021).

This kind of practice, which I summarize under the label of *marking*, recalls in some respects that of *discoursing*, yet differing from it under other concerns. Indeed, even marking intends to remove subjects from an immediate and casual environment to plunge them into a designed experience. However, the differences are also evident. In discoursing, the subjects of production and those of reception are co-present both in spatial and temporal terms; this situation makes it possible for the attendants to exchange their roles and actively interact. On the contrary, marking presupposes at least a temporal distance between the making and the observing situations, a gap filled by the inscribed and observed surface; hence, it introduces an imbalance between the maker and the observer. Furthermore, discoursing is essentially temporal, linked to the ongoing delivery of expressive materials, and capable of expressing the temporal and narrative development of a series of actions; the marking, on the other hand, has a primarily spatial nature since it is linked to visual (or rather visuospatial and visuotactile) paths that take place within the limits of a two-dimensional circumscribed surface. Finally, discoursing uses multiple expressive registers, while that of marking is essentially visual.

Blendings, Recursions, Remediations

Research on the origin of visual art has generally ignored mark making and identified the start of artistic activities with the figurative art of rock paintings (the cave of Chauvet, the oldest in Europe, dates back to 32,000 years ago). From this perspective, many scholars underlined that rock art coincided with a creative and cognitive explosion witnessed by immediate progress of symbolic material culture in the Upper Palaeolithic, between 45,000 and 30,000 years ago (Mithen 1998, Harari 2015): in addition to the birth of figurative painting, we find in this phase the invention of articulated language, the introduction of musical forms, a decisive technological development, new and more complex forms of social life, etc. Recently, however, several scholars have argued that the birth of figurative painting (like language) results from prolonged gestation. This involves a series of previous technical, expressive, cognitive, and social phenomena such as those I have sketched above.

On this background, I intend to propose the following hypothesis. Among the phenomena that produced figurative images, *an important role was played by the convergence of practices of discoursing with those of marking within a single, modern technology of experience design* – perhaps thanks to the common inclusion in the same ritual or “making special” frame. A similar convergence can be considered in the most general terms as a *fluidification* of the boundaries between different skills previously matured in an autonomous way (Mithen 1998), con-

nected thanks to the ability of *blending* that characterizes the modern human mind (Turner 2014). Following a more specific perspective, the convergence of discoursing and marking can be interpreted as a form of *recursive thinking* (Corballis 2014), i.e. embedding narrative discourses within marked surfaces – and therefore as a kind of *remediation*, in terms of Bolter and Grusin (1998). In any case, the result is the completely new possibility of *articulating discursive narratives in figurative visual forms*: the narrator has thus stopped speaking only through voice and gestures and has begun to tell stories through displayed images.⁷ The resulting spatialization of the temporal development led to new and decisive cognitive abilities of Homo, particularly a more precise domain over time. But the most interesting results for the reflection I am conducting lie on another level.

Medium, Textuality, Intermediality

I summarize what I said to reach a pertinent conclusion concerning the debate on intermediality, multimodality, and intertextuality. Starting around 400,000 years ago, Homo sapiens developed two distinct techniques for the constitution and modulation of their experience, one based on the live use of one's body (*discoursing*), the other based on the use of inscribed surfaces embedded in everyday living spaces (*marking*). In a more recent phase that began about 150,000 years ago, the two techniques gradually converged, giving life to a systematic activity of experience design; about 50,000 years ago, this process led to the distinction between live and mediated forms of expression, with all the possibilities of mutual connection and combination between them.

Three conclusions derive from this story. First, the passage from the most archaic phase to the modern one corresponds to the shift from the use of many and co-present perceptive modalities (sight, hearing, but also touch, smell, taste) to the domination of only one of them: the visual one – a phenomenon that McLuhan (1964) would have labelled as a “warming” of the medium. In fact, *the other sensory channels are not entirely suppressed*: starting from the visual objects, the viewer reconstructs one or more narrative discourses through the reactivation in a simulated form of voices, sounds, gestures, etc. In any case, the new

7 It is debatable whether and to what extent these phenomena are connected to the birth of articulated language. We can argue (recovering and expanding [Mithen 2005]) that the advent of language caused a re-articulation of discoursing: in particular, it freed sound and gestural resources from immediate communicative needs, triggering the rise of music, dance, performance, etc. On the other hand, the language would have linked itself to the forms of marking as an interior or exteriorized storytelling activity that named images referentially and connected them in narrative situations and developments; hence, conversely, a reorientation of marking to the production of figurative paintings. In other words, the language may have acted as a connector between the previously autonomous practices of discoursing and marking, causing both the transformation of each of them and their new reciprocal relationships (see next paragraph).

situation allows the subjects to grasp the distinction between the different sensory modalities that were previously perceived as an indivisible whole.

Second, this kind of experience takes place within spatial and temporal frames determined by the presence of the support for image inscription, a sort of proto-cinematic screen (Buckley, Campe, and Casetti 2019). This situation implies that in the course of their experience the subjects constitute not only representations of what is expressed or narrated – indeed, they also represent the object delivering sensory stimuli: this object is a *medium* if considered from the point of view of its physical presence and the type of stimuli it provides; at the same time, it is a *text* if regarded from the point of view of its internal organization. In other words, *the convergence of discoursing and marking gives life to both the idea of medium and that of text.*

Finally, the constitution of a difference between different sensory modalities (point 1) and the instauration of mediums and texts (point 2) make it possible to think reflexively about the relationships between all these resources and possibly invent new ones. Whether watching a traditional story translated into images or attending a performance that combines pictures with song, dance, or storytelling, Homo sapiens is endowed with a new powerful cognitive tool that we now call *intermediality*.

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Jürgen E. Müller*

A Re-visiting of Some (Pre-)Historical Intermedial Playgrounds of Cinema

Cinema “happened” as a result of specific social, technological, and historical conditions and developed in numerous encounters and interactions with more or less “neighbouring” media, before it finally got a sort of supposedly “stable” profile and identity in the thirties of the 20th century. The dynamic media confluences of cinema still prove to be a challenge not only for (“traditional”) scholars of cinema studies. They constitute wide fields of research for academic studies, especially for intermedial approaches.

In my “interjection,” I focus on socio-historical and intermedial constructions of “cinema.” A short look will be taken at early and pre-historic constructions and forerunners of cinema, as well as at some basic vectors of an archaeology of intermediality. This approach is realized in a paradigmatic way with regard to prehistoric and current intermedia plays within and with the *dispositif* of caves, for example, with the *Cave of Forgotten Dreams* (Werner Herzog, 2010). The intermedial playgrounds of cinema are reconstructed in the light of an intermedia network history, and they finally lead us to interactive assemblages of contemporary documentaries.

A Short Glance at the Manifold Intermedial Beginnings of Cinema

Is There a Pre-Historic Intermedial Cinema? Or When Does “Cinema” Become a “Cinema?”

One of the persistent and until today only partly answered questions in the academic field of cinema and media studies is the circumscription and reconstruction of the beginnings of early cinema. Does cinema start with the 19th century’s inventions of the *Cinématographe* or *Kinétoscope* by the Lumière brothers or with Athanasius Kircher’s *Smicroscopium parastaticum*, which he described in his book *Ars magna lucis et umbrae* (1671), or thousands of years ago, with pre-historic cave paintings, which are spread across our globe, or even much earlier, with tribal performances around flickering fireplaces surrounded by bushes or rocks? –to mention but a few “cornerstones” of the history of cinema.

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Figure 1. The Chauvet Cave

Naturally, these few instances of media phenomena are closely related to historical concepts or ideas of the medium of cinema, which have undergone various changes during the past decades – not only in academic discourses. The more or less explicitly or implicitly supposed borderlines, specificities, and correlating historical functions of the medium called “cinema” are decisive factors and historical research axes for the reconstructions of its histories.

In the 18th and 19th centuries’ visions of future audiovisual media, “cinema” appears not to be a key desire but rather a marginal aspect or a “detour” (Uricchio 1997). If we evoke, for instance, Tiphaigne de la Roche’s *glace merveilleuse* (allowing a live broadcasting of sounds and images, as described in his novel *Giphantie*, 1760) or Robida’s *téléphonoscope* (a first draft of television, given in his utopian novel *Le Vingtième Siècle*, 1883), we notice that “cinema” was *not* central to the wishful thinking on the horizon of attention of our Western societies (Müller 2000).

Let us look back on some of its roots or sediments which can be retraced in early history and start with an example motivated by Werner Herzog’s fascination for caves. In his film *Cave of Forgotten Dreams* (2010), he presents a poetic 3D documentary of the *Chauvet* cave paintings, which were painted some 30,000 years ago [Fig. 1]. Herzog and his team could only be present in this cave during six days for four hours per day because of possible damages to the wall drawings and paintings by human breath. This documentary gives a fascinating example of a revitalization of and reflection on early human (intermedial) cinematic art. After viewing this film, Andrew Pulver saw intense connections between the cave of *Chauvet* and Herzog’s poetic documentary; he described his experience “as almost like watching the reinvention of the cinematic medium” (2011).

Herzog's 3D documentary of the *Chauvet* cave paintings can in fact be considered as a cinematographic and intermedial revival of prehistoric (also moving) pictures.¹ The flickering pictures of this film are interacting with a voice-over by Herzog, comments and interviews by scholars of prehistoric culture and an avant-garde soundtrack by Ernst Reijseger. This interplay of an avant-garde music soundtrack with the pictorial masterpieces has the quality of a sort of restaging of historical *performances*, as sound archaeology (Reznikoff 2000, Jacobs 2017) has taught us. Some 30,000 years ago *Chauvet* must have been a place of performances and spectacles, which show parallels with (not only early Vaudeville) cinematic representations and also with Fluxus events.

Let us briefly continue our reconstruction of now lost live, as well as multi- and intermedia events during the Palaeolithic period based on the examples of two further caves, the Cave El Castillo and the Cave De la Chimeneas.

Caves, Pictures, and Sounds – Before and After Plato²

In the context of their approach to a sound archaeology, Rupert Till and his colleagues produced audiovisual clips of prehistoric performances in caves. The videos which were made in the famous Spanish caves of the Cueva de el Castillo and the Cueva de las Cheminas are characterized by complex historical and medial transformations. They refer in an impressive way to the intermedial character of plays which probably took place in the *dispositifs* (“apparatuses”) of these caves. The revitalizations and re-mediations of prehistoric thrilling spectacles give us an idea of human actions and media interactions realized in caves thousands of years ago. This audiovisual reconstruction of prehistorical events makes us *feel* the central effects of intermedial processes in a mythical sound space, effects triggered by interactions between structures and materialities of rocks, drawings and sounds, between proper sounds of the underworld, songs, human voices and musical instruments, echoes and human bodies. The clips point to the fact that the caves of the prehistoric man/woman had never been silent spaces (sometimes decorated by drawings) but “vibrant places” of dynamic and complex intermedial processes where human bodies, actions, and sounds were interfering and mixing up with the “proper sound” of these spaces. All human voices and instruments (flutes, whistles,

1 In a certain way, Herzog's film can be put in relation to a prehistoric research, realized by Marc Azéma, who published in 2009 and 2010 two volumes entitled *L'art des cavernes en action* and in 2015 *La Préhistoire du cinéma* (including a DVD), which confronted graphic narrations of caves with 19th-century pre-cinema and the birth of the *cinématographe*. In the light of our intermedial research axis, Azéma's findings and theses represent a re-accentuation in terms of an *intermedia network history*, which will have to go back further in (pre-)history and to be continued until our digital era.

2 In this chapter and in the short chapter on *Plato's Cave*, I follow some of my remarks formulated in Müller 2020a and 2020b.

trumpets made from bones or horns) of Till's performances have been reconstructed on the basis of historical discoveries.

In the context of a prehistory of intermediality, the new approach of a "sound archaeology" can function as a "tool" which brings us as close as possible to prehistoric intermedialities and to some roots of intermedia processes. As the clips prove, prehistoric cultures are far from being "crude or primitive;" they are characterized by complex interactions of media and arts and indicate that the ancient man/woman was capable of creating early cinematic performances, which can be seen as manifestations of so-called "Ur-Intermedialitäten" (Schröter 2008).

The tool of *Sound Archaeology* thus opens new and relevant perspectives with regard to the reconstruction of intermedial processes and (very early) cinema. Even if we know for quite some time that dance, music, rhythm, cults/rituals, performing and fine arts are closely related, the (prehistoric) research of these processes has for a long time neglected a central factor of the in-between of these dimensions: the fact, that iconic, indexical, aesthetic, and – naturally – social functions of all these codes and signs represented and enacted in caves are *unimaginable without sound*.

In this sense, the phenomena we have described can be considered as indicators of an archaic intermediality. Caves would then be spaces of not only human rites and interactions between spatial givens/characteristics of rocks and paintings but also of intermedial interactions between bodies, rhythms, human voices, songs, sounds of animals, music and of proper sounds of their spatial conditions. As Reznikoff (2000) has shown, in a great number of Palaeolithic caves, *specific spots, marked by paintings*, are to be found in very close relationships with sound configurations, for instance, in the form of echoes or amplifications of voices and sounds. He calls this phenomenon a "concordance between image and sound," which I would like to characterize as a form of pre-historical intermediality.

Caves have not only been spaces for rites and human dances but also "resonance spaces" or "rocky resonance bodies" of which specific places, signs, and pictures have been marked and constituted by corresponding sound qualities. In this sense, we would have to reconsider famous caves such as Lascaux as intermedia places of drawings, paintings, human bodies, movements, and sounds. In the Cave Solsemhula, the drawings of men move towards a sound funnel which amplifies sounds [Fig. 2]. These spaces of caves open up intense experiences of a "life effect," an "effet de vie" (Münch 2004).

Plato's Cave

As mentioned before, the research of intermedialities and inter-arts in caves also points to the fact that one of the constitutive elements of film theory, Plato's allegory of the cave as a circumscription of the filmic *dispositif*, must be revised or at least completed. The almost exclusive emphasis on the visual dimension and on the pictures/images of cinema and audiovisual media has led to a ne-



Figure 2. Cave Solsemhula – Drawings and sound funnel

glect of sound during decades of film theory. As we can see from our examples, in caves, the visual dimension (also of a flickering fire and of human shadows) always goes together with the acoustic dimension.

The Caves of Early Cinema

At the end of this short *tour d’horizon* of intermedialities and (pre-)historical cinema, we must ask ourselves which historical appearance of institutionalized cinema might come close to some of the phenomena described above. I think that this would be the period of the so-called early or silent cinema (which, as we know, has never been silent if we remember, for example, sound, music, and the important role of the *bonimenteur*, that is, the commentator or narrator, during the screenings/performances). Many of the (short) films of this early phase of cinema have been retrospectively labelled as “documentaries,” which forms another link with Herzog’s *Cave of Forgotten Dreams*.

It might be tempting to follow on this line of the historical concepts of the “documentary” in film reviews and film theory, but this would go much too far within the framework of our short article.³ Let us only keep in mind that the notion and genre of documentary plays an important role for the development of cinema and film. As generally known, for technical reasons, early films could

3 We could, for example, take into account the coining of the term “documentary” for filmic travel reports in France in the 1910s, the “documentary value” of a film, as it has been formulated on 8 February 1926 in the *New York Sun*, or the development of specific patterns of action, of production and reception, including so-called characteristics of the genre, as they have been described by Odin (1994) and Altman (1999).

not be shot in the dark spaces of caves, so there are no representations of caves in films of this period. Nevertheless, the Vaudeville and other spaces can in fact be regarded as caves before they were, in big cities, replaced by lighthouses to a large extent, which brought light into the darkness of big halls, “velvet light traps,” or “movie theatres.” I would like to refocus in the last chapter of my “interjection” on some interfaces between the prehistoric, early, and digital cinema, where established generic patterns of documentaries are blurred in interactive assemblages. But let us proceed in a somewhat unorthodox way from a historiological step to a theoretical reflection and then get back again to some historiological intermedial network findings and perspectives.

Media Plenitude and Intermedia Approaches – A Plea for an Intermedia Network History

Cinema and Intermedia Studies

As Ágnes Pethő (2010) has shown, “traditional” film studies have not really been urgently waiting for intermedia research axes. This attitude, which is still persisting in many circles of film scholars, might be due to historical processes of institutionalization and of “ennoblement of a discipline,” which tried to obtain a standing similar to that of already established schools of literature and linguistics. For many film scholars, the filmic *oeuvre* has been for a long time at the centre of their research, an approach which might be compared to procedures/theories of structuralism, formalism, linguistics, hermeneutics, semiotics, phenomenology and connected only in a restricted way with theories of reception or critical historiology such as Allen and Gomery’s *Film History* (1985). Thus, intermedia studies have been regarded for quite a long time as somewhat “impure and annoying troublemakers” for film studies which sprang up in the second half of the 20th century as rather “solid and closed” academic fields of research with corresponding theoretical-methodological approaches of humanities.

Ágnes Pethő’s work has significantly contributed to the tearing down of these established and rigidly fixed walls between film scholars and intermedia research axes (Pethő 2020). Nowadays, the transgression of “clearly marked” borderlines of film studies⁴ has become a sort of “fashionable standard procedure,” even if in many studies this transgression is not really referred to as an intermedial approach. The demarcation lines between film and (inter-)media studies seem to have been dissolved, and the scholarly preoccupations have been expanded.

Some Preoccupations of Current Intermedial Research

The research axis of intermediality is keeping busy numerous scholars at numerous universities and research centres (also of cinema) all over the globe,

4 As far as “borderlines” are concerned, see Lars Elleström (2010).

and, in fact, this concept proves to constitute a large field for many involved disciplines. Given the broad spectrum of intermedia studies, it is very difficult, or almost impossible, to present a general overview of all of its research options, which, naturally, cannot be an objective of this brief heckling. Nevertheless, I would like to give a very short idea – in addition to Pethő’s work – of some recent useful summaries and classifications and relevant or innovative tendencies in the broad field of intermedia research.⁵

In 1998, Jörg Helbig edited and published one of the first surveys on the state of affairs of intermedia studies; in 2000, Mertens followed with a “Forschungsüberblick” on intermedia studies, and, subsequently, Joachim Paech and Jens Schröter (eds. 2008) refocused intermedia research with regard to analogue and digital processes, where Schröter proposed a typology of intermediality as “synthetical,” “transmedial,” and “transformational/ontological” (2008). Ágnes Pethő gave a survey of key concepts of intermedial studies of cinema (2010); Irina Rajewsky (2014) published a useful overview on “Intermediality,” “Remediation,” and “Multimedia;” Claus Clüver (2019) released a very valuable article entitled *From the “Mutual Illumination of the Arts” to “Studies of Intermediality;”* and there came out two remarkable volumes, one edited by Patricia Viallet (2020): *FORMES ET (EN)JEUX DE L’INTERMÉDIALITÉ DANS L’ESPACE EUROPÉEN d’hier à aujourd’hui* and one by Albert Jiatsa Jokeng, Roger Fopa Kuete, and François Guiyoba (2020): *Intermédialité. Pratiques actuelles et perspectives théoriques*. This is to mention only a few key publications and not to forget a forthcoming book (2022) by François Guiyoba, Roger Fopa Kuete, and Albert Jiatsa Jokeng (*Le discours scientifique comme pratique intermédiaire en Arts, Lettres et Sciences humaines*), which investigates intermedia practices in academic discourses. In the following, with the abovementioned key publications as background, I will propose some central vectors of an intermedia network history.

Towards an Archaeology of Intermediality or an Intermedia Network History

My contribution to the research of intermediality is not so much designed as a meta-element of an intermedia theory of media theories or even a “closed theory;” it is rather characterized by its opening of the possibility to take a fresh look at media history or histories. This is because the claim to devise a meta-theory of media theories would be a rather naive endeavour that would fail to do justice to the complexity of intermedia processes and phenomena, which in turn reveal themselves in the infinite number of possible intermedia combinations and interactions. From this perspective, the notion and concept of “convergence” (Jenkins 2009) would just mark the “other side of the coin” or the opposite end of a continuum, where the complexity of these processes “collapses” into some sort of a “digital pabulum.” In this sense, my research axis leads to a rethinking of the dynamics and interactions between media, the materiality and contents of the media, by taking into consideration the modal-

5 Here, again, I follow some observations developed in my articles – Müller 2020 a, b.

ities of these interplays, which, currently I try to trace back to the example or *dispositif* of caves and intermedia processes.

With Cisneros (2007), we will permanently have to face the challenge and question: which of the current *axes de pertinence*, or research axes, of intermediality need to be corrected, re-accentuated or re-orientated. It is before this background that I would like to search (pre-)historical traces of intermedialities in and with *caves*. Caves have been constituting media *dispositifs* and media topics for a very long time, being present also in our digital age in the *dispositif* of virtual caves, filmic and audiovisual representations as well as video games [see Fig. 3].⁶

Let us now briefly return to our archaeology of intermediality and confront some prehistorical intermedia processes with new intermedia plays of documentaries in the digital age.

A Concluding Short Glance at the Many Intermedia “Deaths” and “Rebirths” of Documentary and Cinema in the Digital Era

Herzog’s Cave of Forgotten Dreams Re-visited – Or about Intermedial Births and Revivals of Cinema

Werner Herzog’s documentary initiated and continued a revival of prehistoric (almost cinematic?) performances, which are characterized by intense interplays between various media. With this in mind, his film has to be regarded as a rebirth of “forgotten” dreams and performance practices of “cinematic day-dreams.” His documentary also gives way to innovative processes of the genre “documentary.”

The Lumière Brothers, Godard’s Le Mépris – And Interactive Assemblages of Contemporary Documentaries

One of the central scenes in Jean-Luc Godard’s *Le Mépris* (1963), where, in the projection room (or cave?) of Cinecittá, the director, the producer, and an assistant discuss tensions and interactions between the film script and the *mise en image et en son* of a fictional film on the Odyssey, brings us back to the question of intermedialities in documentaries. At the bottom of the screen of this “fictional documentary” sequence, we find a statement of the Lumière brothers: “Il cinema è un’invenzione senza avvenire.”⁷ (By the way, as far as we can trust film historians, the Lumière brothers have never pronounced this sentence.)

6 The project of GUT (Gdańsk University of Technology, Immersive 3D Visualization Laboratory) is described by its initiators as follows: “In the middle of the over 12 meters high room, there is a virtual reality cave in the shape of a cube (the length of each edge is 3.4 m) and a 3D sphere. Each of these elements can work separately – depending on the needs – but they can also create an integrated system for creating in-depth visualization of 3D space in virtual reality.” See: <https://pg.edu.pl/en/news/2020-07/gut-immersive-3d-visualization-laboratory>. Last accessed 07. 09. 2021.

7 “Cinema is an invention without a future.”



Figure 3. GUT

In the light of our research axis of an intermedia network history, this ironical and quasi-documentary encounter of the Lumière's utterance with Godard's film in the cave of the projection room suggests – in spite of the many proclaimed deaths of cinema – the continuation of its intermedial plays in the historical times of the 1960s and in our present times. In the digital age, these plays continue, for example, in forms of networking in interactive assemblages. As Anna Wiehl (2019) has shown, the new documentary is about to lose its formally fixed generic patterns and corresponding modes of action and is on its way to new intermedial and interactive practices which will also have to be further studied. Without overstressing my point, I would like to add that the new documentary media practices do refer back to fascinating prehistoric intermedial interactions in the dispositifs of caves as well as to audiovisual representations of caves.

Thus, the manifold and dynamic media confluences of documentary film and cinema seem to remain a challenge – not only for (“traditional”) scholars of cinema studies. They constitute wide fields of research for academic studies, especially for intermedia studies, which should, where possible, go even further back in time than the cave paintings of Neanderthals or of Homo sapiens. Some traces can be found, among others, in South African caves, such as the Wonderwerk Cave, where archaeological discoveries suggest that the human gain of control over fire some 1.6 million years ago laid the ground for the development of culture, language, and arts (Suzman 2020, 97). However, we must stay aware of the fact that this will be a rather painstaking effort. As de Certeau (1973) has shown, our intermedial reconstructions cannot escape the basic principle of every historiological work, that is, *the construction of present histories on the basis of traces of absent media events* such as interplays between sounds, rocks, body movements, and iconic signs. In this sense, an intermedia archaeology generates a provocation for traditional cinema and media studies. It will have to be carried out in a narrow cooperation of media scholars with (palaeo-)anthropologists as well as sound archaeologists and should bring forth reliable results without getting lost in esoteric speculations.

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Intermedial Correspondences in *The Seventh Continent* (Michael Haneke, 1989)

On Metaphor

Michael Haneke's film, *The Seventh Continent* (*Der siebente Kontinent*, 1989), understood under a metaphoric construal, represents the abstract target domain (FILM) with the help of an illustrative source domain (*THE EVENTS IN THE LIFE OF A FAMILY* or *LIFE*).

In Haneke's film, the conceptual domain *LIFE* (A) is the source of the metaphor that can be mapped onto the target domain FILM (B), which, in its turn, will be an instance of the category "life." The mapping mechanism generates a generic space schema (C), the ad-hoc concept, whose instances are both the source and the target. Let us label this schema "*the film**." In Haneke's movie, this conceptual structure, "*the film**," is, in a second stage, the new source (A*) of the second metaphor, whose target is this time "life*" (B*) [Fig. 1].

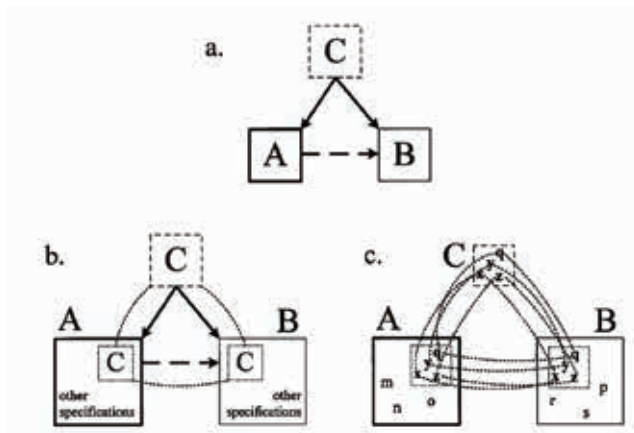


Figure 1. Tuggy 2007, 88

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The fictional world depicted by Haneke’s film is categorized in a diegetic conceptual domain (an instance of “life”) or in a domain labelled here as symbolic, i.e. the “film” (an instance of a visual artefact, e.g. film, painting, or photo). The resulting blend contains schematic relations between the elements, and partial endorsements of the involved cognitive structures. Eventually, the two main cognitive domains seem to alternate between the positions of source and target respectively.

A series of similarities and associations are gradually revealed between the conceptual descriptive source system and the conceptual descriptive target system. For instance, the descriptive system “a family sitting in the car at a car wash” is mapped onto the target descriptive system “the film” or “the cinematic setting” (“viewers facing the projection screen in a cinema”). In other words, the symbolic domain of “film” is conceived with diegetic “life”-like features.

The metaphor in *FILM IS GEORG’S FAMILY LIFE*. The resulting conceptual blended space that correlates elements from both the source and the target can be labelled *THE FILM**. The conceptual descriptive system “the film*” is the metaphoric blend of the source descriptive system perceptibly present on the screen and the film’s target system. Haneke’s film is about film, a meta-film. The conceptual blend *THE FILM** exhibits a series of features or emergent properties which become visible as one understands or conceptualizes the metaphor (Yus 2009, 152). This blended conceptual domain will be apprehended, at a secondary level of interpretation, as the source input conceptual domain for a second metaphor construction. By a reversal of the dynamic direction of mapping, the new target space is now the story of a family, or, more broadly conceived, the human condition. The resulting metaphoric secondary blend is *THE HUMAN CONDITION**. The secondary metaphor is *LIFE IS A FILM**, a revisited version of the metaphor *LIFE IS A STAGE*. The human condition is being in a cinematic condition; it exhibits the features of the cinematic artefact and has cinema-like features. We have here two metaphors, each with a different mapping: *FILM IS LIFE* and *LIFE IS A FILM*.¹

This double binding scope creates a performative discourse. The cinematic expression is the semantic content represented. The representing expression causes the existence of what is represented. Stated otherwise, the film determines a fictional diegesis which makes reference to its own artefactual nature. As a performative text, Haneke’s movie focuses on the figurative work of cinematic expression. A comment by Roger Odin on Jean Epstein’s *Le Tempestaire* (1947) can also be helpful. The performative text is self-referential – it points to

1 See Rohdin (2009, 419) about the bidirectional visual metaphor *WOMEN ARE ANGELS* and *ANGELS ARE WOMEN* in *Il bidone* (Federico Fellini, 1955) and in Evans and Green (2006, 297) the bidirectional metaphor established between humans and machines (*PEOPLE ARE MACHINES*: He’s had a nervous *breakdown*; *MACHINES ARE PEOPLE*: I don’t think my car *wants* to start this morning). See also Martin Hilpert (2015, *A Course in Cognitive Linguistics: Metaphor* [18:33], [19:37]). https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ROBYLpwSM6E&index=2&list=PLKgdsSsfw-faeun9_OLVETPT-ZGpKptlj. Last accessed 30. 10. 2021).



Figure 2. Three attentional frames of the generic shot: 5a–c

a reality which it constitutes by itself – also because it is “effectively enunciated in the conditions which shape it as act.” The film does not lecture on the topic of cinema but rather is “in itself a discourse on cinema [...] a thinking machine” (Odin 2000, 122).

The Generic’s Captions

The first shots of the film are of particular interest in the present argumentation. In Fig. 2, the key frames 5a–c belong to a long take consisting of a medium shot made up of several attentional frames. The camera is placed inside the car behind two still human characters facing the window’s car.² On this “car screen,” motion is displayed. The foam washes away, and we can see the mechanical brushes performing an abstract movement that traces black and white shapes. In other words, a non-figurative, experimental display is depicted in front of our eyes. There is *chiasmus* between the human presence (expected to move but standing motionless) and the mechanical elements (inanimate objects expected to stay still but moving). The main caption of the shot shows what the viewer is about to watch, i.e. “a movie by Michael Haneke” labelled *The Seventh Continent*. It is worth mentioning that the text in Fig. 2.5b frames the visual depicted as a second screen within a screen: “(a movie by [*the screen and the moving image within it*] Michael Haneke).” The caption notices that the viewer has to assist to “a film made by Michael Haneke.” In other words, the movie we watch is a sample of film, not a diegetic story (e.g. “the story of a couple sitting in a car”). It is an artefact, a construct (“this is a film”). The viewer is invited to see the cinematic product as artefact and detach himself from the diegesis, to see the formal features of the displaying artefact. The cinematic cues are part

2 Considered retroactively, the POV may be the girl’s Eva, but in the first moments of the movie the shot lacks a subjective voice since it is a “narrative” shot unassigned to any of the characters.

of the descriptive system “film is an artefact” and are not to be taken just as representations (simulations) of “the life of an Austrian family.”

The final shot of the generic (Fig. 3: shot 7) is a black, opaque image which obstructs vision. The shot lasts for 12 seconds, and its length turns it from an unobtrusive transition cut into an autonomous perceptual trope incorporated into the fabric of the film. The viewer is presented with an opaque surface, an interdiction of visual access or, in biological terms, with a kind of blindness. The frame can be strictly abstract, or it can be a sample of a film cut uttered by the film’s author, i.e. “this is a film cut.”³ The black cut is a disruption in the fabric of diegesis needed in order to recategorize the conceptual domain from the diegesis of “life” to the descriptive system of the “film.” The shot’s content is no more used (fiction mode) but mentioned as a film sample (documentary/didactic mode).

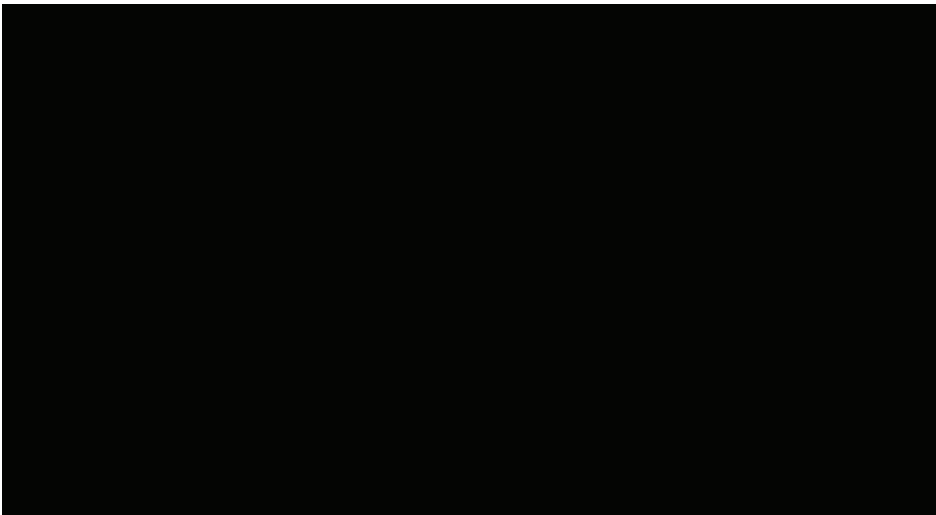


Figure 3. Shot 7

3 The black frame/cut can be a parallel to experimental “conceptual” movies: *L’Homme Atlantique* (Marguerite Duras, 1981) and *Blue* (Derek Jarman, 1993). The two movies make use of a nonfigurative, monochromatic shot (black and blue respectively) as part of a discourse on vision and the event of seeing.



Figure 4. Shots 8 to 22

Georg's Family Wakes Up

The shots of this sequence are metonymic cuts that can either be conceptualized in a descriptive diegetic mode or can be metaphorically construed. As in the previous generic sequence, the focus is either on inanimate objects or the camera singles body parts performing an action. The shots foreground the opposition human vs. nonhuman as in, for example the white vs. black contrast, which is chromatically dominant [Fig. 4: shots 11, 13, 16, 21]. The final shot, 22, introduces the reference to abstract cinema: the editing cut profiled as such. Shot 21 depicts the mechanical transition from the abstract white to the figurative shape of the car, which intrudes into the frame and is followed again by the closing of the metallic garage door. The mechanics of shot 21 are reminiscent of the mechanical shutter of the photographic or recording camera. This shutter, just like the door in shot 13, echoes the features of the inanimate camera that contains in its semantic description the mechanical mobility. It also contains, much like the curtains in 11, transparency as well as opacity.

Shot 20 excludes the human element in favour of objects and food displayed on the dining table [Fig. 4]. The food on a plate is the metaphor which ties ideas to food (IDEAS ARE *FOOD* or IDEAS ARE *PHYSICAL OBJECTS*) (Schilperoord and Maes 2009, 235; see also Daniel Spoerri's compositions) [Fig. 5]. In short, a conceptual content, made up of ideas, is instantiated as a series of material objects. The family meal can be seen as a metaphor of the movie's conceptual content.⁴ Haneke will reiterate the motif of indulgence in food in a subsequent episode, creating a stylistic counterpoint to the bleak scenery of the home, road, and factory. The association of carnivalesque excesses and culinary pleasures also references Marco Ferreri's *The Grande Bouffe* (*La Grande Bouffe*, 1973), in which death is conditioned and caused by sexual and culinary excesses.

The references to film art are supplemented by the highlighted metonymic framing which is reminiscent of the style of Robert Bresson and Jean-Luc Godard [Fig. 6].⁵

Georg's Daily Life

The scene at the factory references the cinematic style of *Red Desert* (*Il deserto rosso*, Michelangelo Antonioni, 1964) [Fig. 7]. In the subsequent scene at the school, Eva, Georg's daughter, pretends to be blind. Although in the previous episode the framing was dominated by large industrial backgrounds, here the

4 "Cinema has become part of culture as a resource or the general good: shared, prepared and feasted upon like food at the dinner table, rather than valued only for the uniquely personal vision of the artist-auteur." (Elsaesser 2005, 19.)

5 The elaborate use of the metonymic cut reveals a stylistic pattern of modernist cinema as it appears in other works done, for example, by directors such as Andrei Tarkovsky or Krzysztof Kieslowski.



Figure 5. Daniel Spoerri,
Sevilla serie nr. 29 (1992)



Figure 6. Two shots from *A Married Woman*
(*Une femme mariée*, Jean-Luc Godard, 1964)

camera adopts the close-up viewpoint that places emphasis on the human character. The dialogue between the school teacher and Eva introduces the cinematic schema of the face-to-face dialogues achieved with the help of the deictic off-frame gaze. Haneke highlights the opposition between the refusal of vision and the acceptance of vision (a “humanized” version of the closing/opening of the shutter). The same pattern was previously manifested in the transition from the diegetic figurative media to the black abstract shot.

Multiple elements in Haneke’s movie allude to considerations regarding the editing cut.⁶ Some of those stage the cinematic device of the editing cut. The cut is associated with blindness and lack of sight, as Anna suggests when she pretends to be blind. Repressing the perception of the editing cut in classical narrative cinema in order to enable diegetic continuity represents – in the spirit of Derridean deconstructionism – precisely an unconscious inhibition of sight, i.e. a kind of blindness. Sight is based on the absent picture that is, nevertheless, foundational to the perception and understanding of a coherent diegesis. At the same time, Haneke foregrounds blindness as a full diegetic object and transforms the editing cut into a diegetic element, i.e. the abstract, nonfigurative, and prolonged editing cut; the film “speaks” of the cinematic apparatus. Otherwise stated, Haneke depicts the transition from the “absence of representation” to the “representation of absence.”

In the next episode, the mechanics of the cinematic vision is under scrutiny [Fig. 8]. This scene expands the descriptive system of the optician as a source for the metaphoric interpretation. Ana, Georg’s wife, is an optician and, as such,

6 According to Raymond Bellour in *Le corps du cinema* (2009), the editing cut is similar to the guillotine and the shutter obstructing the flow of movement in photos of the snapshot type. The working of the shutter implies the same invisible imminence that characterizes the guillotine, of which it can be considered a metaphor.

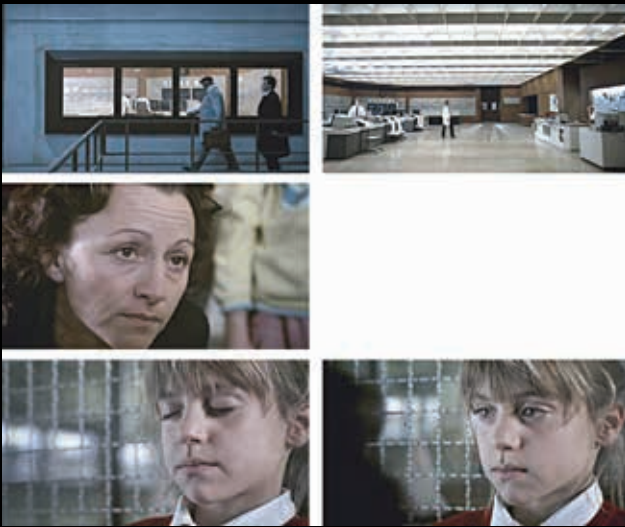


Figure 7. The factory scene and the school scene

adopts the position of the cameraman. The diegetic source domain, “the optician’s office” is mapped onto the target conception of “the cameraman’s work.” The shot’s framing foregrounds the mechanical process of controlling the camera. The metonymic shots that profile details of the eye quote Dziga Vertov’s *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929). Like in Vertov’s case, there is a two-way metaphor: THE CAMERA IS AN EYE and THE EYE IS A CAMERA.⁷

The extreme close shot of the iris of the eye echoes the metaphor of the diegetic dimension of the cinematic process. Moreover, Anna’s close inspection of the eye’s anatomy indicates that film is an art of control and directing attention; one could say that film is “an attention-controlling device” and the product of “researching eye movements” (Carroll and Seeley 2013, 53–75). Film is conceived as a connection between two visions: the one of the director, manifested as the camera or the screen, and the one of the viewer; both gaze at each other (a scopic interlocution). In a panopticon-like manner, both gazes survey each other – the screen watches the viewer watching the screen. In Haneke’s case, this relationship is anatomical and is represented as the reciprocal investigation of two ocular instances. It is worth mentioning here that in shot 3 [Fig. 9], an image of an enlarged eye, the eye could be both Anna’s and her patient’s as in Fig. 8. In other words, shot 3 cues two possible interpretations simultaneously, i.e. it is at the same time the eye of the agent and the patient’s act of vision. In metaphoric terms, the cinema screen is the immaterial location of the collision and blending of two separate vantage points/visions: of the camera director and of the viewer. Shots 2 to 3 depict the

7 See Francois Jost: *L’œil camera* (1987) for an analysis of this descriptive system.



Figure 8.



Figure 9.

distortion of the eye in anticipation of what will happen subsequently, when the family house will also be distorted/disassembled.

The Disassembly

The Reference to Jacques Villegle

The sequence depicting the suicide of Georg's family is methodically "cut" by Haneke. In this scene, mirroring the director's cinematography, Georg suggests that the "cutting into pieces" of the house should be done in a systematic manner. The editing procedure of "montage" is similar to the methodical process of cutting and disassembling the house from the inside, as performed by Georg [Fig. 11: 05]. The character's actions amount to a cultural reference to painting. Eva's expressionist painting [Fig. 11: 01 and 05] reminds of Jean-Michel Basquiat's style [Fig. 10].

Eva's composition is figurally and chromatically similar to the setting of the dinner table for the family's last supper [Fig. 11: 02 and 06].

Fig. 11: 12 depicts the editing motif (i.e. a storyboard of still pictures meant to sum up previous shots). In Fig. 13: 22, editing itself is disassembled and cut – just as Eva's painting will be cut with a pair of scissors in Fig. 11: 15. The cutting/editing process highlighted here makes reference to other cultural artefacts: for instance, the paintings of French artist Jacques Villegle, which are compositions made up of ripped ad posters, or some shots from Jean-Luc Godard's films (e.g. *Two or Three Things I Know About Her*, 1966) are "smeared"

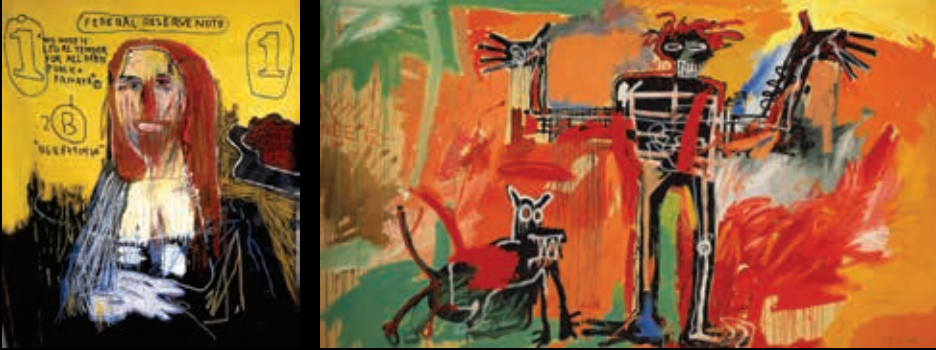


Figure 10. Jean Michel Basquiat's *Mona Lisa* (1983) and *Boy and Dog in a Johnnypump* (1982)

with posters [Fig. 12].⁸ What the characters accomplish is not the dismantling of the house and the objects inside but their reconfiguration, a reassembling of the deconstructive kind. A first instance of “deconstruction” appears in Fig. 11: 13. Editing and cutting represent a form of creative art construction done by a randomization that prompts a novel way of perception, contemplation, and conception of the referenced object.

Fig. 13: shot 16 is also relevant for the topic at hand. Georg’s actions are shredding, cutting, or dismantling. Making a “film” involves cutting, operating sutures (creating cinematic syntagmas), and editing out slices of “life.” Dismantling is therefore present both in the diegesis and in the cinematic process as editing cuts that elicit either the cinematic continuity based on blindness of the boundary between shots or, based on the random segmentation of events, the discontinuity cinematic style that gives perceptual emphasis to cuts. Shots 17, 18, and 22 [Fig. 13] are the images of the aesthetic consequences of deconstruction, i.e. abstract art. Cinematic descriptions of “life” provide fragmented, noisy, disordered, and disjointed information about events.

The Reference to Jacques Derrida

Fig. 13: 33 anaphorically refers to Fig. 11: 03 (displays the signature of the protagonist on the wall). Georg scribbles the date of death on the wall before swallowing the poison. Hence, a new descriptive system is introduced, i.e. the act of “writing” and “signing.” It should be noted here that deconstruction is not an act of annihilation but an effort to restructure, distort, and remap an item which appears immutable and perfectly coherent. What Georg does is to reas-

⁸ Haneke makes multiple references to shots and sequences from *Two or Three Things I Know About Her*.



Figure 11.

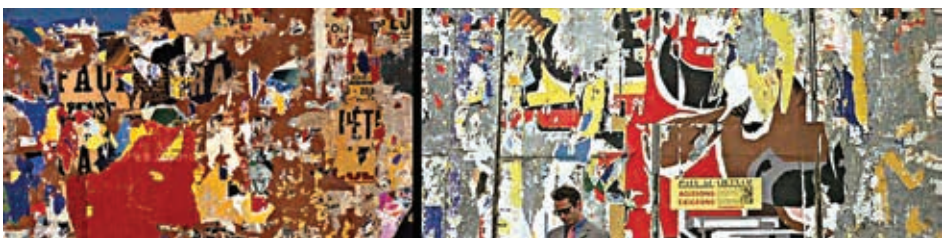


Figure 12. Shots from Jean-Luc Godard's films

semble the components of his house and life. He operates like an artist a cut in the texture of a familiar object in order to create a new artefact (as illustrated by shot 22). This idea can be illustrated with the help of Jacques Derrida's *Glas* (1974). The concepts introduced by Derrida in *Glas* are "sign cutting and sign sewing" [*signacoupure et signacouture*] (Derrida 1974, 192). To sign the written text is to divide and separate and then weave with the temporal and narrative



Figure 13.

threads of the text. The weaving happens, as one might expect, along the signifying cut (the paradigmatic axis) and the discursive junction (the syntagmatic axis); this is how unstitching becomes the creative gesture par excellence.

The signature as an element embedded within the text is an effect within the object (1974, 6–10), while as an external element it stands out as “what opens the eyes and blinds.” The signature (a mark of ownership or possession of an artefact) is associated with a paradoxically tomb-like device for mourning and for blindness that, at the same time, makes the instantiation of meaning possible.

Derrida conceives the text as an ensemble made out of quotes, fragments, and grafts (1974, 184–188). It is what Georg does when he reassembles by cutting into pieces his own house in order to manufacture a new artefact; no less com-



Figure 14. *Wind from the East*
(*Le vent d'est*, Jean-Luc Godard, 1970)

prehensible but less figurative and so more abstract. Haneke's movie (it should be mentioned here that Haneke is, by education, also a philosopher) edits a whole so as to enable the restoration of a new meaning with the help of the dismembered fragments. It should become apparent towards the end of the film how the "text" (film in this case) creates a scattering of Georg's identity along metaphoric self-referential routes which simultaneously state and cancel distinctions such as here/there and me/him or life/movie (or even visual media/written text).

The Figural

The movie stages also the concept of the *figural*, as defined by Philippe Dubois (2004). The *figural* introduces a rip (*une déchirure*) in the figurative or instantiates a disfigurement of the sign (69). Concretely, this is portrayed in the film through altering or disfiguring what is figuratively illustrated in one way or another. At the same time, however, the rip is a result of alterity or dissemblance, those moments which were overexposed for too long or blurred the figure turning it into shapeless matter (2004, 68–69). Shapeless matter can manifest as film scratching, glaring light, a blur of the field of the vision, or indistinct and dark shapes;⁹ the intervening black shots (editing cuts), insistently used by Haneke, are this dark informal shape that rips the structure of representation.

What is relevant to the topic at hand is that the film director incorporates the figural in the film's fabric (much like Antonioni or Jean-Luc Godard does) [Fig.

9 For an example of the use of such techniques, see the long opaque (black or red) frames, film scratching ripping into the diegetic fabric of the movie to create abstract shapes as well as texts with erased bits in *Wind from the East* (*Le vent d'est*, Jean-Luc Godard, 1970) (min. 1:09:58–1:15:00).

14]. The entire film is a repetition of the gradual transformation of image from an identifiable object to an abstract and opaque image (the blur of the field of vision with something like mist or white foam, a black screen; forms of editing cut).

The Imaginary Signifier

In Fig. 15, shots 34 to 36 are taken from the final scene where the dead family members are reunited in the dark room where the TV faces them. What is conspicuous about this scene is that the human presence, almost always animated during the film, is in this final shot lying still, in the state of *rigor mortis*, while the mechanical inanimate presence – here, the TV – displays a form of motion. Shot 34 marks the chiasmus of the human (/inanimate) and the inanimate (/mobile). This trope sums up the meaning structure of the whole film. The inanimate immobility feature is transferred to the human while the human mobility is transferred to the inanimate object. The shot displays the interior of a *camera obscura* (with a screen or camera shutter in the background represented by the window). It should also be noted that THE FILM* is built as a series of nested containers: the house, the *camera obscura*, the TV monitor; that means that THE FILM* contains a reduplicated relation between a (TV) screen and a human presence. The mechanical and the human exhibit a reversed potential for motion. Georg literally becomes an absence inasmuch as he is an image inscribed in the cinematic mechanism; the diegetic *camera obscura* and the cinematic representation in which the film viewer is immersed.¹⁰ In short, the human is equated with the dead stillness of picture, and static filmic images are equated by animate motion (as in the definition of film as *motion picture*). Georg is a double virtuality since, as image, he is contained in a diegetic *camera obscura* (his final resting room) and in the filmic artefact.¹¹ Simultaneously, Georg is a living camera. For Metz, the film viewer is also absent on the screen but, as a “second screen,” he is the one that apprehends film as a “present absence,” as the subject of the act of cinema viewing (57). Haneke’s film makes again a synthesis and résumé of one of the main characteristics of post-war European cinematographic modernism.¹²

10 As such, Haneke’s film qualifies as what Bellour, in his analysis of Fritz Lang’s movies (*Mabuse*, *Metropolis*), calls “a perspective on image based on the immediate association of vision and death” (2009, 374).

11 Haneke’s film is “thinking about image that associates gaze and death,” as Bellour said about Fritz Lang’s films (Bellour 2009, 374).

12 See the extensive argument about “nothingness” in European cinematographic modernism in Kovács (2008).



Figure 15.

The Death at Work Scene

A cinematic dialogue takes place between the motionless character and the screen – the locus of all virtual worlds – that displays an internal abstract mobility. This final scene is interrupted by retrospective shots of the film, made up of snippets and grafts. The POV of the TV screen [Fig. 15: 36], however, cannot be that of Georg since he is dead now, so it must be that of the camera doing a forward travelling shot. Or, in other terms, the camera recreates the POV of the dead person as if it enacts a view from beyond, the vision of an absent viewer, the cinematic focus. The character lacks sight, and so it is replaced by the impersonal camera. This trope recalls Metz’s theory developed in *Impersonal Enunciation, or the Place of Film* (1991).

The final shots of the movie are once again metaphoric renditions of the imaginary of vision. Although an *absent* vision (that of the dead male character), the images are the result of a device-generated imagery, in this case the camera or the cinematic process. The shots project the images into a space *elsewhere* while also rendering them absent. The shot reverse shot gradually becomes less distinct and turns into an example of an image continuously generated by an autonomous mechanical hardware. At a first reading, shot 36 is interpreted as an instance of the shot reverse shot pattern and, therefore, belongs to Georg’s POV. But, at the same time, we can understand that it is the camera’s “POV” and not the one belonging to Georg, the dead man. Both shot 36 and 35 are the camera’s POV. Georg and the TV are non-human entities due to their inanimate state, and they can – because of being mediated by the impersonal camera – “communicate” in the form of a reciprocal POV; in other words, the camera mediates the two “absences,” which assert one another through metaphoric transfer. Visual memories or flashbacks also inhabit an absence, which can be identified as belonging to the camera/spectator, i.e. the only entities that can animate and bring meaning to the play of light and shadows on the screen.

Cinema Rhetoric and the Performative Lecture

Two types of entities repeatedly switch positions in consecutive cinematic configurations. Georg alters position from the one watching the screen (the *subject* of seeing) to the one watched by the screen (the *object* of seeing). Thus, he takes the role and place of a film viewer or, to reference a previous dialogue between the characters, “his head has been replaced by a screen.” This paradoxical mirror loop is the pure event of film seeing that is a self-generating virtuality.

As claimed here, Haneke offers us a film in which semantic oppositions are invoked in order to be subsequently cancelled. If the film is apprehended from a logical point of view, it is an *impossibilia*, i.e. an absurd auto-referential conceptualization. During the online experience, the film viewer is not aware of the internal contradictions since s/he is immersed in a dynamic mental scanning of the meaning trajectories between descriptive systems that are locally comprehensible, and s/he does not get the big static picture of a conceptualization that exhibits incompleteness or inconsistency.

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„Az a bizonyos rendellenesség még mindig változatlan, tiszteletben tartott, érintetlen a kövezeten és az emlékezetemben is” - a kőpadlóról készült fotó Derrida–Fathy *Szóforgatás* című könyvében (2000, 89)

Orbán Jolán*

A filmírás retorikája – Derrida szó(ki)forgatása

Marie-Claire Ropars-Wuilleumier az elsők között fedezte fel Jacques Derrida írásfelfogásának és írásmódjának jelentőségét a filmelmélet számára. Gregory L. Ulmer az elsők között hívta fel a figyelmet az angloamerikai kontextusban Derrida írásmódja és a montázstechnika közötti összefüggésre. Peter Brunette és David Wills az elsők között kísérelte meg „lefordítani” Derrida szövegeit a filmelmélet nyelvére. A filmvilág több alkalommal is megszólította Derridát, filozófiaprofesszort játszott Ken McMullen *Ghost Dance* (1983) című filmjében, két dokumentumfilmnek is főszereplője – Safaa Fathy *D’ailleurs Derrida* (1999), valamint Kirby Dick és Amy Ziering Kofman *Derrida* (2002) filmjének. *Szóforgatás* címen Safaa Fathyval megírják a filmforgatás történetét (*Turner les mots. Au bord d’un film*, Derrida–Fathy 2000). A filmbemutatókat követően rendszeresen részt vesz beszélgetéseken, ahol olyan témákat érintenek, mint a szöveg és kép viszonya, az archiválás, a nyomhagyás, az emlékezet, olyan beszélgetőpartnerei vannak, mint Bernard Stiegler (1996), François Soulage (2014) vagy a *Cahiers du cinéma* részéről Antoine de Baecque és Thierry Jousse (2001). Derrida szövegei a filmrendezőket is megihlették, Joanna Callaghan például *Love in the Post* (2014) című filmjében a *La carte postale de Socrate à Freud et au-delà* (1980) című kötetére játszik rá.

Míndez önmagában is elég ok lenne arra, hogy Derrida és a filmművészet, filmelmélet és filmelemzés viszonyát elemezzük. De nekem van még egy személyes okom is arra, hogy itt és most Derrida filmmel kapcsolatos szövegeit vizsgáljam: a filmelmélet iránti érdeklődésemet Pethő Ágnesnek köszönhetem, akivel egyazon városban, egyazon kórházban, egyazon évben, egy nap eltéréssel születünk. Amikor a csíkszeredai Matematika–Fizika Líceumban egy osztályba kerültünk, már az első napon összebarátkoztunk, ezt követően tudtuk meg Édesanyaink elbeszéléseiből első találkozásunk igaz történetét. A filmet mindig is kedveltem, de Pethő Ágnes szobájában a *Filmkultúra* hasábjain talákoztam a filmelmélettel, ott tanultam meg, hogy mit jelent rendszeresen, következetesen, kitartóan filmtudományt művelni, amiként azt is, hogy mit jelent a rendező szemével figyelni egy előadást, amelynek akkor és ott a gimnázium dísztermében Pethő Ágnes volt az egyik rendezője, és én voltam az egyik szereplője. A Babeş–Bolyai Tudományegyetem elvégzése után Pethő Ágnes a film-

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elmélet, én az irodalomelmélet vonalán haladtam tovább, de mindvégig és mindenhol szemmel tartottam a filmelméleti kutatásokat. Ezért, amikor először olvastam Derrida szövegeit, felismertem az írásmódja és a montázstechnika közötti kapcsolatot, a szavak és a (szöveg)képek egymásba és egymásra íródásának retorikai alakzatait – *mise en abyme*, *chiasmus*, *katakrézis*, *anakoluthon* –, a különböző beszédmódok, műfajok, médiumok *entre*, azaz köztes alakzatait, a *pli-plier-replier-déplier*, azaz redőzés, gyűrítés, ki-be-vissza-hajtogatás Mallarmé-műveletnek az újrahajlásait Derrida és Deleuze szövegeiben, Hantai Simon képein, valamint Godard filmművészetében, az intertextuális és intermedialis alakzatok jelentőségét az irodalom, a filozófia és a film számára. Pethő Ágnes nem a dekonstrukció felől közelít a filmelmélethez, hanem a filmelmélet felől a dekonstrukcióhoz. Több alkalommal is hivatkozik Derridára, így például a *Műzsák tükre. Az intermedialitás és az önreflexió poétikája a filmben* (2003) című könyvében az *Écographies* (Derrida–Stiegler 1996) című kötetre, vagy *A kinematográfia Passiója. A mozi narratív médiumának dekonstrukciója Jean-Luc Godard A film története(i) című művében* (2009) tanulmányában Derrida Freud-értelmezésére (Derrida 1967, 293–342). Pethő Ágnes kutatásainak Jean-Luc Godard az egyik főszereplője, a kortárs francia filozófusok közül Foucault, Deleuze, Guattari és Rancière, az irodalmárok közül Blanchot és Barthes a leggyakrabban hivatkozott szerzők. Foucault esetében az „eltérő terek”, a „heterotópia”, a „köztesség” (*entre/in-between*), Deleuze és Guattari esetében a „rizóma”, Deleuze és Rancière esetében a Godard-értelmezéseik, Blanchot esetében a „kivüliség” gondolata, Barthes esetében a *Világoskamra* a legtöbbit idézett szövegek, de sorolhatnám a többi írást és fogalmat is, amelyeknek Pethő Ágnes (film)elméleti megközelítését és a filmelemzésekben kreatív alkalmazását adja. A francia új hullám csak egyik iránya Pethő Ágnes filmelméleti kutatásainak, most mégis azért emelem ki a francia vonatkozásokat, mert Godard és Derrida (film)nyelve és (film)írása francia. Ez alkalommal nem célozom a két életmű összehasonlító vizsgálatára, pusztán pár olyan képet szeretnék felvillantani a két szerző alkotásaiból, amelyek alapján az én értelmezésemben együtt áll Godard és Derrida csillagzata, pár olyan szövegre szeretnék utalni, amelyek rávilágítanak arra, hogy a dekonstrukció milyen nyomot hagy a film(elmélet)ben, egy olyan filmkockát és szócikket szeretnék kiemelni Derrida és Farthy alkotásaiból, amely a filmforgatás és szóforgatás történetét meséli el.

Konstellációk – Godard és Derrida

Godard idézi Derrida szövegeit, Derrida is hivatkozik Godard filmjeire, de a kettőjük közötti viszony megmarad az oda-vissza utalások szintjén (Crasnanscki 2014; Derrida 2014, 37). A francia filmművészetben és filozófiában, valamint az intellektuális és kulturális életben játszott szerepük viszont kísértetiesen hasonlít egymásra, így az intézményesült filmnyelv és a filozófiai diskurzus dekonstruálására tett kísérleteik, a filmírás és a szövegírás új hullámainak elindítása, a hagyományos filmkép és szövegkép retorikai alakzatainak felülírása, a költészet és a festészet kiemelt szerepe az

alkotásaikban, a filmnyelvvvel és a francia nyelvvel való játék, a szubverzivitás, az intertextualitás és az intermedialitás színrevitele. Godard és Derrida értelmezői is utalnak ezekre a párhuzamokra, különösen azok, akik a filozófia és az irodalomelmélet felől közelítenek az alkotásaikhoz. Az elemzések egyrészt a korai, azaz az ötvenes-hatvanas évek, másrészt a kései, azaz a hetvenes évek végétől megjelenő filmekre és szövegekre összpontosítanak.

A „korai korszak” Godard esetében a *Kifulladásig* (*À bout de souffle*, 1959), az *Éli az életét* (*Vivre sa vie*, 1962), a *Bolond Pierrot* (*Pierrot le Fou*, 1965), a *Hímnem-nőnem* (*Masculin féminin*, 1966), a *Weekend* (*Week End*, 1967) időszaka. Marie-Claire Ropars-Wuilleumier e korszakot vizsgálva amellet érvel, hogy „Jean-Luc Godard sajátos, mindig »külön bandában« járó univerzumát tehát makacsul vissza-visszatérő motívumok szövik át, ismétlődő témákkal és újra fel-felbukkanó szereplőkkel – a formák folytonos elváltozásai azonban, amelyek néhány év alatt tökéletesen felismerhetetlenné teszik az absztrakt szinten azonos elemeket, arra figyelmeztetnek bennünket, hogy máshol keressük, mégpedig pontosan ezekben a formákban, a Godard-életmű jelentését, melynek alakulása szorosan együtt halad nyelvezetének fejlődésével” (Ropars 1999). Derrida esetében a „korai időszak” a metafizika, a strukturalizmus, a fenomenológia kritikájának az időszaka. Ekkor jelennek meg azok a szövegei, amelyekben a filozófia, a pszichoanalízis, az irodalomelmélet és a színházelmélet kérdéseit vizsgálja – *A hang és a fenomén* (1967), a *Grammatológia* (1967), *Az írás és különbség* (1967). Ekkor vezeti be a filozófiába azokat a kifejezéseket – írás, textualitás, dekonstrukció, disszemináció –, amelyek visszhangra találnak a különböző művészeti ágakban és diskurzusokban, így a filmelméletben is. Marie-Claire Ropars-Wuilleumier Derridára hivatkozva használja a „filmes írás” vagy „filmírás” (Ropars 1981), Laura R. Oswald pedig a „kinema-gráfia” kifejezést (Brunette-Wills 1994, 251–261).

Godard a hatvanas évek végétől a hetvenes évek közepéig rendezett filmjeit nevezi a szakirodalom a középső vagy „maoista korszaknak”, amikor „fokozatosan és egyre radikálisabban a politika felé fordult, és leginkább maoista provokációnak tekinthető filmagitációkat rendezett” (Nánay 1999). Derridát nem kísértette meg Mao szelleme, szemben azokkal a francia értelmiségiekkel, akik a hetvenes években ultrabalra váltottak, amiben szerepe van a „prágai tavasz” is, amelyet nem ideológiai síkon szemlélt, hanem családi kötődései révén, eseményközelből figyelt. Mindez nem jelenti azt, hogy ne foglalkoztatta volna a politika, Marx már a korai szövegeiben is ott kísértette, még akkor is, ha a kilencvenes években írja meg a *Marx kísértetei* (1995) című könyvét. A hetvenes éveknek azonban van egy olyan francia belpolitikai eseménye, amely felerősíti Derrida nyilvános politikai szerepvállalását, mégpedig a Haby-reformmal szembeni fellépés (1975), amely összefogásra készítette a francia filozófusokat, Derridát pedig arra, hogy aktív szerepet vállaljon a közéletben.

Godard hetvenes évek közepétől rendezett filmjeit – *Mentse, aki tudja (az életét)* [*Sauve qui peut (la vie)*, 1981], *Új hullám (Nouvelle vague)*, 1990), *Passiójáték (Passion)*, 1982) és *Németország kilenc (új) nulla (Allemagne 90 neuf zéro)*, 1991)

– „kései korszakként” tartja számon a szakirodalom (Nánay 1999). Derrida esetében is használják a „kései Derrida” kifejezést (Mitchell–Davidson 2007, 220), de ezt elsősorban a kilencvenes években írott szövegekre vonatkoztatják, amelyek kérdésfeltevése már nyíltan politikai – *Politiques de l’amitié* (1994) – vagy etikai – *Force de loi* (1994) –, vagy a kettő összekapcsolása a vendégszeretet, a szuverenitás vagy a halálbüntetés témájáról tartott szemináriumokon – *De l’hospitalité* (1997), *Le concept du 11 septembre* (2003), *Rogues states, La peine de mort* (vol. 1–2, 1990–2000; 2000–2001), *La bête et le souverain* (vol. 1–2, 2001–2002). A „korai”, „középső” és „kései időszaknak” is több hullámát különböztethetjük meg mindkét szerző esetében, és ezeket a hullámokat nem elsősorban a kronológia vagy a tematika, hanem a filmek és a szövegek írásmódja határozza meg, így az irodalom és film, szöveg és kép, kép és hang közötti viszony újraértelmezése. Éppen ezért Godard és Derrida esetében is a korszakolás helyett indokoltabb a poétikai és retorikai szempontokat érvényesítő megközelítés. Pethő Ágnes az intermedialitás alakzatait vizsgálva Godard filmművészetében két paradigmát különböztet meg, amelyek alapján értelmezésében a francia új hullám (1959–1969) és a hetvenes évektől rendezett Godard-filmek közötti esztétikai különbségek is kimutathatóak (Pethő 2003a, 183–232). Godard maga kínálja azokat a kifejezéseket vagy nyelvjátékokat, amelyek alapján jól körvonalazhatók ezek a különbségek. Pethő Ágnes fogékony Godard nyelvjátékaira, amelyek nem pusztán a francia nyelvvel való öncélú játszadozások, hanem filmelméleti tétjük van. Mallarmé „fehér lap” (*page blanche*) kifejezésére rájátszva vezeti be Godard a *Passiójáték* forgatókönyvében a „fehér part” (*plage blanche*) kifejezést. Pethő Ágnes e kifejezések alapján különbözteti meg a két paradigmát: a „fehér lap” és a „camera stylo” az új hullám írásmódjának, a „fehér part” és a „camera pinceau” pedig a hetvenes évektől művelt filmírásnak a metaforája. Az előbbi az irodalom felől közelít a filmhez, ennek megfelelően a fehér lap mint fehér vászon filmírásra alkalmas felület, amelyet a „töltőtoll kamera” teleír, ez az „irodalmi modell” vagy „nyelvészeti modell” működik azokban a filmekben és megközelítésekben, amelyek palimpszesztusként, szöveggént, írásként, felülírás-ként értelmezik a filmet. Az utóbbi megközelítés a vásznat „vakító napsütötte partként” tételezi, amelyet elárasztanak a kép-hullámok, itt a „fluid-modell” a domináns, az idő és a tér ritmusa vagy hullámverése. Pethő Ágnes értelmezésében mindkét esetben a „fehér lappal” mint az „ürességgel” és a „másikkal” való szembe-sülés, azaz a „tipikus modernista” megszállottság nyomai figyelhetők meg, ám érvelése szerint a „fehér lap” és a „fehér part” esetében a dinamika különbözik. Az első esetben az írás, a kollázs, a „mozaik” (Jean-Louis Leutrat), a második esetben a képek hullámzása, a fluiditás, a „muzikalitás” (Jean-Louis Leutrat) a domináns, az első esetben az intermedialitás alakzata az „inven-cióra épülő chiazmus”, a második esetben a lét és nemlét, a „lehetetlen”, a „köztesség” tapasztalatával szembe-sítő „heterotópia”, az elsőre az *Éli az életét*, a másodikra az *Új hullám* a példa (lásd Pethő 2003a, 184–185).

A hetvenes években írott Derrida-szövegek kérdésfeltevésüket illetően összhangban vannak a korai szövegekkel, írásmódjuk azonban eltér a koráb-

biaktól, hiszen ezek formailag is kikezdi a hagyományos filozófiai írásmódot, és ugyanúgy a köztesség, azaz az intertextualitás és az intermedialitás különböző alakzatait viszik színre, mint Godard filmjei. A grafikai formával való játék *A filozófia margói* (Derrida 1972) című kötetben a *Timpanon* szöveggel kezdődik, ahol megtöri a hagyományos laptükröt, a *La différence* írásmódjával folytatódik, ahol rájátszik a hallott és a látott közötti különbségre, az *Aláírás esemény kontextus* szövegével pedig Austin nyelvfilozófiájának kritikáját adva a performativitás új megközelítését kínálja, amely nemcsak a Derrida–Searle-vitához, hanem a képaktuselmélethez (Mitchell 1994, 190–223) is elvezet. *A disszemináció* (1972) című kötetben, amely „nem lett leszen könyvvé”, a transzpartitúrákkal és a *Kettős ülés*szel Derrida dekomponálja a könyv struktúráját. Ez az írásmód leginkább a *Glas* (1974) című szövegére jellemző, ahol Derrida rájátszik Mallarmé *Kockadobás* és Joyce *Finnegans Wake* című szövegére. Ez az a szövege, amelyet olvasván az irodalmárok (Hartman, Miller), a képzőművészek (Valerio Adami) és a film(elmélet) képviselői (Stam, Peter Brunette és David Wills) érteni vélik, a filozófusok pedig végképp nem értik, hogy mit művel Derrida. *Az igazság a festészetben* (1978) című könyvében még játszik a formával, azaz a kerettel (*ergon-parergon*), de már felerősödik a *Glas*ban elkezdődött hangjáték, hiszen „n+1 női hangra” írja az *Igazság a cipőfűzőkben* szövegét, a *La carte postale* (1980) című kötetében pedig már nem annyira a grafikai forma, mint inkább a hangnemek váltakoztatása (*Wechsel der Töne*) adja a poétikai többletet. Ezek a Derrida-szövegek megbontják a könyv struktúráját, megkérdőjelezzik az epikus vagy narratív modellt, dekomponálják a szerzői szövegre épített műkompozíció monotonitását, a mesterdiskurzus dominanciáját, több diskurzusból szőtt, hangnem-váltakoztató, avagy polifon szöveggént íródnak, ezek késztetik arra az építészeket – Bernard Tschumi, Peter Eisenman, Zaha Hadid –, képzőművészeket – Hantai Simon, Valerio Adami, Mark Tansey –, zenészeket – Michael Lévinas, Marcel Cobussen – és filmeseket – Ken McMullen, Safaa Fathy, Kirby Dick és Amy Ziering –, hogy a saját művészeti águkban játsszanak rá Derrida szövegeire, személyesen szólítsák meg, kérjék fel szereplőként vagy fedezzék fel, hogy az általa művelt dekonstrukciót gyakorolják ők maguk is a saját művészeti águkban. Az építészetelmélet – Andrew Benjamin, Elias Zenghelis, Catherine Cooke, Mark Wigley –, művészetelmélet – Mieke Bal, Jean-Claude Lebensztejn, Georges Didi-Huberman –, színházelmélet – Philipp Auslander, Elinor Fuchs, Helga Finter, Évelyne Grossman –, zeneelmélet – Marie-Louise Mallet, Szendy Péter, Danielle Cohen-Lévinas – és filmelmélet – Marie-Claire Ropars-Wuilleumier, Laura R. Oswald, Robert Stam, Peter Brunette és David Wills – képviselői ezek alapján mutatnak rá arra, hogy Derrida és a dekonstrukció milyen szerepet játszik az adott művészeti ágakban vagy egyes alkotók műveinek vizsgálatában.

A filmírás alakzatai – *mise en abyme, katakrézis, anakoluthon*

Marie-Claire Ropars-Wuilleumier, Gregory L. Ulmer, Laura R. Oswald, Robert Stam, Peter Brunette, David Wills, Joachim Paech az írás, a textualitás, a nyom, a disszemináció, az önreflexivitás, a differancia kérdését emelik ki Derrida szövegeiből és írják át a filmelméleti diskurzusba. A szövegek alapján ráláthatunk a hetvenes és nyolcvanas évek filmelméleti kutatásainak kérdésfeltevéseire, követhetjük a formalista és strukturalista filmelméleti diskurzusnak a poszt-strukturalizmus és a dekonstrukció irányába történő elmozdulását. Pethő Ágnes szövegeiből három olyan részt szeretnék kiemelni, amelyek rámutatnak a Derrida által bevezetett kifejezések filmelméleti jelentőségére.

Ropars-Wuilleumier Derrida-értelmezésének filmelméleti hozamát elemezve Pethő Ágnes egyrészt rámutat arra, hogy Derrida, Freud és Benveniste szövegeinek bevezetésével a filmelméleti diskurzusba a szerzőnő a strukturalista filmelmélet (Metz) számára „kínál alternatívát” (Pethő 2003b, 52). Másrészt amellet érvel, hogy „Ropars-Wuilleumier szerint a mozi azért válhat kitüntetett területévé a derridai nézetek alkalmazásának, mivel a kép többértelműsége és a film anyagának heterogenitása eleve ellenszegül a jelölő–jelölt oppozícióra való redukálás modelljének (1981, 123)” (Pethő 2003b, 52). Harmadrészt az Eisenstein montázstechnikája és Derrida írás-felfogása között tételezett párhuzam kritikai olvasatát adja: „annak ellenére, hogy távoli összefüggésbe állítható (Ropars-Wuilleumier talán vitatható elképzelése szerint) a derridai dekonstrukcióval, nem összeegyeztethetetlen a korabeli teoretikus álláspontokkal, és nem tekinthető a strukturalizmus kritikájának. Derrida nyomán azonban Ropars-Wuilleumier már a jelentés jelenlétének elhalasztásáról és a diskurzus szubjektumát illető egységének felfüggesztéséről ír. A filmben, akár csak az ideogrammatikus írásban a jelölt eltűnik, »szétrobban« azáltal, hogy a jelölő folyamattól válik függővé (1981, 52)” (Pethő 2003b, 52). Jean-Louis Leutrat, valamint Joachim Paech szövegeire hivatkozva Pethő Ágnes rámutat arra a folyamatra, ahogy a filmelméletben a „szövés mechanikus képzeteket keltő metaforája helyett (46. lábjegyzet) előtérbe kerülnek, Derrida nyomán, a *szövegnevezés* organikus képei, a *jelentésszóródás* mint *disszemináció* és a *nyomhagyás* képzetei is” (Pethő 2003b, 38). Godard nyolcvanas és kilencvenes években forgatott filmjeivel kapcsolatban amellet érvel, hogy „a mediális autoritásbeli rivalizálásokat megjeleltő allegorikus történetek átadják helyüket egy nyíltabb dekonstrukciónak, amelyben a mediális viszonyok már nem személyesítődnek meg egy »kínos helyzet« cselekményelemei és szereplői formájában, s annak ellenére, hogy a chiazmikus szerkezet megmarad, azt inkább a différence-játékok kezdeményezőiként értékelhetjük” (Pethő 2003a, 210). A dekonstrukció itt már nem Derrida, hanem Godard írásmódját jelenti, amiként *A kinematográfia Passiója. A mozi narratív médiumának dekonstrukciója Jean-Luc Godard A film története(i) című művében* (2009) Pethő-tanulmányban is.

De vajon mit szól mindehhez Derrida, aki saját bevallása szerint mindig is rajongott a moziért, de „inkompetensnek” érezte magát a filmelméleti kérdé-

sek megválaszolásában (Brunette–Wills 1994, 9)? Vajon milyen szempontokat kínálnak még a szövegei és filmjei a kortárs filmelmélet számára, és fordítva: a kortárs filmművészet és filmelmélet a Derrida-értelmezés számára? A hetvenes években újrafelfedezett retorikai alakzatok – *mise en abyme*, *clinamen*, *chiasmus*, *allegória*, *metalepszis*, *parabázis* – mára már a filmretorikai vizsgálódások részét képezik, amint ezt Pethő Ágnes Godard-, Greenaway-, Mircea Daneliuc-, Lars von Trier-, Wim Wenders-, Agnès Varda-elemzéseiben nyomon követhetjük. Derrida szövegei, valamint a róla készült filmek kínálnak még pár olyan retorikai alakzatot – *katakrézis*, *anakoluthon*, „*kettős chiazmatikus invagináció*” –, amelyeket érdemes lenne a filmelmélet felől megvizsgálni. A filmelméleti kutatások eddig is kiemelten kezelték Derrida *Glas* (1974) című szövegét (Ulmer 1984, 25; Brunette–Wills 1989, 67–68; Stam 1992, 228), amelynek a szerző (ön)értelmezése szerint a katakrézis az alakzata: „Mindig megpróbáltam felfedni azt a módot, ahogyan a filozófia irodalmi, nem annyira mivel *metafora*, hanem mivel *katakrézis*. (...) Egy olyan műben, mint a *Glas*, vagy későbbi hasonló művekben, megpróbálom a katakrézis új formáit létrehozni, az írás más fajtáját, erőszakos írást, amely megmutatja a nyelv töréseit (*failles*) és deviációit; úgy, hogy a szöveg magában, a saját nyelvét hozza létre, amely, miközben tovább folytatja a tradícióban való munkát, egy adott pillanatban mint *szörny* (*monster*) emelkedik ki, egy olyan szörnyszerű mutáció, amelynek sem tradíciója, sem normatív előzménye nincs” (Kearney 1984, 122–123).

„– Gyengém az anakoluthon. Ez az alakzat jobban megfelel ennek a folytonosan elliptikus, diszkontinuus, cezúrázott filmnek” – olvasható a *Szóforgatás* című kötet két hangra írott előszavában (Derrida–Fathy 2000, 21). Proust *Az eltűnt idő nyomában* című művének azt a szöveghelyét idézik meg itt, amelyben Albertine hazugságai kapcsán a narrátor megjegyzi, hogy a szintaxisnak ezek a hirtelen ugrálásai az anakoluthonra emlékeztetnek, csak hogy az anakoluthon maga akadályozza meg, hogy megtudjuk, mi is a cselekvés tárgya. Innen Derrida szerint a „hazugság nélküli hazugság,” „a hamis eskü eldönthetetlensége”: „nem lehet többé elítélni sem Albertint, sem senki mást” (Derrida–Fathy 2000, 21). A Derrida-filmre vonatkozó következtetés így hangzik: „[A] film Szerzője számára az anakoluthon egy kezelhetetlen, kegyetlen, fenyegető törvény volt” (Derrida–Fathy 2000, 21). Mit jelent a film Szereplője számára? Mi az igazság és a hazugság a Derrida-filmben és szövegben? Hogyan érhető tetten a hazugság? Megannyi kérdés, amelyekre nincs egyértelmű válasz, van viszont három film, amelyek Derrida körül forognak, és van egy könyv, amely a filmforgatás történeteit beszéli el két hangra.

Derrida szó(ki)forgatása – filmkockák és szócikkek

Derrida jól forgatja a szavakat, kihasználja a francia nyelv adta lehetőségeket, mesterien játszik a szövegek grafikai struktúrájával, a térbeli elrendezéssel, az intertextualitás és intermedialitás különböző alakzataival. Szóforgatásai mégsem öncélúak, hiszen nem kiforgatja a szavakat, hanem szójátékaival és



(*Kép-kocka-kövek*) A kőpadló csak egy pillanatra tűnik fel a filmben

nyelvjátékaival új jelentésárnyalatokat, hangzásalakzatokat, retorikai alakzatokat hív elő. A szóban forgó kötet „két hangra írt rövidfilmjében” a Szerző (Fathy) és a Szereplő (Derrida) a filmforgatás és a szóforgatás „kettős írás” voltát, valamint a kettő egymáshoz való viszonyát viszi színre. A film nem egyszerűen megfilmesíti Derrida életét, a könyv nem egyszerűen leírja (ekphrasisz) vagy magyarázza (egzegézés) vagy kiegészíti (pótlás) a filmet, hanem a film és a szöveg egymásba játssza a két médiumot, a két médium közötti térben, egymás szélén-peremén íródnak, ennek a peremek-közöttiségnek a retorikai alakzata a „kettős chiazmatikus invagináció” (Derrida 1986, 272). Egyetlen filmkockát, szócikket és szövegrészt szeretnék kiemelni Derrida és Fathy közös alkotásaiból, amelyek közötti viszony szerintem a „kettős chiazmatikus invagináció” alakzataként értelmezhető: a filmben feltűnő kövezetet, valamint a *Kőpadló* (*C. Carrelage*) szócikket és a filmezés Fathy által elmesélt történetét.

Első látásra nincs rajta semmi különös, de rögtön fennakad a tekintet azon a kockán, amely nem illeszkedik a mintázathoz, megtöri a vonalvezetést, megbontja az összhangot, felforgatja a szögek, rombuszok, vonalak rendjét, alig érzékelhetően ugyan, de kizökkenti a filmelbeszélést a ritmusából. A verbális narráció és a vizuális narráció első látásra összhangban van a filmben, Derrida hangja és alakja köti össze a spanyolországi, kaliforniai és algériai helyszíneken forgatott felvételeket (*chiazmus*), ám kétszer is megbomlik ez az összhang, egyrészt a filmezést filmező filmkockák (*mise en abyme*), másrészt az algériai felvételek (*anakoluthon*) esetében. Derrida nincs jelen az algériai forgatáson, de a hangja egészen El Biárig követi a kamerát, ott hirtelen megszakad az elbeszélés, és a kamera veszi át a szót. Amint a Derrida-házhoz közelít a kamera, megszólal a zene, és a lépcsőn, az előszobán át egészen a kőpadlóig kíséri a kamerát, amely egy másodperctörédekig megáll a fordítva berakott kockán, és visszaadja a szót Derridának.

(*Néma-film-kockák*) Megfigyelés alatt, rejtett kamerával készültek az algériai filmfelvételek. „Némák a Derrida házáról készített képek is” – meséli Safaa

Fathy a filmforgatás történetét. Derrida az indulás előestéjén „félénken egy csekélységet” kért Safaa Fathytól: keresse meg azt a „deformált, aszimmetrikus, deszinkronizált kőpadlókokkát”, amely nyomot hagyott az emlékezetében. Az emlékezet, mondja Jacques, „a sebre, a szétváltra, a heterogénre épül” (Derrida–Fathy 2000, 62). A házról készült kültéri és beltéri felvételeken senkit nem látni, a lakók „elbarikádozták magukat”, mintha szellemház lenne, mintha valóban minden úgy maradt volna, mint Derridáék idejében, a nappali, a zongora, *A kölyök* (Charlie Chaplin, *The Kid*, 1921) képe a falon, a szoba, a kert. A ház jelenlegi lakójának csak akkor jelent meg a mosoly az arcán, jegyzi meg Fathy, amikor rákérdezett az elhibázott kőpadlóra: „Ah, a fordított kocka, ott van” – felemelte a szőnyeget, és ujjal mutatott rá (Derrida–Fathy 2000, 63).

(Emlék-kép-kockák) „Az a kőpadló, amelyről beszélni fogok, még most is ott található a »villa« előterében” – meséli Derrida, aki három hangon szólal meg ebben a szócikkben. Az önéletíró-elbeszélő (Jacques) adja meg az alaphangot, majd átvált a filozófiai diskurzus hangnemére (Derrida), a gyermekhang (Jackie) a zárlatban hallható. Az egyes bekezdéseknek eltérő a hossza, de hasonló a szerkezeti felépítése, mintha ugyanazt a szöveglérakási mintát követnék, miközben más-más megvilágításba helyezik az emlékképet. Az első idézet-mozaikkocka az életrajzi adatokat követően hirtelen átvált a filmkocka-kép-leírásba, majd visszatér az életrajzi elbeszélő hangjára, amely mintegy keretezi a történetet: „El Biárnak ebben a »villájában«, az Aurelles de Paladines utca 13. szám alatt töltöttem a gyermekkoromat és az ifjúságomat (1934–1949), ezt követően 1962-ig már csak vakációkra tértem vissza oda, majd 1971-ben tettem egy látogatást az új tulajdonosoknál, 1984-ben voltam ott utoljára. Gyorsan átsiklik a kőpadlón (virágminták, barna és fehér rombuszok, csak szögek és egyenes vonalak) a kamera, de mégis úgy tűnik, mintha alig észrevehetően ugyan, de megállna egy pillanatra, egyfajta »hibán«: egyetlen rosszul illesztett, szétvált, kikökölt, kimozdított vagy rosszul elhelyezett kockán. Mi ez? Minden szög rossz irányba fordul. Azonnal szembeszökik: fordítva illesztették ezt a kockát a másik két kocka motívumához, amely szintén szögekből áll. Újra megnéztem ezt a kockát, az exodust követő utolsó látogatásaim egyikén. Meglepődtem, amikor azt láttam, hogy az a bizonyos rendellenesség még mindig változatlan, tiszteletben tartott, érintetlen a kövezeten és az emlékezetemben is” (Derrida–Fathy 2000, 89).

(Fordul a kocka) „Soha nem fogjuk megtudni – írja Derrida –, hogy ez a mostantól visszafordíthatatlan »baleset« eredetileg a véletlen műve volt-e, ügyetlenség, nemtörődömség, vagy egy tapasztalatlan munkás figyelmetlensége – vagy pontosan fordítva szándékolt” (Derrida–Fathy 2000, 91). Azt viszont tudni véli, hogy „egyese” szerint Algériában „a szakképzett kézművesek (...) szántszándékkal egy tökéletlenségre utaló nyomot hagynak maguk után. Babona és aláírás egyszerre” (Derrida–Fathy 2000, 91). Derrida szövegeit olvasva azt is megtapasztalhatjuk, hogy a dekonstrukciót nemcsak az ismert meste-

rektól – Nietzsche, Freud, Heidegger – tanulta, hanem az ismeretlen kézművesektől is ellesett egy-két fogást, a takácsoktól, akik képesek visszajáról is szőni a vásznaikat (Derrida 1997, 119–120), vagy a kőpadlóarak mesterekről, akik egy „elhibázott” kőkockán hagyják rajta a kézjegyüket. „Nyilvánvaló, hogy a kőpadlónak ez a hibája nem esemény” – jegyzi meg Derrida. Ezen a ponton fordul a kocka, az ismeretlen mester kézjegye felsebzi az emlékezetet, rányomja a bélyegét a Derrida-szövegekre: „Ez az elhibázott kőpadló hatvan év után is itt van túlélőként. Mi ez a kőpadló? Túlél és közömbösen asszisztál a gyermekkoromhoz, ahogy valószínűleg azokat is túléli, akik utánunk laktak ugyanabban a házban. Ez a túlélés egy olyan jelt ad, amely egy még általánosabb példaszerűség felé mutat: valamilyen módon mindig egy feszültségből, egy megszakításból, egy hibából, egy aszimmetria sebéből kiindulva szerveződik az emlékezet. A kikökkentésben szerveződik a legjobban” (Derrida–Fathy 2000, 92–93). Derrida mindig megtalálja azt az „elhibázott” kockát, az ismert vagy ismeretlen mester „kézjegyét,” amely kifordítja a szöveget, a filmet, a képet sarkaiból, kikökkenti a metafizikai vagy retorikai kerékvágásból, felfedi azt a „kettős kötést” és kettős törvényt – „a baleset törvénye és a törvény balesete” –, amely egyszerre kötelezi, néhol performatív önellentmondásba keveri a szerzőt, a szöveget és az olvasót, de soha nem kecsegtet azzal, hogy helyrehozza vagy kijavítja a hibát, mivel ez a hiba vagy felsebzés az esemény bekövetkeztenek feltétele, nem pedig következménye. Az esemény kikökkent a térből és az időből, rendkívüli, egyszeri, megismételhetetlen, akárcsak ez az alkalom – Pethő Ágnes köszöntése.

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CINEMA IN-BETWEEN MEDIA
A FILM A MÉDIUMOK
KÖZTESSÉGÉBEN

Yvonne Spielmann*

Electronic Vocabulary in the Audiovisual Medium Video

Historical experiments from the early phase of analogue video art show influences and overlaps but also demarcations to other media that played a role in media development in the 1970s as leading or parallel media. Video denotes neither a transitional phenomenon nor an in-between medium on the path from analogue to digital; for video, like any other technical medium, displays various developmental steps: from the introduction of a new technology to the articulation of an electronic vocabulary and the emergence of a medium specificity and institutionalization of a new medium.

First and foremost, the focus is on television, with which video shares the basic technical characteristics of signal transmission, followed by film as a moving image medium, which, like photography, is based on a photochemical recording process and the separate reproduction of fixed image units. Video, on the other hand, is characterized by the simultaneous recording and reproduction of light pulses, whereby the optical recording of light is not the only form of realization because the video signal can also be generated in the devices themselves. Crucially, video is based on electronic signal transfer, and fluid forms of electronic imagery exist because the electronic signal is continuously written in lines. This open writing process generates television and video images only by adjusting the flow of electronic information into a form and into standardized formats (such as PAL and NTSC). In addition, the output of a device, such as an audio synthesizer, can be used as the input signal of video so that audio signals control the appearance of video and the electronic information contained in video signals can be output in a visible and audible way. Therefore, video is the first truly audiovisual medium.

Because of this peculiarity, parallels arise to electronic processes with audio synthesizers in music, which has inspired artists from the field of music, such as Nam June Paik and Steina Vasulka, to extended electronic experiments with video. While composer Paik, together with Shuya Abe, develops the *Paik–Abe Synthesizer* (1969) to synthesize audio and video sources from film and television, concert violinist Vasulka, in her video performances and other video works, uses the sound of the human voice and the violin she herself plays as modulation instruments, so the sounds control the flow of electronic images.

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More precisely, music, voice, and video converge when the sound creates the waveform of the moving image, and the modulation of the electronic signal can be seen and heard simultaneously. Further intermedial references and correspondences between syntax in language and in video become apparent above all where articulations of a video-specific electronic language are tested in video art. This concerns the reference to the medium of language in Gary Hill's video works, which explore the processual possibilities of electronic writing and combine elements of writing, language, text, and image. Stan VanDerBeek's intermedial transformations and compilations of film and early computer graphics are even more comprehensive. He expands the potential of video mixing with superimpositions and other electronic means to compress as many different image layers and graphic elements as possible, such as writing and text, into video collages on the screen.

These intermedial connections play an important role in the early phase of the medium video because the emergence of video initially denotes a new technology and the formation of video into an independent medium takes place in relation to and in exchange for other media. In this intermedial phase of development, the languages of other media form the relational structure in which an electronic vocabulary and independent video forms are constituted. Such intermedial developmental steps can be exemplified by video works in which artists working with video come from the experimental surrounding of happening, Fluxus, dance, performance, action theatre, music, and intermedia. The audiovisual video examples given here show different levels of engagement with the electronic vocabulary, especially starting from language and text as well as sound and voice. They stand for a developmental stage of electronic media that have an open apparatusive structure, are generated, performed, and transmitted processually from signals and are characterized by the reciprocal transformativity of audio and video.

Nam June Paik implements the Fluxus concepts of disruption and deformation in his early experiments with the *demagnetizer* (1965), an electronic ring that manipulates the waveform of the television image. Paik understands television as a cultural form, which he collages and recombines in *9/23/69, Experiment with David Atwood* (USA 1969) with electromagnetic deformations and using the Paik–Abe Synthesizer. His approach is to remediate television programmes that are decomposed, varied, and remixed. His approach to decomposition is musically based and is evident in the endless variation on the scheme of television as programme. Paik's intervention in the programme structure of television uses the flowing signal processes and the transformational properties of the electronic medium to make video recognizable as a transformational image and transformational medium of flexible manifestations in contrast to institutionalized television. In cooperation with the WGBH television studio in Boston and its director, David Atwood, Paik is given the opportunity to try out the Paik–Abe Synthesizer in interactive performances and to modify live television images. Using the means of decomposition and recomposition of television images, theatre documentaries, and advertising, films, Paik transforms the

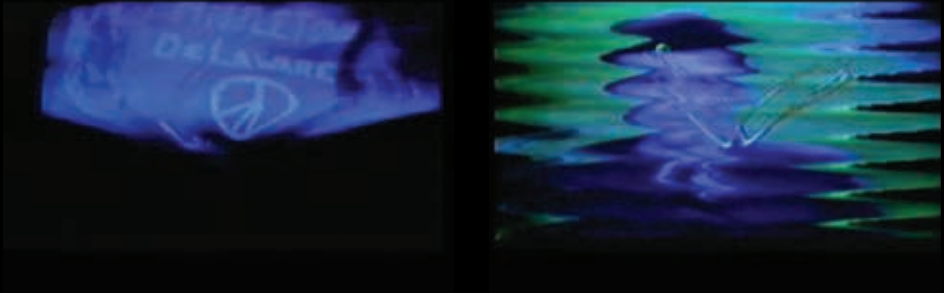


Figure 1. Nam June Paik: *9/23/69, Experiment with David Atwood* (USA 1969, Paik–Abe Synthesizer)

material through magnetic manipulation, feedback, and synthesiser into image–sound–text collages in various editing processes.

In these televisual experiments, waveforms are produced as image content when the signal is changed during transmission. Image and sound disturbances are produced with the synthesiser. On the sound level, in addition to the disturbed original sounds of the television material and their dissolution into noise, one also hears Paik's and Atwood's immediate comments on the transfigurations performed live in the studio. In the relation between video and television, it is crucial for Paik that the existing image–sound connections are dissolved and subjected to an electromagnetic massage in which the electronic medium reveals its basal audiovisual quality in the variability of the signal. In the synthesiser, the course of the signal can be configured in different directions [Fig. 1].

Paik's massage of the medium presents an intermedial process in which the new medium, video, expresses its relations to existing media, especially music and film, in a dialogical encounter, thereby forming the media specificity of video. It becomes clear that experimental video takes two directions: one consists of disruption and deformation; the other builds an aesthetic vocabulary that proves to be expandable and not limited to certain order of the apparatuses. In this respect, the performative video practices of Vito Acconci and Steina Vasulka and the transgressions from image to object in Gary Hill and Stan VanDerBeek form logical developmental steps of video as a medium that contains other media as its language.

Stan VanDerBeek works with multiple projections. In his live shows, he uses film, video, and computer graphics to create a density of information that comes close to later music videos. He is concerned with a compression of collage-like form, for which recognizable details are less important than the idea of endless variation, superimposition, and conflation of textual and visual elements to create multimedia and multisensory expressions. It is worth highlighting the fact that VanDerBeek's work with processors in analogue video denotes transitions to early computer graphics and concerns the interrelation of image, sound, and



Figure 2. Stan VanDerBeek: *Poemfield No. 2* (USA 1971)

text/script. The use of different medial elements and superimposed image fields produces figurations in which the visibility and non-visibility of electronic line structure alternate and the image elements pushed into one another result in complex patterns. By combining different textual and abstract-graphic image surfaces, a multilayered graphic collage is created. The process of multiplying and nesting the same image scheme resembles the basic principle of three-dimensional computer graphics in its aesthetic expression [Fig. 2].

An overarching feature of Vito Acconci's video performances is the interweaving of media reflection with the artist's self-reflection. In *Theme Song* (USA 1973), Acconci establishes an intimate eye and body contact with the personified camera and conducts a "dialogue" with "her" (the real camera and the imagined presence of a girl), as if the video camera were a real counterpart and the interface of the medium were mutually permeable on both sides. Acconci establishes this "person-to-person" contact with a virtual "girl" by looking at her (camera/girl) and addressing her directly. He plays music to "her" and moves his body as close as possible to the recording level in order to provoke both a verbal and physical reaction to his sexual approach.

The real dialogue situation is simulated in this video work, as the physical presence of the imaginary girl is replaced by an apparatus that represents the interface to the viewer and a media boundary that cannot be crossed. Due to its ambivalence of feigning a "real" dialogue and immediately negating this possibility, the electronic image here comes to visibility under the conditions of simulation. Ultimately, the reflection in the medium is only simulated: The recording with the video camera does not return an image in the place of the mirror. On the contrary, it radiates presence, the immediacy of which is intensified by the duration of the uncut videotape. The video work *Theme Song* combines the two components of a reflection, the mirrored self-image (narcissistic situation) and the self-reflection of the video image (medial reflection), in a pictorial unit, the video image of the performer Acconci. In this medial bond, the mirror sit-



Figure 3. Vito Acconci: *Theme Song* (USA 1973)

uation and the reflection of the video image coincide in that the performer, Acconci, generates, directs, and controls all parameters of the presentation such as duration, course, and reaction. The first-person narrative corresponds with his visual presentation, for the narrative form of a constant, unbroken monologue, which simulates the dialogue with the virtual counterpart and which lasts as long as the tape length of about thirty minutes – which was common at the time –, allows, reinforces the video-specific structure of the repetition of the video signal [Fig. 3].

Gary Hill, like Paik and Vasulka, uses video synthesizers and understands the articulation of electronic language as a necessary deconstruction and construction of image–sound connections. In contrast, Hill develops his electronic vocabulary on the basis of language systems. He derives his understanding of an electronic language from linguistics, which gives rise to the processes of decomposing, stretching, compressing, and inverting sequences of images and sounds. Overall, Hill uses spoken or written language as a link between image and electronics. He experiments with linguistic set pieces, sounds, syllables, and spoken words in the video and thereby aims to reveal new contexts of meaning associatively on the linguistic level. For Hill, the examination of language is the most important level of reference, because he understands the temporal writing process in the video as parallel to the succession of thought processes and their verbalization. He is concerned with the possibility of transcribing electronic lines into forms whose realization can take place in image objects as well as in written objects.

Exemplary for this concept is the formal structure of the videotape *Electronic Linguistics* (USA 1978), which translates electronic sound signals into visual language and visually represents the process of this transcription. Video images are nothing more than visualizations of electronically generated sounds that become more complex and intense over time [Fig. 4].



Figure 4. Gary Hill: *Electronic Linguistics* (USA 1978)

The exploration of the mutual translatability of writing, language, and imagery is of central importance to Gary Hill as a whole. The interactions of image, writing, and language establish Hill's electronic visual language and determine his analysis of audiovisual expressions of temporality, which is based on the linear writing movement of the videographic line image. This process is expressed in the combinations of image and speech in the videotape *Primarily Speaking* (USA 1981–1983). The varying speed of speech and the sequence of image windows, in which image-within-image framing is collaged, points to the variability and openness of the electronic writing process in time. At the same time, the compression of image-within-images windows points to an object status of the video image. The use of the device function of a keyer creates aesthetic effects of compression and superimposition that correspond to the association and complexification of meaning in linguistic connections. Such shifts through variation in rhythm and combination of elements alter understanding and meaning.

Primarily Speaking illustrates the procedure of irregular rhythms in image and text sequences when two different, similar, or mirrored image fields are keyed into monochrome colour surfaces in parallel. In this video work, a text spoken by Hill corresponds with the process of the visual sequence of image elements, which in constant flux create and cancel neighbouring relationships. These different correspondences between the image segments illustrate the open character of the audiovisual medium and indicate in the relationship between image and text that the media languages can both reinforce each other and form congruence as well as drift apart and form contrasts [Fig. 5].

In her video performances and videotapes, Steina Vasulka experiments with the modulation of the signal itself. The voltage and frequency of the signal and its translatability from audio to video influence the “content,” i.e. the representation of the image. Similarly, auditory elements, such as the sound of the violin played by Vasulka, speech, singing, and noises at the recording site, are

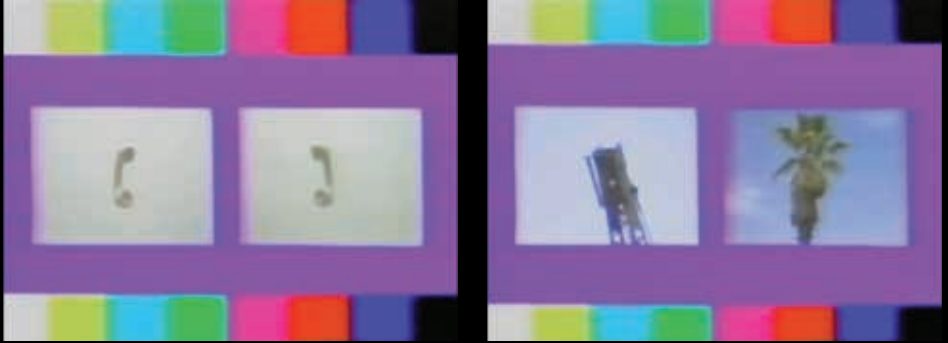


Figure 5. Gary Hill: *Primarily Speaking* (USA 1981–1983)

mixed with the manipulation of audio and video signals into layers. The signal manipulations of audio and video form the actual content of the videotape *Voice Windows* (USA 1986), in which performer and singer Joan La Barbara modulates the appearance of keyed image layers with her voice and constantly changes the flow of the image simultaneously through changes in vocal expression. The work superimposes different image planes, while the voice as input signal controls the functions of the keyer. The two video layers, interlaced into each other, appear as mutually permeable layers, depending on the modulation of the voice, which can be heard in the video and simultaneously seen in the frequency of keying the two image layers. This parallel display of sound and image as two media expressions of the same electronic information reinforces the basic characteristic of video as an audiovisual medium [Fig. 6].

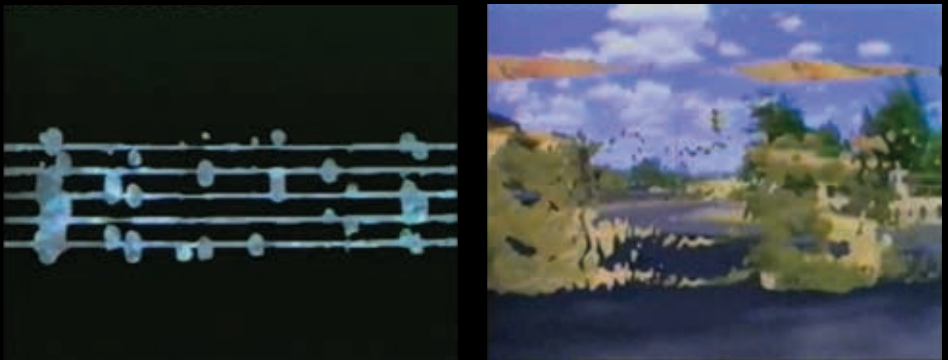


Figure 6. Steina Vasulka: *Voice Windows* (USA 1986, with Joan La Barbara)



Figure 1.

Susan Felleman*

A Parenthetical Story about Art: Between the Lines of Hollis Frampton's (*nostalgia*)

Hollis Frampton's 1971 film (*nostalgia*) is a quintessential structural film, a riddle about film itself. It consists of the serial presentation of thirteen still photographs, each placed on the coil of a hot plate and photographed from above for the duration of one 100-foot roll of film, accompanied by a voice-over narration. At first, the relation between sound and image confounds. Gradually, it becomes evident that each passage of Frampton's first-person script – voiced not by him but by his friend and fellow artist-filmmaker, Michael Snow – is, perplexingly, not about the photograph we are seeing burn “before” our eyes but, rather, the subsequent one: one we are yet to see, that we await. In keeping with the hallmarks of structural film, (*nostalgia*) emphasizes duration, along with this gap between image and narration, by the attenuated silences that conclude each passage, as the withered, black remains of each photograph shift and shrink upon the hotplate below, making time very perceptible and concrete.

By beginning with the image of a still photograph, the film interrogates the relationship of spatial illusionism to photography and to narrative – another form of illusion –, and it deconstructs, thereby exposing, cinema's conventional use of sound and image, stillness and motion, as well as acting, drama, and suspense, by recasting and calling into question these constitutive elements of filmmaking. Deceptively, this process reifies the nature of moving pictures: when the still image begins to burn, *it moves*. Once divined, (*nostalgia*)'s structured disjunction between sound and image induces simultaneous suspense, as we await the image being described in voice-over, and reflection, as we struggle to recall what was already said about the image turning to ash before our eyes. Making literal Pasolini's observation that “to make films is to write on burning paper” (“Fare del cinema è scrivere su della carta que brucia,” 1972, 245), Frampton's film also illustrates his own insight that “a fundamental illusion of cinema is that the image itself, carrier of illusions, is ‘there,’ before us. It is not. Both physically and temporally, it is behind us. In film, the spectator's future is the artist's past” (2009, 82). This insight is literalized in (*nostalgia*), both by its title – the parentheses and lower-case “n” prevent it from being either the begin-

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ning of a sentence or the end – and its narrative, stories, and photographs from the artist’s past. The images captured in photographs are, of course, always already past, as Roland Barthes has most eloquently explored in *Camera Lucida*, which describes the noeme of photography as “that has been” (1981, 76–77). Although film consists of photographs, the succession of images, one replacing the next, makes us insensible to this, as Barthes elaborates: a phenomenology (*nostalgia*) deconstructs, also by reifying, as one photograph replaces another, each passing into oblivion in painfully slow succession.

On the other hand, (*nostalgia*) also tells stories about art and the New York art world from 1959 to 1966: wry, reflective stories, told from not far beyond that fertile period in the lives of Frampton, his friends, and associates.

“Hollis Frampton [...] released his first film in 1966 at the age of 30. Highly erudite, with a command of Latin, Ancient Greek, French, and German, and an encyclopedic knowledge of art and literature, Frampton attended but never completed high school (Philips [sic] Academy) or university (Western Reserve, in his native Ohio). Frampton explored poetry in the 1950s, studying with Ezra Pound, and then was immersed in the emergent New York City avant-gardes of painting, sculpture, and dance from 1958 until he decamped to Western New York in 1970. His circle included Carl Andre, Simone Forti, Robert Huot, Lee Lozano, Michael Snow, Twyla Tharp, and Joyce Wieland.... [his] images of these artists at the moment of their emergence in the New York art scene capture not only the detail of the scene [...], but he also captures the performative element of artists considering their ‘image’ for the art world. His brilliance, dry wit, and reputation as an inexhaustible raconteur is remarked upon by many in that scene, though at the time his *métier* – still photography and experimental film – left him, in his words, ‘a committed illusionist’ in an art world dominated by abstraction.” (Zryd 2015, 261–262.)

(*nostalgia*)’s narration, although coated with irony and obscured by Michael Snow’s affectless reading, is rich with documentary specificity and affective memory associated with the artists portrayed in some of the film’s photographs, which derive from the much larger photographic archive to which Michael Zryd alludes above, as well as the milieu around and trends associated with contemporary art movements of the period, including Pop, Post-Painterly Abstraction, Op Art, and Minimalism. It also resounds with the artist’s own reflections on the *métier* of photography, his efforts and failures, doubts and pleasures in the medium.

The first image described in (*nostalgia*) – on the soundtrack, while the first photograph, of a darkroom, occupies the screen – is of 23-year-old Carl Andre [Fig. 1]. Along with painter Frank Stella, Andre, who by the end of the 1960s would become one of the foremost sculptors associated with minimalism, was a schoolmate of Frampton’s at Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts. “This is the first photograph I ever made with the direct intention of making art,” we hear. “I had bought myself a camera for Christmas in 1958. One day early in January of 1959, I photographed several drawings by Carl Andre, with whom I shared a cheap apartment on Mulberry Street. One frame of film was left over, and I suggested to Carl that he sit, or rather, squat, for a portrait. He

insisted that the photograph must incorporate a handsome small picture frame that had been given him a year or so before by a girl named North. How the metronome entered the scheme I don't recall, but it must have been deliberately."

This forgetfulness might be disingenuous, however; the device not only predicts the measured, structural aspect of time-based media; its pyramidal, wooden shape suggests some of Andre's early work of the time. Andre's minimalism relates to the history and traditions of sculpture as much as (*nostalgia*) relates to the history of cinema: as a radical interrogation of the ontological, spatio-temporal, and material properties of medium. Frank Stella, Frampton's other great artist friend from prep school, is featured in another of (*nostalgia*)'s stories about one of a dozen likenesses Frampton captured early in 1963 "for some casual business" of Stella's. "Looking at the photograph," more recently, according to the narration, Frampton is reminded "unaccountably, of a photograph of another artist squirting water out of his mouth, which is undoubtedly art." This allusion to *Self-Portrait as Fountain* (1966), an iconic photographic image by and of Bruce Nauman, is followed by a tongue-in-cheek comparison. Nauman's squirting water is "undoubtedly art," it is said, while "blowing smoke rings seems more of a craft" [Figs. 2–3]. This droll and rather absurd distinction belies not only the sequence's clever mobilization of smoking (once it starts to burn, the photograph is a smoking, *smoking* image), it also ironically invokes the hierarchies of the art world of the period, which Frampton referred to in a 1980 interview. "It may be worthwhile to recall that, from when I got to New York in 1958 until deep into the sixties, there were big doin's afoot in art," Frampton said in 1980. "Those big doin's had almost exclusively to do with painting and sculpture – and, to a much lesser extent, with performance and dance. Most of the people who started to make films in a serious way around the time I did had matured artistically in some other terrain. There was no hearing for anyone in either still photography or film." (Frampton and McDonald 1980, 105.)

Among the biggest of the "big doin's" in painting and sculpture to which Frampton alludes were Frank Stella's. His revolutionary series of so-called "Black Paintings," completed between 1958 and 1960, drew considerable attention and acclaim. Even before he was 25 years old, Stella had soloed or was featured in several major exhibitions, including *Sixteen Americans* at the MoMA. About work such as the "Black Paintings" and the subsequent series of metallic paintings, on copper and aluminium, sometimes shaped, "in 1964, Stella famously declared [...] 'What you see is what you see.' By championing purely formal concerns, he was ostensibly reacting against the rhetoric of subjectivity and romanticism surrounding abstract expressionism" (National Gallery of Art). This rigorous focus on the operation of medium, along with the implicit foreclosure of illusionism finds its complement in what Hollis Frampton referred to as his own "massive *sottisier*," *The Secret World of Frank Stella*, a series of 52 environmental portraits of the young "master" Stella that not only collectively parody David Douglas Duncan's 1958 book of photographs, *The Private World of Pablo Picasso*, but also individually reference and deconstruct the "rhetoric of subjectivity" and conventions of particular monuments of photographic history



Figures 2–3.

(Zaher 2011). Of course, one knows nothing of all this from (*nostalgia*)’s casual, anecdotal narration about a workaday portrait commission or that Stella and Frampton were, in a sense, “like mountain-climbers roped together” (as Braque had described his early Cubist partnership with Picasso) in those years – 1958 to 1962 –, exploring together the boundaries of their respective mediums.

Among others of the “big doin’s” obliquely memorialized in (*nostalgia*) were those of James Rosenquist, a painter who is the subject of two of the film’s chapters, one explicit (the portrait taken the day the two met, Palm Sunday 1963), the other not [Figs. 4–5]. “Late in the fall of 1964,” we hear, “a painter friend asked me to make a photographic document of spaghetti, an image that he wanted to incorporate into a work of his own. I set up the camera above an empty dark-room tray, opened a number 2 can of Franco-American Spaghetti, and poured it out. Then I stirred it around until I saw a suitably random arrangement of pasta strands, and finished the photographs in short order. Then, instead of disposing of the spaghetti, I left it there and made one photograph every day. This was the eighteenth such photograph.” The unnamed painter friend was Rosenquist. The colour photograph of spaghetti Frampton provided was the source of a section of Rosenquist’s gallery-sized painting, F-111 – a monumental juxtaposition of photo-realistic images drawn from popular culture –, shown at the Leo Castelli Gallery in 1965 to international acclaim.

Just as the smoking, smoking image of Stella was a surplus image from a commissioned photograph, so is the spaghetti photograph that appears in (*nostalgia*) a leftover, so to speak: the eighteenth photograph in a series made of the canned spaghetti left to decay in the studio after the commission was complete. The film’s narration describes the “action” of decomposition, rather like a frame from a slow-motion or stop-motion sequence: “the spaghetti has dried without rotting. The sauce is a kind of pink varnish on the yellow strings. The entirety is covered in attractive mature colonies of mold in three colors: black, green and white.” This vivid description of what will be a black-and-white film image (yet to be seen as it is described), in its



Figures 4–5.

emphasis on colour and strings, conjures a picture more like a splatter painting by the most famous action painter of the previous decade, Jackson Pollock. This is no coincidence. Just as Stella’s minimalist and Rosenquist’s pop breakthroughs are refusals of the theretofore dominant subjective, heroic, expressionist vernacular of the New York School, so does Frampton’s photography question the dominant modes of contemporary art photography, as (*nostalgia*) and the structural film generally will themselves turn away from the highly subjective art cinemas – from the trance film to Brakhage’s mythopoesis – that preceded them.

The ironic and knowing imitation of action painting is confirmed by another of (*nostalgia*)’s stories. “A young painter, who lived on the floor above me, wanted to be an Old Master. He talked a great deal about gums and varnishes, he was on his way to impastos of record thickness. The spring of that year was sunny, and I spent a month photographing junk and rubble, in imitation of action painting. My neighbor saw my new work, and he was not especially pleased.” Desiring to “ingratiate” himself, as he was enchanted by the young painter’s girlfriend, Frampton tried again “by making a realistic work of art. I carved the numerals you see out of modelling clay, and then cast them in plaster.” The viewer does not yet see these numerals, of course, so this is a very hard “narrative” to follow. “The piece is called *A Cast of Thousands*. The numbers are reversed in the cast, of course, but I have reversed them again in printing, to enhance their intelligibility.” [Fig. 6.]

When the image finally appears, as the next story begins, it is the punch line: it is a plaster cast image of the number 1000, which appears twice, a literal “cast of thousands.” Any artist or art historian familiar with the story of post-war art in the U.S. will probably recognize this comical anecdote, which ends with a laugh and a kiss, as an allegory of the reaction against the dominion of Abstract Expressionism by young Turks like Robert Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns in the mid-1950s.

A Cast of 1000s is strongly suggestive of Jasper Johns’s *Numbers series*, which began in the mid-1950s and, like his targets, maps, and flags, problematized the semiotics of representation and mimesis, rejecting the subjective expres-



Figures 6–7.

sionism of the New York School. The ironies that emerge from Frampton’s engagement of this NeoDada practice and his disdain for his painter-neighbour are too numerous to recount in an essay with a numerical word limit.

Similarly, I cannot do justice to (*nostalgia*)’s description of a photograph of two bathroom stalls: “as you can see [again, you cannot], it is an imitation of a painted Renaissance crucifixion. The outline of the Cross is quite clear. At its foot, the closed bowl on the right represents the Blessed Virgin. On the left is Saint Mary Magdalene: a bowl with its lid raised. The roll of toilet paper stands for the skull of Adam, whose sin is conventionally washed away by the blood the crucified Savior sheds. The stairs leading up to the two booths symbolize Calvary.” [Fig. 7.]

This heretical and rather hilarious description, as with *A Cast of Thousands*, really depends upon the disjuncture between the film’s sound and image, another punch-line, while at the same time illustrating Frampton’s formal and iconographical acuity, along with his cheeky sense of humour. Of the five artists explicitly represented in (*nostalgia*), Michael Snow is probably the most important to the story. He not only, in his deadpan Canadian dialect, performs as Frampton’s surrogate on the soundtrack (quite obviously reading the script) and is the subject of one of its chapters, but he and Frampton essentially embarked upon their careers as filmmakers side by side in the period that straddles the end of the story told in (*nostalgia*) and the production of the film itself, Frampton himself having performed in Snow’s breakthrough film, *Wavelength*, in 1967 [Fig. 8].

“This photograph was made in Michael Snow’s studio, sometime in 1965,” says Snow himself, channelling Frampton. “It was made into a poster announcing a show of his *Walking Woman* works at the Poindexter Gallery in that year. As many as possible of the pieces are seen, by reflection or transmission, in a transparent sheet of acrylic plastic which is itself part of a piece,” he continues. “If you look closely, you can see Michael Snow himself, on the left, by transmission, and my camera, on the right, by reflection [...]. I believe that Snow was pleased with the photograph itself, as I was. But he disliked the poster intensely.



Figures 8–9.

He said I had chosen a typeface that looked like an invitation to a church social. I regret to say that he was right. But it was too late. There was nothing to do about it. The whole business still troubles me. I wish I could apologize to him [...]:” another laugh line, given who performs it, yet still poignant.

The last artist photograph in (*nostalgia*) is also the last image taken by Frampton seen in the film (the very last image seen is a newspaper photo): a portrait of painter Larry Poons taken for *Vogue* magazine in 1966 [Fig. 9].

Poons was another good friend of Frampton’s whose career took off in the sixties. The narrative frames Frampton’s decision that year to give up this sort of commercial photography for its conflict with his paying job and having to haggle over pay. “Since 1966 I have made few photographs,” says (*nostalgia*)’s narrator. From the literature, however, we learn that *Manual of Arms*, made that same year, is the first film Frampton publicly admitted to having made, later acknowledging that some lesser earlier efforts were lost or discarded. So, this story ends as another begins.

Intermediality is the heart and soul of (*nostalgia*)’s two-films-in-one, in the first – to borrow from Frampton himself – by transmission and in the second by reflection. With its durational sequence of still photographs, and by making the photographs move by burning them, (*nostalgia*) makes literal the intermedial ontology of cinema: the sequence of still photographs that constitute film’s illusion of movement. The film’s portraits and stories suggest a different form of intermediality, a historical and personal one, as Juan Carlos Kase has established. “Behind its knotty matrix of references, conceptual gags, and ironic twists, (*nostalgia*) is also an evocative self-portrait of the artist as a young man, presented as a fragmentary narrative in which Frampton has embedded layers of diaristic detail along with evocations of affect, humor, and loss.” (2017, 59.) Not only does the film portray and invoke major players and issues of the downtown art scene of the sixties, but the gap between that last dated photograph, of Poons in early 1966, and that of the film itself – 1971 – is an interregnum in which numerous



Figure 10.

visual artists, including Frampton and Snow themselves, took up film or video. The two films merge into one; the interrogation of medium describes the nature of cinema and its expansion: a revolution in contemporary art [Fig. 10].

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Ivo Blom*

The Pictorial Turn: Intervisuality and Recycling in *Fabiola* (Enrico Guazzoni, 1918)

Thanks to large-scale film preservation, the growing access and the technological possibilities to compare film images in detail, in recent years it has become possible not only to trace returning motifs that, as in art history, give credibility and historicity to historical feature films, but also to reveal that film companies have recycled sets and props. For example, at a 2018 workshop on early Italian film that I co-organized, we were able to observe how the Film d'Arte Italiana company (FAI) continually reused sets, even when representing different time periods.¹ It also turned out that certain locations, such as Villa d'Este in Rome, were repeatedly used as the backdrop for antiquity films. During recent own research into the earliest historical feature films by the Lumière brothers, I found a small series of sets frequently reused after some reshuffling.² In this article, focusing on a similar case of early recycling in film, I offer an adaptation of a lecture held at the Austrian Institute in Rome during a conference on the film *Fabiola* (Enrico Guazzoni, 1918) and its context.³ The film deals with the often told tale of the persecution of the Christians in Roman times, personified here by the struggles and deaths of the Christians Agnes, young Pancratius, Cecilia, and Sebastian, caused by the hatred, jealousy, and manipulation of the Roman Corvinus and the Asian Fulvio, after which Fabiola, the patrician aunt of Agnes converts to Christianity, within the Roman catacombs. First of all, I would like to point out that my research is based on two versions of Enrico Guazzoni's film *Fabiola* from 1918: the Dutch version, an unpreserved nitrate from the EYE Filmmuseum in Amsterdam, and the copy from the Cineteca Nazionale in Rome, which Maria Assunta Pimpinelli kindly made available to us. Most of

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1 Workshop *A Dive into the Collections of the Eye Filmmuseum: Italian Silent Cinema at the Intersection of the Arts*, Eye Filmmuseum 2018. It was Olivier Bohler who unmasked the set recycling by FAI.

2 This was research for the catalogue of the exhibition *Enfin le cinéma!* at Musée d'Orsay, Paris, autumn 2021.

3 Conference *Fabiola di Enrico Guazzoni. Dal buio delle catacombe alla luce degli schermi* [*Fabiola* by Enrico Guazzoni. From the Darkness of the Catacombs to the Light of the Screens]. Istituto Storico Austriaco, Rome, 2017.

the images I discuss, though, come from the Dutch copy, which is incomplete, e.g. the beginning and the end of the film are mostly missing. As I begin my analysis with the presentation of painters related to the film and the novel, I will focus below on the use of *set design* in the film and the *inter-visual* relationships between *Fabiola* and earlier films, earlier paintings, and, importantly, original antique furniture.

In Vittorio Martinelli's filmography, *Il cinema muto italiano*, vol. 1918, one reads that the well-known painter Camillo Innocenti was responsible for the set design of Guazzoni's *Fabiola*.⁴ Still, I have not found so far any historical sources (such as period magazines) that confirm this. Innocenti was certainly involved in some way in *Fabiola*, as his signature can be seen in the intertitles of the Roman print.⁵ While Innocenti made his debut as a student of painting in the studios of Ludovico Seitz and Antonio Mancini, and developed a Morellian style,⁶ in the 1910s he was better known for his fashionable portraits of elegant women, dressed or naked, and often set in a misty, Impressionist atmosphere. While Martinelli attributes the set design of various films to Innocenti, such as Guazzoni's *Quo vadis?* (1913), art history studies such as the one by Maurizio Fagiolo dell'Arco and also Innocenti's own *Ricordi di vita* (1959) indicate that the artist began his work as a set and costume designer for historical films from 1919 onwards, first at Medusa Film, where for a time he was co-director with Fausto Salvatori. He provided at Medusa the set design for the historical films *Redemption (Redenzione/Maria di Magdala*, Carmine Gallone, 1919) and *I Borgia* (Caramba, 1920) and at Bonnard-Film those of *The Bethrothed (I promessi sposi*, Mario Bonnard, 1922), while later he also designed some of the costumes for MGM's epic production *Ben-Hur* (Fred Niblo, 1925).⁷ Here more research is needed, but interesting as an *hors d'oeuvre* for my discussion on the set design

4 The same is the case with the film *Cabiria* (Giovanni Pastrone, 1914), as Mario Verdone in the Treccani Encyclopaedia of Cinema writes that Innocenti assisted Pastrone with the costumes, but here, too, we have no serious evidence so far.

5 According to Martinelli and Bernardini (1994), Camillo Innocenti was already responsible for the set design of *Quo vadis?* by the same director Guazzoni, but neither here is there any confirmation so far. In the advertisements for the two films, Innocenti's name cannot be traced.

6 In 1896, Innocenti won the Concorso del Pensionato Artistico Nazionale with a painting entitled *Il giuramento di Pontida*. In 1902, he exhibited the painting *Cesare e Cleopatra* as the final test of the scholarship scheme. In the later 19th century, Domenico Morelli was a highly influential and acclaimed painter of historical and religious works such as *Pompeian Bath* (1861). Among his pupils there were, e.g. Francesco Paolo Michetti, Vittorio Matteo Corcos, and Antonio Mancini.

7 The press of the period, such as *La vita cinematografica* and *Film*, confirm collaboration on *Redenzione* and *I Borgia*, where Innocenti's name stood out in the publicity. Innocenti also wrote the subject for a film, *Le due rose* (1919). Although directed by Camillo De Rossi, the publicity only promoted Innocenti's name. Martinelli credits the set and costume design for several more films to Innocenti, including the set design for *Frate Sole* (1918), *Giuliano l'Apostata* (1919, in collaboration with Duilio Cambellotti), *Il figlio di Madame Sans Gêne* (Bal-dassarre Negroni, 1921), and *Cirano di Bergerac* (Augusto Genina, 1922, released in 1926).

and antique furniture is the little table with a sphinx on the left and a chair on the right in one shot of *Redenzione*. The small table is a version of the famous *cartibulum* table, which I will talk about later, and of which a fine example can be traced today in the Oratory of S. Barbara in the church of S. Gregorio Magno in Rome, where there is also a bishop's chair of Augustan origin which resembles the one in *Redenzione*.⁸

Before cinema, *Fabiola* had already been visually represented, for example, in illustrated editions of the eponymous novel (1854) by Cardinal Frederick Wiseman. Eventually, in France from 1885 onwards, Alfred Mame et Fils made an often reprinted edition with illustrations by Joseph Blanc. The cover image of this edition greatly resembles the paintings of the time, those by G r me and Rimmer, with always the imperial lodge on the right at the top and the victim looking up. Instead, an early twentieth-century postcard by Del Senno for *Fabiola* mirrors the situation, and the tiger seems to be attacking us too. Stefano Cracolici, in his valiant article *Rapsodie cristiane. The Artistic Fortunes of Wiseman's Fabiola* (2013),⁹ pointed out that in the nineteenth century various sculptures seem to have been inspired by the novel. But while there is still doubt about a direct inspiration for sculptures, there is none in the case of the narrative painting of artists such as Cesare Maccari (*Un episodio nella vita di Fabiola*, 1870). Maccari's scene where Sirta is attacked by her brother Fulvio is clearly derived from Wiseman's (although the scene does not appear in Guazzoni's film).¹⁰ The most famous and most often copied painting of *Fabiola* in the 19th century is the one by Jean-Jacques Henner from 1885, which was lost in 1912. Still, so many copies and variations have survived that the Belgian artist Francis Alj s made an exhibition that was first (2007/8) opened at the Hispanic Society of America in Northern Manhattan and afterwards in Los Angeles (LACMA, 2008/9), London (National Portrait Gallery, 2009), and Burgos (Santo Domingo de Silos Abbey, 2009/10).

While films dealing with the story of *Fabiola*, Agnes, Cecilia, and Sebastian, which predate Guazzoni's *Fabiola*, do not seem that pictorial – say, *San Sebastiano (By Order of the Emperor)*, Milano Films, 1911)¹¹ –, I would claim that the sword dance in Guazzoni's *Fabiola* could be thought of as an indirect quotation from Henryk Siemiradzki's 1881 painting *The Sword Dance*, now at the Tretyakov

8 The vases are of a type used extensively in parks such as Villa Doria Pamfili in Rome, also at Palazzo Corsini in Rome.

9 On the depiction of life in Ancient Pompeii in 19th-century painting, see, e.g. Giuseppe Pucci (2007, 111–121).

10 By the way, the bed on the painting is a reworking of a triclinium bed, of which there is a reconstruction in the Archaeological Museum of Naples, based on remains found in Pompeii. The painting also shows a lamp used at the time and of which about forty are in the Museum of Naples.

11 A print of the film is in EYE Filmmuseum's Desmet Collection. The director is unknown but may be Giuseppe De Liguoro.

Gallery in Moscow, famous at the time and often reproduced.¹² Not only the up-standing swords but also the musicians with partly the same instruments such as harp and flute concur. As full frontal nudity was not allowed in the cinema of the 1910s, the naked female dancer on Siemiradzki's tableau was replaced by a half-naked man (male torsos were permitted). Beyond quotations, the search for depth in the film *Fabiola* is very pictorial but also filmic, for example, in the scene when Fulvio spies on Agnese, together with us spectators. We see the same complicity a few years earlier in Louis Feuillade's film, *In the Days of Nero* (*Le fils de Locuste*, 1911), where Nero and Locusta watch a victim die from behind the half-opened curtains. On the other hand, in the 1913 *Quo vadis?*, Enrico Guazzoni uses the curtain to open up unexpected perspectives such as the one on a deep path with a staircase and fountain in the back, shot at Villa d'Este near Rome but representing the house and garden of Lygia's foster parents Aulus and Pomponia. We see this deep-staging research through curtains being represented earlier in the works of Anglo-Dutch painter Lawrence Alma-Tadema, who had the doors replaced by curtains in his own house in London in order to experiment with space; the house functioned as a laboratory. It can be traced in his paintings such as *Welcome Footsteps* (1883), which, just like in *Quo vadis?*, gives a perspective on the garden, from the inside towards the outside.¹³

But let us move on to my central theme, *Fabiola's* set design. It is clear that Guazzoni in *Fabiola* used large, constructed outdoor scenes such as those of the Forum. He also used real locations, such as the Clivo di Scauro, and did not shy away from simply reusing shots from his film *Quo vadis?* for the scene in the circus. A daring self-plagiarism perhaps, but let us not forget that before *Fabiola* shots from the circus in *Quo vadis?* were already stolen by Famous Players for *The Sign of the Cross* (Frederick A. Thompson, 1914) and by Film d'Arte Italiana for *Caligula* (*La tragica fine di Caligula Imperator*, Ugo Falena 1917), as two prints at the EYE Filmmuseum testify.¹⁴

Instead of exteriors, here I would like to focus on the use of antique furniture objects in interiors of *Fabiola*.¹⁵ My first example is the so-called *cartibulum*, a stone table with marble supports with winged griffons with lions' heads and paws. In antiquity, it was rather a decorative and prestigious table in the atrium of the *domus*. Yet, in the paintings of Alma-Tadema and other 19th-century painters, and later in early Italian cinema, it was used as a writing desk, a table

12 See, for example, <http://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2011/russian-works-of-art-n08733/lot.11.html> for an alternative version, sold by Sotheby's.

13 See on this Blom 2016, 187–199.

14 The 1924 remake of *Quo vadis?* (Gabriellino D'Annunzio, Georg Jacoby) would again use shots of the circus from the 1913 version. It is not clear whether the production companies inserted this older footage right from the start, or if local exhibitors did this to spice up the films.

15 On antique furniture, see Mols (1999) and De Carolis (2007).



Figure 1. Cartibulum in *Fabiola* (1918). Fulvio (Amleto Novelli) and Eurota (Augusto Mastripietri) plot against the Christians

for display of precious objects or an ordinary table. We see it in *Fabiola*'s house but also in the house of Fulvio and Eurota, his vile companion [Fig. 1].

Exactly the same type of cartibulum can be seen in Guazzoni's *Quo vadis?*, five years earlier, in the house of Petronius and in the house of Aulus. It is remarkable that in both cases there is no decoration between the two griffons in contrast to the real cartibulum. The same cartibulum from the Cines stock returns in Guazzoni's *Cajus Julius Caesar* (1914), while in the 1917 film, *Caligula*, we see a version with decoration between the griffons. Overseas, Famous Players included the cartibulum as Nero's desk in *The Sign of the Cross*. An early example of the cartibulum in cinema can be found in the coloured version of Feuillade's *Le fils de Locuste, en profil* and later also one *en face*, with the mention that here Feuillade and his crew used a gold dye to imitate bronze, whereas the cartibulum was stone and marble normally.

Before the cinema, the cartibulum was already an object dear to Alma-Tadema, who made it appear in paintings such as *en face* in *The Sculpture Gallery* (1874) and *Glaucus and Nydia* (1867), the latter referring to the two characters of Edward Bulwer-Lytton's famous novel *The Last Days of Pompeii* (1834). In contrast to the Cines furniture, in the two aforementioned examples, Tadema shows variants with decoration between the griffons. We also see this motif *en profil* in *The Honeymoon* (1868) and in a detail of *A Roman Lover of Art* (1868), both by Tadema. Italian painters of the time also used the cartibulum to establish the atmosphere of antiquity, for example, Giovanni Muzzioli (*Il funerale di Britannico / The Britannicus Funeral*, 1888, *en face*) and Roberto Bompiani (*Il Parassita / A Roman Feast*, 1875, *en profil*). The two prototypes on which many painters relied were from Pompeii, from the House of Meleager and the House of Cornelius Rufus. In one of them, the griffons did not have ram's horns, in the other they did, and both had decorations between the griffons. Both of them are now in the Archaeological Museum in Naples. I do not know exactly where Guazzoni got his motif from – because images of cartibula were multiplied at will during the



Figure 2. Mensa delphica in *Fabiola* (1918). Sebastiano (Livio Pavanelli) hosting a Christian refugee

early 20th century as postcards, lantern plates, stereocards, book illustrations, etc. An impetus could have been the 1911 Archaeological Exhibition in Rome, where facsimiles of two such cartibula were part of the exhibition.¹⁶ I can well imagine that both for Guazzoni and Cines, as well as for the Italian public, this exhibition had an important impact on the imagination of Roman furniture.

Another type of table that can be seen in *Fabiola*, and before in many other films and paintings as well, is the *mensa delphica*, or Delphic table, a round table on top and below tripods with lions' heads and legs. In *Fabiola*, we find it in Sebastian's and Fabiola's houses [Fig. 2].

A famous original (the upper part of which is not ancient) is in Pompeii in the house of Casca Longus. It was already well known to Alma-Tadema, who made his honeymoon trip with his first wife to Rome, Naples, and Pompeii in 1863, acquiring hundreds of photos but also making many sketches in situ, thus building a huge visual databank for himself. All this is now at the University of Birmingham. It is strange, however, that we do not see the *mensa delphica* in Tadema's own paintings but plenty of them within the works of his contemporaries such as *The New Perfume* (1914) by Tadema's epigone John Godward. Guazzoni used the *mensa delphica* in *Quo vadis?* for both Vinicius's house and Nero's palace: as if all rich Romans had the same interior decorator. But the tracing of this recycling can even be antedated, because already in 1911 in Guazzoni's short film *Agrippina* we see the same table at Nero's banquet where he poisons Britannicus, and immediately afterwards it shows up again in an antechamber where Agrippina now fears for her life.

In the same picture in *Agrippina*, we also see a so-called *cattedra*, a type of chair taken from the Greek *klismos*, with arched legs and a large curved back. It

¹⁶ See Palombi (2009, 71–99) and Pisani Sartorio (1983). This exhibition was the forerunner of the later Museo della Civiltà Romana in Rome.



Figure 3. Brazier as table in *Fabiola* (1918). Elena Sangro (Fabiola) tries to convince Agnese (Ms Poletti) to give up her belief

evokes a prototype that was shaped in a similar way, but of which no originals exist and can only be seen on ancient murals and reliefs. Guazzoni uses exactly the same type two years after *Agrippina* in *Quo vadis?*, for example, in the house of Petronius, and in 1918 in *Fabiola*, in the house of Sebastian [again, Fig. 2]. These are chairs made in an almost minimalist style. Much more refined and decorated is the chair from Alma-Tadema, in *Catullus at Lesbia's* (1865). Also, the *sella*, the *klismos*-type stool can often be found in works by Guazzoni, for example, in *Fabiola*, in Sebastiano and Fabiola's house. Furthermore, there is the so-called *sella curulis*, the folding stool, which we see in Fabiola's room but already earlier in *Agrippina* outdoors (in a scene shot at the Rometta at Villa d'Este) and in the house of the poison-monger Locusta (based on a single prototype). And almost like a synthesis, one shot in Guazzoni's *Cajus Julius Caesar* shows simultaneously the *cattedra* chairs, the *sella* stools, and the *mensa delphica* tables.

Recurring in *Fabiola*, for example, in the scene in which Fabiola tries to convince Agnes to let go of her Christian beliefs because she is worried something awful will happen to her favourite niece, there is an elegant bronze table with a huge bunch of flowers [Fig. 3].

As specialists point out,¹⁷ the floral abundance is more typical of Alma-Tadema than of antiquity. The Romans knew no vases, only flower beds at most. But even the table is originally not a table but a brazier, as you may see in Tadema's painting *In the Temple* (1871). The original comes from the temple of Isis in Pompeii (now in the Naples museum), while in the 19th century many copies were made, including the one now at the Leighton House museum in London.¹⁸ An original sketch by Tadema of an antique original is kept now in the Birmingham collec-

17 See Lane Fox 2017.

18 Leighton House was the last leg of the big Alma-Tadema exhibition, which started in autumn 2016 at the Fries Museum in Leeuwarden and for which I was co-curator.



Figure 4. Litter in *Fabiola* (1918). Fabiola (Elena Sangro) helps her niece Agnese (Ms Poletti) to flee Rome

tion (mark the sphinx, the decoration, the paws at the bottom). The brazier also returns in the artworks of Tadema's colleagues such as Siemiradzki (*The Patrician's Siesta*, 1881). Also often returning are the Aladdin-like oil lamps put on a long stick and having animal claws at the foot [Fig. 1]. In addition to *Fabiola*, they are clearly visible in Agrippina's villa in *Agrippina* and in Nero's palace in *Quo vadis?* A photo in Tadema's collection shows original antique examples, while originals may be traced at the Archaeological Museum in Naples, the Louvre in Paris, and so on.

It may be clear now that Guazzoni continually made a recycling of "antique" furniture and objects as markers of Antiquity, no doubt always available at the Cines warehouses. When stopping the films and taking captures, we will notice that not only furniture but also other props were recycled, such as the statuette with Silenus lifting a tray (based on a well-known and often reproduced original now in the museum of Naples) used in both *Agrippina* and *Quo vadis?* Likewise, a Greek-styled amphora with riders appears both at Vinicio's and at Nero's palace, as if Antiquity were one big IKEA where everyone buys the same furniture and objects. That is why we are no longer surprised that the brazier next to Agnes as she dies in *Fabiola*, with its wolf's head and the ring in her mouth, is the same in *Quo vadis?*, at the orgy at Nero's, at the arena, and at Petronius's house during his death scene. And the *lectiga*, or litter, that carries Fabiola and Agnes to the villa outside the city during the raids against Christians in Rome is identical to that from *Agrippina* in the scene when the Empress leaves the imperial palace and to the one that carries around Petronius in *Quo vadis?* [Fig. 5], as well as Chilo after his betrayal.

We have exactly the same details of the winged Victories, the roof that looks like an everted tondo roof with its rosettes, and then a border that resembles the antefixes of Roman roofs [Fig. 4]. I have searched in vain for a pictorial prototype of this object. The closest is the litter in the painting *The Torches of Nero* (1876) by Siemiradzki, where at least the Victories are the same. At the



Figure 5. The litter of Petronius (Gustavo Serena) in *Quo vadis?* (1913)

Montemartini Museum in Rome, there is the only remaining Roman litter, the so-called *Capitoline Lectiga*, which is actually a nineteenth-century construction, using ancient elements. Strangely enough, there are no images of ancient litters in ancient art, while they are part of the repertoire of 19th-century painting, 20th-century antiquity films, and Asterix comics.

Certainly, the fountain in the house of Agnes is copied from a Pompeian original, now in the Naples museum, as a photo in Tadema's study collection proves, and Fabiola's hairstyle resembles that of Empress Domitia Longina, whom we do not see in the film but to whom a kind of voodoo statuette in the plot refers [Fig. 1].¹⁹ Finally, I would like to refer to a discovery I made a few years ago. In 1909, Cines produced a film called *Patrician and Slave* (*Patrizia e schiava*), with an unknown director – however, I would suggest the name of Guazzoni, at least to save his reputation. If you look closely at the images of the film as I did, you will easily recognize some of the suspects in my story: exactly the same stools, chairs, lamps, as well as the *mensa delphica*. And that is not all: in the garden, we recognize a statue of a putto holding an amphora spraying water, just as the one in *Fabiola*. The litter that takes the patrician mother to the place where she finds her lost daughter is exactly the same as in *Agrippina*, *Quo vadis?*, and *Fabiola*. And even the boat with the swan's neck and head from *Fabiola* [Fig. 6] was already used in *Patrizia e schiava* with some slight variations.²⁰

To conclude, in spite of the fame of Camillo Innocenti and the historical consultancy of catacomb expert Baron Kanzler²¹ at the production of *Fabiola*, and in

19 Cf. the statue of Domitia Longina at the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek in Copenhagen.

20 On *Patrizia e schiava*, see Bernardini (1996). A preserved print of the film is held within the Collection Joye of the National Film and Television Archive (NFTVA).

21 For archaeologist Baron Rudolf Kanzler, see North (2016, 88–103). NB Cines was not the only company to recycle props. In addition to the aforementioned Film d'Arte Italiana, at



Figure 6. Roman ship with swan's neck in *Fabiola* (1918). Fabiola (Elena Sangro) and her niece Agnese (Ms Poletti) flee Rome because of riots and persecutions

general Guazzoni's own keen eye for historical research, we may find that from 1909 to 1918 the Cines company shamelessly expressed a reiterating vocabulary, a scenographic repertoire that in part falls back on antique originals and nineteenth-century painting.

In this respect, we are dealing here with an example of what Ágnes Pethő has called "in-betweenness" (Pethő 2011), referring to the cinema in the post-media age. Pethő believes that intermediality within film manifests itself in a borderland, a space of transition from one medium to another, in an act of transposition that takes place in a space that Ágnes Pethő defines as the *in-between*. In this intermedial process, the transgression of one medium into another reflects on both mediums and contributes to the "unmasking of each other's medial potential" (Pethő 2011, 78). As Catherine Russell writes, we may also project these ideas back to the early years of cinema, when practising a *parallax historiography*. As she writes this concept, "it conceives of history as a panorama that shifts according to the gaze of the observer" (2002). This concept serves well the present research, in which new observations on the close connections between 19th-century literature and painting, as well as between 20th- and 21st-century archaeology, with early 20th-century historical films, may shift our gaze and deepen our insights into these films and into cinema at large. Yet, with the case of *Fabiola*, simultaneously we are also dealing with a highly self-reflexive and intra-medial cinema that creates its own *simulacrum*, a world that refers only to itself because of its scenographic recycling.²²

the company Pasquali director Giovanni Enrico Vidali reused props and set pieces from the epic *Jone ovvero gli ultimi giorni di Pompei* (1913) in *Spartaco* (1914).

22 For the concept of intramediality, see Wolf (1999). For the help with my research, I would like to thank antique furniture experts Stephan Mols and Ernesto De Carolis. I also thank Maria Assunta Pimpinelli (Cineteca Nazionale), Elif Rongen-Kaynakçi (Eye Filmmuse-

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“One Centimetre of Real Poetry and Three Thousand Metres of Silliness” – Silent Movies and Hungarian Ekphrastic Poetry

My paper aims at exploring the ways in which the early 20th-century Hungarian literary elite reacted to the “new” medium – the film. In this respect, I examine some examples of Hungarian cinematic ekphrases published in the first quarter of the 20th century and outline answers to the following questions: Did the renowned Hungarian poets – such as Mihály Babits, Gyula Juhász, Zsolt Harsányi, and Jenő Heltai – consider film as a sister art? Did they consider film as an art form at all? What portraits of silent film and its viewers do their poems create?

As it is well known, the term *ekphrasis*, which has its origins in the Antiquity (it is first mentioned by Dionysius of Halicarnassus, but it very rarely appears before the 3rd-4th centuries AD) and was revived by literary studies in the second half of the 20th century, nowadays enjoys a kind of renaissance. Needless to say, over its thousands-year-long history, the meaning and usage of the term have undergone substantial shifts. On the one hand, within the field of literary studies, one might notice various narrowings of the concept, one of these being that while in ancient rhetoric the notion of ekphrasis centred around the mode of speech and the affective response of the audience, and it could have referred to the vivid depiction not only of objects or living beings but also periods of time and actions (Barthes 1994, Webb 2009), modern, 20th-century definitions highlight the referential aspect of ekphrasis, limiting its range to either the literary description of a visual work of art or the verbal representation of visual representation (Heffernan 1993). On the other hand, the booming of the field of literary ekphrasis around the turn of the new millennium has brought about the migration of the term to the fields of musicology, film studies, and media studies mainly in the 2000s (Bruhn 2000; Pethő 2003, 2011; Bolter 1996), where it went through diverse extensions due to its conceptions as dissimilar forms of intermediality.

Although in late 20th-century literary studies ekphrasis typically refers to the description of still images or works of art (principally paintings, sculptures, and photographs), in recent years the concept has been broadened to

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include cinema as well. James Heffernan notes that “twenty years ago, I defined ekphrasis as ‘the verbal representation of visual representation,’ which applies fairly well to the description of representational artworks that stand still. But until I was asked to give a talk about fictional cinema, I never realized that my definition could easily include descriptions of movies, which are undeniably examples of visual representation.” (2016, 3.) Literary and film studies focusing on the comparative analysis of cinema and literature predominantly concentrate on the myriad complexities of adaptation of literature into film; however, the reverse inter-art and intermedia relationship, that of film into literature, is also getting more and more scholarly attention (Bellardi 2018, Marcus 2015, McCabe 2005, Sághy 2009). Modernist literature is one of the pivotal interests of such literary studies research, and key approaches include the examination of the ways in which film contributed to the forming of modernist literature and of the ways in which film as a new medium was perceived and discussed by modernist writers. Obviously, there exist many more approaches to the impact of cinema on literature or the ways in which writers react to film; however, explorations of literary descriptions of existing or imaginary films, that is, cinematic ekphrasis, are still very scarce.

In general, ekphrasis not only provides its reader with mental image(s) of the visual representation(s) in question, but also, by presenting acts of seeing or processes of reception, it interprets the visual artefact while unfolding the various forms of knowledge it embodies and the practices it entails (aesthetic, cultural, scientific, societal, or even economic values and practices). Moreover, literary ekphrases offer commentary on the meaning and the cultural status or prestige of a specific picture or a type of image, disclosing the assumptions or prejudices that surround or underlie our concepts of the visual. Due to their interpretive and hypermedial character (Milián 2019), ekphrases are not only able to illuminate the connection between an image or a type of image and its cultures of production, use, and aesthetic reception but also participate in establishing or changing cultural values or attitudes towards a visual medium. Accordingly, literary ekphrases are not just “passively receiving (and profiting) from visual culture” (Tripp 2013, 1), describing and reflecting on existing or imaginary pictures, and staging scenes and ways of perception, but they actively participate in the understanding or even canonization of various phenomena of visual culture. Thus, when attempting to historically outline past visual cultures, practices of image consumption, or ways of seeing, literary ekphrases might play a cardinal role.

It is a commonplace to state that since the birth of film, literature and cinema have been deeply and fruitfully interlaced with each other. Since its early decades, the seventh art has borrowed stories, characters, and narrative strategies from literature, while it has also impacted literary devices and topics; writers have become screenwriters; they have discussed and have even promoted the new medium, and they have taken various stances towards cinema (for instance, sharp rejection, lacklustre interest, or passionate enthusiasm).

When examining writers' attitudes towards the medium of film or the influence that film has exerted on literature, the first quarter of the 20th century is particularly worthy of attention since this is the period not only of evolving filmic techniques and emerging production and exhibition practices but also the first writerly attempts at comprehending and creatively engaging with the younger art.

Far from giving an exhaustive overview of the corpus of study, my paper aims at outlining the ways in which the early 20th-century Hungarian literary élite responded to the new medium of film by way of lyrical cinematic ekphrases published in the first quarter of the 20th century and written by some of the most renowned and popular Hungarian poets of the era (such as Mihály Babits, Gyula Juhász, Zsolt Harsányi, and Jenő Heltai). I aim at sketching out the most significant aspects of the material by focusing on the writers' attitudes towards cinema and the portraits they create of contemporary silent films and their viewers. Throughout my paper, I shall mostly ignore the differentiation among actual, notional, and virtually notional ekphrases. In John Hollander's terminology, actual ekphrasis refers to a literary work that is based on an existing work of art, notional ekphrasis denominates a literary work that describes an imaginary work of art, and virtually notional ekphrasis signifies a literary work that may or may not depict "some actual, but totally lost, work of art" (1988, 209). I shall largely ignore this distinction firstly because I tend to agree with W. J. T. Mitchell's observation that "in a certain sense all ekphrasis is notional and seeks to create a specific image that is to be found only in the text as its 'resident alien,' and is to be found nowhere else" (1994, 157) and, secondly, because in my view it is not expressly necessary to identify the particular (supposedly) existing film(s) verbalized in ekphrases in order to examine processes of viewing, attitudes towards the new medium, or the social practice of cinema-going represented in ekphrastic texts.

In the first thirty years of film history, around 600 films were produced in (Austria-)Hungary, but the overwhelming majority of these have been lost or destroyed. According to the film archivists of the Hungarian National Film Institute, the survival ratio of Hungarian silent films is only approximately 8%, below the international average (10–15%); "there are only some 50 works from the entire period between 1901–1931, and several of these are fragments only."¹ A silent film might be lost forever, but its content might be summarized in synopses, critical reviews, reports, even actual ekphrases, or fragmentary information about it (for example, its title) might be preserved in surviving cinema programmes or other promotional materials. Accordingly, these lost films can be comprehended or at least their aforesaid existence can be known

1 See the description of silent films until 1930 on the website of the Hungarian National Film Institute. <https://filmmarchiv.hu/en/collections/film-collections/feature-films/silent-films-until-1930>. Last accessed 10. 07. 2021.

through collateral – typically verbal – sources, just as their viewing and receptive practices can be reconstructed, at least to a degree, from cinematic ekphrases.

The earliest known examples of a Hungarian writer's response to moving pictures are two letters from 1895 by Mór Jókai, the most popular 19th-century Hungarian novelist. In one of these letters, he writes: "These moving pictures that creep like insects on a white wall are something marvellous! When I first watched them in Nice, I was wonder-stricken; I was taken aback by what this demonical photographing machine is capable of. It is a great shame that they do not have colour, then they could show and tell more. In the café in Nice, and then in Genoa, where I watched them once more, people rushed to them as if there had been a saint's day or a fair going on. When people will get bored with it, it will get there anyway – to the fair, among circus and trapeze artists"² (Jókai 1971 [1895], 10). These lines by Jókai obviously attest to a genuine writerly interest in the new filmic medium and an amazement at it; however, they also display a kind of reluctance or scepticism towards moving pictures in that the author apprehends this new technology as a transient craze and classifies it among the trivial, low cultural forms of entertainment.

When attempting to explore the ways in which early 20th-century Hungarian writers responded to the new medium of film, one finds a (perhaps) surprisingly rich number of sources: journalistic reports of film-viewing experiences, private letters, kinema sketches, critical reviews, aesthetic essays on film, (ekphrastic) poems on moving pictures or film actors, short stories, and novels. Zsolt Kőhádi notes that "with a few notable exceptions (such as Mihály Babits's relatively early cognizance of cinematography), writers of the age took notice of the emergence of 'living photographs' with quiet sympathy" (1996, 16). Nevertheless, if we take a closer look at the Hungarian literature of the age or the emerging film aesthetics discourse during the 1910s, we find that the first generation of authors and associates of the *Nyugat* [West] periodical, the most significant progressive literary journal of the period that had an indispensable role to play in the creation of modern Hungarian literature, actually turned towards film with unusual enthusiasm and voiced their interest in literary, critical, or journalistic texts on cinema though for the most part – at least in the first two decades of film history – they did not necessarily acknowledge film's aesthetic and cultural status as a sister art.³ Undeniably, many of the cinema-going Hungarian poets and writers – e.g. Endre Ady, Mihály Babits, Zsolt Harsányi, Jenő Heltai, Gyula Juhász, Lajos Kassák, Frigyes Karinthy,

2 Translated by me, O. M.

3 To my knowledge, Dezső Szabó, an author of the *Nyugat*, is the first Hungarian writer to write extensively and with unbridled enthusiasm on film as a sister art. In his essay *A mozi esztétikája* [The Aesthetics of Cinema], published in the journal *Thalia* in 1919, he even declares that the significance of the "highest art," i.e. cinema, rivals that of Gutenberg's invention, and he states that "Yes, cinema is art; it is a discrete, specific art form that has got its own purpose, its own laws and devices" (Szabó 2001, 376).

Dezső Kosztolányi, Ferenc Molnár, Dezső Szabó, Ernő Szép, and many more – watched films as a leisure activity or out of curiosity about the newly invented technology; however, their cinematic experiences sometimes became sources of literary inspiration. In the lyrical cinematic ekphrases of the first quarter of the 20th century – such as Jenő Heltai’s *Dal a moziról* [A Song about Cinema], Zsolt Harsányi’s *A mozi* [The Cinema], Mihály Babits’s *Mozgófénykép* [Moving Picture], and Gyula Juhász’s *Prológus* [Prologue] and *Moziban* [In the Cinema] –, the filmic medium (and its exhibition environment) is evoked as a descriptive topic, a representational technique to imitate or to compete with, or a mediatic and socio-cultural experience that transforms not only the perception of the world but also the existing social norms, while the represented viewers’ or the lyrical subject’s attitudes towards it range from caution to fascination, from scepticism to enthrallment, from contempt to appreciation, from stark rejection to unrestricted enthusiasm.

Jenő Heltai’s poem *Dal a moziról* [A Song about Cinema] was first published in the 12 April 1907 issue of the *Fidibusz*, but before that it had been performed as a couplet song⁴ in the Bonbonnière Cabaret in Budapest. It recounts a romance unfolding from a chance meeting in the street, during which a young man accosts a girl named Berta and invites her to the cinema (“Come with me to the projectograph / to watch moving pictures”), where instead of watching motion pictures, they pay more and more attention to each other; they start kissing, which is “followed by something else,” leading to Berta’s pregnancy and her sorrowful regret. As Izabella Füzi puts it, “the poem by Heltai presents cinema as a place where social conventions of contacts between the genders are temporarily suspended – because it is impossible to control them in the darkness (‘in the deep’) of cinema” (2016). The venue of cinema is thus shown as a space for improper behaviour and loosening moral norms, and moving pictures are used as an instrument of seduction and ruination. The space of cinema seems to be especially risky for women since in Heltai’s poem cinema is not just a social but a gendered space, too: the rhymes of the poem disapprove and make fun of the fallen maiden, while her seducer’s social status and appreciation remain the same. Although the main scene of the action is the cinema, we receive little information about the moving pictures themselves: out of the 28 lines of the poem, only six describe and comment on the “main attraction” of cinema, mentioning some thematic aspects (remote “cruises,” “train robbery”), technological and mediatic features of the filmic apparatus (“on the screen,” “pictures were moving”), and aspects of cinema as a sociocultural space (the “darkness” of the auditorium, viewers’ behaviour). The metonymic enumeration of visual experiences abruptly ends with the line of “heaven knows what they saw there,” as if – at least in a

4 Couplet songs were a popular genre in the nightclubs and cabarets of turn-of-the-century Budapest; they were performed with piano accompaniment and were renowned for their prankish humour.

metapoetic sense – the ekphrastic description ultimately renounced evoking the visual, redirecting the readers’ attention to the activities of the young couple in the darkness. Eventually, the poem tells more about the goings-on among viewers in the dark auditorium than the images on the screen, and accordingly, this cinematic ekphrasis is an impish poem first and foremost about the institution of cinema and its moviegoer culture, associating negative (moral) connotations with the social practice of spending an evening at the cinema.

A similar, though more openly hostile and contemptuous stance towards cinema is detectable in *A mozi* [The Cinema] by Zsolt Harsányi (1912), where – through satirical rejections of any other (aesthetic, cultural, educational) value – cinema is captured as an exclusively social experience. Harsányi’s poem is a parody of the contemporary discourse on cinema and its audience, and it centres on the artificial darkness of the cinema environment that creates or allows space for debauchery. Harsányi designates the concepts of cinema shaped by “hundreds of essays” as “the house of new culture,” “the abode of light” (that is the home for education and culture), and “the ferment of people’s pleasure” or “the home of new wonders” as “obsolete conceptions” because the sole essential feature of cinema is “the darkness” it provides, under the cover of which pinching and groping hands are at work, which guarantee “success in the dark” for cinema-goers. There exists not a single word in the whole poem regarding moving pictures screened in the cinema; here the emphasis falls on the “dark” auditorium and the erotic activities of the audience. The poem that mocks cinema and its viewers ultimately ends in the radical aversion of cinema and the harsh devaluation of its visitors (“It’s no use reciting with great fervour, / About this, or that, or culture, / Which the modern cinema sells. / Because no doubt – pardon me – darkness / is of paramount concern here”), reducing cinema to the class of places for sexual encounters only, (almost) putting cinema into the category of brothels.

The much-discussed poem *Mozgófénykép* [Moving Picture] by Mihály Babits⁵ (1909) also leads its readers to the venue of cinema, but it stages a strikingly different cinematic scene and experience than the two poems discussed above. Babits’s poem is both a thematic evocation and a discursive simulation of silent films: an American “love tragedy” and an “automobile rush,” that is, a mix of romance and chase film is swirling before the viewers’ eyes; the entire poem is a description of moving pictures that includes elements of the cinematic apparatus (such as “machine,” “image circle,” “flat sheet,” “the lamp projects on the wall,” “the image turns into,” “light and shadow ex-

5 The poem was composed during Babits’s stay in Szeged (Hungary), probably at the end of 1906 or in the first half of 1907, and the poet could have seen American films at one of the five contemporary screening locations in Szeged. It is still disputed whether this poem is based on an existing film (or more) or is only influenced by the urban culture and the cultural techniques of the age (cf. Apró 1983, Fűzi 2016).

change”) and film’s perceptual and cognitive mechanisms (e.g. “faces grow larger,” “dreamlike” pictures). The quick rhythm of the poem, its brief paratactic sentences, and its alternation between the explicitly itemized content of the silent film and the cinematic effect on its viewers can be interpreted as a simulation of the rapid, temporal sequence of diverse scenes characteristic of film’s structure. In other words, it seems as though the poem, by its rhythm and discourse, would strive to “catch up” or compete with the cinematic means of expression. On the one hand, Babits’s poem adopts an ironic comic tone, poking fun at the cinephile viewer uncritically enthusiastic about motion pictures, who watches the banal stories on the screen in a thrilled, almost ecstatic state. On the other hand, the textual subject keeps an intellectual distance from cinema, a “cheap and great pleasure,” in that, by drawing a parallel between dream and cinema (i.e. the effects of moving pictures on viewers’ consciousness) and avoiding to attribute any high aesthetic quality to film, ultimately it relegates cinema to the sphere of cheap and easy entertainment which does not necessitate any intellectual effort from its consumer.

Gyula Juhász’s poems *Prológus (a Fehér galambok fekete városban című Lóth Ila filmhez)* [Prologue (to the White Doves in a Black City with Ila Lóth)] and *Moziban* [In the Cinema], both published in 1923, define the social practice of cinema-going and the cinematic experience as fleeting escapism; these poems tend to show both cinema and the films screened in it as places to escape to from the upsetting weight of daily existence. The poem *Prológus* [Prologue] was composed for the Szeged premier of the film *Fehér galambok fekete városban* [White Doves in a Black City] (Béla Balogh 1923), where one of the main actresses of the film, Ila Lóth, recited the poem live before the audience of Belvárosi Mozi [Downtown Cinema]. The film itself is a now lost silent film drama about the bodily and mental misery caused by post-war inflation, and, while Juhász’s poem characterizes cinema in general as the realm of “desires” and “dreams,” it attributes exceptional significance to Béla Balogh’s film, considering it a “true,” “modern” “Hungarian,” “Budapest tale.” The melodramatic aspects of the film are pictured in the poem by virtue of colour contrast (“greyness” and “black weekdays” versus “snow-white hope;” “black city” versus “white doves”) and the evocation of some plot elements that indicate the characters’ moral stance and dignity (“Resigned benignity that endures in silence, / Faithful and victorious love”). The opening and the ending lines address the members of the audience, those “fatigued people” with “thirsty hearts” who crave for motion picture stories, a world into which they can escape from the daily grind. Juhász’s other poem, *Moziban* [In the Cinema], also contradistinguishes the empirical reality with the “colourful” illusions of film representing other worlds and forms of life in terms of space, time, or social class. Here, cinematic experience is both a light-hearted form of recreation and a collective, almost hypnotic event: films are able to make people forget their own “sad,” “grey,” and “small” lives, and anyone can become an “adventurer” for the time of their duration. Thus, cinema is a fun

place to visit for a few hours, it is a valuable though somewhat stupefying alternative to the real-life world.

A later poem by Jenő Heltai, *Mozi* [Cinema], written some time after the emergence of sound film, evokes either the experience of an entire evening spent at the cinema or assembles a metonymical list of various cinematic experiences. The poem's short sentences seem to imitate the fast succession of filmic images, and they describe an evening's film programme or create a catalogue of diverse filmic genres, styles, and forms (e.g. burlesque, animation, documentary, crime film, melodrama; short- and feature-length fictional films) and the response of a lyrical subject to them ("tears and laughter"). The last stanza of the poem ends with a devastating evaluation of cinema; accordingly, film is "one centimetre of real poetry / and three thousand metres of silliness." These last lines stage an open rivalry between literature and film insofar as the comparison is grounded on the concept of true, "real" poetry and its (supposedly) higher abstract or intellectual capacities, compared to which the medium and experience of film lags far behind.

Even if far from being exhaustive, the above study hopefully has provided a peek into the ways in which early-20th-century Hungarian poets responded to the emergence of cinema. As we have seen, members of the literary élite, to say the least, had some difficulty in recognizing film's aesthetic and cultural prestige, even if they were clearly fascinated by its capacity to capture movement or to offer glimpses into different spatiotemporal worlds. The invention of cinema has brought about an intermedial competition within which writers of the age consigned film to the lowest rungs in the hierarchy of the arts and, as their cinematic ekphrases show, regarded it as having little artistic, educational, or societal value. Some of the poems examined above engage in a playful, creative relationship with cinema, but even in these film and its screening environment or its viewers become the object of caricature, ridicule, or underestimation.

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**INTERMEDIALITY AND AUTHORIAL
REFLEXIVITY**

INTERMEDIALITÁS ÉS SZERZŐI
REFLEXIVITÁS

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Specular Affinities: From (Self-) Reflexivity to Intermediality via *Mise en Abyme*

This article is a theoretical account of the convergence between cinematic self-reflexivity and intermediality. Agreeing with Petr Szczepanik, who considers that “reflexivity constitutes a fundamental feature of all kinds of intermediality” (2002, 29), I ponder their mutual self-constructed and self-revealing nature. I stress the importance of an authorial discourse in this dynamics, which is informed both by a formal and a conceptual makeup. In Lucien Dällenbach’s account, *mise en abyme*, the key figure of artistic specularity, combines the enunciative surplus at the level of enunciation (whereby intradiegetic creators and spectators are revealed at their activities) with a fictional mirroring at the level of the story itself. Ultimately, *mise en abyme* reinforces the frame-breaking devices of cinematic self-reflexivity, but it also conveys the appropriation of other art forms by cinema, either as media transformation or as transmediation. Departing from the idea that the arts among themselves generate an exchange that invokes the materiality of the media and hence the self-reflexive potential of the art forms, I posit that an additional meaning of in-betweenness is in order. Adapting Gilles Deleuze’s theory of the crystal-image (1985) to this intermedial context, I argue in favour of an “inter-media image,” consisting of a perpetual flux of qualified media in which the *mise en abyme* generates a true constellation of ever-new inter-art combinations.

All types of artworks are produced, but not all of them evince this constructedness; some hide their artefactual essence and pretend to simply be, as if created ab nihilo. This purported realism of an artwork which metaphorically conveys the world as if through a mirror held up to nature, as William Shakespeare wrote in *Hamlet* (Act III, Scene 2),¹ is precisely what reflexive cinema in general disrupts. Instead of a mirror which is simply reduced to a frame, letting nature be perceived *through* it as if it did not exist, one is made to perceive it as an opaque duplicating device, a reflective machine. Along these lines, Robert

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1 Ironically, this is a scene in which the protagonist, Prince Hamlet, intent on unmasking the craftiness of his royal uncle, instructs theatre players of an intradiegetic play on how to best accomplish his own goals. This is a *mise en abyme*, as the play in the play, *The Murder of Gonzago*, mirrors the actual situation of the play *Hamlet* by Shakespeare (ca. 1600).

Stam defines reflexive cinema (also known as anti-illusionist) as the one that questions its own filmic conventions, revealing the artifice upon which all art is based: “Reflexive works break with art as an enchantment and call attention to their own factitiousness” (1992, 1).

Therefore, reflexive cinema explicitly manifests what I have elsewhere called an “authorial discourse” (Chinita 2013b), which at its simplest, formal level is a combination of the more encompassing activity of a physical intentional agent with a designated locus (a metaphorical voice) present in all films, resulting in restricted and particular enunciative marks explicitly present in a specific film. This discourse thus refers to all the technical and aesthetic work undertaken by the author(s), regardless of the level in which it manifests itself: in his/her own name, through an interposed diegetic agent, or even in an apparent filmic neutrality (through the mediation of the recording camera) (Chinita 2013b, 138). This amounts to considering that, broadly speaking, technically explicit cinema is always a reflexive construction; it always manifests the *self*-consciousness of the author(s) involved and the enunciative practices they employ.

Christian Metz (1991), who, *stricto sensu*, considers the film text an “impersonal enunciation,” actually distinguishes between two artistic enunciations where intentionality can be explicitly devised. He differentiates between those works that reflect aspects concerning the cinematic practice in general from those that reflect aspects pertaining to *their own* construction as a specific film object. He calls the former film type “metacinematic reflexivity” and the latter “metafilmic” or “discursive reflexivity” (which corresponds to what is known as the self-reflexive variety). For example, at a visual level, a direct disclosure of the apparatus is obtained via the presence of diegetic cameras, booms, lighting projectors, screens, etc. during the production and/or film viewing operations, whereas an indirect perception of the apparatus is achieved through a flare, a gaze at the camera, an object or liquid thrown at the lens, or the realization of technical devices that point to the artificiality of the film, such as a split screen. The two strategies may be combined when, for instance, the actual recording camera is glimpsed in a diegetic mirror.²

At a more conceptual level, my notion of authorial discourse entails a marked and assumed ideological position on film: a *discourse* on the mechanisms of creation and reception has to take place throughout the entire picture for it to be considered an authorial enunciation about the seventh art (Chinita 2013b, 118). The film director, as responsible for the film’s shot list and *mise-en-scène*, has to resort to specular strategies that reinforce the enunciative component of the film work and its cornerstone: the *mise en abyme* (i.e. mirror images).³ It is precisely here that intermediality crosses paths with metacinema, as Stam’s above-quoted comment on the artificiality of all art already presupposes.

2 The sound may also contain revealing strategies of both types.

3 For simplicity’s sake, I will use the French denomination throughout this piece.

The *mise en abyme*, which carries innate narrativity, is the key figure of artistic specularity implying the mirroring of an element within the confines of an artwork. According to André Gide, who first used the concept,⁴ the duplication involves the figures and facts of a diegesis and not the image per se. Lucien Dällenbach's narratological theory of mirror images in literature (1977), which may be adapted to the field of cinema,⁵ broadened the scope of this interpretation of mirroring to include the mechanics of both the storytelling (enunciative *mise en abyme*) and the story told (fictional *mise en abyme*). In the workings of the storytelling, the characters are perforce – as is the case with Federico Fellini's film *8 ½* (1963) – creators or spectators of any kind, and the action involves the process and the context of their activities, calling attention to the psychic and artistic makeup of creation and reception at large and to the auteurs' and film viewers' roles. The story that is told, on the other hand, may involve all sorts of characters and diegetic universes or situations. Yet, it is fully dependent on the narrative structures used to depict them. In this category, fictionality and enunciation are intertwined although the story is made to prevail. Thus, a mirroring may be produced inwards and be embedded in the story, taking place either once or multiple times (which Dällenbach describes as *ad infinitum*). Conversely, an aporetic reduplication may occur when a supposedly "fictional" world is mirrored by an apparently "real" one, placed outside of it (however, they coexist in the same film, and both are naturally diegetic). Furthermore, embeddedness may be combined with aporia in a single film, which, once more, is the case with Fellini's *8 ½*, which depicts a film director in the process of pre-producing a film while experiencing artistic and existential angst. This sends him into a labyrinth of memories and fantasies which interrupt the normal development of his work.

Christian Metz (1991) argues that self-reflexive films need to be regarded as something in process in which a surplus of enunciative devices is used. Among those enunciate, ed implements listed by Metz in his book *L'énonciation impersonnelle* (1991) as part of the *mise-en-scène*, to my mind, some are more clearly specular than others: the already mentioned *mise en abyme*, but also films in the film, the use of mirrors, the camera gaze, and the disclosure of the apparatus. More importantly, *mise en abyme* as a backstage revelation of filmmaking and film viewing (a type of product known in the American film industry as the Hollywood on Hollywood Film/Movie)⁶ may be – and often is – used together with mirroring devices that strengthen the authorial discourse both formally and

4 Thus, for him, a work of art contained in the character's own world (that is, "reduced to their scale") the self-same subject-matter of the artwork as a whole. André Gide, *Journal 1889–1939* (Paris: Gallimard, 1948, 41. quoted by Dällenbach 1997, 15 – my translation). Within the pictorial field, as long as image is figural, sustaining the repetition of a situation within different media formats, Gide's postulate remains true.

5 Cf. *The (In)visible Spectator* (Chinita 2013a, published in Portuguese) and Fevry (2000).

6 Cf. P. D. Anderson (1978), Parish, Pitts, and Mank (1978), Laurence Soroka (1983), Christopher Ames (1997), to name only the more academically inclined.

conceptually. However, in order to effectively link (self-)reflexive cinema to intermediality, two aspects have to be broached: (1) the relationship between cinema and other arts, (2) the consideration of film as a medium among other media.

In the first case, mirroring as represented and produced in film extends far beyond cinema and accommodates other art forms. For example, Dällenbach himself allows for other artworks – such as a painting, a theatrical play, a piece of music, and so on – to be present within a narrative with the explicit purpose of representing a work of art (1977, 95). Hence, they are not mere decorations or neutral objects, but they stand for art forms themselves. The sheer existence of a frame in a painting or a photograph, an architectonic barrier such as a windowpane, a doorway, an arch, a store window, a mirror, a camera framing, a stage and/or a curtain, a book page, and so on may operate as frame-breaking devices. Some of them, such as the mirror, are mentioned by Metz (1991) as downright specular tools. Marcello Walter Bruno (2001) claims that the self-reflexive variety of cinema – which he calls “implicit metafilm” – does not require the representation of the artistic context (the so-called cinema world); it is solely dependent upon the film being perceived as a work of art, that is, as “artefact, artificial and artful” (2001, 16, first column – my translation). Gilles Deleuze (1985, 103) considers the hyalosign⁷ an “oeuvre au miroir” (“a mirrored image”), which includes all forms of artistic inlays: either films in the film or other artworks such as theatre plays, shows, and paintings.⁸ This line of thought culminates in Petr Szczepanik’s concept of “intermedia reflexivity,” which takes into account the differences between media in order to see how they merge into one another and originate “hybrid forms of images” (2002, 29). He argues that “[R]eflexivity constitutes a fundamental feature of all kinds of intermediality” (2002, 29). Although Szczepanik writes about media, while Dällenbach, Walter Bruno, and Deleuze focus more specifically on art forms, they are all part of the same debate.

As pointed out by Joachim Paech (2000, 13), following Niklas Luhman: “Every [artistic] form is a form solely because of a medium which is only observable in the form it has made possible.” There can be no art forms without media. Adopting the notion of “qualified media” propounded by Lars Elleström (2010, 24–27) allows us to eliminate any confusion and simultaneously dismiss what would be an unnatural separation between two things which are tightly connected. Elleström distinguishes between “basic media,” identified by their modal properties (involving materiality, sensoriality, spatial-temporality, and meaning), and “qualified media,” cultural media types strongly dependent on their historical, social, and cultural circumstances as well as certain variable conventions. Art forms belong to the latter category, although some overlap is

7 Whereupon the modern bifacial image is composed of two halves perpetually interchanging between a visible and an invisible side.

8 When these embedded occurrences become indiscernible from one another, he calls them “*l'oeuvre en germe*” (Deleuze 1985, 102).

admissible (Elleström himself provides the example of “moving images” in reference to films). Szczepanik (2002) corroborates Paech (2000) by defining intermedia reflexivity as “a process of mutual reflecting and self-reflecting of two or more media forms, correlated within one single image or the diegesis” (2002, 30). As Paech claims, “[T]he arts, in their relationships to one another or respectively to older [...] and newer technological media [...] are only special cases of intermediality which occur at times when forms that originate from contexts defined as art [...] and passed on as artwork or text appear in other art forms [...] or in mechanical-technological production” (2000, 16). For Lars Elleström, “media transformation” is a transference of media characteristics among media, which may take the form of a qualified medium being represented in another one (2014, 28–30). Such a representation is what Paech calls the symbolic level of intermedial relations, either of other film(s) in the film – one of the mirroring processes listed by Metz (1991) and which entails an enunciative *mise en abyme* of reception – or of other arts (paintings, theatre, etc.) in a film (Paech 2000, 17). The more built-in this medial reflection is, presumably the more self-reflexive it may be considered to be, exposing traces of the receiver medium itself, into which the others are embedded.

According to Elleström (2014), when some features of a given medium are transposed to another medium, “transmediation” takes place. In the case of qualified media, groups of media products “tend to trigger similar representations” (Elleström 2014, 22). Paech calls this process “material intermediality,” inasmuch as it is not about the representation of media as part of the object or theme of the work, but it rather involves the representational layer itself reappearing “constitutively in a different medium” (for example, a painted or photographed picture) (2000, 17). Szczepanik’s concept of intermedia reflexivity addresses this duality. Indeed, he distinguishes between two levels of the phenomenon: one which is a mere figuration of different media in the filmic diegesis and another one that is more elusive and intermediate (in the sense of in-between), which he designates as “image-surface” (2002, 31).

Concerning cinema’s mediality, Walter Bruno argues that cinema is a meta-medium because it not only manages to reproduce referential images (that is, reality) but also fantasy images derived from other artistic media (screen-mediated reproductions of static photographs, television images, verbal and written language, and pictorial canvases, among others). According to him, this multimedial nature is what makes cinema a medium so prone to *mise en abyme*. Consequently, I posit that cinema is a multiplier and exhibitor of media in a way that none of the other so-called art forms can be. Its reflective and representational properties are immense.

The element of the cinematic apparatus that makes it particularly inter-artistic and self-reflexive is the frame. In Pascal Bonitzer’s opinion (1987), the cinematic “reality” is always illusory: as long as there is a frame, the viewers are made to be aware of the medium, that is, the flat surface on which the images

are projected.⁹ That rectangle is not a manifestation of the profilmic, neither is it a representation of the world. “It is an agency of volumes, masses, forms, and movements” (Bonitzer 1987, 21); it is a conjunction of effects and the result of choices. Werner Wolf, referring to frames in general, observes that they allow interpretation and are, therefore, meta-phenomena (2006, 3). He considers two types of frames: the cognitive, made of schema that help us interpret reality and the artefacts, and the artistic, consisting of physical frames that surround artworks and help us perceive a coherent whole (2006, 5). In this context, “framing” is the activity of decoding that artworks require in order to be considered as such, and the rules enabling that activity are called “framings.” Inasmuch as they may involve more than one medium, frames may be explicitly intermedial. In turn, framings flaunt their condition: they have both a self-referential and a meta-referential function and are frame-breaking devices (2006, 30). They enable viewers to either concentrate on the artefact or the artifice; to either see the frame (the art object as qualified medium) or the picture (the contents of the image as representation), and to possibly see it in conjunction with other art forms. The relationship between arts generates an exchange that invokes the materiality of the media and, consequently, the self-reflexive potential of the art forms. As Ágnes Pethő states, “[T]echniques of intermediality [in general] effectively break the transparency of the filmic image, and while they sort of close the image upon itself, they can also open it up towards illusory inter-media and inter-art ‘transgressions,’ ‘crossovers’” (2011, 96). Intermediality is more than reflexive (as per Szczepanik 2002, 29); it is always self-reflexive because specific media cannot be removed from the equation, no more than cinema can be truly appreciated without taking into consideration other art forms. However, applying the Deleuzian logic of the hyalosign (1985) to this inter-arts context, we obtain a specific meaning of intermediality in which the very often discussed in-betweenness of media (cf. Pethő 2018, 165–176) resides in the qualified media’s perpetual movement *towards* other media, an “inter-media image” so to speak.¹⁰

In what concerns cinema alone, Deleuze postulates a propagation of the inner reflex of the bifacial image, characterized by a permanent interchange between its two sides: the visible/actual and the invisible/virtual. When such an image, intrinsically indiscernible in itself, due to its constant movement, enters in contact with an environment (in French “milieu,” meaning *medium*), endowed with reflective properties, the whole medium is “crystallized” and becomes fully visible in all its magnitude. Expanding upon this concept, let us consider the medium of cinema as a whole, as actually Deleuze himself does when he

9 In the current post-cinematic age, the flat surface of projection is being replaced by more volumetric ones, owing more to sculpture than to painting, but the same type of anti-illusionist and medial reasoning applies.

10 This also takes into account the sound. Indeed, Deleuze calls the bifacial sounds “sonic image(s)” (*son-signes*).

writes about the four types of crystal-image in relation to time (1985, 111–128). According to him, cinema as a medium endowed with reflective properties may be a “perfect crystal,” presenting the world as a theatrical spectacle (as in Max Ophüls’s films); a “crystal in formation,” showing life as a spectacle, *tout court* (as in Federico Fellini’s works); or a “decomposing crystal,” revealing the atemporal dimension of the arts and incorporating the world as a theatre (as in Luchino Visconti’s works).¹¹

This conception of the crystal-image is already intermedial, but nevertheless restricted, because it is reduced to a single departure medium (cinema). Now, if one thinks of cinema as part of a cluster of media, interchanging with several media,¹² then one obtains the perfect intermedial crystal-image, or, as I said above, yet another (and, it seems to me, better) meaning of in-betweenness. In this context, the expression does not refer to something which is in the middle, to something that crosses paths with other media specificities, or to hybridity in some way. It is more than that: it points to an intrinsically intermedial substance in constant permutation, a perpetual flux of qualified media bursting with anti-illusionistic possibilities, a true symbiotic cinema. None of this would be possible without the *mise en abyme*, which, beyond generating an internal audiovisual mirroring, begets a true constellation of ever-new inter-arts combinations.

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11 Yet another, fourth, type of crystal is the “flawed-crystal” (as in Jean Renoir’s films).

12 A true mirrored polygon as Deleuze suggests of the shattering mirrors scene of Orson Welles’s *The Lady from Shanghai*, which he takes to be the best example of crystal-image (Deleuze 1985, 95).

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Teréz Vincze*

In-Between Written Text and Moving Image – The Intermediality of Hong Sang-soo

“Film as an art is finished. It’s dead. [...] Let’s just read. In such a rotten world, only books will save us. Only books.” (Hong Sang-soo: *Oki’s Movie*, 2010.)

Prominent and extremely prolific auteur of South-Korean cinema, Hong Sang-soo has directed twenty-six full-length feature films since his debut in 1996. He is famous for telling stories about filmmaking in his works, especially about the private life of film directors. Approximately half of the twenty-six films have a film director as a main character or depict the life of filmmakers. In his early films, sporadically there also appears an actor, a painter, or a poet in important roles, but since his sixth feature, *Tale of Cinema (Keuk-jang-jeon)*, 2005, film director characters have started to dominate stories [Fig. 1].

Hong has developed a coherent oeuvre with many returning topics, motifs, and structural elements of stories and film language. He is also a typical auteur in the sense that through his artist characters he constantly reflects on the process (or very often the inability) of creating art. In a typical Hong film, the prototype of a (failed) artist is a middle-aged director who is often more occupied with chasing women than creating art. It is worth mentioning that Hong’s oeuvre started with the story of an (unsuccessful) novelist – the protagonist of his first film, *The Day a Pig Fell into the Well (Doae-ji-ga woo-mool-e bba-jin nal)*, 1996.

In this short piece, I would like to discuss the interesting position of literature, the written text and the book in Hong’s oeuvre that had become increasingly prominent during the 2010s. The above motto is uttered in Hong’s 2010 film, *Oki’s Movie (Ok-hee-eui yeong-hwa)*, by a professor of film during a conversation with his younger film director colleague who had been directing arthouse films but had difficulty finding financial support for his projects. The next year, in 2011, Hong again directed a film (*The Day He Arrives / Book-chon bang-hyang*) about a film director. The spatial axis of the mysterious and repetitive story is a bar called “Novel.” I argue that these two films open a series in Hong’s oeuvre that develop an intermedial connection between cinema on the one hand and literature, writing, and the book on the other. These films centred around writing and literature were dominating Hong’s production in the 2010s. In 2021

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Figure 1. *Tale of Cinema*: The classical self-reflexive structure of film in a film

with *In Front of Your Face* (*Dang-sin eol-gol ap-e-seo*), the film director is back again in an important role on Hong's screen.

Hong's distinct style of filmmaking can be detected in his tendency to confuse his viewers by building a mysteriously repetitive narrative structure that connects variations of similar events, dream and fantasy sequences, while using a misleadingly simple and realistic *mise-en-scène*. In a sense, Hong creates his own art-house style taking on the so-called "mind-game films" of the 21st century. Thomas Elsaesser connects the proliferation of these mind-game films to digital culture and database structures, and argues that the new technologies of data storage and retrieval naturally engender new forms of narrative that sequence and link data differently into structures where a story is not necessarily composed of a beginning, a middle, and an ending (Elsaesser 2009, 22). According to him, the new challenges to narrative can be defined in three directions: embracing the rhizome, the archive, and the database as we are already experiencing it in the forms of hypertexts and networked structures of cyberspace; see it as a complement to the (modernist) narrative that is "accommodating seriality, multiple options, and open-endedness within a broadly telic and goal-oriented storytelling format;" and the "third direction would reassess the present state and future potential of the material object and symbolic form which has largely shaped linear narrative in both word and image: the printed book" (Elsaesser 2009, 23). The series of Hong's films during the 2010s seem to reconnect with the "material object and symbolic form" of the printed book, the (hand)written text on paper, and other non-digital tools that are able to record stories, while his *camera stylo* (Astruc 1948) has become entirely digital – Hong switched to digital filmmaking in 2008.

In her book *Cinema and Intermediality: The Passion for the In-Between*, Ágnes Pethő argues that "inter" in intermediality means relationships instead of structures, it is a concentration on what "'happens' in-between media rather than simply exists within a given signification" (Pethő 2011, 1). I believe that what is present in these Hong films of the 2010s can be interpreted as the for-

mation of the cinematic auteur in-between cinematic storytelling and the concept of literature as written text and linear storytelling. This position expresses a certain kind of nostalgia towards an analogue medium while using the very flexible tool of digital filmmaking.

The in-betweenness is present not only as a dialogue between moving picture and written text but also in the interactions between different types of intermediality. Pethő defines two modes of the intermedial: the sensual and the structural. She suggests that in order to provide a phenomenological (re)definition of intermediality, the often-used concept of intertextuality has to be replaced by a different approach “based on the assumption that while ‘reading’ intertextual relations engages our intellectual capacities, ‘reading’ intermedial relations requires, more than anything else, an embodied spectator who gets ‘in touch’ with the world of the film” (2011, 4). This approach suggests the (re)definition of intermediality in the context of cinema as sensorial experience. I would say that this sensual mode of intermediality is the mode of the present or even the future, the path leading through many new possibilities available for moving pictures from 3D to virtual reality, from computer-generated images to extremely sophisticated sound systems. While Hong creates nostalgia for analogue technologies, he remains sophisticated on a different level – he generates complicated and confusing narrative structures and uses self-reflexive techniques.

Hong’s approach fits into the other category of intermediality, namely the structural mode. As Pethő argues, “The ‘structural gateway’ to intermediality [...] relies on the possibility of the cinematic flow of images to ‘break down’ into their media components and the image of the world to become spread out as a giant screen of media palimpsest. The *structural mode* thus involves either a fragmentation, a shattering of the world into pieces of media representations[,] or the experience of some kind of juxtapositions, jumps, loops or foldings between the media representations and what we perceive as cinematic reality. This kind of intermedialization may take the form of diegetic reflexivity, or it may result in the world appearing as a media collage, it can be perceived as a marker for metaleptic leaps” (2011, 5–6). Throughout his career, Hong has been constantly applying these jumps, loops between representation and reality, creating diegetic reflexivity. What I propose here is the idea that Hong in his films of the 2010s reflects on the medium of the written text and the book in order to create nostalgia for a more traditional concept of complexity in the digital age.

I start the story of the “book” in Hong’s oeuvre with the film *The Day He Arrives* (2011). The main character is a film director, but practically all the crucial scenes take place in a bar called “Novel” [Fig. 2]. Although Hong’s oeuvre is full of confusing and mysterious storylines, according to scholars who have painstakingly solved the puzzles of the plotlines in his earlier films (Deutelbaum 2005), *The Day He Arrives* is the first one where “the pieces of the puzzle do not really fit together,” the variations of events that repeatedly happen in the bar are separate visions of the same event, a “commentary on the act of cinematic



Figure 2. *The Day He Arrives*: repeated encounters in the bar called “Novel”

recreation of events that can never really be more than representation” (Raymond 2014, 32). The film also contains the most classic tool of reflexivity: a look into the camera by the film director hero. As a “commentary on cinematic representation,” the name of the place where the mysteriously repetitive events take place evokes literature. What makes this significant retrospectively is the repeated return of the motif of books and writing in subsequent films.

Probably the most intriguing film of this series about reflections on writing is *Hill of Freedom* (*Ja-yu-eui eon-deok*, 2014). In this film, Mori arrives from Japan to meet his ex-colleague Kwon in Seoul. They worked together in a language school years ago, and now Mori has come back to confess his feelings to the woman, and probably suggest starting a relationship. Unfortunately, Kwon seems to be out of town, her flat is closed, and at her workplace Mori cannot get any information about when she will be back. Mori decides to stay and wait for Kwon to return.

The plot starts with Kwon returning to her workplace and receiving a pile of handwritten letters from Mori documenting what happened to him while waiting for Kwon in Seoul. Kwon sits down and starts reading the letters. From this point on, the story unfolds on the screen as a series of letters narrated by Mori. When Kwon starts to read the first letter, we hear Mori’s voice-over narration and see the events he writes/narrates about. The basics of the narrative structure are set: Kwon is reading the letters, and we see the content of the letters come alive on the screen. But after the first sequence there comes the trick: while Kwon sets off from the office with the letters in her hands, she seems to faint and trip over on the stairs, dropping the letters. After collecting the letters, she goes to a bar and continues reading. The structure remains the same: we see Kwon reading the letters, and whenever she turns to a new letter, a new episode about Mori appears on the screen. However, it takes a few sequences for the viewers to realize that the episodes of Mori’s story had been mixed up. The very attentive viewer might remember at this point that the letters were dropped by Kwon at the beginning, so they could have been mixed up, and

Kwon reads them in the wrong order; consequently, we also see the episodes in the wrong order. As the film continues, viewers gradually adjust themselves to the new rule of mix-up regardless of the memory of the scene with the mixed-up letters at the beginning. This structure continues till Kwon finishes reading the letters and goes to the place where Mori stays and finds that he is still there. The next day, the two leave together to Japan and – as Mori’s narration concludes during the scene of the two leaving – live happily ever after. This already seems to be a strange happy ending since we (and Kwon) have been informed by the letters that during the week Mori was waiting for her in Seoul he had a relationship with the owner of the coffee shop close to Kwon’s place. But before we could fully digest this discrepancy, there comes the next surprise. After the concluding scene of “happy ending,” there suddenly follows an episode where Mori wakes up one morning in front of his room at the guest house. We realize that this is the morning after he had a dinner with the coffee shop owner, and this is before they started the relationship. What does this sudden turn of events mean? How, or, more importantly, when does this happen? Even the most attentive viewer could have missed the structural explanation of this scene: there was a letter left on the stairs after Kwon dropped them at the beginning. One of the usual and mostly awkward zoomings of Hong showed the lost letter that could explain this scene. But I have the impression that on the first viewing of the film the immediate reaction might be sheer confusion caused by this sudden, unexpected scene.

This structure is an organic continuation of everything Hong has been interested in concerning narration throughout all his oeuvre: to construct plotlines that mix up the timeline of the story and cause bewilderment. The new element here is the way he connects the game of time and narration to the linearity of writing. The film imitates an epistolary novel while it mixes up or “tears out” some chapters from it. Hong creates a study on narration and linearity in film, linearity being ensured by a written text [Fig. 3]. But not only Mori’s letters connect writing to the question of linearity. There is also a book featured in the film. The book is about time, and it is being read by Mori. As he summarizes the content of the book to the coffee owner during their dinner: “It says, time is not a real thing like your body, my body or this table... Our brain makes up a mind frame of time continuity: past, present, and future. I think you don’t have to experience life like that... necessarily as a species... But at the end we cannot escape from this frame of mind because our brain evolved this way, I don’t know why.”

This study of narration and linearity that directly and materially connects the filmic structure to the concept of the epistolary novel is one of the best examples of Hong’s place in-between film and literature, that is, a true example of intermediality in the sense Ágnes Pethő described it in her above-quoted book.

The motif of analogue media as mediator between the concept of linearity and filmic narration is also present in his other films from this decade. In *Claire’s Camera* (*Keul-le-eo-eui ka-me-ra*, 2017), Polaroid pictures play an interesting role, and a book also has a significant appearance [Fig. 4]. The plot contains a series of encounters between several people such as Claire, the teacher, So,



Figure 3. *Hill of Freedom*: intermediality structured around the handwritten text



Figure 4. *Claire's Cinema*: the book as an analogue tool for bonding culturally

the director, and Man-hee, the film sales assistant. Hong plays his usual game of confusing viewers – although editing suggests continuity, there are sudden misleading twists and incongruities, while strategically placed repetitions of motifs are making the confusion deeper. Interestingly, the Polaroid pictures taken by Claire are used to suggest connections between events and create a feeling that these material objects are proofs that could help us to detect the actual order of events: what is in the picture must have happened earlier. It seems to be important that these pictures are not digital images but real objects. The Polaroid pictures in *Claire's Camera* play a similar role to that of the letters in *Hill of Freedom*: they signal connections between elements of the plot but not necessarily make it easier to understand causal connections. And there is also the book. It is a collection of poems this time. After Claire meets the director at a cafe, they go to a library, and the man asks Claire to read out loud a poem from one of the books. He asks her to teach him to pronounce the lines in French. Again, it seems important that after Claire already googled the director's name on her phone while at the cafe, they try to bond culturally via an analogue object, a book, and through poetry read out loud from a book.

In the same year of making *Claire's Camera*, Hong also made *The Day After* (*Geu hu*, 2017), which almost entirely takes place in an office of a publishing house [Fig. 5]. The main character is a critic who is the director of the publishing house. He has many common features with the usual male hero of Hong's films: a cowardly man romantically caught between several women. The narrative structure – thanks to the usual, confusing editing style – is rather opaque. Although books do not feature extensively in the story, their part seems meaningful from the perspective of my current argument. After her turbulent first workday at the publishing office, the young editorial assistant, Ah-reum, takes a taxi home. In the taxi, she reads one of the books she had picked up in the office. The taxi driver asks her: “Does reading help you with life?,” “A little, I think” – Ah-reum replies [Fig. 6]. And at the moment of this dialogue, she probably



Figure 5. *The Day After*: the publishing house and the books as set for the story



Figure 6. *The Day After*: “Does reading help you with life?”

needs help since at the end of the turbulent first day she had already lost her job. Furthermore, the film ends with the appearance of a book. After a perplexing, Hongesque scene of a dialogue between the director and the once-fired assistant, the man gives her a novel as a parting gift. He mentions that it is a book by Soseki – and the film’s (Korean) title is the same as the (Korean) title of one of Soseki’s novels. The film that takes place in a publisher’s office and is about a troubled man has the title of a novel that is a story of a troubled man.¹ I read this film as another example of Hong being in-between literature and film, and the use of literature as a possible aid to solve the problems of one’s personal life.

The 2010s were closed by two of Hong’s films that featured writer characters. In *Grass* (*Pul-ip-deul*, 2018), there is a mysterious writer played by Kim Min-hee, Hong’s constant muse since the mid-2010s. On the surface, the structure of the film is misleadingly simple and linear, but the usual mysterious repetitions and contradictions keep alive the suspicion that something is not right here, there is more to the series of seemingly clear-cut dialogues. The central motif of all the dialogues are trust, compassion, and conscience, and a sudden and passionate outburst of emotions seems to shape the flow of dramatic tension. The usual, Hongesque editing that does not support continuity works towards the weakening of causal connections, while the character of the writer seems to be a tool that builds connections between episodes through her voyeur positions and her narrated comments about the happenings around her. The character of the writer is positioned in the film as a contact point of plotlines, and sometimes we even have the impression that the whole world of the film is the product of this writer who sits all day in the corner of the cafe, watches people,

1 Natsume Soseki’s *And Then* (1909) is a story of a young Japanese man struggling with his personal purpose and identity, as well as the changing social landscape of Meiji-era Japan. The Korean title of the novel and the film are both: 그 후 (*Geu hu*).

and writes this exact story on her computer about the importance of emotions. “And so people gather together... Their emotions combine, and give each other strength. Their lives become intertwined and now they stand side by side. [...] Why do they act so intimate? [...] Is it real? It’d be so nice if it were. In the end, people are emotions. Emotions are gullible and forceful, precious, cheap, and alluring. And I long for them now.” – the writer comments while sitting in the corner and observing their fellow humans. At these moments, the feeling that the writer is creating the whole story of the film as a study of human emotions looms over the viewer. Although in this film the act of writing is not connected to any analogue tool, being rather performed on a computer, it still seems to be the continuation of the trend of using writing and literature as the model of storytelling.

Hotel by the River (*Gang-byeon-ho-tel*, 2018) closed the decade of the 2010s in Hong’s oeuvre. This time, the centre of the story is a poet played by Ki Joo-bong, who seems to appear in some of Hong’s latest films as a new and older alter ego of the director. *Hotel by the River* is a symbolic closure of the decade and possibly of the trend of using literature as an intermedial tool for building a layered, reflexive narrative structure. This is a symbolic moment because the film ends with the death of the poet. This death might symbolize the end of a cycle of films that had assigned an important role to literature and writing in an oeuvre that prefers to reflect on the state of art and human condition through stories about filmmakers, and especially about film directors. At the beginning of the new decade, Hong seems to return to actor and director heroes. Whatever the future might bring, during the last decade Hong has developed the motif of writing and literature into a complex and recognizable layer of his films that opens his body of works for intermedial readings, to understand them in-between written text and moving image.

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Ying Zhu*

Regulating Morality on Chinese Screen: From *A Sigh* (2000) to *Cell Phone* (2003)

After firmly establishing his reputation by the end of the 1990s as king of New Year comedy for the winter holiday market, popular Chinese filmmaker Feng Xiaogang made an unexpected turn for his next project, producing a dark melodrama to be released in the early fall rather than the winter holiday season. The resulting film, *A Sigh*, dealt with the messy issue of extramarital affairs, one of China's touchiest topics, yet still forbidden at the time. *A Sigh* told the story of a married screenwriter who holes himself up on a tropical isle to finish a screenplay. To unleash his creative juices, his business partner dispatches a leggy temptress to keep him company. The companionship leads to an affair and later the discovery of the affair by the writer's wife. The resulting torturous romantic triangle captivated Chinese viewers, and Feng's non-judgmental approach encouraged rare public debate on this thorny issue.

***A Sigh* (一声叹息, 2000)**

A Sigh became the first Chinese film that confronted the challenges of extramarital affairs, divorce, and the troubled state of domestic unions in urban China (Pomfret 2000). As Feng told *The Washington Post* while promoting the film, "These days everybody seems to be getting a divorce. Everybody has a mistress or a lover. I went through this myself, so I thought it would be a good issue to explore." Feng had an affair in real life in the mid-late 1990s with actress Xu Fan, who starred in *Be There and Be Square*. He eventually divorced his first wife in 1999 and married Xu soon after. She went on to appear in many of his films, including *A Sigh*, in which she played, perversely, the wife who was cheated on.

The film was a reworking of Feng's failed attempt at the same project in 1996 when he carried on an affair with Xu, with his wife's knowledge and consent. Called *Wrecked Life*, the 1996 autobiographical project, though backed by Beijing Studio, was a few years ahead of its time and was cancelled partway through its shooting (Feng 2010). The censor's rejection letter to Beijing Studio stated that "As a popular mass medium, film has a broad and profound influence in guid-

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ing social values and ethics. This script focuses excessively on sexual flirtation, the improper pursuit of male–female relationship, and raping. It exposes the ugliness but does not criticize it, which goes against the shared social values and moral standards, and promotes incorrect aesthetic taste. In the script, the relations between the three characters are improper, involving extramarital affairs, homewreckers, and adultery, which have always been despised by society. If it does not condemn these relationships, the script will not be tenable. Therefore, we suggest Beijing Film Studio change the topic or rewrite the script fundamentally. Otherwise, Film Administration would not permit it to be released even if the film were to be completed” (Chengxiang 2008).

The official notice concluded by ordering the studio to dismantle the production team and to study the Changsha Meeting for “correct thoughts.” Hosted by the Ministry of Radio, Film and Television in March 1996, the Changsha Meeting launched a campaign to root out what the Chinese government saw as risqué literature, politically explicit and exploitative artworks, and pirated rock music. For counterprogramming, the government sponsored public viewings of biopics about socialist heroes and model communist members, the so-called leitmotif films such as *Fatal Decisions* (Benzheng Yu, 2000). When Feng was notified about the cancellation of his project on April Fool’s Day, he reportedly drank himself to oblivion.

Censorship loosened its grip four years later. After all, *The Bridges of Madison County* (Clint Eastwood, 1995) with the theme of adultery had made its way to China as one of the ten annual imports. *Kramer vs. Kramer* (1979) also became well known in China through unofficial channels, thirty years after its US release. With the success of the New Year’s trilogy under his belt, Feng was able to pick up the project again, this time with the backing of Huayi Brothers, a rising private film company that would become one of the major players in Chinese film industry. By 2000, Feng no longer had to convince the censors to allow a movie exploring extramarital affairs. Compromises were made to cut the more explicit and provocative scenes and to tweak dialogues here and there. Censors eventually greenlighted the movie on the condition that the main character choose his family over his lover in the end.

In the original cut, the last scene shows the writer and his family enjoying a beach outing together, months having passed since the writer had seen or heard from his lover. The family has been reunited, and things appear to be back on track. But his mobile phone rings, and he answers it. The call is from his lover, and she is obviously nearby, but she bids him farewell, after reminiscing about their time together. Feng was told to cut her monologue. So, what we see in the final version is the close-up of the husband’s mesmerized face turning slowly towards the camera. Instead of saying farewell, he looks as if he is tempted again. Elsewhere, Feng had to change certain lines of dialogue. In the original screenplay, the writer’s wife asks if he still loves her. He says that when touching her leg in bed at night, he feels nothing, but if she were to lose that leg, it would be like losing his own leg. Feng had to swap “leg” for “hand” in

this exchange because the censor thought that “leg” was too sexually explicit, and the depiction of sexual acts was still a taboo in 2000.

The Hollywood PCA under Joseph Breen

These draconian measures recall Hollywood’s enforcement of censorship during the era of Production Code Administration (PCA) under Joseph Breen from 1934 to 1954, which was designed by the US film industry to ensure the implementation of the Hays Code established in 1930 (Asimow 2020). To ward off attacks by the Catholic Legion of Decency and other religious and secular activist groups on Hollywood’s perceived moral degradation, Hays granted PCA the absolute power to approve, censor, or reject movies made or distributed by the studios. Joseph Breen, the tough and able Catholic layman Hays appointed to run the PCA, often reviewed a film’s basic story before the screenplay was written. Breen’s PCA scrutinized every word of a submitted script, often demanding deletion of specific lines, scenes, or action. The PCA censors required that extramarital affairs be treated discreetly and that those who engaged in extramarital affairs be ultimately punished for their actions. This was an example of the rule of “compensating values,” a mainstay of Code enforcement, which held that films could portray morally questionable acts, such as crime or illicit sex, only if those who engaged in them received retribution by the story’s conclusion. Forbidden subjects included abortion, miscegenation, contraception, homosexuality, and divorce. Double entendres were pruned, as were shots of visible female anatomy.

The Breen era of US film production thus accompanied a wave of “clean pictures” led by Shirley Temple movies and films based on great novels. The Hays Code became less effective in the 1950s as Hollywood movies lost audiences to television, as well as to foreign films with explicit sex and violence, which were freely exhibited at art theatres without the PCA’s Seal of Approval. Jack Valenti, the then head of MPPDA, officially ditched the Hays Code and the PCA in 1968, and replaced it with the letter-based film rating system that has lasted to this day. A milder version of industry self-censorship, the now widely applied MPPDA rating system is designed to grade movies according to their degree of explicit sex, violence, and language. It aims to help viewers make intelligent choices while protecting children from what is conventionally considered inappropriate content. Incidentally, Feng has been a fierce advocate of a film rating system in China, which has yet to emerge, making production of films with adult themes a daunting task for Chinese filmmakers. Going to the movies is considered a family event in China, especially during the holidays, which helps explain China’s long list of cinematic taboos, including sex and violence. This partly explains why *A Sigh* was released in the fall of 2000 instead of during the winter holiday.

When it came to finances, however, even the downbeat nature of *A Sigh* did not deter its sponsors. *A Sigh*’s overt commercial tie-ins with major global brands, such as Ikea and Starbucks, led to incredulous scenes in which the wife ob-

sessively arranges and rearranges the family's large suburban apartment with Ikea furniture, and every rendezvous takes place in one of Beijing's Starbucks, which were becoming ubiquitous at the time.

***Cell Phone* (手机, 2003)**

Regardless of the financial arrangements, *A Sigh* was Feng's first successful attempt to seriously engage in moral and ethical debates surrounding love and marriage, themes that were personal to him and that he would revisit in 2003, this time with a dramedy for the winter holiday. The film that returned Feng to the familiar terrain of marriage and affairs was *Cell Phone*, a bittersweet New Year film depicting the sexual follies and exploits of a corrupt media celebrity. By the time Feng returned to make *Cell Phone*, extramarital affairs had become both rampant and routine, in China, even fashionable. They had become something to be lampooned. In Feng's satirical rendition of what were now perceived simply as domestic disputes, a popular TV talk show host, Yan, used his cell phone to lie, cheat, and scheme his way through multiple affairs (Magnier 2004). Yan's character was rumored to have been based on a famous real-life talk show host, Cui Yongyuan, who reportedly had shared his personal story with Feng in confidence (*China Daily* 2004). The link between Cui and Yan in *Cell Phone* would come back to haunt Feng when he attempted to make a sequel to *Cell Phone* in 2019.

In the 2003 film, when not hosting his show, the main character Yan keeps himself busy by deleting text messages, shutting off his mobile phone, or turning the phone to silent mode in order to prevent his wife, girlfriend, and lover from finding out about one another. To defuse tension and suspicion when he is with one of them while talking on the phone to another, he frequently whispers into his cell phone that he is "in an important meeting." The film turned the phrase "in an important meeting" into a double entendre, and it became a popular slang expression and famous tagline. Feng said that the inspiration for *Cell Phone* came during a brainstorming session for a different project that was repeatedly interrupted by cell phone calls. The frustrated Feng nonetheless saw comedic potential in the situation and promptly turned the occasion into a premise for his film.

This film about multiple deceptions facilitated by a handheld gadget struck a chord with Chinese audiences, propelling it to the top of the box-office charts, beating Hollywood heavyweights *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (Chris Columbus, 2002), *Finding Nemo* (Andrew Stanton, 2003), and *The Matrix Revolutions* (Lana Wachowski and Lilly Wachowski, 2003). The cell phone deployed as the cheater's companion and potential source of revelation added many funny twists to the drama, making it much lighter in tone than *A Sigh*. Naturally, Yan's telephone itself features prominently in the film. The opening scene is a prelude set during the Cultural Revolution, showing villagers in Yan's rural hometown waiting in line to use the lone public phone, which was padlocked and fiercely guarded by a full-time attendant. The movie then fast-forwards 30

years to a wife picking up her husband's cell phone and hearing a woman's flirtatious voice on the other end. Unsurprisingly, a film about cell phones offered an ideal advertising platform for Huayi Brothers, which signed investment and advertisement contracts with four companies (Motorola, BMW, China Mobile, and Mtone Wireless), who provided almost half of *Cell Phone*'s budget. From beginning to end, the audience is bombarded with information about the special functions of various models of Motorola cell phones, which are used by every character in the film. The film also officially launched the newest model of Moto A70 into the Chinese market.

Unlike Feng's earlier New Year skit-based comedies, *Cell Phone* is tighter in its narrative structure (Zhu 2007, 56). Depicting spousal cheating and the role of modern cell phone technology in facilitating the old habit, the film follows its protagonist through several short-lived affairs and the dissolution of his marriage. Yet the complexity of human relationships does not fit easily into a classical narrative, and the film resorts frequently to episodic sequencing as it maps out the evolution of his multiple affairs. Absent are the melancholy and moral anguish captured in the melodramatic *A Sigh*. As Karl Marx said, history repeats itself, first as tragedy, then as farce ([1852] 2017). The stealth unearthing of one tortuous affair in *A Sigh* gives way to the calmer and more matter-of-fact revelation of multiple affairs in *Cell Phone*; Chinese society had, within a short span of three years, similarly transformed its outlook on love, relationships, and marriage. According to a survey by sociologist Li Yinhe of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, by the early 2000s, more than 60 percent of the Chinese admitted to having an affair at some point during marriage, compared with only 15 percent in the late 1980s. *Cell Phone* served as a swan song to the traditional moral codes seen by many as the impact of China's corrosive, relentless pursuit of material abundance.

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Ewa Mazierska*

A Hole in the Head: Between Theatre and Cinema

Polish post-war cinema has a fair number of films which are adaptations of literature. Given that these films, including *Nights of the Teutonic Order* (*Krzyżacy*, 1960) directed by Aleksander Ford, *Promised Land* (*Ziemia obiecana*, 1974) and *Pan Tadeusz* (1999) directed by Andrzej Wajda, and *Deluge* (*Potop*, 1974) directed by Jerzy Hoffman, are the most popular and critically acclaimed Polish films, it can be argued that Polish cinema is “literary cinema.” There is also a smaller number of films which engage with other media, most importantly plastic arts, such as those by Lech Majewski, which can be regarded as a meditation on the nature of painting, as in his *The Garden of Earthly Delights* (2004). Finally, Poland has a director, Wojciech Jerzy Has, who treats films as a kind of vessel for all possible arts, be it literature, music, or plastic arts, as in his celebrated *The Saragossa Manuscript* (*Rękopis znaleziony w Saragossie*, 1965).

The rise and popularity of adaptations of literature and other arts in Poland can be attributed to two principal factors. One is the rise of audiovisual culture, which renders literary texts, even those which were previously very popular, elitist, or at least less accessible. Thus, to make them relevant to the new type of audience, brought up on the audiovisual culture, one needs to make them more aural and visual, and adapting them to screen is a perfect way to do so. The second reason is the conviction that Polish classics are relevant to the current situation either because what they said is universal (which is a typical reason they became classics) or because history repeats itself, hence they caught up with the contemporary situation. In the case of Polish Romantic Poets (Adam Mickiewicz, Juliusz Słowacki, Cyprian Norwid), the second aspect is emphasized, because the situation in which Poland found itself during the Second World War and its aftermath, when it became the Russian semi-colony, was in some ways similar to that in the 19th century, when Poland lost its statehood and fought in bloody uprisings to regain it. For this reason, Polish cinematic movement, known as the Polish School, is known as Polish Neoromantic Cinema.

A Hole in the Head (*Dziura w głowie*, 2018), a relatively new film directed by Piotr Subbotko, belongs to the tradition of Polish literary cinema, although I

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will locate it on its periphery. On this occasion, the medium which Subbotko interrogates is theatre. His film is inspired by the play *The Dramatist* (*Der Theatermacher*, 1984), written by Austrian author Thomas Bernhard, about an actor from the state Playhouse Bruscon, who stops in the small village of Utzbach on tour to perform his play *The Wheel of History*. Subbotko presents the story of an actor (the Actor), who tours the eastern part of Poland with a small troupe of fellow actors, staging a play (whose title is not revealed) in provincial culture clubs. This is presented as an opportunity to interrogate the role of the theatre in the lives of ordinary people, as well as the effect of performing in the theatre on the identity of an actor. Let us look at how Subbotko approaches these issues.

The play presented by the Actor and his colleagues is attended by only a small audience. This can be explained in part by the fact that the small towns and villages simply do not have populations large enough to fill a large hall. Another possible answer is that there is no hunger for theatre or high culture at large in such places. This is, however, not a reason to give up. It can be argued that the less “natural” appetite simple people have for art, the more artists should strive to provide it. It is not difficult to find such imperative in other cultures, but in the Polish one this was particularly pronounced in some periods of Polish history, such as Positivism, a literary movement in the second part of the 19th century, due to the convictions that Poland could not liberate itself and thrive because its people were backward. As such, the question of why the Actor is touring a play by Bernhard, which is non-Polish and particularly difficult, rather than something which is easier to assimilate, for example, comedies by Polish playwright Aleksander Fredro (which constitute a staple diet of Polish provincial theatres), comes to the fore. We never receive an answer to this question, as the film is purposefully enigmatic, but I can provide several hypotheses. One is the view that provincials should not be patronized; they deserve difficult art as much as the elites. This assumption proves wrong, as the audience for which the troupe performs is not interested in the play, becoming bored by it and, ultimately, hostile, as demonstrated by young people laughing in the wrong moments (which leads to the Actor’s own outburst of hostility and even a scuffle with the audience). This not only undermines their aim of civilizing the province but also renders the actors themselves in need of civilizing.

The second reason why the Actor chose Bernhard’s play is that it takes issue with acting. The main character is an actor, unfulfilled in his professional and private life, who tries to come to terms with his position. He can be regarded as a figure of a misunderstood and lonely artist. Indeed, when the Actor insults the audience saying that he despairs seeing them so uninterested, so indifferent to his art, we are not sure whether he does so as the character in a play in which he performs or as an actor offended by the behaviour of the audience.

It is worth mentioning here the profile of the film’s director and scriptwriter, Piotr Subbotko. Subbotko was already fifty when he directed this film, which was his full-length fiction debut, and by this point he mostly wrote scripts and directed episodes of television series. He thus can be regarded as an epitome of a commercial director and, by the same token, somebody who understands



Figure 1. Transformations of the main character

mass audience well, including people in the provinces, for whom television is the main source of culture and entertainment. I will suggest that for somebody in his position it makes little sense to make a film informed by the same values as his “commercial” work. The temptation is to go to the other extreme, making a difficult film, whilst taking issue with the division between serious/elitist and light/commercial art. The latter is represented in the film by songs in the style of disco polo but sung in Belarussian, which accompany the Actor practically everywhere he goes: in his car, in a restaurant, and in his mother’s house.

This issue of playing versus living is developed in the second part of the film, when the Actor returns to his family home, somewhere in the eastern part of Poland, near the border with Belarus. There, he finds his very sick, bed-ridden mother, who is being looked after by an old flame of his and a mentally disabled man, Andrzejek, whom his mother recruited from a psychiatric asylum to help her on the farm. The Actor is hostile towards Andrzejek and tries to get rid of him by returning him to his own family, but this proves impossible either because Andrzejek’s family does not want him or because the Actor’s mother designated him as her heir. Initially, Andrzejek gets on the Actor’s nerves simply because he behaves like a man with severe learning disabilities, unable to talk or fulfil simple requests. After some time, however, the reason of the discord changes: it has to do with Andrzejek’s apparent mocking of the Actor, implying that he knows the play which the Actor was recently performing. Hence the question: how did he learn about it? Is it a coincidence that he knows some lines of the dialogue from the play, or did he enter the mind of the Actor? Or, perhaps, Andrzejek’s intimate knowledge about the Actor is a figment of the Actor’s imagination?

These questions are never answered, but Subbotko plants various clues to help us answer them. One of them, which I only noticed when watching the film for the second time, is at the beginning of the film, when the Actor is dining at a fast-food restaurant in an underground passage, probably in Warsaw, next to a man whom he asks if they had met before. It turns out to be Andrzejek, or somebody



Figure 2. Divisions and frames in *A Hole in the Head*

who looks like Andrzejek, although this man is clearly articulate, as proved by the fact that he answers the Actor's question and reads from his mobile phone. Andrzejek thus has a doppelgänger or behaves as if he does. This also refers to the Actor, who at the beginning of the film, when interrogated by a police officer, pretends to be Italian and during his trial claims that he knows only Russian and must have been mistaken for somebody else [Fig. 1]. Not only do the characters get cloned, so to speak, but they also change their places in the story. In the end, when the car takes the Actor and Andrzejek to the mental asylum, we find out that this is not to lock away the troublesome Andrzejek but the Actor whose grip on reality significantly weakens during his stay at his mother's house. Is this schizophrenia a natural consequence of the Actor's professional and private problems (the lack of successes, stable relationship and home), or was he "played" by the clever Andrzejek, who pretended to be a victim, whilst in reality was an oppressor? The theme of a doppelgänger who mimics the "original" is also evoked in the dialogue. For example, when travelling to their acting assignment through the winter landscape, the actors talk about the advantages of following in someone else's footsteps in the snow, which helps the walker to avoid detection, presumably when he attempts to commit a crime. Also, whilst he is at his family home, the carer of the Actor's mother says that Andrzejek took the Actor's place of the prodigal son, who left his home and did not return for many years.

The porous division between living and playing, healthy mental life and schizophrenia, the material reality and reality represented in art or imagined is conveyed by the frequent use of divisions and frames [Fig. 2].

We see characters framed by windows, semi-opened doors, car windows, glasses, as well as divided by different parts of the theatre: one occupied by the actors, the other by the audience. We also see them reflected in mirrors and mirror-like objects. Frames and divisions allow people to fit into specific roles such as the actor and the viewer, the doctor and the patient, or the policeman and the criminal. When these divisions are undermined or broken, as it often happens

in this film, problems appear; ultimately, identity and reality disintegrate. This break-up is underscored by the soundtrack, composed by Paweł Szumański, in which every note appears to be played separately, as if disconnected from those preceding and following it, thus capturing the protagonist's schizophrenia.

These plays with doppelgängers, as well as the changes of a victim into a victor and vice versa, encouraged critics to compare *A Hole in the Head* to the productions of David Lynch. No doubt, we can find in this film an echo of such Lynch productions as *Mulholland Drive* (2001) and *Inland Empire* (2006). However, Subbotko's film also belongs to the Polish lineage of films of the directors interested in transmediality, and specifically in the motif of art as a portal to a different reality and a means to change one's identity. I think here especially of the films of Has, such as *The Saragossa Manuscript*, and *Podwójne życie Weroniki* (*Double Life of Veronique*, 1991) by Krzysztof Kieslowski. However, although Subbotko's film shares common ground with these classics of Polish cinema, it also diverts from them, by offering a darker assessment of art. In *A Hole in the Head*, art does not liberate but confines, it does not enrich but impoverishes. It is possible that this darkness reflects the fact that Subbotko made his film under a different political regime than Has, which does not extol the value of art as it was the case under state socialism. The pessimistic vision of art can also be seen as a reflection of an artist who was made to save the masses and perhaps was initially unhappy to do so but in the end was reconciled with this position. *A Hole in the Head* shows what could happen to him if he chose a different trajectory, trying to be a great artist in the old "communist" style, and failed.



1. kép. Rimini, az álmos tengerparti üdülőváros



2. kép. Modesto, vidéki csillogás



3. kép. Little Italy: maffia és katolicizmus



4. kép. Baltimore, az örök kisváros



5. kép. *A bikaborjak* – túlkoros kamaszok



6. kép. *Az Étkeзде* állandó vendégei

Ferencz Zsófia*

Dühöngő bikaborjak. Egy korai Fellini-klasszikus tovább élései az 1970-es, 1980-as évek amerikai férfi *coming-of-age* filmjeiben

Federico Fellinit mindig is különös tisztelet övezte az új-hollywoodi rendezők körében. Woody Allen *Csillagporos emlékeiben* (*Stardust Memories*, 1980) többek közt a *8 és ½-et* (*Otto e mezzo*, 1963) parafrazálta, Francis Ford Coppola mintegy *homage-ként* állandó zeneszerzőtársát, Nino Rotát kérte fel a *keresztapa* (*The Godfather*, 1972) zenéjének megírásához, Martin Scorsese pedig a *Nagymenők* (*GoodFellas*, 1990) főszereplőinek bemutató narrációját egy az egyben a *bikaborjak* (*I Vitelloni*, 1953) kezdőjelenetéből kölcsönözte (Jones 2004). Az országúton (*La Strada*, 1954), *Az édes élet* (*La dolce vita*, 1960) vagy a *8 és ½* alkotói örökségének árnyékában nem is gondolnánk, hogy amint Terrence Rafferty – ha talán kicsit túlozva is – fogalmaz, volt idő, amikor Amerikában azt lehetett érezni, a legjobb filmek legalább felét éppen ez a kevésbé ismert korai Fellini-darab inspirálta (Rafferty 2004).¹

Tanulmányomban Fellini klasszikusát Martin Scorsese, George Lucas és Barry Levinson azóta iskolateremtőnek számító *coming-of-age* filmjeivel vetem össze, amelyek témájuk mellett személyes hangvételük, erős önéletrajzi ihletettségük, ennél fogva pedig hiteles provinciális körképük miatt is talán leginkább párhuzamba vonhatók a *bikaborjakkal*, és amelyek hozzá hasonlóan mérföldkőnek számítottak az akkor pályakezdő alkotók életművében. Összehasonlításomban, amely inkább film- és problématorténeti, mint szociológiai megközelítésű, a főszereplő fiatal férfitársaságok társadalmi és kulturális összetételét, szereplőinek jellemét és egymáshoz való, olykor ambivalens viszonyát, első nagy felelősségvállalásainak dilemmáit, döntéseik tétjét és súlyát vizsgálom, különös tekintettel a felnőtté válásukban hangsúlyos szerepet betöltő, hol eseménytelen kispolgári közepszerűséggel, hol elkerülhetetlen bűnözőkarrierrel

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1 Peter Bogdanovich *Az utolsó mozielőadás* (*The Last Picture Show*, 1971), Martin Scorsese *Aljas utcák* (*Mean Streets*, 1973), George Lucas *Amerikai Graffiti* (1973), Philip Kaufman *A csavargók* (*Wanderers*, 1979), valamint Barry Levinson *Az étkezde* (*Diner*, 1982) című filmjei kétségtelenül sok hasonlóságot mutatnak, Tullio Kezich pedig Joel Schumacher *Szent Elmo tüze* (*St. Elmo's Fire*, 1985) című művét is idesorolja (2006, 137).



7. kép. Érettségiző tinik – az *American Graffiti* hősei



8. kép. Kisstílű bűnözők – az *Aljas utcák* hősei

fenyegető elszigetelt környezetek önéletrajzi ihletésű, részletes és hiteles ábrázolására. Ezenkívül összevetem a filmek narratív szerkezetét és legfontosabb stílárís jellemzőit is.

Scorsese *A bikaborjakat* nem csak az *Aljas utcák*, de egész alkotói pályája és *ars poeticája* egyik alapvető inspirációjának tartja (*My Voyage to Italy*, 1999, Macnab 2004), Lucas hasonlóképpen a *THX-1138* előképeként nevezi meg (Pullman 2011). Levinson állítólag *Az étkezde* elkészültéig nem ismerte (Farber 1982), utólag azonban mind témájában, mind stílusában maga is sokkal közelebbi rokonának tartja, mint például az *American Graffiti*t (Lev 2000, 101).

A filmek az életművekben is hasonló helyet foglalnak el: fiatal rendezők korai darabjai, személyes retrospektívek, „így jöttemek”, amelyek jelentős mérföldkőnek számítanak az alkotók karrierjének elindításában. Mind a négy film rendezője saját szülővárosát választja helyszínül, amelyet maga is elhagyott egykor, és amelyet sajátos provincialitásával hangsúlyosan a szereplők jellemét, értékrendjét, konfliktusait és motivációit meghatározó tényezőként ábrázol. Fellini a második világháború utáni, munkanélküliséggel sújtott Riminiről az álmos tengerparti üdülőváros képét festi (1. kép), ahol az emberek többnyire unalmas szerepet játszanak, maszkot viselnek, de leginkább átalusszák az életüket, kicsit hasonlóan, mint az *American Graffiti* hatvanas évekbéli vidéki Kalifornia Modestójának valamivel jobban élő lakói néhány évvel a vietnami háború kirobbanása előtt (2. kép).

Scorsese az amerikai olasz bevándorlók New Yorkon belüli mikroközösségének zárványáról, Manhattan Little Italy negyedéről ad ijesztő panorámát, különös tekintettel két uralkodó jelensége, a katolicizmus és a maffia ambiguitásaira (3. kép), Levinson pedig földijéhez, John Watershez hasonlóan több filmet is szentelt szűkebb pátriájának, Baltimore-nak, amely 1959-ben csaknem egymillió csúcspopulációval is rendületlenül őrizte kisvárosjellegét (4. kép), és az Eisenhower utáni, de még a hatvanas évek előtti periódusban kizárólag a megházasodás lehetőségét tudta életpályául kínálni. A négy város tehát (és ilyen értelemben „város a városban” jellegével Little Italy is) a filmekben az álmok beteljesülésének tulajdonképpeni akadályaként jelenik meg, amely fogva tartja a hősöket. De kik is ezek a hősök?

Fellini regionális dialektusában a *vitelloni* kifejezés eredetileg a fiatal marhákat jelölte (Stubbs 2015, 94), átvitt értelemben pedig éretlen, lusta, céltalan fiatal férfiakra használták, ahogyan állítólag ifjúkorában egy asszony is valamely ízetlen tréfája miatt ezzel a kifejezéssel illette a majdani mestert (Alpert 1988, 81). Maga Fellini így határozza meg őket: „elkényeztetett, munkanélküli középosztálybeli fiatalok, anyukák kedvencei. A turistaszezonban tündökölnék, az év hátralévő részét pedig erre való várakozásuk emészti fel” (Fellinit id. Stubbs 2015, 95).

A *bikaborjak* főhősei tehát túlkoros kamaszok (5. kép), eltartott férfiak húszas és harmincas éveik fordulóján, valahol félúton a felnőtté válásban, akik már régen befejezték az iskolát, de még nem dolgoznak és nincs családjuk. „Elkényeztetett kishercegek” (Stubbs 2015, 94–95), akik a végsőkig kitanak a gyermeklét mellett, mivel rokonaik eltartják őket, így egyfajta felnőtté válás moratórium periódusát élvezik, amelyben még ott az álmodozás, a város elhagyásától várt nagy változás, a végtelen lehetőségek illúziója.

Főszereplőit tekintve Barry Levinson *Az étkezde* c. filmje áll legközelebb Fellini filmjéhez. Középpontjában egy húszas évei elejét taposó hattagú férfitársaság áll (6. kép): van, aki egyetemre készül, van, akit már ki is rúgtak, van, aki unalmas munkát végez, és van, aki másokon élködik. Akad, aki korán megházasodott, és akad, aki éppen most készül a nagy napra. Közös bennük, hogy mindenki kicsit unatkozik, mindegyikük életéből hiányzik valami. „Felfüggesztett” idejük nagy részét egy étkezdében mulatják, ahol „az élet nagy dolgairól”, nőkről, fociról, énekesekről, és – a bikaborjakénál jóval kicsinyesebb – terveikről beszélgetnek. Levinson központi problematikája azonban nem annyira az elmenés és a jövő dilemmája, sokkal inkább a kommunikációképtelenség, amely a nőkhöz való ambivalens viszonyukat, és ezáltal egész közérzetüket meghatározza. Főbb konfliktusaik éppen ezért a balul sikerült randevútól a korán kiüresedett házasságig terjedő férfi-női viszonyok széles palettáján mozognak, felnőtté válásuk történetük fő tétje kinek-kinek saját létező vagy elképzelt párkapcsolata, felelősségvállalásuk mértéke pedig a házasság.

Az *American Graffiti* a négy közül talán a legklasszikusabb értelemben vett *coming-of-age* film, a legfiatalabb szereplőkkel. A kimerevedett idő itt az érettségi utáni nyári szünet utolsó éjszakája, főszereplői pedig azok a tinédzserkor határán lavírozó, egyébként az ifjú Lucashoz hasonlóan az autók mámorában



9. kép. „Átalusszák az életüket” – *A bikaborjak* zárójelenete



10. kép. Az *Étkезде* kimerevedett záróképe

élő srácok (7. kép), akik életükben valószínűleg először dönthetnek azzal kapcsolatban, hogy merre indulnak el. Az *American Graffiti* a karrierért hozott áldozatról szól, a konfliktus pedig azokban a szereplőkben születik, akik kezdenek tisztába jönni azzal, miről kell lemondaniuk, ha más városba kerülnek egyetemre, és életük első nagy döntését ennek tudatában hozzák meg. Őket éppenséggel a maradás szelleme kísérti, hol egy felvillanó helyi lehetőség, hol egy kísért szemű barátnő alakját magára öltve.

A Scorsese által rendezett *Aljas utcák* környezete jóval sötétebb, témája a négy közül a legkomorabb. A férfitársaság tagjai itt a Little Italy maffia által uralt enklávéjának huszonéves, egyelőre csak kisstílu bűnözői (8. kép). A főszereplő, Charlie felnőtté válásának dilemmája morális: választania kell furcsán individualista, de létező katolikus hite és lelkiismerete, valamint a maffia becsületkódexe között, melyek közül rokoni kapcsolatai révén csak utóbbi kecsegteti a felemelkedés lehetőségével.

A felvázolt dilemmák kifejelete, a hősök döntéseinek következményei, és ezekkel együtt az egyes fejlődéstörténetek sikeressége, azaz a felnőtté válás „hatékonyága” a szereplők konfliktusainak, viszonyainak alakulásán és a filmek ezeket bemutató sajátos narratív szerkezetein keresztül érthető meg. *A bikaborjakban* az öt barát epizodikus szerkesztésben elmesélt történetét a „spirituális vezetőjükként” bemutatott Fausto sokszorosán késleltetett felnőtté válás története fogja össze, hiszen ő az, aki házasságra és munkavállalásra kényszerül, a többiek hol élő lelkiismeretként, hol hű barátként asszisztálnak mindehhez, egyfajta *mise en abyme* szerkezetben ismételve meg a gyerekes álmodozások összeomlásának paradigmáját. Albertót, a társaság harsány bohócát az őt eltartó nővére távoztása hozza a fejlődés lehetőségét magában hordó válsághelyzetbe, az operaénekesi ambíciókkal megáldott Riccardóhoz hasonlóan elszállt írói babérokra törő Leopoldót pedig az a jelenet, amikor kiderül, hogy az általa a szakmában nagyra tartott színész látszólagos érdeklődése munkája iránt pusztán szexuális irányultságú. Mindezek ellenére *A bikaborjak* ifjai látszólag elszalasztják

ezeket a lehetőségeket, a várost egyedül a Fellini alteregójaként értelmezhető, és a társaságban legfiatalabb és legvisszafogottabb Moraldónak sikerül elhagynia.² A film utolsó képsoraiban az ő vízióit látjuk: a vonaton maga elé képzelet, ahogyan lótuszevő társai átalusszák az életüket (9. kép), mialatt számára megnyílik a nagyvilág.

Levinson hasonlóan epizodikus szerkesztésű *Étkezdéjének* kerettörténetét szintén egyikük készülő esküvője adja, a narratívák összekötő szervezőeleme pedig az étkezdében folytatott beszélgetések sorozata, ahogyan a szereplők a történetekre reflektálnak. A társaság azonban *A bikaborjak* középosztálybeli aranyifjaival ellentétben sokkal színesebb társadalmi körképet nyújt. Boogie egy fodrászszalonban dolgozik, de színleg jogásznak készül, mert így nagyobb sikereket remél a nőknél, az egyetemről már kihullott Fenwick gazdag szülei félretett „babakötvényéből” él, és mindketten tele vannak tartozásokkal. Bill egy másik városban egyetemista, Shrevie „megállapodott férfi” módjára televíziókat árul egy boltban, és semmilyen közös témája nincs a feleségével. A házasodni készülő Eddie – Shrevie példáján okulva – az esküvő feltételét egy, a menyasszonya részére összeállított futballkvíz helyesen megválaszolt kérdéseinek pontszámaiban szabja meg, Modell pedig arra sem képes, hogy eldöntse, mit is rendeljen az étkezdében. Bár a felelős döntés és jellemfejlődés csirái esetükben fel-felbukkannak, a zárójelenet keretét adó esküvő ironikusságában nyomasztó hangulata és az asztalukra hulló virágcsokor arra enged következtetni, hogy előbb-utóbb mindannyian beállnak a sorba, és húsz év múlva talán ugyanabban az étkezdében nosztalgiázva nézik majd az Eddie esküvőjén készült, később a film fekete-fehér záróképévé merevedett csoportfényképet (10. kép).

Az *American Graffiti* történetvezetésében több szempontból is *A bikaborjakat* tükrözi. A négy főszereplő párhuzamosan futó epizódjai az indulás-maradás problematikáját megtestesítő két barát kétségei köré csoportosulnak az utazást megelőző estén: Curt egy helyi ösztöndíj-lehetőséget készül otthagyni, Steve pedig időlegesen barátnőjét és gyönyörű Chevrolet Impaláját (11. kép). A film elején Curt a bizonytalanabb, végül Steve lesz az, aki barátnője nyomására a maradás mellett dönt.³ Curt és Steve az epizodikus szerkesztés ellenére egyértelműen az *American Graffiti* főszereplői, társaik kalandjai, a Steve kölcsön-Impalájával ékeskedő, ügyefogyott Toad hódítási kísérletei, a nagymenő drag-racer John rivalizálásai, és végül a *Haragban a világgalt* (*Rebel Without a Cause*, 1955) idéző autósverseny szórakoztató mellékszálak maradnak. Ezt támasztják alá az

2 Fellini a *Moraldo a városban* című filmben tervezte feldolgozni, mi is történt vele ezek után Rómában, de a film soha nem készült el, részleteit azonban Fellini később a *Cabiria éjszakáiban* (*Le notti di Cabiria*, 1957) és *Az édes életben* is felhasználta, mi több, Marcello Rubini karakterét egyenesen *Moraldóról* mintázta.

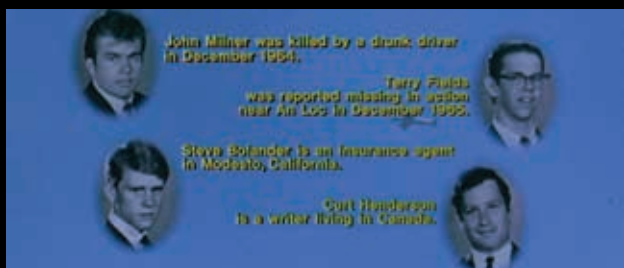
3 Kip Pullman az *American Graffiti* öröksége előtt tisztelgő, igen részletes blogjában előképüket *A bikaborjak* Moraldójában és Faustójában látja, kiemelve, hogy a film elején Fausto az, aki elköltözne a városból (Moraldo ekkor igyekszik rávenni, hogy teherbe ejtett hűgát ne hagyja magára), végül Fausto dönt családjával együtt, és Moraldo indul útnak (Pullman 2011).



11. kép. Barátnő és Chevrolet Impala (*American Graffiti*)



12. kép. Kocsiverseny, mint a *Haragban a világgalban* (*American Graffiti*)



13. kép: Az *American Graffiti* magyarázó epilógusa

indulás-maradás tematikáját erősítő mellékszereplők is, a kisvárosban rekedés elrettentő példájául szolgáló felügyelő tanártól kezdve az életét rozoga stúdiójában eljégkrémező gerillarádiósig. Hogy a fejlődés megkérdőjelezhetetlen zálogát az elindulásban látja, Lucas azzal is alátámasztja, hogy a szereplők további sorsáról egy, a Moraldo vonatós vízióját idéző szöveges epilógusban tájékoztat (13. kép), és Fellinivel ellentétben egyetlen kérdést sem hagy nyitva: megtudjuk, hogy pár évvel később John autóbalesetben, Toad a vietnami háborúban vesztette életét, Steve pedig továbbra is biztosítási ügynökként dolgozik Modestóban. Curt Kanadába költözött, és befutott író lett.

Scorsese *Aljas utcáinak* egyértelmű főszereplője a négy férfi közül Charlie Civello, nyitó narrációjának (14. kép) pedig egyes szám első személyben maga Scorsese kölcsönzi hangját. Az itt tárgyalt filmek összes szereplője közül róla kapjuk a legárnyaltabb jellemzést: többgenerációs bevándorló kulturális és szociális klausztrofóbiákkal, aki nemcsak az amerikai demokratikus érték-



14. kép. Az *Aljas utcák* stilizált főcíme



17. kép. Giovanni, a „keresztapa” (*Aljas utcák*)



15. kép. Charlie mint *imitatio Christi* (*Aljas utcák*)



18. kép. Színstilizáció: Tony kocsmája (*Aljas utcák*)



16. kép. Johnny Boy, a bajkeverő: Robert De Niro egyik első szerepében, az *Aljas utcák*ban



19. kép. Extrém kameraállások (*Aljas utcák*)

rend és az elszigetelt, tekintélyelvű nápolyi tradíciót⁴ képviselő maffia *rispetto*-ja között őrlődik (nem beszél, csak érti az olaszt), de kételyei vannak saját hitével kapcsolatban is. Robert Casillo egyfajta félresiklott, mazochista *imitatio Christi*-t lát benne (15. kép), aki a maga módján szeretne megfizetni bűneiért. Vezeklésképp az extravagáns lázadó, Johnny Boy nevű barátjának (16. kép) látszólagos megmentését tűzi ki célul, felnőtté válásának fő döntései e látszólagos küldetéshez, valamint a maffiavilágban tiltott szerelmi viszonyához kapcsolódnak. Johnny Boy *A bikaborjak* Faustójának és Albertójának keveréke, és később *Az étkezde* Fenwickjével rokon öntörvényű hazárdjátékos, provokatőr, de az ő tréfái nem ártatlanok, és Charlie-t is veszélybe sodorják. Kérdés, hogy

4 Scorsese Dél-Olaszországról festett képe csöppet sem hasonlít az északi Riminihez, a New York-i diaszpórában pedig a szicíliaiak és nápolyiak szemben állnak egymással, ami az *Aljas utcák*ban a Joey-val való verekedés jelenetében mutatkozik meg (lásd erről: Casillo 2006, 198).

egy olyan világban, ahol mindent a Charlie nagybátyjához hasonló mindenható „keresztapák” (17. kép) irányítanak, kínálkozik-e lehetőség a valódi kitörésre. Charlie morális fejlődése meglehetősen ambivalens: védelmi pénzek beszédéből él, és amikor megtudja, hogy nagybátyja ellenzi az epilepsziás Teresával való viszonyát, maffiakarrierjét féltve nem hajlandó a lányhoz költözni. Egyes értelmezések a Johnny Boy megmentéséről szóló látszatküldetését is pusztá hübrisznek tudják be. Ebben az olvasatban Charlie nem más, mint Scorsese legnegatívabb önmagáról festett rémképe, Johnny Boy lázadása pedig teljességgel megalapozott, morális értéket képvisel (Casillo 2006, 194–220), annál is inkább, mert valóban az életével játszik. A maffiavilág egyik élhető modelljét a filmben a társaság negyedik tagja, a bűnözők közt ügyesen lavírozó Tony képviseli, akinek kocsmája szimbolikus helyszín: saját szabályokkal rendelkező, de a fiúknak ideiglenes (és igen törékeny) biztonságot nyújtó mikrokozmosz, akárcsak „az étkezde”. A nyomorúságos Little Italy lakói ugyanis az eddig láttaknál sokkal szorongatottabb helyzetben vannak, a férfitársaság összetartó dinamikája pedig az életben maradásért való küzdelem mellett a szintén délolasz konvenciókhoz tartozó kölcsönös agresszió, rivalizálás és presztízs fitogtatása (Casillo 2006, 196–197).

A négy film közül Scorsese él a reflexív filmnyelvi technikák legszélesebb palettájával, szerzőként Fellininél is hangsúlyosabban van jelen az *Aljas utcák*ban. A kíméletlen maffiavilágban szinte abszurdan botladozó szereplői megfestésekor a dokumentarista stílusra emlékeztető kézikamerás megoldásokat és improvizatív színészi játékot olykor túlzott, stilizált, expresszionista világításokkal (pl. Tony kocsmájának vörös színe, 18. kép), lassításokkal, *freeze frame*-ekkel, *jump cut*okkal, extrém kameraállásokkal (19. kép) és hosszú beállításokkal ötvözi: egyszerre érződik az olasz neorealizmus és a francia új hullám hatása. Tudatos zenehasználatában egyfelől szicíliai dalok és a rock & roll váltogatásával jelzi a maffia nagy öregjei és az amerikanizálódni próbáló fiatalok szemben álló világát, másfelől groteszk módon ellensúlyozza a képen megjelenő agressziót, reflexív, elidegenítő módon hívva fel a figyelmet kép és hang megkonstruáltságára. Scorsese, aki maga is olasz származású, nemcsak Fellini, de az európai filmkultúra alapos ismerője, filmnyelvi eszközeit tudatos, komplex módon építi az európai bevándorló sajátosan hibrid amerikai mitológiájába, az *Aljas utcák* pedig éppen e hangsúlyosan eklektikus belső poétikája által válik le stílusosan *A bikaborjak*ról.

Érdekes, hogy a tárgyalt filmek közül éppen a Fellini-filmet legkevésbé ismerő Levinson az, aki *Az étkezde* stílusában és ábrázolásmódjában a legspontánabb módon „érez rá” *A bikaborjak* szatirikus, de a velejéig együttérző, kissé melankolikus, groteszk humorára, komikus helyzeteire és karakterrajzaira, témájában és főhőseinek életkorát tekintve is a legnagyobb hasonlóságot mutatva. Bondanella szerint a neorealizmussal szemben Fellininél nem az objektív, materialista ideológia, hanem a szubjektív illúziók és a fantázia áll a középpontban. *A bikaborjak*ban sem annyira karakterük társadalmi közegére helyezi a hangsúlyt, mint inkább arra az elkerülhetetlen konfliktusra, amely társadalmi szerepük rideg valósága, valamint saját tudat alatti érzéseik, ösztöneik, vá-

20. kép. Retrónosztalgia és autómámor
(*American Graffiti*)



gyaik és ideáljaik között feszül (2002, 48). Mindez összeegyeztethető azokkal az értelmezésekkel, amelyek igazat adnak a szereplőknek abban, hogy nem akarnak beállni a kisvárosi élet mókuskerekébe, ahogyan végül Moraldo is hátat fordít neki (Suzanne Budgent idézi Stubbs 2015, 95). Életteli megjelenésükben éppen ezért az ösztönvilág invencióinak, a fantázia erejének alternatív értékeit képviselik, ami az olyan jelenetekben ragadható meg, mint Fausto gramofonja, a spontán táncolások, vagy a focizás a konzervdobozokkal. Bár Levinson nem használ külső narrátort, és a Nino Rotáéhoz hasonló melankolikus zenével is csak ritkán él, hasonló együttérző szeretettel, a leereszkedés legapróbb gesztusa nélkül ad értő és intim képet azokról, akik végül beállnak a sorba.

Lucas *American Graffiti*-je csillogó-villogó sikerfilm, az 1950-es, 1960-as évek iránti retrónosztalgia⁵ egyik megteremtője. Szórakoztató szereplőivel, élénk színeivel (20. kép), a már-már musicalszerű zenei aláfestéssel és divatos autókölteményeivel, de a fő történetet tökéletesen tükröző mellékszálaival is a téma klasszikus tömegfilmes narratívákba való visszatérését és az 1980-as évek népszerű musicaljeit előlegezi meg.

Fellini harmincas éveiket taposó, céltalan „bikaborjainak” történetéből Lucas tehát a frissen érettségizett modestói ifjakról szóló színpompás nosztalgiafilmjében a karrierért hozott áldozatot, az elköltözéssel járó lemondás fájdalmát emeli ki, míg Scorsese szintén 1973-ban készült, az európai művészfilmek poétikáját reflexív módon ötvöző alkotásának kisstílusú bűnözőit valóban élet-halál, vallás és erkölcs súlyos kérdéseivel állítja szembe Little Italy maffiaenklávéjában. A legtöbb hasonlóságot Fellini filmjével furcsa módon mégis Levinson *Étkezéje* mutatja, amely, bár az alkotó a film elkészítéséig nem ismerte olasz előképét, mégis a Felliniéhez hasonló szeretetteljes, groteszk humorral mutatja be a baltimore-i ifjú bikák nőkkel való kapcsolatteremtésének bájosan tragikus kudarcait, és vetíti előre a megállapodott polgári házaselet észrevétlen kiüresedését, főszereplői pedig életkorban is a legközelebb állnak Fellini bikaborjaihoz. Akárhogyan is, a probléma mindannyiunké, mert – ahogyan Scorsese fogalmaz – „előbb vagy

5 A négy film közül egyedül Fellini helyezte saját korába filmjének idejét.

utóbb mindenkit utolér az a keserédes pillanat, amikor eldöntheti, hogy felnő, vagy örökké gyermek marad” (*My Voyage to Italy*, 1999).

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**THE ALLURE OF PAINTING IN
CINEMA**

A FESTÉSZET CSÁBÍTÁSA A
MOZIBAN



Figure 1. Pere Borrell del Caso: *Escape from Criticism* (*Huyendo de la crítica*, Madrid, 1874)

Joachim Paech*

Jump at Last, Boy!

The Jump from the Painting into the Film. Intermediality in Action

Films, for example, by Woody Allen, keep relocating their action in picture galleries (often the *Louvre* in Paris or the *Metropolitan Museum* in New York). From the point of view of the intermediality between painting and film, this leads to interesting conclusions. Certainly, one cannot speak of intermedial relationships when the film shows us usual paintings hanging on the walls, visitors more or less interested in the pictures passing by, depending on what brought them into the gallery. The film moves the visitors in the room but not the images – the respective media properties of painting (static) and film (dynamic) are incompatible.

That changes when the concept of movement spills over from film to painting and the intermediality becomes an interactive relationship between painting and film. Illusion painting (since the Antiquity, especially during the Baroque, but also in the 19th century and in the present) has already started to “leap” out of the picture, but it has not been able to overcome its static media property, which only works in the film. The boundary that has to be overcome between painting and film is marked by the frame, which can “no longer hold onto” the image as a prerequisite for the static image to dissolve into the dynamic of the film. Only the interactive play between painting and film – in films – is an astonishingly diverse evidence of the intermediality between these two arts.

The Painting

A boy has climbed onto the frame of “his” picture as if on a window ledge. He is still holding onto the inside of the frame. He seems to want to jump out of the picture at any moment. But he does not jump [Fig. 1]. Since 1874, when the picture was exhibited for the first time in the Colección Banco de España in Madrid, it has been clear that it is *An Impossible Thing*. This first title of the picture, which addresses it as painting, was later changed to *Escape from Criticism*, with the allusion to a narrative (theme “escape”).

This painting is emblematic of aesthetic border crossings in the visual arts in general and of the deceptions of illusion painting in particular. It testifies to

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the desire to set a picture in motion, but also to the necessary disappointment that illusion painting results in. Because if its deceptions had been successful, it would have failed – as a painting –, which is why we should be satisfied that the boy is still coming and will continue to come towards us from “his” picture.

At the end of the 19th century, film also made painting a new offer for the representation of movement, which could also help the Spanish boy to escape from “his” image when the film finally “got him going.” It is the medial properties of painting that fix every movement in its frame. Only the viewer in front of the picture can move in the gallery. Sometimes the gaze depicted in an image seems to follow the viewer (subjectively), but the eye will always be (objectively) in the same place. When do we experience the deception? “At the moment when we become aware, through a simple shift in our gaze, that the representation does not shift with the gaze and that it is only an optical illusion here.” (Lacan 1987, 119.) In cinema, the viewer and his/her gaze are fixed on the screen, while the film image can make jumps on the screen because the media properties of film enable the “image in motion.” Are there intermedia connections between painting and film that enable the “leap” from one medium to the other?

The Frame

The frame is blown up by movement, while normally it is responsible for the internal static unity and the distance to the surroundings of a picture (Simmel 1922). Although it is constitutive (as a border) of the aesthetic unity of a picture, the frame is still not part of the picture but rather marks an intermediate zone of transition,¹ which for that reason is also productive as an intermediary. The frame onto which the Spanish boy jumps in his picture is painted, so it belongs to the picture itself and its narrative about the escape of the boy who has to overcome barriers. This frame can hardly hold the inner dynamics of the picture, it is the place of the figure’s crossing over to the outside and a symbol of intermedial translation (Paech 2010, 489–504) from the painted to the moving picture. In its form of *décadrage* (Bonitzer 1985), the inner tension reaches the limits of the (medial properties of) painting until the function of the frame is suspended and activated intermedially (in the film). For his van Gogh film, Alain Resnais no longer used the painted pictures but rather their clips from a previous 16-mm black-and-white film. With the movement of the camera, he combined them into a narrative statement and, for this purpose, dissolved their edges (or frames). The centripetal property of painting was translated into the centrifugal property of the cinematic “movement image” (Bazin 1981) with its connections and expansions beyond the “Kasch,” which only covers what can be shown and seen by the next camera movement beyond the current image on the screen.

1 See Derrida 1992, 56–104 and Dünkelsbühler 1991, 207–223.

The Story

The dissolution of the frame inevitably destroys the image of the painting, something the critics of the van Gogh film by Alain Resnais never tire of criticizing. Resnais's answer could have been that he had made a film (about painting), and not filmed paintings for cinema. The temporal narrative has taken the place of the framework function and now fills the spaces between the images with their transitions. In order for the Spanish boy to be able to jump out of his picture, a narrative is also required that gives his past and future actions a new, narrative "framework." The title of the picture, *Escape*, already provides a motif; everything else appears almost automatically in the description of the picture: "Wide-eyed, a boy storms out of the golden picture frame, which he grips with both hands. In astonishment he sees the world beyond the housing in which he ekes out a restricted existence. It is a leap of freedom: At last, it seems he is coming out of the system, leaving everything two-dimensional behind" (Jammers 2010). It remains unclear what he has in front of him when he jumps out of his picture: the showroom of the bank in Madrid, 1874, or the rooms of the Hamburg exhibition *Deceptively Real. Illusion and Reality in the Visual Arts*, 2010, in which the picture was also displayed? Once the framework is blown, there are no limits to the imagination and its cinematic representation. However, it looks as if painting can never really let go of its figures, they still need "art or painting as an institution" in the background for their excursions in order to be able to exist beyond their pictures. The genuinely cinematic characters in Woody Allen's film *Purple Rose of Cairo* (1985), for example, are able to leave not only their motion picture on the screen but also the "medial shelter" of cinema without getting lost in what is supposedly real. The figures in painting, on the other hand, primarily act in the film in painted rooms or rooms in which their paintings are presented such as museums and picture galleries. The reverse movement, the penetration into the picture of the painting already finds a depicted situation in the "picture space" of the painting, which can be expanded once the frame has been overcome.

The Film

Strong motives, such as "escape and persecution," contrast with gentler motives such as daydreaming, curiosity, or the desire for change. All of the films briefly presented below (and many more) deserve to be treated in detail.

Joe Dante's animated film *Looney Tunes. Back in Action* (2003) is perhaps the most complex example of its kind [Fig. 2]. Even though a mixture of film and animation is the starting point, what is important is not the traversal of a single image but the picture gallery (the Louvre) in which the images are presented. The cartoon characters Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck, and others give themselves a wild chase through the galleries of the Louvre, they cross walls and paintings that partially destroy them. As painted figures, they do not differ from the painting they traverse, they are of the same kind. As animated film characters, they do (radically!) share in the cinematic movement, which also directly contaminates



Figure 2. Duffy Duck's chase in the Louvre in *Looney Tunes. Back in Action* (2003)



Figure 3. Leaving the frame in *Gemäldegalerie* (1989)

the paintings. The story is dictated by the film plot; the Louvre is the playground that connects the film characters with the paintings.

The short animated film by Siglinde Hamacher, *Gemäldegalerie* (1989), comes across much more civilized. The figures in painting leave their pictures, for example, by coming out from behind the picture frame, which, as in Borrell's *Escape from Criticism*, is part of the picture and an active part of the film as well [Fig. 3]. They leave their shadows (or costumes) in the picture (for their return?) and gather in the eponymous picture gallery. As drawn and animated figures, they are equally elements of painting and film that interact in the space between painting and film "in the film" beyond their media boundaries (that is the frame).

Akira Kurosawa's film *Dreams* (1990) already indicates in the title that the relationship between the work of painting and its viewer, who will penetrate the picture, is determined by the dream. A visitor, possibly a painter himself, in a Vincent van Gogh painting exhibition moves past the pictures on the wall, which remain static and without a narrative connection. Then the viewer stops pensively in front of one of the pictures, *The Langlois Bridge at Arles* (1888). Determined to leave, he takes his utensils and puts them on his hat. The montage, a "hard cut," now shows him going inside the filmed scene of the picture. Only the title of the film, *Dreams*, can eventually confirm the statement that the viewer of the van Gogh painting dreamed himself into the picture. In the picture, then, he will meet van Gogh in the *Cornfield with Crows* (1890), which finally turns the narrative motif of the intermedia connection into "dream work" [Fig. 4].

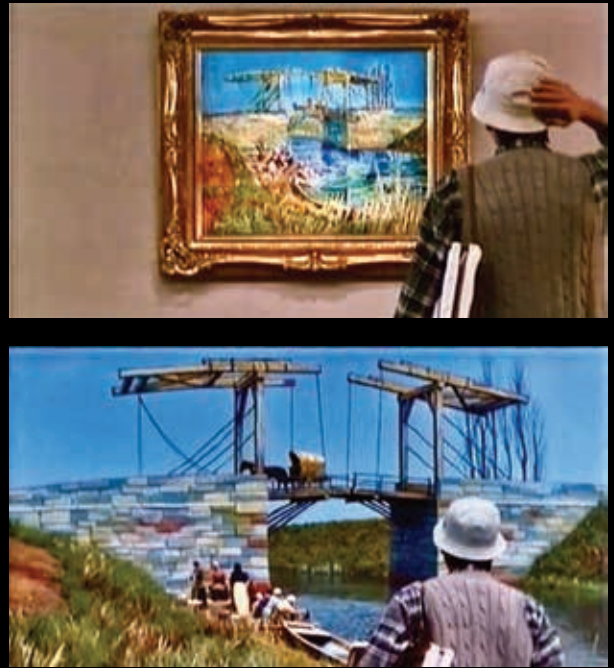


Figure 4. From the inter-medial to “dream work” in Kurosawa’s *Dreams* (1990)

Shawn Levy: *Night at the Museum 2: Battle of the Smithsonian*, 2009. This is where everything comes together that defines the “game” of intermediality between works of art and film. The exhibits in the museum, not just works of painting, “come to life” at night. They leave their pictures or move their sculptures and occupy the whole museum to play the games that have given them their themes. Finally, a riddle (the overall story of the film is to prevent the exhibits from being moved to an archive) has to be solved, which brings together all the characters, including the museum attendant as the only “real” figure who tries to restore the old order to the museum, in the struggle for the solution. For example, the museum keeper and his partner are harassed by the pharaoh’s warriors. On their escape, both manage to jump into the famous photo by Victor Jorgensen: *V-J Day, Kissing the War Goodbye at Time Square*, which hangs in full body length in black and white on the wall. From there, they look back at the picture gallery, where the pharaoh’s warriors are looking for them puzzled. They adapt to the black-and-white scene of the photo, whose theme, victory celebration, and “kissing,” they are happy to adopt for their own love story [Fig. 5]. The museum is an art space, the events are nightly dream games in which the intermediality between works of art and the film itself is acted out in a playful way. The film made possible what the “fine arts” dreamed of.



Figure 5. The intermedial “game” in the *Night at the Museum 2: Battle of the Smithsonian*, 2009

Conclusion

A painting is not a film if by film one understands the projected “movement image” that one can see in the cinema, for example. Painting and film are incompatible in terms of media. When a film shows a painting, it is like one object among others, a piece of furniture, for example. If a painting represents the cinema or the film, then it is in the form of architecture or interior space with a photograph on one of the walls. What separates them above all is movement, its absence in painting and its constitutive function in film. In painting, not only in modern times, there have always been efforts to simulate movement in the static image, and film has also been persuaded to mimic painting on large flat screens on the wall. (Experimental) films have become picturesque, and painting has become cinematic in this way.

None of this has anything to do with the intermediality between a painting and a film. It does not exist. At least not immediately. The example of Borrell’s *Escape from Criticism* and many other pictures of illusion painting show that these paintings (of art – and that is what they are) are animated by a longing for movement, a kind of death instinct in painting, the fulfilment of which would mean destruction. So, caution is required.

Intermediality as a procedure would set in motion a cautious process of translation which, based on the respective media properties, would create or reconstruct the transition from one medium to the other. The paragone or contest of the arts is the description of such a process – as a critical distinction rather than a translation. Lessing’s discussion of the *Laocoön* comes very close to such a procedure. Instead of the difference between the medium of sculpture/painting and the medium of literature, it is their cooperation that should be emphasized, because an intermedia process that constructively relates the two only takes place between them as a translation of one medium into another.

This requires an intermediate zone that is filled with storytelling. Narration is not a medium in itself but a form of temporalization that is looking for an appropriate medium: in music, literature, film, or a grandmother, for example. If the subject of a painting is taken up and formulated in a narrative, then the static image finds connection with other media forms of narration that are suitable for intermedial translation.

As is always the case with translations, the result is never the same as at the starting point. Intermedial processes are processes of change in which the properties of one medium (as transferred forms) are added to the properties of the other medium, etc. The Spanish boy's leap out of Borrell's image can be realized in a few words or entire stories, and thus it can arrive in the film. The game with entering and leaving pictorial spaces, which pictures of painting as well as literary narratives and films "play" according to their media properties, takes place between the media with reference to one or the other medium. In other words, this is exactly where "intermediality" takes place.

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Figure 1. *Lust for Life*. A stunning montage of images modulates from filmic/photographic to painterly



Figure 2. *Vincent and Theo*: actors before the painted panorama at Scheveningen, designed to fool the eye

Brigitte Peucker*

In the Picture: Immersion as Intermedial Strategy

Immersive practices have a long history, so I offer only a few examples taken from Western Europe in the 18th century. They include the programmed walk through the English landscape garden, whose perambulating spectators enjoyed the *frisson* of the aestheticized spaces through which they walked. When picturesque travellers turned the landscape into painting with the help of Claude glasses or mirrors used as optical toys, they saw themselves as “in the picture.” Even camera obscura effects could be understood as immersive during this period: when Joseph Addison describes his experience in a “dark room” in the *Spectator* papers of 1712, he mentions moving images in true colours, projected on two opposing walls between which he describes himself as positioned, immersed in images that intermingle art and nature (Addison 1876, 338). The discursive framework of Addison’s experience is shaped by the desire to see Nature as Art, as in the case of the picturesque traveller. Similarly, in the *Salon of 1767*, Denis Diderot projects himself into the genre paintings he describes by using the fiction of physically entering the picture. In such instances, Diderot’s descriptions narrativize the paintings he describes, “enters,” and “inhabits,” turning them into spaces replete with sounds, breezes, and even odours.¹ A final example: popular in the Europe of the 1780s–1880s is the entertainment called the panorama, which aims at the figured placement of the spectator within a represented scene, again as a means of blurring the boundaries between reality and art. An aesthetic interest in the panorama has been read as accounting for the paintings of this period that abandoned traditional framing and compositional devices such as Caspar David Friedrich’s *Monk by the Sea* (1808–1810). One viewer, the writer Heinrich von Kleist, describes his profound visual and bodily experience of immersion into its images in a review titled *Feelings before Friedrich’s Seascape*.² Kleist writes: “the picture with its two or three mysterious objects lies before one like the Apocalypse, as though it were thinking Young’s *Night Thoughts*, and since in its uniformity and boundlessness it has no foreground but the frame, *the viewer feels as though his eyelids had been cut off*” [italics mine]. Kleist is plunged, in other words, too abruptly

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1 See, for example, the *Sixth Site* (Diderot 1995, 110–120).

2 Published in Kleist’s *Berliner Abendblätter*, 1810. Quoted by Traeger 1996, 414.

into the picture's world. His remarks strongly convey the physical and material aspects of spectatorial experience, convey the momentous impact the mere abandoning of conventional framing devices (*repoussoir*) could have on the beholder of a painted landscape during this period. As Oliver Grau points out, spectatorial practices promoted by the panorama are at play here and "Kleist's notion of the ideal observer's position is *in* the image" (2004, 63).

I do not intend to suggest that a conventional genealogy links immersive practices in the England, France, and Germany of the 18th and 19th centuries. It is not proto-cinematic experience that is at issue here, either. Of interest to me is that as spectators we repeatedly seek out such experiences – each in its historically-specific context, with its historically specific technologies, yes, but each with its distinctly physiological and psychological component. The varieties of immersive practices may be historically-specific, but they share commonalities as well as differences. What is immersion's pull? Are immersive experiences simply fairground attractions, given different guises by different epochs and diverse technologies?

Walter Benjamin famously commented on immersion's political effects when he disdained the legendary Chinese painter – Wu Daozi –, who, sitting before his painted landscape in contemplative immersion, gets up and enters its space. Benjamin references this story on several occasions in his writing,³ most notably in *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility* (1936), where the painter's entry into pictorial space figures the unanalytical spectatorship promoted by the auratic art of painting. In Benjamin's reading, the Chinese legend illustrates the immersive contemplation elicited by painting rather than Benjamin's preferred *analytical* attitude, an attitude generated by the mass medium of film (2008, 39–40). In a recent essay, Jan Cao takes up the provenance of Wu Daozi's story with respect to Benjamin's appropriation of it. In Chinese history, this painter is noted for his murals in Buddhist and Daoist temples – murals so true to life that animals depicted in them seem to move – a trope of realism. Cao pursues the tale of Wu Daozi through the work of German art historian Otto Fischer (1882–1962), who referred to Wu's art as "Kunst der Versenkung," an "art of immersion."⁴ Cao ultimately traces the story of Wu to Tachibana Morikuni, the 19th-century Japanese woodcut artist and translator of earlier Chinese writings on painting, arguing that Benjamin may actually not have *read* about the Chinese painter at all but rather learned about the legend from one of Morikuni's woodcuts.⁵ The attendant irony is that a mass-produced

3 See Cao 2019. Other references to the story of the Chinese painter by Walter Benjamin occur in *The Mumerehlen* section of *Berlin Childhood around 1900* and, as Jan Cao points out, in Benjamin's review of Adorno's dissertation on Kierkegaard (2019, 39).

4 Cao 2019, 38. Fischer served as director of the Basel Kunstmuseum between 1927 and 1938.

5 Cao 2019, 5. I find this hypothesis somewhat questionable given the various German writers of the period who referred to the legend – among them, Theodor Adorno and Ernst Bloch.

woodcut would then have been the impetus for Benjamin's remarks concerning painting's auratic pull. Be that as it may.

A prominent contemporary theorist of immersion is art historian Michael Fried, who reads the central expression of Gustave Courbet's immersive drive in the painter's figured corporeal entry into his paintings within the context of realism (1990, 141). Fried's interest in corporeality extends to the materiality of the medium. He praises Courbet's gesture of (figuratively) entering his paintings as realism's appropriate strategy for denying the place of the painter-beholder before his work, reading this strategy as "Courbet's *pictorial and ontological obsession*" (1990, 171; italics mine). In all of our examples, there is a fascination with a figured continuity between a work of art, a painting, and "the real, the world" – a continuity that promotes spectatorial immersion in the painterly space. Image space and body space are figured as coextensive. Immersion in Courbet's painting is both a formal strategy – it is pictorial – and an "ontological obsession." Perhaps this remark answers our question concerning the recurrence of immersive strategies in different media and different historical moments.

Film as a medium is by no means averse to using immersive strategies, often in moments that address intermediality. This is not the mode of filmmaking that Benjamin had in mind in his seminal essay, of course. As a strategy, it is most prevalent in art cinema, and I approach it in films about Vincent Van Gogh, where it is noticeably present. Griselda Pollock is not off track in claiming that Van Gogh is a "brand identity," the paradigm for the suffering modern artist in humanist discourse, arguing that he is addressed by the medium of film for that reason (1998, 110). But there is more. Perhaps John Berger gets it right when he writes that Van Gogh's "compulsion" was "to bring the two acts of production, that of the canvas and that of the reality depicted, ever closer and closer" and that Van Gogh's desire was "to approach and approach and approach" (1985, 276–281). Repeatedly, filmmakers who address Van Gogh's works acknowledge the painter's immersive drive in their filmic approximations thereof. Vincente Minnelli's *Lust for Life* (1956) reconstructs Van Gogh's paintings as sets in which the Vincent character is contained: at one point in the film, the camera shoots Kirk Douglas against one of Vincent's paintings as though it were the diegetic landscape. And then there is the dissolve from a close-up of *Starlight over the Rhone* that imposes Van Gogh brushstrokes over the filmic figure of Kirk Douglas: here the conceit is that Vincent Van Gogh actually paints over Vincente Minnelli's filmic images, covering over film images with painted ones. And consider the scene in which a window is opened onto branches covered with peach blossoms, with the camera travelling over photographic and painterly landscapes alike.⁶ These intermedial techniques figure an exchange of sorts, which for Minnelli may well be an erotic exchange, but,

6 The model for this image is Van Gogh's *Almond Blossoms* of 1890, which – like so much of his work – was strongly influenced by Japanese woodcuts.

in any case, the exchange figures the *unity* of the respective arts and artists, not their Benjaminian/Brechtian dissonance. As Scott Bukatman puts it with respect to Minnelli's film, "by the time [Van Gogh] collapses in the café, the artist has come to inhabit his paintings" (2008, 305–306). The spectator of *Lust for Life* is similarly swallowed up, plunged into the film's images, not least by the immersive propensities of CinemaScope [Fig. 1].

Consider, too, Robert Altman's *Vincent and Theo* (1990), where the trope of entering the painting is very explicitly addressed. Here it is Vincent's brother, Theo, who muses about his wish to enter a painting, describing this desire in conversation with a Parisian prostitute. There is something erotic in Theo's discourse, which is about a state of being hermetically sealed in an atemporal space (a *locus amoenus*?) in which Theo says he wishes to linger forever: "if I could just walk into the painting, if I could just stay there forever," he says, wishing for a place outside time and history. There follows an abrupt cut to a scene in which Vincent, his female companion, and her little girl are visiting a panorama. Not that we recognize the seacoast landscape as a painted panorama immediately – at first glance, it seems a photographic image of the seashore [Fig. 2].

For this sequence, Altman shot the panorama at Scheveningen, which Van Gogh did in fact visit and where he sketched. It still exists today. Here objects – the *realia* – camouflage the "join" between painted scene and the viewing platform of the panorama. In Altman's film, the panorama is realistic enough to fool the child, who proceeds to relieve herself on the sand that fills the intermediate space. To what end does Altman include this sequence in his film if not to point with some insistence to a spectatorial obsession – perhaps his own – with being in the picture? At the same time, the sequence focuses on the mediatic issue of film's hybrid textuality, its oscillation between realism and artifice, which may very well be Altman's ontological obsession.

Next we come to the Van Gogh film that images this obsession most dramatically: I refer to two episodes in Akira Kurosawa's *Dreams* (1990), which the filmmaker says were inspired by his own dreams. In these episodes, a young painting student wearing Kurosawa's signature hat is lost in the contemplation of Van Gogh's paintings in a museum only to become literally immersed in them [Fig. 3].⁷ Stephen Prince suggests that the theme of immersion in this film points to the career in painting the filmmaker gave up and that the student's literal immersion in these imaged spaces signifies the way in which Kurosawa might have been "trapped in the forms of others" had he remained a painter.⁸ It is also probable that the legend of Wu Daozi, the painter who enters his painting, lurks in the background. Tachibana Morikuni's woodcuts and his trans-

7 Visual effects for these sequences were created by George Lucas, and Martin Scorsese himself plays Van Gogh painting in the cornfields of one of his landscapes.

8 Prince 1991, 309. Van Gogh similarly claimed to have seen his paintings in his dreams.



Figure 3. Kurosawa's *Dreams*: Kurosawa's young painter is enveloped by Van Gogh's images.

lation of Wu Daozi's story would have been familiar to Kurosawa, an erstwhile student of painting.

What is notable about the film's scenes of Van Gogh's work through which the young painter makes his way is their viscosity: the thick impasto of the paint that brings the brushstrokes into relief. Further, these images are in extreme close-up, enveloping the human figure in each painting's surface, thus immersing character and spectator alike. It is the materiality of paint that is at issue: film is a "flat medium," images on a screen can only figure texture, whereas paint is material, its application inscribed with the artist's facture.⁹ Could this be the aspect of Van Gogh's technique that inspires filmmakers to read his work as immersive? The Japanese art student of Kurosawa's film pursues Van Gogh through several landscapes, ending with *Wheatfield with Crows*, said to be the last painting the artist completed.¹⁰ But at the end of this vignette, the art student – the Kurosawa stand-in – extricates himself from the images in which he has been entrapped: he rejects immersion, picks up his painting materials and leaves the museum. The implication is that he will henceforth pursue another art form.

Other films featuring Van Gogh make use of his work in different but similarly over-the-top ways. Of these, I will just briefly mention Doruta Kobiela and Hugh Welchman's *Loving Vincent* (2017), an animated film that consists of more than 65,000 oil paintings: each frame of the film is hand-painted. Here Van Gogh's paintings become film images that simulate movement through editing procedures. The insistence on the film's painted images as constituting a world is a

9 Lane 2018, 32. As Lane puts it: "No special effect, however costly, and no closeup, however intimate, can rival the layering of oils into a sticky paintscape, although, Lord knows, directors have tried."

10 Although this is not actually the case, its images do prefigure Van Gogh's death.



Figure 4. *Loving Vincent*: Every frame of this film is painted – an act of extreme homage suggesting the replacement of reality by art, the troping of film by painting.

trope of realism, and its strategies can be understood as immersive in the sense that the film posits a living reality similar to our own, one that might be entered [Fig. 4].

Interestingly, none of the abovementioned films resorts to *tableau vivant* to explore immersion – although the *Night Café* scene in which Van Gogh seems to inhabit his painting comes very close. *Tableau vivant* is one of the most straightforward ways of being “in the picture:” it is a literally immersive practice for the actors who perform it, who assume the postures of figures in a painting. But for its spectators the effect of *tableau vivant* oscillates between their awareness of a disconnect between the recreation of figures in a (static) image and an awareness of the living bodies of the actors who do so, who must arrest all movement and remain still. Ontological obsession – or call it, rather, the aesthetic pleasure created by indulging in the effect that juxtaposing different ontological registers produces – is certainly what powers *tableau vivant* as a practice. Then add the medium of film to that heady mixture, and the human body becomes the fulcrum between painting and cinema. Need it disappear, become fully immersed in the painting it is evoking? Not really.

To illustrate the latter remark, just a few observations about Agnès Varda’s *The Gleaners and I* (2000), which contains an important *tableau vivant* enacted by its director (Peucker 2019, 108–113). Among other painted representations of women in the fields, Varda’s film references Jules Breton’s *La Glaneuse*, a painting she encounters in the Arras Museum of Fine Arts. When Varda herself stages a *tableau vivant* of *La Glaneuse*, it is not simply an amusing way of suggesting her identification with the female gleaner of Breton’s painting. Standing next to the canvas, Varda in a held pose speaks complexly of the relation of painting to the real world by performing a (figured) merger with the painted subject. But in Varda’s *tableau* we find the embodiedness – the “making real” – privileged by realism alongside an antithetical modernist theatricality expressed in her bold frontal look out. This frontal look is both a feature of the documentary genre



Figure 5. A close-up of Agnès Varda enacting a *tableau vivant* of Jules Breton's *La Glaneuse* (1877)

(*The Gleaners and I* is an essay film with pronounced documentary concerns) and a way of acknowledging the artifice of the filmic medium. In other words, the *tableau* performs a “both/and” that allows it to evoke realism and yet to stand outside and against it [Fig 5.].

Varda's *tableau vivant* is in every way a performance: she visibly enjoys the ironic tension between the heroic stance and stature of Breton's *glaneuse* and her own diminutive height, her unheroic figure that nevertheless assumes the heroic attitude of the painted one. She is in the picture, but looks outside it. The blatant theatricality of Varda's look out prevents her immersion in the *tableau* and the spectator's immersion in the film's images as well. In other words, Varda's *tableau* stresses dissonance rather than immersion. As Benjamin suggests, immersion is not emancipatory: that is the province of an analytical attitude before the object filmed in conjunction with the properties of film as a medium. By stressing the *tableau*'s dissonance, Varda accommodates an analytical form to her feminist stance, creating a “picture” that oscillates between modalities – one we can never enter.

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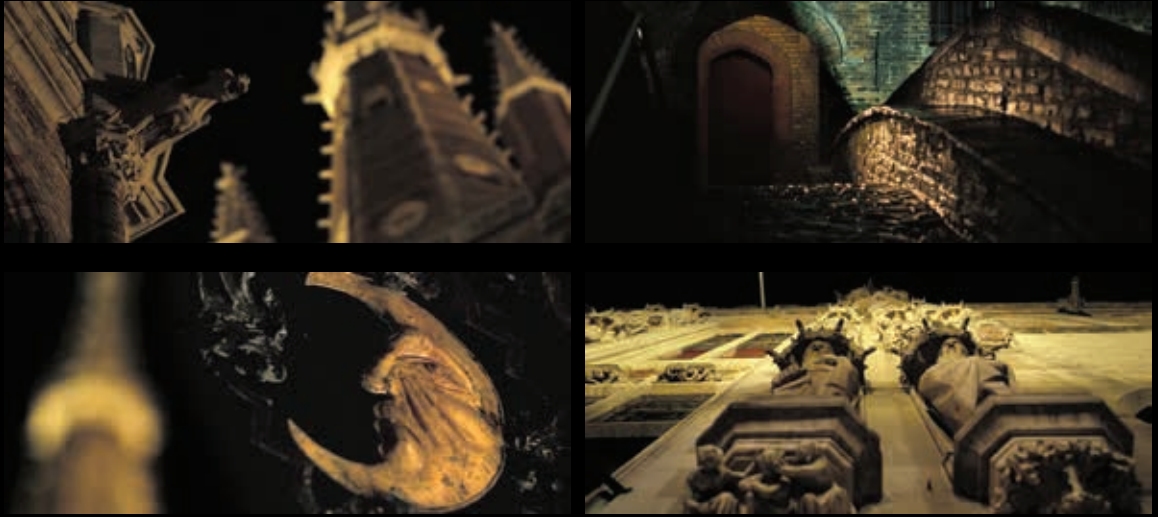
Sensations of In-Betweenness, Intermedial Transgressions in Martin McDonagh's *In Bruges*

A bizarre tragicomedy on screen, Martin McDonagh's *In Bruges* (2008) employs multifarious devices through which it subverts the template of the gangster movie. Bearing the signature of a playwright, author of plays such as *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*, *The Cripple of Inishmaan*, *The Lonesome West*, *The Pillowman*, or *A Very Very Very Dark Matter*, the film *In Bruges* intensely relies on the dramatic tradition from Shakespeare through Irish theatre to the “in-yer-face” movement of the British drama in the 1990s. McDonagh's penchant for the grotesque and absurd is equally nourished by the Theatre of the Absurd and the Irish and British dramatic heritage. His theatrical background makes its presence felt not only in the film's dialogue-driven composition packed with dark humour but also in turning the gangster narrative about two hitmen's derailed commission into an existential drama of tragic proportions.

The anti-gangster movie, as it might be called, defies expectations and relies on displacement in several respects. This essay looks at the medial layeredness of the film and at the ways in which its pronounced intermediality performs multiple shifts and transgressions. The analysis of the film from the perspective of media interactions is aimed at revealing the manifold sensations of in-betweenness identified in its texture, reinforced by the in-betweenness of media, involving theatre, music, photography, sculpture, but paramountly painting. The essay relies on the assumption that the presence of a set of classical Flemish paintings in the film is not limited to being subordinated to the diegesis but plays a significant role in the poetics of hybridization, media reflexivity, and transgression manifested in the film.

The storyline occasions several modalities to introduce dissonances and contrasts, divergent elements culturally and linguistically, to turn upside down generic and narrative conventions, ethnic stereotypes, and to focus on “confusing the sensibilities of the spectator” (Moore 2013), in accordance to what McDonagh's Hungarian monographer Péter Görcsi (2017) calls the “dramaturgy of deception.” Two Irish contract killers, Ray and Ken arrive in Bruges, being sent there by Harry, their assignor in London, in order to hide away for

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Figures 1–4. Photographic stills conveying the architectural heritage of Bruges

two weeks after Ray’s fatal mistake committed on the occasion of his first commission. Bruges emerges as an apparently randomly selected – albeit virtually all the more significant – destination of their temporary stay, the characters being unaware that this will be the last stage of their lives, as it gradually turns out from the carefully choreographed hints that lead to the finale. It is in line with McDonagh’s dramaturgy that the protagonists are outsiders, which provides the necessary distance for a reflective position. Bruges as a transit zone is formed in the dynamics of mobility, including Ray and Ken’s arrival and supposedly temporary stay, Ray’s failed attempt of escape, Harry’s arrival, as well as Ken and Ray’s failed final return because of Harry’s vendetta.

The title of the film directs attention to the location and, as the plot unfolds, it gets reinforced that Bruges does remain in the focus as the actual protagonist throughout the film.¹ The introductory lines of the script offer the description of the setting, laying emphasis on the atmosphere: “Various shots of the empty, cobble-stoned, *other worldly* streets of Bruges, Belgium. It’s winter, and a freezing fog covers everything; the Gothic churches, the narrow canals, their *odd* little bridges. We could be in any period of the last hundred years. We happen to

1 Dániel Varró’s free Hungarian translation, “Erőszakik” – a wordplay merging the meaning of “aggressive” and “professionals” –, drops the reference to the setting and arbitrarily shifts focus to the main characters, thus losing a very important layer of signification.

be in the present day” (emphasis mine). It is to be remarked that both the spatial and the temporal reference endow the location with special qualities such as otherworldliness and atemporality, a place that is out of space and out of time. The corresponding opening sequence consists of a series of photographic stills of architectural details of the town, building exteriors, reliefs, sculptures, decorations, canal bridges, and arched gateways that have survived from the Middle Ages and now hold in store a lavish spectacle for the visitor [Figs. 1–4].

The picturesque close-ups alternating with the opening credits fading in and out create the first visual impressions of Bruges, later described by Ken as “the most well-preserved medieval town in the whole Belgium.” However, rapture is counterbalanced by a disquieting sensation from the very outset, effected by the expressionist-style photography applied in these shots, captured at nighttime and recorded from a low camera angle. The face of Bruges is formed in a particular duality of familiarity and strangeness, attraction and repulsion, first articulated in the dialogue between the protagonists: “Ray: ‘Bruges is a shithole.’ Ken: ‘Bruges is *not* a shithole.’ Ray: ‘Bruges *is* a shithole.’ Ken: ‘Ray, we’ve only just got off the fucking train. Could we reserve judgement on Bruges until we’ve seen the fucking place?’ Ray: ‘I know it’s gonna be a shithole.’” The duality is reinforced also visually by the fact that this dialogue is heard in voice-over accompanying a black, blank shot that stands in stark contrast with the preceding photographic richness.

Each character defines himself in relation to Bruges; thus, the image of Bruges varies in accordance with its individual perceptions. For Ken, the Belgian town opens up, with all its architectural wonders, as the object of the tourist gaze, as John Urry defines it: “The tourist gaze is directed to features of landscape and townscape which separate them off from everyday experience. Such aspects are viewed because they are taken in some sense out of the ordinary. The viewing of such tourist sights often involves different sights of social patterning, with a much greater sensitivity to visual elements of landscape or townscape than normally found in everyday life” (2002, 3). Ken behaves as an eminent tourist, engaged in “the collection of signs” (Urry 2002, 3), being capable of lifting them out of everydayness and perceiving them in their extraordinary presence and signification, as “the tourist is interested in everything as a sign of itself” (Culler 1981, 127, quoted in Urry 2002, 3). His profound interest in Bruges as a site of cultural heritage, not at all typical for a contract killer, may be in itself a sufficient reserve of humour; on top, it is complemented with Ray’s total disgust and rejection when it comes to getting immersed in the pleasures of sightseeing. He sticks to his Irishness, saying “Ken, I grew up in Dublin. I love Dublin. If I’d grown up on a farm and was retarded, Bruges might impress me, but I didn’t, so it doesn’t.” While Ken is spellbound by the spectacle that meets his eyes on the boat trip, Ray stays gathering his coat and looking inward, as if he were perceiving in advance its threatening emanations. It turns out through a flashback a little later that Ray is burdened by a failed commission when, besides the priest that he was hired to kill, he also killed a child; the sense of guilt and inescapable trauma turn his stay in Bruges into an unbearable nightmare. The stay



Figure 5. Detail of Jan Provoost's *Death and the Miser* (1515–1521) quoted in the film

in Bruges also turns into a nightmare for Ken the moment when he is ordered by Harry to kill Ray. Ken is informed that by choosing Bruges Harry intended to provide some happy days, a two-week fairy tale for Ray before he gets killed. Thus, Bruges undergoes a dramatic transformation from a light tourist destination into a traumatic place, into the dark realms of burdened conscience, from a transitory life stage into the eternity of death. The contrast between the two perceptions of the place is maintained throughout the film by the insertion of photographic stills rendering the exceptional beauty and tranquillity of the Belgian town; the tension is amplified to the full in the final part when this unique townscape serves as the background of brutal bloodshed. It has to be noted immediately that, in McDonagh's cinematography, brutal bloodshed is carried to such extremes and is elaborated in such a deconstructive manner – also reinforced by the accompaniment of the Irish folk song *On Raglan Road* – that it subverts the gangster movie genre, turning it straight into its own parody. In this way, Bruges becomes an ambivalent, disquieting scene of in-betweenness, between “fairy tale” and “shithole,” the picturesque and the uncanny, physical place and moral realm, outer spectacle and inner vision, comedy and tragedy, heaven and hell, life and death.

In McDonagh's film, Bruges is depicted as a transit zone also in medial terms. The manifold sensations of in-betweenness mentioned above are reinforced by the in-betweenness sensed at the level of medial shifts and transpositions. Needless to say, the choice of the setting has been motivated by its art historical significance, by its being one of the main centres of the Golden Age of Flemish art. McDonagh's film substantially draws on the art historical relevance of the setting, not only by manipulating the scenery with cinematic means and transforming the picturesque townscape into a disquieting cinescape in accordance



Figures 6–7. Close-ups highlighting details of the second panel, *The Flaying of Sisamnes*, from Gerard David's diptych *The Judgement of Cambyses* (1498)

with its dramaturgy relying on contrast and displacement but also by heavily relying on concrete artworks that are included in the film. Masterpieces of the Flemish Primitives turn up in the diegesis when the two contract killers visit Groeningemuseum in Bruges and contemplate some of the exhibited paintings. The paintings have their well-defined role in the diegesis, as pointed out by research so far (Melnikova 2013, Göröcsi 2017). The film shows four paintings that Ken and Ray see in the museum (it is a flick that while Ken gets immersed in one, Ray has already had a quick look at three), each of which can be connected to particular motifs, twists and turns occurring at the story level. The paintings thematize sin, punishment, and expiation through the representation of particular historical, legendary and allegorical figures (Cambyses, Saint George, the Miser) as well as that of humanity facing the Last Judgement and meet intense emotional response in Ray, who feels directly affected. The flashback showing Ray's fatal mistake of also killing, together with the victim, the priest, a little boy preparing for confession, writing his sins on a slip of paper – "1. Being moody, 2. Being sad at maths, 3. Being sad" –, is juxtaposed with Jan Provoost's *Death and the Miser* (1515–1521), which consists of the two side panels of a triptych whose central part is missing [Fig. 5].

These two interrelated paintings process a topic of wide circulation, showing the miser preoccupied with his earthly temptations and handing over a piece of paper to death. It is an enigmatic and ironic representation; it seems that the miser wants to extort money even from death. Supposedly the miser's note contains the list of his sins; however, there are not coins but jettons, used at the time for calculations, in front of death. At the level of film narrative, the paintings are not only in connection with the hitman's former traumatic experience, but they also hint at episodes when there appear coins: first, when Ken wants to,



Figure 8. Detail of anonymous Flemish Master's *Scenes from the Legend of St George* (16th c.), connected to the motif of beheading in the film

pay for the entrance fee to the Belfry in coins but they are not enough and the petty receptionist is not flexible enough to accept less than the prescribed sum; second, when shot by Harry in the Belfry towards the finale, in the face of death, Ken prepares for throwing himself down, but before that, in a gesture of dignity and care, in order to distract attention from the chased Ray, he drops the same coins that fall like manna from heavens.

With these paintings, the scene changes to the interior of Groeningemuseum, where Ray rigorously scrutinizes *The Judgement of Cambyses* (1498), an oil on wood diptych by Gerard David, from which the film includes the second panel, representing the flaying of the corrupt judge called Sisamnes on the order of the Persian king Cambyses, as related by Herodotus [Figs. 6–7].

The camera pans the details of flaying, especially painful for Ray as the painting is about bribe and corruption that he is involved in up to his neck. The next painting that grabs Ray's attention is *Scenes from the Legend of St George*, a polyptych by an early 16th-century unknown Flemish master. Again, the film shows parts of the polyptych, namely the two lower panels, which represent the beheading and putting in the grave of Saint George [Fig. 8].

Beheading as a motif will turn out to be relevant from the perspective of the film narrative. Ray accidentally shoots the kid in the head; Harry buys from Yuri, the gun dealer, “dum-dum” bullets strong enough to destroy the victim's entire head. The film ends in the reiteration of Ray's “tragic flaw,” this time by Harry, who, together with shooting Ray, will unintentionally blow the head of Jimmy, the dwarf, corresponding to the formerly killed child.

While Ray translates these paintings to his own situation and is horrified – again, a displacement of the gangster figure who himself commits no less brutal acts himself –, Ken is immersed in the contemplation of the triptych *The Last*



Figures 9–10. The hitmen scrutinizing the central panel, representing the Purgatory of Hieronymus Bosch's *The Last Judgment* (c. 1486, Bruges)



Judgment (c. 1486) by Hieronymus Bosch. Ray joins him, and it is one of the key moments of the film as both hitmen contemplate and interpret the painting [Figs. 9–10].

Bearing resemblance to his two other masterpieces, *The Last Judgment* (c. 1482, Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna) and *The Garden of Earthly Delights* (between 1490 and 1510, Museo del Prado, Madrid), the triptych located in Bruges consists of a left panel representing Eden, where the blessed souls are being shipped on a boat with a pink tent, a right panel that depicts Hell, an infernal fortress under siege by demons, with a fire in the background, and the central panel, in between, the largest and most elaborated one, representing Purgatory, populated by insect-like demons torturing the men in forms that exceed the liveliest fantasy. Ray says: “Purgatory. Purgatory’s kind of like the inbetweeny one. ‘You weren’t really shit, but you weren’t all that great either.’ Like Tottenham.” Here we come across an instance of McDonagh’s verbal humour that relies on digression, since, to Ray’s question “Do you believe in all that stuff, Ken?” Ken asks: “Tottenham?” To the jokes made at the expense of Tottenham Hotspur, a football team, the film director added another by saying in an interview that “ever since I wrote that scene I’ve been worried it would eventually be ruined by Tottenham winning the treble. That’s been a constant source of anxiety in my life. But I think I’m safe – for a while at least” (Chalmers 2018).

While the role of these paintings in the chain of references within the film narrative is indisputable, their presence and significance is not limited to diegesis. Perceivably, the film includes these paintings not merely for the sake of echoing narrative aspects. Actually, it is the universe of the paintings themselves that might have inspired the entire script, and thus they open up a media-reflexive dimension in McDonagh’s film. It can be regarded as a significant displacement



Figures 11–12. Ray’s agony among weird creatures in the streets of Bruges

of the genre that action is merged with high art, what is more, that action is determined to such an extent by painterly representation. Let us just think about the visceral details of flaying in the diptych *The Judgment of Cambyses*, which fully resonate with the bloody closure of the movie. As if *In Bruges* were a contemporary recontextualization of ancient and mediaeval times. As if time had been reversed and Bruges had actually turned into a mediaeval scenery. The series of paintings and, among them, eminently Bosch’s triptych, endow the film with an intermedial layering that turns Bruges into a floating scene of in-betweenness and multiple transgressions not only thematically, diegetically but also medially. It is the spirit and universe of Bosch’s masterpiece that guides the film viewer towards understanding the choice of scenery, the characters, the events, even the self-reflexive and intermedial texture of the film.

The model for an intermedial *mise-en-scène* may be set up by the intermediality of Bosch’s triptych itself. What Ágnes Pethő writes about Bosch’s *The Garden of Earthly Delights* is also applicable to *The Last Judgment* in Bruges: “As such, Bosch’s triptych can be regarded as a picture *representing* different aspects and levels of in-betweenness but also *performing* a series of transgressions, thereby effectively challenging the idea of the self-containment of different arts. As an altarpiece, a triptych can already be seen as an artwork standing at the threshold of other arts (architecture, sculpture, religious text, ceremonial) and in close connection with them” (Pethő 2014, 472 – emphasis in the original). It is only cinema that is absent from the series of other arts listed above. However, it is inherently also there if we think of the narrative strategies, even proto-cinematic dynamism of mediaeval/Renaissance painting, especially a painting by Bosch. For example, the central panel of the triptych *The Last Judgement* repre-

senting Purgatory is so dense in “action” that it can be watched and enjoyed as long as a full-length feature film.

As such, McDonagh’s film is a contemporary extension of the inherent intermediality of the Golden Age of Flemish painting. Thus, it is not only the film that reframes the painting but also the painting that reframes the film. Elements reminding of, or similar to, details in Bosch’s triptych, such as towers and fortresses, the bell, the fire, grotesque creatures such as the overweight American tourist or Jimmy, the dwarf turn up scattered throughout the film. Marked by manifold qualities of in-betweenness and witness to all sorts of sins, Bruges turns into Bosch’s Purgatory, also positioned in-between on the triptych. The painting impregnates the medial perception of the entire film, which becomes all the more salient in the final scene, when Ray agonizes surrounded by weird creatures in the streets of Bruges, as if all of them had just stepped out of Bosch’s fantastic bestiary. The scene can be interpreted within the diegesis: Ray finds himself among the shooting of the film-within-the-film, among actors disguised for filming [Figs. 11–12].

However, it can also be interpreted beyond the narrative logic, as a visionary scene that animates Bosch’s painting, thus performing a leap from discourse to figuration and becoming an instance of intermedial metalepsis. According to Ágnes Pethő, there are cases when “intermedial occurrences can be perceived as metaleptic figures that are meant to perform [...] ‘disruptions’ of the logic of discourse and ‘transgressions’ into the domain of the figural” (2020, 386–387). The final strange loop of intermediality, in which, during Ray’s agony between life and death, the layers become intertwined and the real, the painterly, and the cinematic inextricably fold upon each other, turns McDonagh’s film into a thought-provoking remediation of Bosch’s grotesque painterly universe. On the threshold of death, Ray also finds himself on the threshold of the “real,” as he enters the making of a movie. Thus, the metaleptic twist of the final scene folds back upon the entire film narrative, wrapping it up in a self-reflexive framing, in which Ray and Ken have acted throughout as movie characters, moving among artificially designed sceneries, from the tourist fairy tale through getting immersed in the world of art in the space of the museum to the bloodshed of thrillers – but never in “reality” itself. Together with the deconstruction of Bruges and its transformation into an otherworldly scenery, the protagonists themselves fall apart into collage figures composed of mosaics belonging to distinct representational conventions.

As a conclusion, the subversive and reflexive media interactions that characterize Martin McDonagh’s *In Bruges* reinforce manifold sensations of in-betweenness, perceived not only at the level of setting, plot, and character but also that of cinematic register, situating the film in-between popular genres and art-house cinema. They enrich the generic template with a sensation of hybridity and excess manifested at the level of images, providing a unique cinematic journey infused with art history and intermedial transgressions.

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Turnacker Katalin*

Epizódok egy színésznő életéből, avagy a pikto-film egy esete: *Shirley – A valóság látomásai*

A művészeti ágak és alkotásaik mint a médiumok közötti komplex kapcsolati rendszer képezi a filmtudományi – immáron kanonizáltnak tekinthető – intermedialitás jelenségét. Kutatása során fogalmának többféle variánsa látott napvilágot, ami meghatározásának nehézségére utal, ugyanakkor használatában bizonyos fokú szabadságot is biztosít. E lehetőséget figyelembe véve szűkül le vizsgálódásom; kiindulásként a köztesség létrejöttének folyamatjellegét hangsúlyozom, amelynek során a kontaktust adó és a vevő médium önmagára és egymásra történő reflexiói konstruálják meg a jelentést (Rajewsky 2002, 12; Nies 2013, 377). Az elemek határátlépése és együttműködése tartalmi megtermékenyülést eredményez, ami a multimediális „egymás mellett” jelenségétől elhatárolódik (Müller 1996, 83). Az intermedialis vonatkozások nagyrészt attól függenek, írja Blöndorn (2007), hogy mely szinten jön létre a referencia. E tekintetben két alaptípust különböztet meg: a kontaktusadó médium tematizálása valósul meg a történeti hivatkozási alap esetében, a diszkurzus szintjén pedig a kapcsolatot felvevő médium sajátítja el az adó közvetítésmódjait. Pethő Ágnes a festészet és a film viszonyát három paradigma mentén, a vizuális ábrázolások és látásmód változásainak történeti összehasonlítása szerint, a két médium különböző kifejezőmódjának és eszközeinek aspektusából, valamint a festőiség stílris megjelenése, a festmények filmekben való előfordulása és szerepe alapján körvonalazza (2007). A vizuális intermedialitás számos esete sorolható fel a klasszikus filmtől kezdve a posztmodernig és máig: meghatározza egyes rendezők egész életművét vagy egy-egy alkotói korszakát, mint Alfred Hitchcock, Jean-Luc Godard, Werner Herzog, Wim Wenders, Peter Greenaway esetében, és idesorolható Gustav Deutsch kísérleti munkássága is. A médiumok közti viszonyt jelölő fogalom a film üzenetközvetítő jellegét hangsúlyozza különösen az esztétikai kapcsolatok tekintetében, mint példának okáért a mediális folyamatok irányított váltása vagy szimultaneitása. E területen sokféle variációja figyelhető meg a kép és kép, a kép és hang, irodalom, színház tartalmi-formai összefüggéseinek, ahol a narrativitás összekötő kapocsként működhet. A festészet és a mozgóképek intermedialis jellegét, a pikto-film egy módját figyelhetjük meg a *Shirley – A*

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valóság látomásai című alkotásban. A vizualitás komplexitását a két művészeti forma kulturális, művészeti beágyazódásán keresztül, Edward Hopper festményeinek és Gustav Deutsch filmjének összefüggéseit a képiség szimultaneitása és az avantgárd experimentum filmtörténeti-elméleti szempontjaival közelíthetjük meg.

A pikto-film kulturális-művészeti kontextusai

A festészet és film együttműködésének tudományos vizsgálata egyre mélyebb összefüggéseket hoz felszínre a 21. században is, melyek régebbi korok kulturális, művészeti eredetére vezethetők vissza. Kiindulásképpen a képzőművészeti alkotások leírására szolgáló egyik első, retorikai fogalom, az ekphraszisz (Graf 1995) megjelenését érdemes megemlíteni, amely a kép és nyelv kapcsolatát alapozta meg. Használata főként az *interart studies* keretében a '90-es években újra virágzott és szétterjedt. Hasonló utat járt be a német romantikából eredő, a zenetudományból ismert *Gesamtkunstwerk* (összművészeti műalkotás) megjelölés, amely Richard Wagner operáinak zenei hangzása, szövegénekklése, színpadra vitele és látványa kapcsán vált népszerűvé az irodalomban, képzőművészetben, majd a filmművészetben is. Eredetileg nem a formák, kifejezések valamiféle összeadását jelentette, hanem az esztétikai minőségek egymást erősítő tartalmi kapcsolatát volt hivatott jelölni (Müller 1998, 34). Aktuális újraalkotását reprezentálja a *Shirley – A valóság látomásai* című film.

Az új médiumként megjelenő némafilm a 20. század elején specifikus módon, technikai adottságaiból adódóan alkalmazta a nyelv, a színház, a festészet, a zene és a fényképezés sajátosságait. A filmelméletírás egyik első, 1916-ban készült szövegében Hugo Münsterberg a fotográfia pszichológiai elemzése kapcsán korát megelőzve a kinematográfia alapjaira mutatott rá, kiemelve annak autonómiáját és hibriditását. A film téridő-meghatározottságától eltekintve úgy vélte, hogy az új médium formális hasonlóságai és átfedései okán főként a színházzal áll kapcsolatban (Münsterberg 1996, 152). Bertold Brecht, az epikus színház megalapítója szerint egy szöveg magán hordozza létrejöttének körülményeit, amiből az is következik, hogy az irodalmár, aki filmeket néz, másként lát és ír, no meg fest – tehetjük hozzá Edward Hopper munkássága alapján. A kinematográfia avantgárd szerepe meghatározó lett, s színházelméletének vonatkozásában Brecht a film dokumentarista képességét tartotta megtermékenyítőnek, amely az elidegenítés (*Verfremdung*) egyik effektusát szolgálta. Darabjainak színreviteléhez képeket, ún. „optikai kórust” alkalmazott, amivel elsőként mutatta meg a gyakorlatban a médiumhatárok átlépését, és tette szemléletessé azok kölcsönös tartalmi megtermékenyítését (Gersch 1975).

Történetének kezdeteitől, a modernitás új hullámainak kibontakozásán keresztül a mai napig újra és újra felszínre került a film kapcsolata a többi művészeti ággal, ill. médiummal. Dick Higgins (1983, idézi: Rajewsky 2002, 9) intermédia fogalmával a '60-as évek közepétől tudatossá vált a médiumok köztes jellege, amely eredetileg a „magas művészet”, a popkultúra, az elektronikus

média közötti viszonyok, viták, különféle gyakorlatok megjelölésére szolgált. Ebben az időszakban indult útjára a fluxus, az avantgárd dadaizmus felélesztésének és egyfajta folytatásának irányzata, amely a művészet és az élet bizonyos egysége közötti folyékony átmenetet és annak mulékony voltát hangsúlyozta. Az alkotók lázadása az elitista művészet ellen új kifejezésmódok és szociális életformák kialakulásához vezetett. Az akcióművészet, a happening szoros kapcsolatban állt a kísérleti színházzal és a zenével. Az előadások alkalmával a művész közreműködéséhez, az általa megtervezett alkotáshoz hozzáadódik a közönség spontán reakciója, aktív bekapcsolódása az eseményekbe (Belting 1998, 455; 468). Végso soron a médiumköziség megszerkesztése, az avantgárd eredetű montázselsv mint kompozíciós módszer újjáélesztése valósult meg, amelynek különféle módjait az egyetemes új hullámok reprezentálják (Pethó 2003, 225–252).

A fluxus globális mozgalmában az élet határtalan, ekképpen a képzóművészeti, irodalmi, színházi, filmi, zenei folyamat is az. Századunkban a médiumok dinamikájának, fúziójának, köztes viszonyainak vizsgálatával foglalkozó diszciplínák nemcsak a történeti avantgárd, a posztmodern és az azutáni kihívásokkal állnak szemben, hanem – ahogy Müller (1996, 83) állítja – újra átláthatóvá teszik a tradicionális elmélet és történet széles területeit.

Az intermedialitás történeti-elméleti megközelítései

Gustav Deutsch osztrák művészfilmes pályája kezdete óta a kinematográfia fenomenológiáját kutatta, *found footage* munkákat készített, építészettel foglalkozott, fotózott, installációkat és akciókat valósított meg.¹ Teljes életműve, mondhatni kis túlzással, az intermedialitás szolgálatában állt. Rövid- és dokumentumfilmjei után 2019-ben bekövetkezett haláláig egyetlen egész estés játékfilmet rendezett, a *Shirley – A valóság látomásai* című alkotást.² Az alkotópályájának összefoglalásaként is felfogható mű egyszerre avantgárd dokumentum, experimentális fikció és filmelméleti-történeti vezérfonal mentén szerkesztett intermedialis komplexum.

Előzménye az 1990-es évek közepére tehető, amikor Deutsch német és osztrák filmarchívumokban Hanna Schirmek alkotótársával végzett kutatásokat a filmi illúzió és valóság, a történeti-elméleti stílusvariációk, a montázs és dekonstrukció tárgykörében, amelyeket a *Film ist* című sorozatában reprezentált. Első rövidfilmjét a mozi születésének 100. évfordulóján, 1995-ben a Lumière-fivérek vetítésére mutatta be, címével utalva André Bazin *Mi a film (Qu'est-ce que le ciné-*

1 Peter Tscherkassy filmkészítő és elméletíró az 1980-as években aktív osztrák avantgárd-filmesei harmadik generációjának tagjai közé sorolta (Tscherkassy 2012, 29).

2 Az osztrák filmdíjat negyedik éve kiosztó Osztrák Filmakadémia 2014-ben Gustav Deutsch *Shirley – A valóság látomásai* című alkotásának három díjat ítél: legjobb operatőr, legjobb jelenet, legjobb jelmez kategóriában. <https://www.oesterreichische-filmakademie.at/filmpreis/archiv/filmpreis-2014>. Utolsó meglekintés: 2021. 03. 04.

ma?) című esszéinek vizsgálódásaira. A klasszikus realista elmélet kérdésfeltevéseire filmtörténeti korszakok különféle műfajú alkotásaiból szerkesztett *found footage* mozgóképekkel válaszolt. Az első hat kisfilm (*Film ist. 1–6*)³ tudományos, nevelési és ipari témájú, amivel megidézi a mozgókép alkalmazásának legkorábbi szándékát, nevezetesen azt, hogy az újabb technikai eszköz – hasonlóképpen, mint például a mikroszkóp – a tudományos kutatást és megismerést segíti majd elő.

A második sorozat (*Film ist. 7–12*)⁴ a némafilm húszas éveinek látványosság-centrikus felfogásából építkezik, megemlékezve a mozi születésének tényleges helyéről-idejéről a vásárok mutatványos sátraiban, majd a varieték színpadán és a stúdiók termeiben, ahol a vidám játék, a varázslat, az érzelmek, a szenvedély, az emlékezet és a dokumentum megszületik. *Film ist. a Girl & a Gun* öt felvonásban szintén a mozgókép történetére reflektál, témája a szexualitás és erőszak, Erosz és Thanatosz konfrontációját műfaji filmidézetekkel fejti ki (Belői 2012).

Gustav Deutsch alkotásaival a filmművészeti tradíció továbbadását tűzte ki célul, ami a tűz táplálásának, nem a hamu megőrzésének prométheuszi cselekedete, ahogy ezt az 1999-ben készült művének címében megnevezi. Egyetlen nagyjátékfilmje ezen a szellemi síkon halad: az amerikai korai hangosfilmtől a hatvanas évekig vázolja fel a folyamatokat az intermedialis diskurzus keretében a festészet és film kölcsönkapcsolatára fókuszálva.

Festészet és filmképek szimultaneitása

Elhíresült mondás az Európában kevésbé ismert amerikai festő, Edward Hopper festészetéről, hogy „(...) rosszul fest. Ha viszont jobban festene, aligha lenne ilyen nagyszerű művész.” Ezt Clement Greenberg (idézi Renner 2003) találóan jegyzi meg egy olyan alkotóról, akinek művei szoros kapcsolatban állnak a popkultúrával, a fotográfiával és a filmművészettel. Első híres festménye, amelyet a New York-i Modern Művészetek Múzeuma megvett és kiállított, a *Ház a vasút mellett* (*House by the Railroad*, 1925) már felsorakoztatja festészetének összes jellegzetességét: a modern élet elszigeteltségének, magányának, elhagyatottságának témáját, az impresszionizmusból eredő fény-árnyékkal, sötét-világos színekkel-tónusokkal objektivitásra törekvő, tárgyias stílusát. A festmény ismertségéről világszerte Alfred Hitchcock *Psychója* (1960) gondos-

3 Fejezetei: 1. Mozgás és idő 2. Fény és sötétség 3. Hangszer 4. Anyag 5. Egy szempillantás alatt 6. Tükör (ld. <https://www.viennale.at/en/film/film-ist-7-12>, utolsó megtekintés: 2021. 03. 06.)

4 Fejezetei: 7. Képregény 8. Varázslat 9. Honfoglalás 10. Írás és nyelv 11. Érzelmek és szenvedély 12. Emlékezet és dokumentum (ld. <https://www.viennale.at/en/film/film-ist-7-12>, utolsó megtekintés: 2021. 03. 06.).



1. kép. Ház a vasút mellett
(House by the Railroad, 1925)

kodott, ahol ez a ház volt az előképe Norman Bates elhíresült, horrorisztikus otthonának (1. kép).⁵

A művészetek történetében szinte példátlan kölcsönös inspiráció jött létre Hopper képei és a filmek vizualitása között. Festményein már a húszas évektől kezdve megjelentek a fotografikus realizmus jellemzői, amelyek – a már említett impresszionizmus mellett – egy másik európai inspirációs forrásra vezethetők vissza, nevezetesen a német *Neue Sachlichkeit* (új tárgyiasság) irányzatára. A valóságghűségre törekvő, materiális faktúrákra, objektív nézőpontokra épülő alkotásmód visszhangra talált a harmincas években kibontakozó hangosfilm kifejezésmódjában. Amerikában a műfajiság stílusmegújulását hozta a korai bűnügyi zsáner egyik alműfaja, a gengszterfilm, majd kevéssel később a '40-es évek elején kibontakozó film noir. Ez időben Hopper egyre nagyobb hazai elismertségre tett szert, s a tágabb politikai-szociális-egzisztenciális folyamatokra reflektálva 1942-ben, a II. világháború idején megfestette az egyik leghíresebb, az amerikai filmekben többször idézett *Éjjeli baglyok* (*Nighthawks*) című képét.⁶

5 Hopper festményeinek ihletése több Hitchcock-filmben felismerhető. A *Hátsó ablak* (*Rear Window*, 1954) szomszédait kukkoló fotóriporterének motívuma megtalálható az *Éjszakai ablakok* (1938), a *New York-i szoba* (1932) című festményeken. Feltűnő az európai modern filmművészet kutatói számára, hogy Michelangelo Antonioni trilógiája (*Kaland, Éjszaka, Napfogyatkozás*, 1960–62) mind tartalmi, mind formai hasonlóságot mutat például a *Nyári este* (1947), *New York-i mozi* (1939), *Napfény egy kávézóban* (1958) című művekkel. Antonioni amerikai filmjei közül a *Zabriskie Point* (1970) szintén Hopper képeinek inspirációját juttatja eszünkbe (ld: <http://www.tasteofcinema.com/2016/20-great-movies-inspired-by-edward-hoppers-paintings/2>. Utolsó megnézés: 2021. 03. 06.)

6 Egy-két példa a filmekből: az olasz Dario Argento *Mélyvörös* (1975) című horrorjának egyik helyszíne az éjszakai bár, motívuma Ken Adam, a nagybecsű brit látványtervező munkáiban is fellelhető, Wim Wenders *Az erőszak vége* (1997) című filmje egyik jelenetében a festményt alkotja újra. Számos amerikai példa közül a leghíresebb az a legenda

Hopper festészeti kibontakozása és az amerikai hangosfilm műfaji jelentősége tehát szimultán jelenség, tematikus-stiláris hasonlóságaik okán az intermedialitás korai megnyilvánulásának egyik eseteként tanulmányozhatjuk. A festett állóképek a tér-idő-figuráció ismétlődő motívumaival egymás után, külön-külön és együtt elbeszélést implikálnak, amely főként kiállítások alkalmával képződik meg. A mozgókép kísérleti alkotója, Gustav Deutsch 2004-ben Kölnben egy retrospektív tárlaton megismerte Hopper műveit, amelynek nyomán életművének konzekvens folytatásaként elkészítette a *Shirley*-t. Inspirációja főként abból a „köztes pozícióból” ered, amit a filmszerű, noir-referencialitást felmutató, a valóságot a festményeken megrendező alkotói intenció közvetít. Szoros hasonlóság lelhető fel a különböző részletek megfestéséből álló táblakép és a beállításokból szerkesztett mozgókép között. Deutsch korábbi kisfilmjei a montázs által létrejött kontextusok sokféleségét mutatják, a mintegy 190 különböző filmből származó szekvenciák új történeteket, új jelentést kialakítva állnak össze.

A montázs mint a megrendezés eszköze mindkét művész alkotásmódjának alapját képezi, amely az egyes fragmentumokból az egész kompozíciót teremti meg, ahogy Eisenstein mesterművei bizonyítják. Az amerikai életforma valóságának illúziója a festő felfogásában a felszíni látszat ellenére az ábrázolási konvenciók felrúgásával jön létre, ami a realizmus irányzatának ellentmond. A műveken a perspektíva szabályai nem érvényesülnek konzekvensen, a fény több irányból érkezik a belső terekbe, az árnyékok és színek alkalmazása nyomán egyfajta objektív formátlanság alakul ki. E stiláris megoldások rokonsága a mozgókép technikai képalkotásán túlmutató, a valóságot megkonstruáló jellegével egyértelmű, egyszersmind hangsúlyozza és differenciálja az intermedialitás viszonyait.

A festmények és filmképek szimultaneitása e mű esetében olyan mértékű, hogy alig különíthetők el egymástól. Deutsch kiválasztott 13 Hopper-festményt, amelyeken ugyanaz a nőalak szerepel, és akinek segítségével az amerikai társadalmi-kulturális-művészeti események története elmesélhető. A festmények keletkezési éve, tere, figurái adják a kiindulási pontot a film egyes epizódjának cselekményéhez. A lineáris kronológia 1931-től 1965-ig öleli fel a narrációt, amelynek főszereplője a színésznő, Shirley, akinek tükrében és az ő bensőjének tükröződésében kerültek bele a filmbe olyan művészeti, mediális utalások, részletek, amelyek közvetlenül nem szerepelnek a festményeken. Az alak statikus pozíciója, tekintetének iránya, a képen kívüli tér történéseire való reakciójának lehetősége az a jellemvonása a festményeknek, ami Hopper filmszerű, narratív kifejezőmódját jelenti és a pikto-film specifikumát implikálja. A képiség kompozíciós irányai, figuráinak szemszöge meghatározta a filmfelvétel

Ridley Scott *Szárnyas fejvadászának* (1982) forgatásáról, ahol a rendező Hopper festményének reprodukciójával illusztrálta, miféle hangulatot, látványt szeretne elérni (ld: <http://www.tasteofcinema.com/2016/20-great-movies-inspired-by-edward-hoppers-paintings/3>. Utolsó megtekintés: 2021. 03. 06.).

fókuszát. Deutsch rendezésének alapelve, hogy a kamerának fel kellett vennie a festő nézőpontját, azt nem hagyhatta el. Hopper egy-egy festménye tehát a filmszerkezet 13 beállításának, egyúttal epizódjának egy-egy pontos, mimetikus képkockája lett. A festői vizualitás mozdulatlansága látszólagos, hiszen a téri kompozíció kialakítása magában foglalja a mozgás, a tér és idő fázisait, a dinamika elvét. Különböző látószögek, fény-árnyék egyensúlyok, a belső elkerekesség, vagy a képen kívüli térre irányuló kompozíció, a részletek montázsa mind a látványt és rejtett, belső mozgását, mögöttes összefüggéseit exponálják (Renner 2003; Kranzfelder 2006).

Hopper érdeklődése a modern amerikai élet elidegenedettsége, magánya, elszigeteltsége felé irányult, amelynek nyomán megszülettek az amerikaiak szociális-szellemi állapotának életképei. Festményeinek anamorf vizuális megoldásai nagyfokú hasonlóságot mutatnak író kortársa, John Dos Passos kollázs-elbeszéléseivel. Mindkettejük életműve magán viseli az új médium, a néma- és hangosfilm hatásának, ihletésének nyomait, amely a kölcsönösség jegyében visszahatott a mozgóképpnyelvre.⁷

Filmtörténeti-elméleti idézetek reflexiója, metaforizáció

Az életkép festészeti műfaja eleve felkínálta a mozgóképi *tableau vivant* elkészítésének lehetőségét, amely Deutsch történeti-elméleti folyamatok és összefüggések iránti érdeklődésével találkozott. Az elbeszélés alapját és struktúráját az biztosítja, hogy egy-egy festmény tereidjét és motívumait a filmszekvencia egy adott képkockája pontosan felidézi. Intermediális kapcsolatok gazdag tárházával, a hopperi vizualitáshoz társuló belső beszéd, zaj, zene hangsúlyos segítségével áll össze Shirley, a színésznő története, aki elutasítja a rá osztott társadalmi, családi és művészeti szerepeket, s végül önmegvalósításának, függetlenségének útját választja.

A *Másodosztály (Chair Car)* című, 1965-ben készült festmény narratív-vizuális keretet képez, s a záróképsor filmeleji bemutatása napjaink *mainstream*-konvenciójával konfrontálja a cselekmény epizodikus töredékességét. A történés – ahogy mindegyik festmény esetében is – rövid mondatokban összefoglalható; a pusztán helyzetváltoztató mozgásra korlátozott kamera lassan ráközelít a vagonban olvasó nőre, és kiemeli a vizuális információt: az Emily Dickinson verseit tartalmazó könyv borítójának Hopper-reprodukcióján ugyanaz a nő áll az ablaknál. Ez a rövid, kettős önreflexióval létrejött mozgóképsor megidézi a vizualitás szintjén a betűk, a fotó, a kinematográfia mint ikonikus jel elméleti szerepét, az amerikai irodalom vonatkozásában pedig az erős, költészetét a

7 Interjú: Edward Hopper war kein Realist. *Gustav Deutsch über seinen „Film Shirley – Visions of Reality“, über die Bilder Edward Hoppers, über Farben und Licht und über eine geplante Ausstellung rund um den Film.* Ray Magazin. <https://ray-magazin.at/edward-hopper-edward-hopper-war-kein-realist-gustav-deutsch-ueber-seine-filmische-annaeherung/>. Utolsó megtekintés: 2021. 02. 23.



2. kép. Edward Hopper: *Másodosztály* (*Chair Car*, 1965)



3. kép. filmkocka: *Shirley – A valóság látomásai* (*Shirley – Visions of Reality*, 2013)

diszkriminatív körülmények ellenére kiteljesítő nő képét. A kintről behallatkozó vonatjazók bevezetnek a mozi születésének (Lumière fivérek: *A vonat érkezése*, 1895) és a korai hangosfilm térnyerésének, a filmművészeti realizmus megjelenésének emlékezetébe, egyszersmind a körkörös szerkezet végkifejletébe (2–3. kép).

A *flashback* első epizódjának felépítését a többi hasonlóképpen követi: az év, a nap (mindig ugyanaz), a napszak és a hely felirata után egy férfihang a rádióban híreket olvas fel, a főszereplő megérkezik egy puritán belső térbe, belső monológja hallatszik. Az 1931-ben készült festmény, a *Szállodai szoba* (*Hotel Room*) narratív információja kiegészül Párizs megjelölésével, a hírek pedig főként amerikai eseményekről számolnak be. Az elbeszélésből hiányzik a szüzsé ok-okozati összefüggéseinek, a szereplő motivációjának kifejtése, ami az avantgárdalapú asszociációkra, szurrealista illogikus megoldásokra építő filmkészítés sajátja, ahol a nézői ismeretek értelmezői szerepére van szükség. Ebben a részben a komolyzenei hivatkozás idézi meg a francia kulturális-művészeti hatásokat Európa és Amerika számára.

A lineáris kronológiát követve az események 1932-ben a nagy gazdasági világválság, a depresszió társadalmi és művészeti következményeiről számolnak be, nemzetközi szinten pedig Mussolini és a fasizmus előretörése szignalizálja a politikai változásokat. A *Szoba New Yorkban* (*Room in New York*) epizódban a főszereplő belső monológja a színházi szakmát érintő munkanélküliség, a Group Theater megszűnéséből adódó egzisztenciális válság reflexiói, az emberi kapcsolatok hiánya, a kinti világtól való félelem kérdéseit veti fel. Az intermedialis viszonyokat két jelentős idézet konkretizálja: történeti vonatkozásban 1932-ben mutatták be Howard Hawks gengszterfilmjét, *A sebhelyesarcút*; az elmélet szintjén pedig a filmképen belüli keret az ablak-metaforát reprezentálja. A képzőművészetben a reneszánsz óta jelen lévő perspektivikus-antropomorf ábrázolás az analóg filmben a hang valóságillúziót megerősítő szerepével – látószólag – még nyomatékosabbá vált. Az osztrák rendező megfogalmazásában e



4. kép. Edward Hopper: *New York-i mozi* (*New York Movie*, 1939)



5. kép. filmkocka: *Shirley – A valóság látomásai* (*Shirley – Visions of Reality*, 2013)

művészeti konvenció – Hopper eljárásához hasonlóan – paradox módon jelenik meg: a világ észlelése egyetlen optikai nézőpontból (kameraállásból) nem lehetséges, realitása illúzió, valójában anamorfizmushoz, a részletek torzulásához vezet. A kitekintés végső soron befelé irányul, a nőalak belső monológjának lelki tényezői felé, ugyanakkor mint fetiszált ikon a nézői voyeurizmus kiszolgálójává avanszál, ahogy azt Laura Mulvey (2000) feminista filmelméletében kifejti.

A film közvetlen kapcsolatát a mozival, annak társadalmi szerepével, a művészeti tájkép átalakulásával, a popkultúra és szórakozás hatásával a hétköznapi életre a *New York-i mozi* (*New York Movie*, 1939) tárja fel. Amerika nagyvárosának példája a színházak térvésztesét, az írók hollywoodi álomgyárnak való kiszolgáltatottságát, a filmipar közönségienyeknek való behódolását szemlélteti. Sidney Kingsley drámájának első sikere a Group Theaterben volt, a *Zsákutca* című drámájának megfilmesítési jogait Samuel Goldwyn producer vásárolta meg. A színházak színészei Hollywoodban próbáltak szerencsét, egyesek a filmvászon sztárjai lettek, mint Sylvia Sidney, aki éppen Humphrey Bogart partnere az éppen pergő, William Wyler által rendezett *Zsákutcában* (*Dead End*, 1937). A mozipalota grandiózus, eklektikus belső tere a *mainstream* mozgóképipar jelentőségét hangsúlyozza, amely a tömegeket érintő-kiszolgáló szociális témákkal egyre nagyobb befolyásra tett szert. Az unatkozó egykori színházi színésznő alakja mellett a vásznon látható szociodráma aktuális társadalmi feszültséget jelenít meg: a fényűző gazdagsággal szemben a nyomornegyedek szegénysége áll, a kiemelkedés, a jobb élet reménye nélkül (4–5. kép).

A filmtörténeti intermedialitás következő kronologikus stációja a *Szálloda-hall* (*Hotel Lobby*, 1943) című festmény alapján a negyvenes évek eseményeit verbalizálja: az Actors Studio Staniszlavszkij módszere nyomán kialakított *method acting*ja kinevelte mind a színház, mind a mozi számára az új színész-nemzedéket. A pályáját ott kezdő Elia Kazan színész, később rendező



6. kép. Edward Hopper: *Kirándulás a filozófiába* (*Excursion into Philosophy*, 1959)



7. kép. filmkockák: *Shirley – A valóság látomásai* (*Shirley – Visions of Reality*, 2013)

az ötvenes években Hollywoodba ment, ahol megkezdte sikeres filmkészítői munkáját. Meglepetést és elutasítást váltott ki cselekedete 1952-ben, amikor az Amerika-ellenes Tevékenységet Vizsgáló Bizottság előtt több munkatársát kommunistaként nevezte meg. A filmben az egykori színésznő ezt illetően kifejti nézeteit a rendezőről, aki a *New York Times*ban közzétett cikkében igyekszik megvédeni magát, ugyanakkor a diktatúráról és módszereiről szerzett tapasztalatai alapján másokat is a bizottsággal való együttműködésre ösztönzött. Későbbi alkotásai sem tudták kivonni magukat a McCarthy-korszak hatása alól, még ha Oscar-díjakat is kaptak, mint például a *Rakparton* (1954). A dokumentarista stílusban készült film az egykori Actors-tanítvány, Marlon Brando főszereplésével a New York-i kikötőben uralkodó maffiaüzelmeket, a dokkmunkások szakszervezetének korrupcióját, embertelen kizsákmányolását leplezi le.

Deutsch az amerikai filmtörténeti kronológiát követő rendezési elve alapján egy-egy évtized jellegzetes, egyedi mozgóképe segítségével teremt meg a tágabb társadalmi-gazdasági-kulturális kontextusokat. Az ötvenes évek nagy műfaji westernjét képviseli az 1957-ben készült *Ben Wade és a farmer* (3:10 to Yuma),⁸ amire Hopper *Western Motel* című festménye adja az apropót és a kuliszszát. A képen látható nagy ablak a westernnek stilizált ábrázolatú, tipikus tájára nyílik, és mint vetítövásznon funkcionál. A filmkészítés *par excellence* önreflexiója testesül meg a jelenetben, ahol az *off* férfihang konkrét utasítást ad a női

8 2007-ben elkészült a remake-je James Mangold rendezésében, Russell Crowe és Christian Bale főszereplésével.

szereplőnek. Az ablak hasonlata már egyértelműen vezet át a még ennél is közvetlenebb intermediális viszony feltárásához a *Kirándulás a filozófiába* (*Excursion into Philosophy*, 1959) kép kapcsán (6–7. kép).

A filmcímbe megjelölt valóság látomásai, víziói, illúziói mint művészeti metafora kiemeli, összekapcsolja a képzőművészet és a kinematográfia szellemi síkjait általánosságban, a Hopper-képek és Deutsch szekvenciáinak lényegi vonásait egyedi értelemben. Ne kételkedj az illúzióban – hívja fel a figyelmet az *Archan* (*The Magician*, 1958) Ingmar Bergman. A Platón barlanghasonlatának részletét felolvasó nő jelenete a moziillúzió kiteljesedése és megkérdőjeleződése, filmelméleti alapvetés, egyúttal a film dramaturgiai tetőpontja is. A gyermekkoruktól megbéklyózva a barlangban élők önmagukból, egymásból és az odahurcolt ember-, állatszobrokból csak árnyakat látnak, amelyeket a tűz a szemközti falra vetít, s ez számukra a valóság. Ha kiszabadulnának rabságukból, s a fényre kerülvén azt mondanák nekik, hogy ez az igazibb valóság, nem hinnék el. Szemük a kinti látható világból kezdetben csak árnyképeket látna, majd az emberek és dolgok tükörképét vízen, felületeken és később csillagokat, a holdat és a legutoljára a napot, amely lehetővé teszi a dolgok keletkezését.⁹ A barlangfalon *alias* mozivásznon létrejön a képi illúzió, a valóság látomása, amelynek sokféle arculata, viszonyrendszere képes metaforákban megjeleníteni, és amelyekről hasonlóképpen vizuális hasonlatokkal, allegóriákkal, szimbólumokkal lehet beszélni, írni.

Nyitott diskurzus

A narráció lezárásában összegzésképpen működnek Hopper utolsó korszakának képei, a *Szünet* (*Intermission*, 1963) és a *Nap egy üres szobában* (*Sun in an Empty Room*, 1963). A filmvetítés megszakítása olyan, mintha álomból ébredne a néző, aki még a látottak hatása alatt áll. Újabb mozi-metafora helyez el a valóság-víziók lezárásaként tágabb-szűkebb kontextusba, egyéni-pszichológiai összefüggésekbe és filmelméleti-történeti folyamokba. A *Szünet* című festményen és a mozgókép-szekvenciában nem látható a film, az akusztika utal rá, a monológ és a francia dal mozgósítja a nézői előzetes ismeretét (8–9. kép).

Az *Ilyen hosszú távollét* (*Une aussi longue absence*), Henri Colpi rendező 1961-ben készült filmje a háborús trauma okozta emlékezetvesztést és következményeit dolgozza fel. Az Arany Pálma-díjas alkotás forgatókönyvét többekkel együtt Marguerite Duras író jegyzi, aki a *nouvelle vague* jelentős műveit is rendezte. A csavargóként a Szajna-parton élő férfi visszatérése után a II. világháborúból nem ismeri fel feleségét, környezetét, rémisztő számára a

9 Platón ideatanában „a megismerhető dolgok közül a legvégső a jó ideája, ami azonban nagyon nehezen pillantható meg, de ha megláttuk, azt kell következtetnünk róla, hogy mindnyájunk számára ő minden helyességnek és szépségnek az oka; ő szüli a látható világban a fényt és a fény Urát; a gondolat világában pedig mint Úr osztja az igazságot és az észet”. Platón: Barlanghasonlat. In *Az állam*, <https://mek.oszk.hu/03600/03629/03629.pdf>. Utolsó megtekintés: 2021. 05. 21.



8. kép. Edward Hopper: *Szünet* (*Intermission*, 1963)



9. kép. filmkocka: *Shirley - A valóság látomásai* (*Shirley - Visions of Reality*, 2013)

fény, minden zaj, s egyetlen tevékenységben leli örömét, hogy újságokból fotókat vág ki. A francia lírai realizmus filmjeiben először megjelenő *clochard*-alak számára minden jóakarata, szeretni tudása ellenére embertársai idegenek maradnak, elszigeteltségét csak a memória-visszanyerés reménye oldhatja fel.

A festmény üres mozijában magányosan ülő nő alakja és Shirley monológja a testi-lelki elszigetelődésről, az egykorvult emlékeiről Tandori Dezső (2003) szavaival az „emberközi reménytelenség (lélektől lélekig) példázása”.

Az eltávozás, a kiüresítés folyamatának vége az üres szobába beáramló fény, a nap sugarai, amelyek éles kontraszttal nyílásokat vágnak a csupasz falakba, feltörik a padlót, kirekesztik az organikus világot. A látás, az észlelés élménye a fény, a nap sugarai által lehetséges, amelyek létrehozzák, megteremtik a dolgokat, a valóság részeit. A *Nap egy üres szobában* (*Sun in an Empty Room*, 1963) nem a látvány ábrázolása, a való a közvetlen tapasztalaton túl alakul ki.

Az amerikai festő egyik monográfusa, Renner írja, hogy a festőt „sokkal inkább kép és képzelet, ábrázolás és esztétikai megszerkesztés összefüggése foglalkoztatta. Csak a való világ képei és a valót megfejtő néző tekintete közti kölcsönös kapcsolat révén születik meg Edward Hopper művészetének valósága.” Gustav Deutsch hasonló elvek alapján látott hozzá avantgárd-experimentális filmjének elkészítéséhez: minden statikus festett kép mozgással és hanggal egészül ki, s az így létrejött epizódokat a szüzsé kapcsolja össze, a montázs szerkeszti egybe. Egyfajta *tableau vivant* jön létre úgy, hogy a nézőt nem a látott festmény emléke orientálja, hanem ráismer a mozgás másodpercnyi kiiktatásakor, éppen akkor és ott születik meg.

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**SCREENS OF MEMORY IN POST-
1989 ROMANIAN CINEMA**

AZ EMLÉKEZET KIVETÜLÉSEI AZ
1989 UTÁNI ROMÁN FILMBEN

Andrea Virginás*

Polaroids from Our Past: Lucian Pintilie's *The Oak* (*Balanța*, 1992)

To Ágnes Pethő, for two decades of intermediality

In his 2005 critically informed overview of Romanian film history, Mircea Dumitrescu differentiates between three epochs: the beginnings of Romanian cinema, the socialist era (between 1945 and 1989), and the “post-December” era. *The Oak* clearly belongs to the third phase due to its being produced after the December 1989 revolution, which put an end to Nicolae Ceaușescu’s communist dictatorship in Romania. However, there are two elements that deeply embed this sarcastic, even cynical, often vulgar and shocking film within Dumitrescu’s second, socialist era: the long, troubled filmmaking career of director Lucian Pintilie and the time frame of the fictional world.

Lucian Pintilie started off as a graduate of the UNATC,¹ the then sole film academy in Romania, and his first artistic creations were minor theatre plays he directed on Bucharest theatre stages in 1958 and 1960 (Dumitrescu 2005, 56–57). Simultaneously, he worked as an assistant director for leading Romanian cinema industry personality Victor Iliu, whose best-rated film was *At the Mill of Good Luck* (*La moara cu noroc*, 1956). Pintilie presented his first feature film in 1964 with the title *Sunday at 6* (*Duminică la ora 6*), the story of a young couple set against communist underground activities in WW2, a film shown at international film festivals (Prague, Cannes, Adelaide) too.

However, his second feature film, the 1969/1970 *Reconstruction* (*Reconstituirea*)/*Re-enactment* did not meet with the approval of contemporary communist censorship, which banned it from public viewing only after three days of screening, trying to destroy all existing film copies (Dumitrescu 2005, 56–58). *Reconstruction* presents the shooting of an educational film which has as a topic the re-enactment of a youth delinquency act, reminding of one of British Free

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1 The state institution was established in 1950 under the name Institutul de Teatru „I. L. Caragiale” [“I. L. Caragiale” Institute of Theatre], re-established in 1954 under the name Institutul de Artă Teatrală și Cinematografică „I. L. Caragiale” [“I. L. Caragiale” Institute of Theatre and Cinematographic Arts], and it currently functions under the name Universitatea Națională de Artă Teatrală și Cinematografică (UNATC) „I. L. Caragiale” [“I. L. Caragiale” National University of Theatre and Film].

Cinema characteristics as presented, for example, in Tony Richardson's 1960 *The Loneliness of a Long-Distance Runner*. During the re-enactment, one of the original protagonists accidentally dies, and the communist state apparatus's hypocrisy and repressive nature is revealed through the police representatives who are responsible, with the self-reflexive film language adding further layers to the critical stance towards the dictatorship. In 1972, Lucian Pintilie directed a Bucharest theatre performance of Nicolai Gogol's *The Government Inspector*, which he also staged as "a parable of a totalitarian system" (Dumitrescu 2005, 56) and which was also banned by communist censorship. Thus, during the 1970s, this prolific and creative-minded theatre- and filmmaker was not allowed to work in his country; instead, he was granted a multiple-entry passport on the condition that he stops working in Romania. Pintilie went on directing theatre and opera performances on stages across Europe and the USA, partly helped by his fellow compatriot, émigré Romanian theatre- and filmmaker with a Cannes-trophy, Liviu Ciulei. His sole film in the decade is the 1979 *Salonul nr. 6 (Salon No. 6)*, adapted from Anton Chekhov's short story and produced by the more open-minded Yugoslavian television. He was granted the possibility of filming in Romania in 1981, but the result – a sarcastic, comical, burlesque, fast-paced film adaptation of early 20th-century Romanian playwright Ion Luca Caragiale's piece *D'ale carnavalului*, entitled *For Whom Do the Bells Toll, Mitică? (De ce trag clopotele, Mitică?)* – was again too outspoken and unruly, premiering in front of its national public only in 1990.

In the post-communist period, Lucian Pintilie not only returned to Romania, but he was also named head of one of the Bucharest studios in 1990, shooting a film every second or third year up to 2007 and becoming an actual mentor to directors, who went on being canonized as the Romanian New Wave. Pintilie's last memorable fictional feature film, the 2003 *Niki and Flo (Niki Ardelean, colonel in rezervă)*, was co-scripted by the most appreciated scriptwriting duo of the Romanian New Wave, Cristi Puiu and Răzvan Rădulescu. He helped off the ground the first debut feature film that has been retrospectively identified as a Romanian New Wave Film, the 2001 *Stuff and Dough (Marfa și banii)* by Cristi Puiu. His death in April 2018 put an end to a rich and diverse filmmaking career, which spans over half a century and has been deeply influencing contemporary Romanian cinema.

As Dominique Nasta presents in her monograph on *Contemporary Romanian Cinema*, published in 2013, *The Oak* had as a source material a novel published by prose- and scriptwriter Ion Băieșu in 1985. Its title was *The Scales (Balanța)*, and it was immediately banned by communist literary censorship since it presented "the army, the secret police, the priests, the hospital milieu and the atmosphere on packed trains [...] in a sensational, dense, albeit surreal way" (Nasta 2013, 99), urging Romanian critic George Pruteanu to call it "an encyclopaedia of disaster" (quoted by Nasta 2013, 99). *The Oak's* fictive story unfolds during 1988, when the Western, capitalist part of the world (called "imperialist" in communist party propaganda) experienced consumer society on a large scale, with video technology becoming widespread, MTV's visual aesthetics

based on handheld cameras and rapid editing finding its way into film, and Internet's first throes already visible. However, these worldwide, even geographically neighbouring happenings are barely tangible in Pintilie's film, which takes us from a short epilogue in the capital city of Bucharest to the Transylvanian province of Romania. Here exquisite natural beauty and well-preserved rural and folk traditions are mixing in an unsettling manner with the horrible, individual and collective consequences of forced and badly executed large-scale communist/socialist industrialization. Yet, and interestingly enough for both the fictional story year (1988) and the year of production (1992) of a Romanian film, *The Oak* manages to subtly hint at late 1980s / early 1990s global media transformations thanks to several ingenious decisions concerning the construction of its fictive filmic world.

First, by placing the burden of introducing us and maintaining our interest in its fictive diegesis on an atypical female protagonist: Nela Truică, recently returned from Paris with a psychology diploma from the Haute École des Études. An unusual professional trajectory for an average woman in the 1980s Romania, Nela has been in an exceptional position thanks to her father being a former colonel of the frightful Romanian Secret Police (the *Securitatea*), thus belonging to the communist elite for whom material, intellectual, and informational deprivation was not imposed in the monstrous manner it was for the rest of the population. The latter could not leave the country so as not to encounter ways of life different from communist dictatorship; could not have proper education or learn foreign languages since intellectual activities were ranked low on the communist hierarchy of values, which promoted (manual) work; Romanian population not connected to the PCR (Romanian Communist Party) or the secret service could not have access to cultural goods, and only a scarce fulfilment of their basic needs (housing, food, clothing) was allowed.

VCR technology is hinted at already at the beginning of the film, when Nela lies in an unmade bed with her terminally ill father and a celluloid Super 8 home movie projector, placed between them on the bed, projects its content on the wall of a cramped little room. The home video is about a long-gone St Nicholas / Christmas party, with high-ranking communist army and party officials celebrating in an elite communist mansion. These people could identify as Nela's former entourage, while the little girl taking centre stage in the events seems to be her younger self. Since Nela is the main focalizer character in the narrative, it is her multiple personal and collective traumas that are telegraphically highlighted in this short home video, simultaneously conferring a heightened awareness of various representational conventions and a sense of theatricality, especially when she seems to join the long-gone little girl's image projected on the wall.

Even if they seem to have lost the original communist privileges, Nela and her family not being average Romanians is also signalled by the fact that the small speaking and/or non-speaking roles are cast on amateur inhabitants of the settlements the film was shot in, paramount being the industrial city of Copșa Mică and the train line connecting it to the outside world. These hastily and exten-

sively modernized socialist cities were (usually) villages before 1945, and once the communist system and its ideology ended, they slowly sunk back to that status in the post-1989 era. Therefore, while shooting *The Oak* in 1991-1992, the general living conditions might have been even worse and the people's attitude even more degraded than in the previous, still socialist decade, adding to the end-of-the world, apocalyptic effect of the film. In contrast to the amateur masses actually on the verge of subsistence (with the Copșa Mică factories and mines fully closing a few years later, making the area ripe for disaster tourism), Nela is played by one of the most accomplished Romanian actresses: Maia Morgenstern. She belongs to what Mircea Dumitrescu calls "the glorious 70s generation in Romanian film," (2005), with a rich experience in Bucharest theatre roles, Romanian shorts and feature films: actually, her performance as Nela earned her the European Actress of the Year award at the 1993 European Film Awards. She also participated in global film hits, playing the part of Virgin Mary in Mel Gibson's 2004 controversial *The Passion of the Christ*, and is currently listed with 68 acting credits on IMDb.

Nela's character has a solid professional training which she will try to apply when organizing extracurricular activities for gifted Roma children lacking proper education; she speaks good French, receives foreign glossy magazines (a copy of *Paris Match* appears several times as an object in the fictive world), and, more than that, has a portable cassette player as well as a Polaroid camera. The director and the creative team of the film chose to grant these objects – which in a late 1980s American film could have simply denoted the character's hobbies or social status (and they also do the same here) – a further layer/role: that of creatively building the audiovisual texture of the film. We have access to the music Nela listens to, even if that is an impossible gesture, revealing the narrative process as omniscient, capable of intruding into the characters' inner perceptions. Practically, the film's soundtrack is formed by the pieces of music that Nela listens to, often as a gesture of shielding herself from the brutal, vulgar, and threatening outside world, pieces that range from Edith Piaf songs to American rap music. These songs offer us clues regarding Nela's taste and worldview, while linking a hermetically closed communist Romania – where such things were hardly available – to simultaneous cultural developments outside its border.

The Polaroid camera is employed in an even more ingenious manner: it functions not only as an object of characterization suggesting Nela's practical, modern nature as a contemporary woman but also as a device that contributes to the narrative process. In this respect, the use of the Polaroid camera in *The Oak* may be compared to how Christopher Nolan employs it in the 2000 *Memento* to create the character, as well as the past, present, and future of insurance agent Leonard Shelby, whose missing long-term memory is replaced by the photos he takes. Nela also photographs seemingly irrelevant and even absurd details of her life, with the Polaroid photos gaining contour in front of our eyes and transforming images we saw as moving seconds ago into petrified freeze frames emanating pastness. Thus, the first thing she photographs is her dead father's face

with the *Paris Match* exemplar next to it, but she will take photos of her new acquaintance in Copșa Mică, hospital surgeon Mitică Bostan (Răzvan Vasilescu), juxtaposing Mitică's portrait to that of a calf. Both the glossy *Paris Match* and the ignorant cow's Polaroid photos have the power to symbolically position and criticize the male characters so important in this oppressive patriarchal world.

Nela's journey from the capital city, after she cremates her dead father's body, to the provincial, faraway town of Copșa Mică, where she is sent as a school psychologist by the communist authorities, is what frames *The Oak*. The film is even identifiable as a loose road movie since Nela's hardships and moving around do not end once she arrives in Copșa Mică. She goes on a camping trip with Mitică, the local hospital's head surgeon, ending up in the middle of an army simulation of an aerial attack over the settlement: a highly absurd idea rather motivated by the collective remembrance of Romanians since the country was a battlefield during both world wars. As the surgeon is incarcerated, defying the secret service's servile representatives, Nela's nightmarish wandering around continues as she tries to free her friend using not exactly orthodox methods; then they both go to the countryside to bury a former patient of the doctor. Their "burial trip" is not a lonely business, as secret service is following them, even giving a helping hand when their car stops, and in the evening they all participate in a huge dinner party in the local Orthodox priest's house, with contemporary Romanian sarcastic social dramas' compulsory "eating together around a big table" while discussing political oppression in half-privacy being played out. Nela and Mitică's last trip takes them through a real hostage drama which recalls the moments of the December 1989 revolution, with civilians being shot and low-ranking soldiers joining them in their protest against the system, to finally find some rest and silence under the oak in the title. Here Nela buries the ashes of her father, revealed to have been an accomplice of the communist system of repression, using the words "good father, liar father, tyrannical father." The memorable final freeze frame of the film – Nela and Mitică breaking the fourth wall and looking directly into the camera – recalls the Polaroid photo technique, while also a recurrent visual method used in Pintilie's other films, forcing the viewers to take an ethically informed standpoint concerning the degraded world just seen, as well as ponder the possibilities of a transition towards a different order.

The Oak is a critically acclaimed film made by a Romanian film director, Lucian Pintilie, who embodies through his career and represents in his films the modern(ist) and postmodern(ist) phases and strategies of one of the most peripheral and underdeveloped, also small film industries in Europe, the Romanian cinema. Thanks to its theme and the artistic strategies employed, *The Oak* is capable of a synthesis concerning recent Romanian historical events and Eastern European film stylistic developments in the last decade of the 20th century. The film was met with instant (inter)national critical and public acclaim, and its cult status has been enforced ever since, not the least by becoming a template for many creations that have been categorized under the label of the Romanian New Wave, and later New Romanian Cinema from 2001 onwards. As for the per-

son of Lucian Pintilie: his significance for contemporary Romanian cinema is signalled by two, apparently trivial events triggered by his death in April 2018. In a commemorative piece in *Variety*, one could read the bon mot: “When asked what he wanted to be when he grew up, director Corneliu Porumboiu answered: Lucian Pintilie” (Tizzard 2018). Finally, a newly established Romanian film fund, backed by a bank (BRD), for first and second features, has been named after Lucian Pintilie (Blaga 2018).

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Christina Stojanova*

The Intermedial Passions of the “New” New Romanian Cinema

The discovery of intermediality as a way to study, talk about, and analyse film and media brought me back, so to speak, to the fold of my passion for cinema as art after many years of veering further and further away from it ever so deeply into the turf of social and political history, cultural anthropology, analytical psychology, and philosophy – a digression that was certainly rewarding scholastically but that invariably resulted in an acute imposter syndrome whenever I had to face the more specialized academic fora of these disciplines. But once you have moved out of the confines of cinema studies proper and pushed the boundaries of the self-imposed compendium of fashionable analytical approaches and theories, it is difficult to return. Especially if you are bringing back Jungian and post-Jungian concepts and ideas, and references to Eliade’s comparative mythology and religion – unless, of course, you do not frame your interests as some kind of intellectual eccentricity. Yet I braved on, until my experimentation with interdisciplinarity finally brought me to the ISIS International Conference on *Rethinking Intermediality in the Digital Age*, organized in October 2013 by the Department of Film, Photography, and Media at Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania, where I got to finally meet Ágnes Pethő, the powerhouse behind the conference, whom I had already known from her book *Cinema and Intermediality* (the first edition from 2011), which I used when writing on Godard and Wittgenstein at that time. There was excellent food and good wine, we were taken on tours, and generally pampered! The conference was small, most attendees knew each other, and the keynotes were world class. As a matter of fact, thanks to Ágnes, I even befriended one of them, Marie-Laure Ryan, as we both stayed at the snug Fullton Hotel near the city centre. Most importantly, there was genuine intellectual interest in the papers presented and somehow for those few days I quietly enjoyed a rare sense of belonging.

And although intermediality is still new to me – I tend to give it my own spin and meaning –, it is definitely an inspiring and thought-provoking way of looking at films, old and new. Encouraged by Ágnes, helped by her in the direst moments of my intellectual, editorial, and interpersonal discontents, I feel privileged to have contributed a few serious publications to the well-respected *Acta Universitatis Sapientiae, Film and Media Studies*, whose active editorial member

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she is, and a chapter to *Caught In-Between. Intermediality in Contemporary Eastern European and Russian Cinema* – the anthology Ágnes recently edited for Edinburgh UP (2020). And, finally, intermediality – and Ágnes’s delicate encouragement! – were instrumental in reinvigorating my curiosity about Romanian cinema. An interest I thought irretrievably lost after the eponymous anthology on *New Romanian Cinema* I edited saw the light of day in 2019, for I was determined to devote myself entirely to working on the monograph *Artist in Motion* about the art and life of my dear friend, the renowned Canadian animator Caroline Leaf. Then, after a pause of almost three years, I saw three films, made by the three leading directors (sic!) of the New Romanian Cinema – namely Radu Jude’s this year Berlin Golden Bear winner *Bad Luck Banging or Loony Porn (Babardeală cu bucluc sau porno balamuc, 2021)*, Corneliu Porumboiu’s *The Whistlers (La Gomera, 2019)*, and Cristi Puiu’s *Malmkrog (2020)* – all of which captured my imagination and radically altered my decision to stay away from Romanian cinema.

In addition to being a textbook illustration to post-modernist aesthetic approaches – collage, parody, distantiation, self-reflexivity –, Radu Jude’s film epitomizes a rather indiscriminate turn to intermediality as he mixes and matches every kind of conceivable visual – and aural – media by gluing it loosely together via what Sergei Eisenstein called associative montage. Thus, Jude introduces his newly found aesthetics of kitsch, trash, and sexual *epatage* with a bang, by opening his film with a hard-core porn amateur video, which becomes the rather extravagant McGuffin for another round of the director’s angry criticism of Romanian social hypocrisies – current and historical. While I personally prefer the more subtle – and, shall I say, more effective – tongue-in-cheek irony and sarcasm of an *Aferim!* (2015) and the *sotto voce* elegance of the black-and-white documentary collages of *Dead Nation (Țara moartă, 2017)*, in *Bad Luck Banging* the intermedial *richesse* is overwhelmed by the hard-to-control sexual excess generated by the directness of the said amateur video. Moreover, the effectiveness of the otherwise original middle – or second part, named “short dictionary of anecdotes, signs and wonders” – is neutralized by Jude’s misguided attempt to equate the responsibility for private – and even intimate – practices with social and historical responsibilities on the individual as well as on the national level. Thus, hypocrisies linked to prudish pretences with regard to a teacher who had the audacity to have a hard-core video of herself and her husband uploaded on Porn Hub, as well as hypocrisies generated around COVID mask wearing and social distancing, are hardly co-measurable with the massive betrayal of Gypsies and Jews exterminated by the military on the Romanian Eastern Front; or, for that matter, co-measurable with the betrayal of Romanian dissidents by the Orthodox Church in 1989 or by the Romanian army throughout various regimes, etc. Yet, I somehow refuse to believe that such a talented director with such a keen eye for the dark, shadowy side of his compatriots, and particularly for the urgency with which they tend to project it on others, and then blame them for it, has not smuggled some important message in – to quote Ágnes Pethő’s title of her chapter on *Glissando* – this exquisite

“intermedial bottle” (2020, 399). Could it be that Emi, the teacher who happens to be also the protagonist of the sex video in question, “starring” with her husband for the camera, is actually not – as film critics are trying to convince us – a victim of a hypocritical society, hypocritical students and parents, and the hypocritical administration of the elite school she works for. But is herself an arrogant egoist and a hypocrite, capable of succumbing to her steamy passions in broad daylight regardless of the proximity of her young child and her mother, residing in the adjacent room. And then – as if this is the most natural thing one could possibly do with the video-recorded séance – she agrees to its posting on Porn Hub... Could it be that instead of construing Emi as the champion of newly-found sexual rights and freedoms versus the endemic local backwardness and hypocrisy, Jude sees her as but a logical epitome of such a society? Indeed, in such a case, Emi – the teacher of high-minded literature by day, who moonshines as a foul-mouthed, amateur Porn Hub star while at home – could easily be seen as the monstrous offspring of a people, capable of systematic betrayal of the vulnerable and the defenceless, thoroughly enumerated by Jude in the second part of the film... I personally believe that such a reading of the film is quite in tune with *The Happiest Girl in the World* (*Cea mai fericită fată din lume*, 2009), with *Everybody in Our Family* (*Toată lumea din familia noastră*, 2012), and the already mentioned *Aferim!* and *Dead Nation*. And I am looking forward to the chance to prove this in writing by seeking deeper for the message in the “intermedial bottle”...

After his successful experiments with narratives and narrativity in his fiction films and collage documentaries, Corneliu Porumboiu offers yet another experiment in what I have called “the Trickster Narrative Polyphonies” – this time around in piecing together a masterful intertextual rendition of film noir, adapted to contemporary Romanian reality (Stojanova 2020, 106). Thus, it is always intriguing for the viewer to recognize the trappings of the genre – the Femme Fatale, who on top of it is called Gilda (after Charles Vidor’s eponymous 1946 noir classic with Rita Hayworth), the Detective Cristi, who has lost his ways; the hapless criminal Zsolt, and the cruel Spanish mafiosi (who have set up the stage for it all), not to mention the staple blinds in the police office, the dark and rainy atmosphere, the smutty motel, called fittingly Opera because of its owner’s passion for famous arias, etc. Yet the tastiest part for neo-noir aficionados – along with some unexpected twists of the otherwise staple plot – is the localization of the above mentioned generic tropes. In the case of *The Whistlers*, these tropes are interwoven within a very realistic Romanian post-communist reality, jarringly juxtaposed to the exotic *paysages* of La Gomera, one of the Canary Islands, where the ancient art of imitating bird whistling originates from. Thus, on the one hand, we are made privy to the mundane facts that the Romanian Detective is paid a meagre 1,000 euros monthly; that his boss, the beautiful Magda, has placed him under 24/7 surveillance and is ready to sacrifice him in order to pocket Zsolt’s stolen millions. On the other hand, it is revealed that the Detective is mysteriously involved with some Spanish mafiosi from

the La Gomera island, who in addition to “curating” the Femme Fatale Gilda, are adamant that Cristi masters the secret language of whistling. In contrast to the above mentioned second part of Jude’s film, which ups its intermedial ante by relying mostly on static associations between a notion – racism, hypocrisy, intolerance – and a shocking photographic image, supporting it – Porumboiu mobilizes yet again the dynamic potential of “jarring narrative polyphonies.”

The intermedial engagement with the soundtrack as a major meaning-making device in *The Whistlers* could be traced back to the ideologically charged juxtaposition of Porumboiu’s – father and son – voice-over dialogue and the original soundtrack of the match they commented on (*The Second Game*, 2014). Here, the jarring effect of the clash between the visceral art of whistling, on the one hand and the refined musical score, on the other – opera arias (Bellini’s *Casta Diva*, Offenbach’s *Barcarolle*);³ famous Waltzes from the Strauss Brothers and Tchaikovsky; Carl Orff’s *O, Fortuna*, to name but a few – has multiple effects of enhancing the mood of a scene, of countering it, or providing ironic comment, like Kurt Weill’s *Death of Mack the Knife*, accompanying Zsolt’s rather unheroic death scene. A similarly jarring effect is produced by the intermedial inserts from old Hollywood films and referencing filmmaking. Justified by Cristi’s cinephile passion⁴ – he also uses the cinematheque screenings as an undercover meeting place – the intermedial inserts further blur the line between authenticity and outrageous fabrication, both on the level of plot and film-crafting. And, finally, Vlad Ivanov’s glumly romantic Cristi provides a destabilizing intertextual reference to the actor’s role as the manipulative Police Boss in *Police, Adjective* (2009), who destroys psychologically his underling Cristi, played by Dragoş Bucur. In fact, *The Whistlers* could be seen as a kind of sequel to *Police, Adjective*, whose victimized operative Cristi has aged as Detective Cristi, who plays both sides of the law. Undeniably, this shrewd oscillation between the scant narrative, the exquisite visuals, the intermedial inserts, and the refined soundtrack is meant – in the best noir traditions – to further disorient the viewers by dragging them deeper into the film’s oneiric atmosphere, yet allowing them to wilfully appreciate Porumboiu’s superb craftiness.

The most sophisticated form of intermediality in the three films, discussed here, is certainly offered by Puiu’s *Malmkrog*, as it is seamlessly interwoven with the ways the director chooses to adapt to screen the last work of the 19th-century Russian religious philosopher Vladimir Solovyov, *War, Progress, and the End of History* (subtitled *Three Conversations Including a Short Story of the Anti-Christ*),

3 The creative appropriation of opera arias is no news to noir aficionados – in *Kiss Me Deadly*, R. Aldrich’s ultimate Cold War thriller (1955), for example, it was also opera that dominated the soundtrack. Along with the numerous mythological citations, it helped the film fit the bill of high-art allusions, allowing the film noir integration within the lofty Classical Hollywood cinema.

4 As stated in the official press kit of the film, Porumboiu considers John Ford’s *The Searchers* (1956) as an inspiration – hence the inclusion of a major excerpt in *The Whistlers*.

published in 1899. Puiu's adaptation of this otherwise very dense text succeeds so well in capturing Solovyov's prophetic ideas that most serious critics of the film remain humbled by its subject-matter and meticulous artistry. And despite some inevitable grumbling about the film's extraordinary length of 3 hrs and 21 minutes, additionally kindled by Puiu's unequivocal statement that the ideas of the film could be fully grasped only after the third viewing, the opinion of international media remains consistently respectful and positive.

My interest in this film was sparked by the way it develops further two major themes – the conjunction of ethics and aesthetics, and the phenomenology of Evil –, which in my view have been ingeniously tackled by the New Romanian Cinema, and on which I have devoted a few publications since the early years of the millennium.

Indeed, in this line of thought, the powerful ethical-aesthetic congruity of Cristi Puiu's works has to a great extent predetermined his formative influence on the movement and its Existentialist Realist aesthetic. In his five auteur films made to date – beginning in 2001 with *Stuff and Dough*, then moving to *The Death of Mr. Lazarescu* (2005), to *Aurora* (2010) and *Sieranevada* (2016) –, Puiu has braved the representation of Evil on screen. Along with such European visionaries like Lars von Trier and Béla Tarr, Puiu is among the precious few filmmakers – and thinkers – who dare tackle the question of evil, one of the most troubling for contemporary Western thought, since the interconnectedness between the concepts of morality and God, Good, and Evil has created a growing conundrum in our predominantly atheist society (Eagleton 2014). Like “evil,” “moral” is a religious term, and the idea that morality cannot exist without a belief in God is deeply ingrained in Western culture (McKay and Whitehouse 2015, 447).

Predicated on Puiu's demonstrated interest in the phenomenology of Evil, and certainly supported by Solovyov's original, is the role allotted to the enigmatic figure of the Anti-Christ. Thus, when Nikolai – the owner of the manor house Malmkrog and host of the Three Conversations – makes his final exit a few minutes before the end of the film, he promises to soon return with the manuscript by a certain Pansophius (or the “all-wise”), which would reveal to his four interlocutors the true nature of the Anti-Christ. And although this never happens – obviously Puiu has left it up to the viewers to seek out and read for themselves the mythical and yet perilously relevant epilogue of *War, Progress, and the End of History* –, this closing announcement throws in high relief the main theme of Solovyov's and Puiu's oeuvre, which could be summarized as the powerful *enantiodromic* potential of Good and Evil, that is, the perilous ease with which they turn into their opposite or become relativized. And it certainly illuminates Puiu's *tour de force* in orchestrating vitally important ideas, and their evolution – from Solovyov's time to ours – both explicitly, through the staged *Three Conversations*, and implicitly – through what is left unsaid but is strongly implied. And, as in the other two films, discussed here, Puiu's intermedial approach hinges upon the way he marshals the multiple layers of meaning, born at the cusp of film and philosophy, words and images, *mise-en-scène* and the narrative

world, consciousness and the unconscious, thus forcefully emphasizing the fragility of everything that is on-screen and its symbolic status as restrainer of the menacing chaos, left – or rather deliberately confined! – off-screen. This elaborate intermedial edifice draws us into the far-reaching and extremely relevant discourses on the life of idea and their role as the sole restrainer of the forces of Evil, understood not only in the light of Solovyov’s religious mysticism but also in the light of political philosophy. And certainly – through the murky prism of our own chaotic times.⁵

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5 This brief discussion of *Malmkrog* is part from *Cinema from the End of Days: Malmkrog by C. Puiu and V. Solovyov*, an article, requested by Ágnes Pethő for a forthcoming issue of *Acta Universitatis Sapientiae, Film and Media Studies*.

Katalin Sándor*

“Excavations” – An Intermedial Approach to Corneliu Porumboiu’s *The Treasure* (2015)

In the context of New Romanian cinema – often described in film criticism with the broad term of “(micro)realism” –, Corneliu Porumboiu’s work distinguishes itself as a markedly intermedial oeuvre shaped by the self-conscious investigation of the relation between different media, between reality and representation, between immediacy and mediation. His films often expose how media are imbricated into the fabric of social reality and how the real is perceived, interpreted, constituted through different social and media practices.

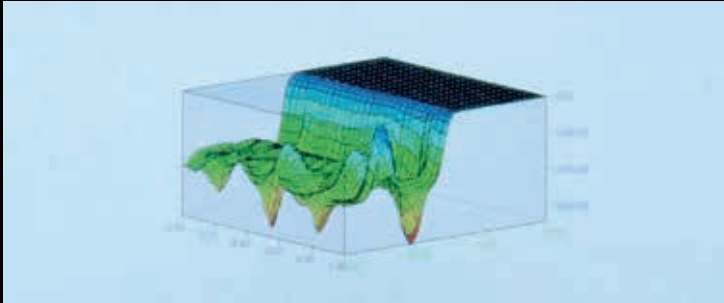
Discussing Porumboiu’s films, Ágnes Pethő persuasively argues that his work should be tackled not only within the “realist” paradigm¹ assigned to New Romanian cinema but “should also be considered in relation to the aesthetic of the so-called ‘contemplative, slow cinema’” or “within the contemporary context of the so-called post-media age” (2019, 65). Examining a particular intermedial figuration, the *tableau* shot – which can provide films “with a pronounced permeability towards painting, theatre and installation art” (2019, 66) –, Pethő considers that Porumboiu’s works “systematically and self-reflexively reframe” the cinematic *tableau*, “excavating its multiple affordances (drawing on a combination of realism and artificiality) to offer different conceptualisations of the same structure”² (2019, 67).

Recent research on cinematic intermediality displays a tendency of rethinking the poetics of intermediality in terms of the politics of impurity. Moving beyond the “narcissistic exercises” of “formalist intermedial analysis,” Lúcia Nagib suggests that intermedial cinema can be “a fertile ground for the investigation of the political” (2014, 21, 31). The dilution of genres and the incorporation of different media within a film suspend “the pedagogical character of representational narratives by introducing a dilemma, or ‘dissensus,’ in Rancière’s terms, which,

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1 Andrei State aptly points out the plurality of different “realisms” that can describe Porumboiu’s cinema such as situational, semantic, and conceptual realism (2014, 80–85).

2 Cf. in Porumboiu’s films, “the tableau appears not only as a liminal space conceived between the visible and the invisible, the grand theatre of politics and the private world of everyday people, it also reveals in different ways the shifting demarcation between the ‘public’ and the ‘domestic’” (Pethő 2019, 76).



Figures 1–2. A media collage of non-cinematic images

rather than giving univocal lessons, multiplies the meanings of the referent” (Nagib 2014, 31). In this way, intermedial cinema may “re-frame the real” by establishing “new relations between reality and appearance, the individual and the collective, multiplying the possibilities of the film medium in a polemical way, while challenging its own limits and the power of representation” (Nagib 2014, 37).

Porumboiu’s films reflect on and reframe the relation between immediacy and mediation, social reality and representation, language and visual signification, often resorting to the incorporation of non-cinematic media and to the subversion or adaptation of global generic templates to local socio-cultural contexts. In *Police, Adjective* (*Polițist, adjectiv*, 2009), for instance, the generic codes and the action-driven rhythm of police films are displaced towards slow cinema; action or eventful happenings are either absent or off-screen in favour of long commentaries on verbal and visual signification, whereas power relations or institutional hierarchies are mainly (re)produced through language use and non-verbal communication. Such films may be considered “pseudo-tem-



Figures 3–4. A media collage of non-cinematic images

plate-films” (Ferencz-Flatz 2020) since they dilute generic templates³ eluding spectatorial expectations. In Porumboiu’s films, the dislocation or the reframing of transcultural generic patterns and narrative formats may address social, institutional, or personal crises and local realities in a performative way.

Porumboiu’s 2015 film, *The Treasure [Comoara]* – first envisaged as a documentary and later shot as a fiction film – reworks the template of treasure hunt narratives, gradually shifting the visual and narrative conventions of cinematic realism towards a more fable-like register. The displacement of the treasure quest story towards a quotidian, slow-paced, de-dramatized narrative in Eastern European context, as well as the understated acting of both professional and amateur actors generates a particularly elusive, low-key humour in the film. The protago-

3 In the context of small (national) cinemas, as Andrea Virginás argues, the use of the generic conventions of template films does not primarily exploit the advantages of accessing the global film industry and market: despite the transcultural generic patterns, the linguistic and cultural differences prevent these films from entering global distribution (2018, 42). Rather, these films construct narratives of personal or collective trauma and cultural crisis, transcoding “the globally circulating mainstream template films for their audiences along certain principles,” such as the avoidance of glamour or the employment of the visual codes of cinematic realism (Virginás 2018, 42–43).

nist, Costi (a husband and father with a public servant job) is unexpectedly visited by his neighbour, Adrian, who wants to borrow money from him. Adrian's small publishing house goes bankrupt after the 2008 global economic crisis, and he is about to lose his mortgaged apartment. He needs the money to rent a metal detector because – relying on a vaguely remembered family legend – he believes that his great-grandfather hid some treasure in the garden of their family house in Islaz. Costi and Adrian hire a man who maps out the old house and the garden with a metal detector, and the two protagonists start digging. In the end, they actually find a metal box with Mercedes stocks dating from 1969 and get rich overnight by selling them to a (presumably multinational) financial institution.

In the eventless, slowly unfolding treasure hunt, the elusive, abstract humour is at times “performed” by the metal detector itself, which, without being anthropomorphic in any way, becomes a character in its own right. Transcoding the layers of the soil, its digital beeping sound overlaps with the oral narrative of the protagonists who reassemble the memory of the family house. Similarly, the process of digging up the layers of the garden is imbricated into the verbal excavation of the historical events that shaped the past of the family and of the country: the 1848 Revolution and the Proclamation of Islaz, the 1877 War of Independence, the Second World War, the communist period and the Ceaușescu regime, the 1989 revolution, the transition period and the 2008 global economic crisis. The history of the house and the place is embedded into macro-historical processes in which the owner and the function of the house change several times: after being a brick factory, the house becomes a kindergarten in state socialism, then a gambling room and striptease bar in the post-socialist transition period.

In the film, the slow-paced, occasionally tense digging for the treasure gives way to another kind of excavation, or rather: archaeology. Folding the process of the actual excavation into the narration of local microhistories, the film itself “excavates” medial and discursive layers: it unearths how different meanings of “treasure” and “heritage” are constituted by informal/quotidian practices (such as rumours or family legends) and by professional/institutional discourses ranging from history books and television debates to legal definitions. At the same time, Porumboiu opens up the film towards non-cinematic technologies and media (such as television, GPS, metal detector), exposing the way in which subjects perceive, interpret, and interact with reality and with each other in everyday media environments. On the one hand, the non-cinematic images (the television screen, the digital screen of the metal detector, the book illustration, the printed stock) are narratively embedded into the diegetic world, but on the other hand, by occupying the whole frame for a certain amount of time, these inserted images preserve their medial otherness and foreground the “impure,” collage-like mediality of film [Figs. 1–4]. While the long takes of uneventful quotidian scenes create a sensation of immediacy, the collage-like inserts resonate with the heterogeneous, mediated aspect of experiencing social reality.

In the film, the quotidian concepts of past and heritage are constituted partly by the medium of orality and rumour in which family history is insepara-

ble from the Romanian historical events of the 19th-20th century. Through the vaguely narrated story of a wealthy Greek great-grandfather (who returns to Greece after the War of Independence) and an adopted grandfather of unknown ethnic origin, the film showcases (family) history as divergent, multiethnic, and transnational. Christian Ferencz-Flatz (2015) aptly argues that the relevance of the historical thread as a subtext of the film encompassing the national past (and leading to the family treasure) is questioned at the point when the treasure itself is found but cannot be integrated into this narrative. Agreeing with Ferencz-Flatz's observation that this is an instance of Porumboiu's equivocal poetics, I nevertheless consider that the historical thread – precisely through its interruptions and opacity – can be relevant not primarily as an explanatory narrative but as an instance of the multidirectional, discontinuous aspect of personal and collective memory.

Besides the fluid, changing oral narratives of family history in which historical reality intermingles with imagination and personal memory, the film also incorporates the discourse of history books. The camera reveals a book lying on a nightstand: *O scurtă istorie ilustrată a românilor* (*A Short Illustrated History of Romanians*) written to a larger (not primarily professional) public by Neagu Djuvara (1916–2018), a well-known Romanian historian. Through subtle humour, the film displays how the protagonist's wife transposes fragments of historical knowledge into the quotidian knowledge about the family genealogy of their neighbour: for her, the historical fact that young Romanians who had studied abroad came home to reform the country and started the 1848 revolution justifies the plausibility of the family legend about the treasure. Moreover, the supposed location of the treasure is in Islaz, an important site of the revolutionary events, where the 1848 Proclamation was read. Porumboiu's film unearths how quotidian concepts of past and heritage are shaped by family legends, by professional historical narratives, by the social imaginary, and by collective and personal memory. The juxtaposition of different narratives and concepts of history also underlines the idea that the (familial) past is not simply given but is constituted by the mnemonic work itself, by the performative act of remembrance and interpretation (reminiscent of Porumboiu's earlier film, *12:08 East of Bucharest* [*A fost sau n-a fost?*, 2006], in which the events of the 1989 revolution are reassembled as an acoustic collage of oral microhistories and personal and collective memories).

Due to the adjacency of different discourses and media, it is not surprising that the (de-romanticized) concept of gold does not surface within the framework of the treasure hunt narrative but in a television footage inserted into the film, an actual debate broadcast on the Romanian public service television about the Roșia Montană gold mining project (of a Canadian resource company) and a possible ecological catastrophe. This footage opens up not only the medium of film towards television (and the mediated reality of the debate) but also the concept of crisis towards an ecological dimension linked to the profit-oriented exploitation of natural resources.

Through the orality of family legends and rumours, the concept of heritage is constituted as fluid and open, it incorporates not only the inherited properties



Figure 5. Framing the local and the translocal

but also the family narratives. Moreover, in the film, the quotidian concept of family inheritance is juxtaposed with the concept of patrimony that refers to the legally codified and institutionalized corpus of national cultural heritage. The film displays the intersection of these discourses in an everyday burlesque scene in which the confrontation with the authorities over the ownership of the treasure – a recurrent component of treasure hunt narratives – is embedded into local context: at the police station of the provincial town of Islaz, the metal box containing Mercedes stocks is opened up “professionally” by the local burglar in front of two policemen so that they can clarify with the Bucharest authorities whether the treasure belongs to the national patrimony or not. Contrary to the institutional hierarchy, the asymmetrical power relations and the tense dialogue between the two policemen and their authoritative superior in Porumboiu’s *Police, Adjective*, the de-hierarchized interaction in *The Treasure* shifts towards a quotidian, parodic, burlesque register. (Moreover, the codified, institutionalized concept of national heritage can also be related in the film to the cultural landscape and the ancient mining site of Roşia Montană,⁴ which appears in the footage of the public television debate.)

Lúcia Nagib claims that intermedial cinema questions and opens up its own medium, its own representational and generic codes towards impurity while reframing the real or the relation of the viewer to the real. Porumboiu’s intermedial film reframes concepts of “heritage” and “past” by exposing them as socially constructed, as heterogeneous and translocal. At the same time, the film also showcases the manifold reality of the present in which the local is affected by global transcultural and economic trends. In one of the last scenes of the

4 The ancient mining site of Roşia Montană has been since included in the UNESCO World Heritage List.

film, a static, frontal *tableau* shot⁵ shows the glass wall of a multinational financial institution that frames the local architectural cityscape, in front of which the representative of the institution, a French woman speaks the global language of financial transactions in accented Romanian. Through the medium of greeting gestures, the scene alludes to the cultural stratification of the codes of social behaviour: while Costi greets the woman with a handshake that complies with the (multinational) corporate environment, Adrian kisses the hand of the woman, performing a gesture of old-fashioned (and, in this context, somewhat unfitting) courtesy. The static *tableau* shot of the geometric grid of the window frames the dynamic intersection of the private and the corporate, of the local and the translocal in the fabric of social relations [Fig. 5].

The film has a critical take on contemporary global capitalism and its local effects by foregrounding socioeconomic insecurity and everyday lives affected by the 2008 financial crisis (the daily existence of the characters is considerably impacted on by their disadvantageous bank loans). By displaying the bankruptcy and the frustration of the indebted small business owner (Adrian) who is about to lose his mortgaged apartment despite his investment and work, the film questions the capitalist concept according to which economic achievement and affluence depend primarily on the competence and the responsibility of the individual.⁶ Within the atmosphere of low-key humour and quotidian absurdity, the frustrated, insecure, disoriented behaviour of the bankrupt character alludes to the crisis of the male capitalist role of the small entrepreneur who tries to save his quotidian existence and recuperate his lost economic and social prestige. Discussing the formations of masculinity in contemporary Hungarian cinema (with arguments applicable to other Eastern European cinemas as well), György Kalmár points out that after the 1989 regime change the initial euphoria was quickly “shattered by the harsh realities of neoliberal capitalism” (2017, xix) that strongly affected the perception and construction of male social roles. In the 1990s and 2000s, Eastern Europeans were more and more emphatically measured by Western standards such as “maturity for democracy” or “economic viability” (Kalmár 2017, xix). Consequently, the regime change “brought about disillusionment and disorientation for many post-communist subjects, especially for men who often found it difficult to meet the traditional expectations concerning hegemonic masculinities in such a situation” (Kalmár 2017, xix). In Porumboiu’s film, the displaced narrative of treasure quest in the context of Romanian actualities becomes not only a source of deadpan humour or local burlesque but also a modality to address the crisis of (traditional) mid-

5 This composition may be familiar from Porumboiu’s earlier films, *12:08 East of Bucharest*, *Police, Adjective*, or *When Evening Falls on Bucharest or Metabolism (Când se lasă seara peste București sau metabolism, 2013)*.

6 Cornel, the character who handles the metal detector, voices his preference to earn money by work and not treasure hunt: “I have worked all my life. I didn’t run after treasures.” Nevertheless, in the aftermath of the global economic crisis, the film questions the concept of (individual) work as a guarantee of economic accomplishment.

dle-class male social roles haunted, among others, by the norms of social and economic accomplishment and viability. In this context, the protagonist's reluctance to borrow a small amount of money from his father-in-law may allude to the disempowering culture of shame that surrounds the economic ineffectiveness of male subjects.

At the end of the film, the treasure quest story intersects a twisted Robin Hood topos. After finding the unexplainably valuable treasure (Mercedes stocks) and selling his part to the financial institution, the protagonist translates the abstract value of the stocks into a more concrete form of treasure, compatible with the world of fables and Robin Hood legends known by his son:⁷ he buys jewelry and distributes it among children in a playground. This gesture of disregarding the financial value of the newly acquired wealth and distributing it in an irrational, playful, and subversive manner shifts the low-key realism of the film's first scenes towards a more fable-like register. As Ágnes Pethő argues: "Despite the manifold irony of the situations, the austere realism is diluted with the light-hearted and unlikely ending, where the prosaic content of the box, the real, palpable treasure is exchanged for a fantasy shared by father and son" (2019, 77).

By adapting the transcultural generic patterns of treasure hunt narratives and fables to local contexts, the film posits treasure quest not as an adventurous attempt of self-realization but rather as a last resort option in a crisis situation narrated as a de-dramatized, elusively humorous Eastern European story (with a critical allusion to the local effects of the 2008 global financial crisis). As the excavation of the treasure folds into the narration of (micro)history in the diegetic world, the film's "archaeological" endeavour unearths and reframes different concepts of "past," "treasure," or "heritage" constituted by quotidian and professional discourses and everyday media practices in a markedly globalizing present. Through these intertwining layers of meaning and mediation, Porumboiu's intermedial film engages with the manifold, changing fabric of the real and becomes an interface of local and translocal narratives.

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7 Earlier in the film, Costi reads Robin Hood stories to his son from an illustrated book reminiscent of old illuminated manuscripts.

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Figures 1–2. Glass-plate photos from *The Dead Nation. Fragments of Parallel Lives* (2017)

Mónika Dánél*

Past in Process. Strategies of Re-collection and Re-enactment in Radu Jude's "*I Do Not Care If We Go Down in History as Barbarians*" (2018) and *The Dead Nation* (2017)

Recently awarded Romanian director Radu Jude's¹ previous films – "*I Do Not Care If We Go Down in History as Barbarians*" („Îmi este indiferent dacă în istorie vom intra ca barbari”, 2018), *The Dead Nation* (*Țara moartă*, 2017), *Scarred Hearts* (*Inimi cicatrizate*, 2016), and *Aferim!* (2015) – differ from the specific microrealism of Romanian New Wave films. In these four films, he creates historical narratives related to a traumatic past and reflects on the mechanisms and the nature of nationalism. He researches genuine artistic modalities of reflecting on the layers and components of nationalism in the historical past. By linking the artwork to social realities through art, he “protests” against the disquieting contemporary phenomena of nationalism. Jude’s political way of creation does not result in the objectification of art – the artwork itself does not become an instrument of an ideology, it remains an open artefact (*opera aperta*). However, the role of the artist and, in a similar way, the role of the viewer are focused on social self-reflection, on such historical and traumatic events that were neglected or were not processed appropriately in social conscience and self-understanding. In the Romanian artistic and societal context with a significant socialist-realist legacy and ideology, focusing on history and reinventing historical cinema also means to negotiate with this legacy as active artistic and societal mental condition.

In the focus of "*I Do Not Care If We Go Down in History as Barbarians*," there is the process of the re-enactment of the 1941 *Odessa massacre* by civil locals staged in contemporary Bucharest by a female director (Mariana) as a self-reflexive, gendered directorial alter ego. The film problematizes the ambiguities of the body-based artistic re-enactment as a collective remembering strategy. In contrast with the definition that “artistic re-enactments are not an affirmative confir-

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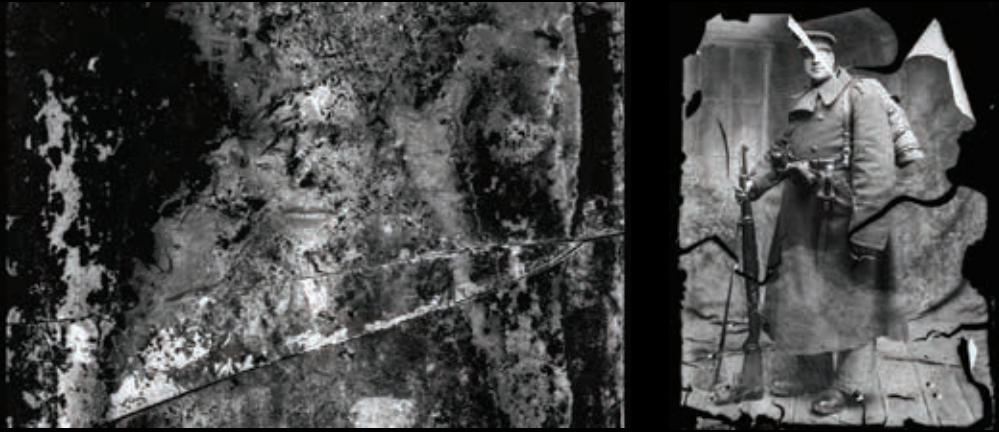
1 For the film *Bad Luck Banging or Loony Porn* (*Babardeală cu bucluc sau porno balamuc*, 2021), Radu Jude was awarded the Golden Bear at the 2021 Berlin International Film Festival.

mation of the past” (Arns 2007), in the film’s diegesis the visible scenes reanimated “through physical and psychological experience” (Agnew 2004, 330) enable their spectators to identify with the murderous nationalist soldiers of the past. Through the failure of the re-enactment, the film transposes nationalism from the historical past into a contemporary social and patriarchal context and problematizes the ambiguities of artistic re-enactment as a collective strategy of remembrance. The film stages the riskiness of representing, reopening traumatic historical events. Furthermore, it stages the doubts related to “political pedagogy,” to educating the public through art.²

From a different perspective, the re-enactment in the film could be seen as a medium which gives form to the existing latent nationalism. The fact that the main character of the film is a female film director and thus re-enactment becomes an inserted *mise en abyme* for artistic creation may create a self-reflexive context, in which the latent nationalism is interconnected with gender inequality and unacceptance. In the film, there appear several allusions to Romanian film director Sergiu Nicolaescu, who “was a believer in mythical history. His version of mythical Romanian history was always subordinated to the interests of political power – first Ceaușescu’s and then post-communist power” (Lazăr and Gorzo 2019, 11). His illusionist and nationalist filmic realism was one of the fundamental visual conceptualizations of history for generations. In the process of staging the historical re-enactment, the female researcher-director, Mariana, confronts with Nicolaescu’s still present (heroic) shadow as a vivid material and mental legacy. In this context, her failure with the re-enactment could be interpreted as a failure of a female director in a male-dominated profession and in a field (history) dominated by male visions. By choosing an ambiguous female director type as a main character, Jude also creates a discursive space for reflection on this position and frames the possibility of the intersectional connection between nationalism and gender inequality in contemporary society.³ His film, in opposition to the illusionist film tradition, “questions its means in front of the viewer and thus aims at teaching her to treat critically,

2 “However, things stand differently with the possibility of dissemination of political pedagogy – including, of course, pedagogy by means of art. On this point, the discourse of Jude’s film becomes sceptical and self-doubting. This is not really in the spirit of Jude’s ’68 models. Those films were made from a position of belief in the possibility – even in the imminence – of large and positive socio-political change. A lucid political artist working today has much less access to that optimism. This is why the aesthetic strategies of ‘political modernism’ cannot be revived without some updates. Mariana is portrayed as being alone in her ‘obsession’ – that of educating the public about the Odessa massacre.” (Lazăr and Gorzo 2019, 13.)

3 In this sense, the latest awarded film by Jude can be considered as an embodied *mise-en-scène* of the existing nationalist, racist, anti-feminist, etc. mental conditions of the contemporary middle class in Romanian society. In a kind of public trial, Jude stages the conflict between private sexuality (turned public) and latent or manifest cultural norms and regulations. In the crossfire of the parents’ gazes and performed social norms, there is a female secondary school teacher of history, who – from an institutional and societal perspective – embodies an ambiguous non-normative female and teacher position.



Figures 3–4. The materiality of erosion and the haptic gaze

to regard as questionable (rather than ‘natural’) the dominant representations and ideas of the world. Beyond the subject matter of specific films, this cinema is left-wing by its very methods – because of its efforts to constitute itself into a self-reflexive, didactic, and dialectical endeavour. From all the possible models of ‘political modernism,’ Jude takes as his explicit reference the Godardian one. *I Do Not Care If We Go Down in History as Barbarians* begins with the shot of a screen-within-the-screen, on which unfolds a fragment from a Romanian WWII anti-Soviet documentary about the ‘liberation’ of Odessa by ‘the soldiers of the cross, the soldiers of justice’ (i.e. the Romanian army led by Field Marshal Ion Antonescu). It is the first of a series of texts (some of them audiovisual) that Jude’s film presents to us, framing them precisely as texts – there to be inspected, interrogated, discussed polemically, examined in their dimension of historical artefacts, etc.” (Lazăr and Gorzo 2019, 8–9). Even though the film results in a coherent linear narration and storyline, the “collage” aspect of the film remains elementary. According to the avant-garde definition of the collage, “Each cited element breaks the continuity or the linearity of the discourse and leads necessarily to a double reading: that of the fragment perceived in relation to its text of origin; that of the same fragment as incorporated into a new whole, a different totality. The trick of collage consists also of never entirely suppressing the alterity of these elements reunited in a temporary composition” (Group Mu: Manifesto, 1978 quoted by Perloff 2003 [1986], 47). A historical film based on collage – “a way of undermining the authority of the individual self, of the ‘transcendental signified’” (Perloff 1998, 306) – as a method “undermines coherence and unity” (Perloff 2003, 72) and creates a new discursive space for a possible critical political art and pedagogy. Besides the collage texture, re-enactment as a different incorporated diegetic level creates space for metaleptic shifts between diegetic levels. Through the performed (pedagogical) failure of the re-enactment as an inserted other diegetic level, the film creates such metaleptic leaps in which the film’s viewer must reflect on his or her position. By



Figure 5. A little girl's raised hand as a disturbing *punctum*

metaleptic structure as a subversive “frame-breaking” narrative mode, which blurs the ontological boundaries of the diegetic levels, and as a trope of dehierarchization,⁴ the film extends the responsibility (of reflection) to its viewers.⁵ We need to negotiate simultaneously with the failure of the direct(ed) pedagogy and with the manifested, staged nationalism. Through the film based on collage and metalepsis, we are embodied as political and social subjects.

About “literature as a medium of cultural memory” Astrid Erll states that it “can display and juxtapose divergent and contested memories and create mnemonic multiperspectivity” (Erll 2011, 150–151). This statement could probably be generalized to other mnemonic artworks, and it definitely seems to be valid for such hybrid artworks as Jude’s 83-minute film *The Dead Nation. Fragments of Parallel Lives* (2017), which is a more experimental antecedent of the film discussed above. In this “collage film” (Mironescu 2017), Radu Jude compiles digitized pieces of glass-plate photos as silent archives from Costică Acsinte’s

4 I.e. it blurs the “sacred frontier between two worlds, the world in which one tells, [and] the world of which one tells” (Genette 1980, 236), and “a grabbing gesture that reaches across levels and ignores boundaries, bringing to the bottom what belongs to the top or vice versa” (Ryan 2004, 441).

5 See Alexandra Effe’s arguments related to readers’ participation “as an instance of metalepsis” (Effe 2017, 261). “Metalepsis makes it possible to represent self and world without claiming to tell truth, to render the authorial self accountable for the act of writing, but also to extend responsibility to readers.” (Effe 2017, 262.)



Figures 6–9. Multiplication as a photographic style and familiarization of the pose

photo studio – a photographer of the small south-east Romanian town of Slobozia, where his photo archive was found with approximately 8,600 photos –, different sound footage fragments (political, patriotic speeches, military songs, radio news), natural sound (the film is framed by landscape photos and the sound of wind), and the director’s own voice narrating a Jewish doctor, Emil Dorian’s diary written in Bucharest between 1937 and 1946 [Figs. 1–2]. “The fact that the filmmaker, and not an actor, reads Dorian’s diary notes indicates a wariness not to spectacularize the historical past. The intention instead is to remove elements of mediation, such as the actor’s voice, which can fictionalize Dorian’s account” (Popescu 2018, 8). This personal act of embodying the written document through the director’s own voice cannot be interpreted only from an artistic point of view. It is an act of re-animation, of re-creation of (dead) letters through his own act of reading and pronunciation, sometimes struggling with sounds, and in this way Jude’s voice becomes a component of the film, which sounds low-keyed in opposition to political archival sounds. With this act, Jude translocates the outer director position: thus, spectators can “direct” their own inner film in the ruptures, in the visible blackness and the incommensurable and simultaneous historical medial traces of the collage film. This communion act can also be interpreted as the humanization of the dead (silent) photographs through sound and narration. As Melinda Blos-Jáni argues, in Jude’s *The Dead Nation* “photographs are indexical documents with a twist: they become traces/proofs of the world that is missing from it, and is represented by the voice-over narration in the film” (2020, 143). Image and sound



Figures 10–11. Spreading of the murder “accessories” through photographic pose

rarely correspond directly, but they create an invisible common ground where we must perceive their ambivalent and parallel co-existence.

The film re-collects and rebuilds the processes and the medial elements of an anti-Jewish historical atmosphere and the parallel everyday life of contemporary society. In the intermedial documentary – that oscillates “between poetry and reality”⁶ –, the non-convergence of the different media, the silence within narration, and the erosion/ruptures of the photographs create “places” for the viewer and enable an alternative understanding of history through both an immersive and a reflective spectatorship. The frames of the photos are opened up to a filmic “blind field” (Barthes 1981, 57), and the acoustic and the visual material traces are combined with invisible images that create the frame for the spectatorial ekphrasis of non-visible images. The modality in which Jude composed his work creates an ambivalent place of embodiment for the spectator. The ruptures and the haptic materiality of digitized⁷ glass-plate photographs open up the frames of the photos to blackness, to imagination, to inner film screening. The natural erosion of the photos signifies different “ways” of the visual uncanny (surrealistic images) [Figs. 3–4].

The haptic visuality of the old material includes closeness and touch on the one hand, but, on the other hand, this closeness is the nearness of the static (photographed) weapons. This tension inside the gaze is multiplied by layered images in the process of viewing and listening to the film.

6 Cf. *Țara moartă*, Q&A cu Radu Jude [*Dead Nation*, Q&A with Radu Jude]. 2017. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=20BpVim.xvJg>. Last accessed 25. 12. 2021.

7 “In the digitization process, the glass plates, which had deteriorated in various degrees, were scanned without being retouched or ‘repaired:’ the spots, the blurred or missing portions became, as a result, part of the images, lending them a surplus of antiquity and ‘authenticity.’” (Mironescu 2017, 106.)



Figures 12–13. Replacements – familiarization of the gun, de-familiarization of the family and child

As if in a photo-album segmented and structured by specific dates from the doctor's diary, we see photos on the screen mostly "rotated" in slow rhythm, but simultaneously we also "see" our imaginary pictures created by the narrated diary. The visible photos and our possible mental images are juxtaposed, they crash in our gaze and mind. The parallel lives of the two types of witnesses (photos and narrated diary) interact and oscillate in our reception. The performative act of verbal narration to create mental images and scenes and the optical and haptic concreteness of the photographs are interwoven and conflictly crash in our perception. We cannot remain innocent outsiders in this process of viewing. By ruptures and diverse medial juxtapositions, the film embodies and incorporates its viewers as bystanders.

The contemporary "blindness" of society to the existing process of the stigmatization and deportation of the Jewish people from Romania is transposed in the film into a medial experience. The ruptures, the black background of the digitized photographs, and the album-structured gaze "collaged" with narration and archival sound (propaganda) materials create together an "unconscious optics" (Benjamin 1968, 237),⁸ in which the viewer faces the blackness as

8 Cf. "Evidently a different nature opens itself to the camera than opens to the naked eye – if only because an unconsciously penetrated space is substituted for a space consciously explored by man. Even if one has a general knowledge of the way people walk, one knows nothing of a person's posture during the fractional second of a stride. The act of reaching for a lighter or a spoon is familiar routine, yet we hardly know what really goes on between hand and metal, not to mention how this fluctuates with our moods. Here, the camera intervenes with the resources of its lowerings and liftings, its interruptions and isolations, its extensions and accelerations, its enlargements and reductions. The camera introduces us to unconscious optics as does psychoanalysis to unconscious impulses." (Benjamin 1968, 236–237.)

a visible medium of non-visibility.⁹ The “blind field” characteristic of the medium of film may also pertain to photographs with *punctum*. According to Roland Barthes, “the cinema has a power which at first glance the Photograph does not have: the screen (as Bazin has remarked) is not a frame but a hideout; the man or woman who emerges from it continues living: a ‘blind field’ constantly doubles our partial vision. Now, confronting millions of photographs, including those which have a good studium, I sense no blind field: everything which happens within the frame dies absolutely once this frame is passed beyond. When we define the Photograph as a motionless image, this does not mean only that the figures it represents do not move; it means that they do not emerge, do not leave: they are anesthetized and fastened down, like butterflies. Yet once there is a punctum, a blind field is created (~ divined)” (Barthes 1981, 55–57).

The transformation of photographic frames into (inner) film and the medialization of the “blind field” through blackness and various modes of ruptures are related to the contamination of *parallel lives* (indicated in the subtitle of the film). On the one hand, as Blos-Jáni argues, the film reflects on the “missing pictures” about Jewish people. On the other hand, in my view, this work embodies *through* visible pictures the way in which the society of that time *incorporated* the silent, absent, and murdered others through gestures, postures, and poses.

Barthes defines the nature of photographs in intentional or non-intentional pose: “Now, once I feel myself observed by the lens, everything changes: I constitute myself in the process of ‘posing:’ I instantaneously make another body for myself, I transform myself in advance into an image” (Barthes 1981, 10). *The Dead Nation* mediates ideology as a performative corporeal act: it reveals how ideology can be inscribed into the body as a pose. From a media technological perspective, the film reflects on the photo as medium: *how the photographic pose of the Nazi salute can multiply and turn into a visual style*. In this sense, the photograph is not only a medium of documentation but also an agent of creating fascism as a photographic style. In Jude’s film, we see several photos with children in the pose of the Nazi salute. First, the little girl’s raised hand in the middle of the carnivalesque group photo acts as a disturbing *punctum*.

Then the film shows in a more rapid rhythm how this hand position turns into a style in individual child poses and in family and crowd photographs. Through the accelerated showing of the photos, the slow album gaze is displaced by the rapid “listing” of images, which can be seen as a condensed recapitulation of the process in which the gesture as a pose is familiarized and socialized by photographs.

The multiplication of the raised hand as a pose has ambivalent meanings precisely because of the medium of the photo: on the one hand, it can become an indexical marker of the contemporary latent social participation in the dehumanizing process. On the other hand, the fact that – due to multiplication

9 When the diary thematizes the gas chambers in 1943, the screen remains black for long moments.

– the little girl’s gesture as *punctum* later becomes a pose may even reveal the process of this gesture’s emptying. By being a *punctum* or/and becoming a pose, these series of child and family photos indicate the presence of the Nazi ideology spread by photographic pose and inscribed into the body [Figs. 5–9].

The raised hands and other bodily practices re-animate the larger society’s latent participation in a process of dehumanization. The series of photos of soldiers, civil people, and children with instruments of killing (knives and military guns) as photographic “accessories” also incorporates the missing, murdered, invisible bodies.¹⁰ The transposition of the guns from soldiers to civilians as photographic “accessories” also reflects the responsibility of the medium that contributed to the creation and the spreading of the pose [Figs. 10–13].

The static (dead) position of murder instruments in photographs may turn into a blind field in the spectator’s inner film: through imagination and inner images, we, the viewers, are witnessing the acts of killing. Our perception cannot remain innocent.

Incorporating several family composition pictures, the film activates the (social) album-structured gaze and “familial looking” (Hirsch 1999). Summarizing Ernst van Alphen’s article, Marianne Hirsch argues that “[a]s familiarity is projected onto the portrayed subjects and the viewer is drawn into a familial network of looking, it becomes impossible to recognize criminal personalities, to distinguish between victims and perpetrators even of the most heinous and unimaginable crimes” (Hirsch 1999, xviii). Jude’s selection reflects on the norms of familial looking and interrogates them.

In picture number 12, the gun in the child’s hands pricks the familial looking. It activates the social code in which in a celebration event the gun wanders from an adult hand (most probably from the soldier on the left side of the photo) into a child’s hand in a photographic pose. This photo enacts how the military presence is incorporated and adopted by civilians and how the killing gun turns into an accessory in a child’s hands (see also Fig. 13). The ambiguity of this image, the back-and-forth replacements – the de-familiarization of the familial and the familiarization of the military – point out that these visible figures do not live parallel lives in a separate world but assist and support the murderous Nazi ideology in a corporeal way.¹¹ They accept, adopt the military in civil society, embrace it and spread it to the children as familial routine in familial frames. As the photos testify, they lived common lives with the missing, killed Jewish population. The absence of Jewish people as “blind field” becomes visible through the static gestures, compositions, and corporeal poses of the other part of society. By adopting these visual codes and by the conceptualized

10 The manifested difference between photographed live animals and animal carcasses in different surrealist compositions also stages the act of killing present in this social album.

11 The small moustache popular in that period is referenced as Hitler moustache and is worn as a corporeal “accessory” – connecting social layers. This can also refer to the trendy social presence of the ideology embodied by the Nazi idol.

reframing of the erosion of archived photographs, the film reveals that in the process of dehumanizing the other, parallel participants are also dehumanized (see, for example, Fig. 1). Therefore, the process of dehumanization also has a common, collective effect. The material transformation of the photos creates a common past of dehumanization.

The Dead Nation is framed by photographic landscapes of wasteland with allusion to the iconography of Holocaust pictures. These photos from Costică Acsinte's archive indicate that sometimes the photographer fled from the process of creating "human" poses and photographed only non-human "unposed" land, blank pictures. For contemporary viewers – in the collaged spectatorial ekphrasis of imagined photographs –, these are probably the only pictures that can be watched with an innocent gaze. The emptiness of the wastelands in the nowhere can be looked at without projections and illusions.

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**THE POETICS AND POLITICS OF
INTERMEDIALITY IN HUNGARIAN
CINEMA**

AZ INTERMEDIALITÁS POÉTIKÁJA ÉS
POLITIKÁJA A MAGYAR FILMBEN

Gelencsér Gábor*

Messzi ég. A paraszti világ melodramái és a *Csempészek*¹

A melodráma nagyformája Balogh Gyöngyi és Király Jenő szerint Székely István *Café Moszkva* című 1936-os filmjével jelenik meg a magyar film történetében, amelyet a korai hangosfilm első szakaszával foglalkozó kötetükben, a „*Csak egy nap a világ...*”-ban Kertész Mihály klasszikusa, az 1942-ben bemutatott *Casablanca* előzményeként elemezznek (2000, 586–603). A nemzetközi hatások mellett a *Café Moszkva* – néhány más korai melodráma mellett – előhírnöke a műfaj 1939-es hazai berobbanásának. Kalmár László *Halálos tavaszával* az addig uralkodó vígjátékok mellett helyet követel magának a melodráma, s a glamúrfilmet, a boldogságmitológiát a sötétebb tónusú, a film noirhoz közelítő szorongástörténetek váltják, illetve árnyalják, nyilvánvaló módon nem függetlenül a kitörő második világháborútól (Király 1989, 7–8).

1945 után alapvető változások következnek be a magyar filmben: átalakul az intézményrendszere, a politikai környezete és nem utolsósorban a funkciója. A szórakoztató tömegkultúrából előbb nevelő célzatú propagandává silányul, majd modern szerzői filmmé nemesedik. Ennek a folyamatnak a legnagyobb áldozata a műfaji film, amely a hetvenes évektől egy évtizedre szinte eltűnik a kínálatból. Műfaji sokszínűség az 1945 előtti korszakot sem jellemzi. Azt gondolhatnánk, a felfokozott érzelmeket ábrázoló melodramának a közösségi, pragmatista, analitikus beállítottságú hősöket előtérbe állító államszocialista korszak filmművészetében esélye sem lehet, vagy ha mégis, akkor az csak a melodráma modernista, intellektuális (Király 2010, 24), vagyis a szerzői film alműfaji státusában megjelenő változtatásban bontakozhat ki, amelyben filozófiai távlatot nyert a sorssal szembeni tehetetlenségérzet (Kovács 2005, 104–124). Nos, az államszocialista időszak filmművészetének tanúsága szerint egyik feltetelezés sem állja meg a helyét.

Az államosítást követő Rákosi-korszak szocialista realizmusában természetesen nem maradhat hely az egyéni érzelmeknek, az individualizmusnak; a közösségi eszmével szemben az ilyesmi „kispolgári csökevénynek” minősül. A Sztálin halálát (1953) követő enyhülés hatására azonban a filmek változásá-

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1 Részletek a szerző Kijárat Kiadónál megjelenés előtt álló *Lopott boldogságok. Premodern magyar melodramák (1957–1962)* című munkájából.

nak egyik legfontosabb jele a konfliktusok személyes motivációjának előtérbe állítása és elmélyítése. S ebben meghatározó szerepe lesz a melodrámának, ám nem a klasszikus műfajnak, hanem alműfaji változatának, amikor is a szerzői film műfaji mintázataként ismerhető fel. Az ilyen típusú filmek előképe már 1955-ben megjelenik (Gertler Viktor: *Gázolás*), amikor a politikai enyhülés az elkészült filmekben is jól láthatóan nyomot hagy, s az 1956 utáni rövid visszarendeződést követően, egészen az új hullám indulásáig kitart. Az 1957 és 1962 közötti hat évben kilencvenhat egész estés játékfilm készül (évenként átlagosan tizenöt), s ebből huszonnégy tekinthető melodráma alműfajúnak, azaz a filmek egynegyede. A melodráma a szerzői film alműfajává azonban csak a modern filmben válik, Európában és Magyarországon egyaránt. Az 1957 és 1962 közötti korszak viszont még nem az új hullámos generációval megjelenő modern film korszaka Magyarországon, hanem átmeneti periódus a szocialista realizmusból a modernizmusba. Alműfajként a melodráma eleinte nem a modern szerzői filmhez társul, hanem a klasszikus drámához, amely a szerzői elmélet megjelenése előtt a műfaji filmmel szembehelyezkedő művész(i)filmmel azonosítható. Később a filmek melodramai karaktere egyre modernebb formát ölt, s ezzel a korszak átmeneti, premodern jellegét reprezentálja: a magyar film átalakulását az ötvenes évek szocialista realizmusából a hatvanas évek új hullámába.

Ha önmagában vizsgáljuk az 1957 és 1962 közötti szakaszt, ebben az esetben is igen figyelemreméltó a melodráma alműfaji jelenléte. Ennek a korszaknak önálló elnevezése sincs a magyar film történetében. Mivel a szocialista realizmus (1948–1953) és az új hullám (1963–1968) közé ékelődik, ezért jobb híján – beleértve az 1954 és 1956 közötti szakaszt is – átmeneti korszaknak tekintjük, noha a maga kilenc évével hosszabb, mint az öt megelőző és követő, formai, intézményi és politikai szempontból is jól körülhatárolható periódus. Az átmenetiség mindazonáltal valóban ennek a rendkívül tagolt, minimum két szakaszra bontható (1954–1956, 1957–1962) időszaknak a legfőbb sajátossága: politikailag átmenet a szigorú kontrollból a kádári konszolidáció szabadabb kulturális terébe; intézményileg a központosított „tématerv-utasításos” irányításból a nagyobb önállósággal rendelkező stúdiórendszerbe; formai értelemben pedig a szocialista realizmus kötöttségéből a személyes stílusnak egyre nagyobb teret biztosító modern szerzői filmbe. A melodramai vonások vizsgálata elsősorban az utóbbi kialakulásának leírásához járulhat hozzá: a társadalmi konfliktusokból miként lesznek magánéleti, érzelmi, szerelmi konfliktusok, a közéleti motivációkból személyesek; ezáltal miképpen válnak összetettebbé, elmélyültebbé, hitelesebbé a filmekben kibontakozó (melo)drámák; s végül mindezt miként támogatják a modern film stíluseszközei. Formaalkító jelenléte a modern filmben különösen izgalmassá teszi ennek az alműfajnak a vizsgálatát, ahogy a klasszikus melodramából elkezd kibontakozni a modern (intellektuális) szerzői melodráma. Tágabb értelemben az 1945 előtti populáris paradigmájú filmkultúrából a hatvanas évektől kialakuló szerzői paradigmába, szűkebb értelemben az 1945 után elinduló (de az ötvenes években megszakadó) klasszikusból a modern formába történő átalakulás folyamata rajzolódik ki tehát az 1957 és 1962 közötti korszak melodráma alműfajú történeteiben.

Azé a korszaké, amelyet ha az átmenetiségen túl sajátosabb jelzővel akarunk illetni, éppen ezért premodernnek nevezhetünk.

A korszak melodramáinak tematikus rendszerezési lehetősége önmagában bizonyítja a korpusz társadalmi reprezentativitását, hiszen a filmbeli karakterek között valamennyi meghatározónak tartott társadalmi csoport képviselteti magát a paraszttól a munkáson át az értelmiségiig (Szilágyi 1977, 39–40). Ismert továbbá a magyar film és irodalom szoros kapcsolata, márpedig e filmek között adaptációkat is nagy számban találunk (a premodern korszak egyharmada adaptáció, míg a melodramák fele irodalmi mű nyomán készült).

A paraszti világ melodramái

A paraszti világ melodramái alapvetően múlt időben játszódnak, és fél évszázadot fognak át az első világháború kitörésétől két, jelen idejű történetig, azaz az 1960-as évek legelejéig. Mindezt egyrészt az magyarázza, hogy itt találjuk a legtöbb klasszikus adaptációt, illetve kortárs szerző korábbi művének megfilmesítését. Emiatt ezek a filmek kapcsolódnak legszorosabban a premodern korszak depolitizáló, ugyancsak legtöbbször klasszikusokat megfilmesítő áramlatához. Az archaikus paraszti világ szintén az aktualizáló jelentés eltávolítását támogatja. A kép azonban ennél jóval összetettebb: a paraszti világ melodramái társadalmi jelentésük és formaviláguk tekintetében egyaránt jól beleilleszkednek a premodern korszak átmenetiségébe.

A paraszti világ múlt idejű melodramáinak osztály- és vagyoni különbségei kiváló lehetőséget nyújtanak az aktuálpolitikai jelentésadásra. E filmek legfőbb tanulsága mégis az, ahogy a direkt, propagandisztikus, leegyszerűsítő jelentés lehetőségét elutasítják, és a hősök érzelmi krízisét állítják előtérbe. Az átmeneti korszak más filmjeiben is tetten érhető depolitizáló törekvés a melodráma alműfajától jelentős segítséget kap – sőt, a melodramától kapja legfőbb segítségét. Mindez természetesen a jelen idejű történetekre is igaz, de a múlt idejű, az elnyomást, a kizsákmányolást mozgalmi alapon, a jelen társadalmának negatív előképeként bemutató alkotások, amelyeknek így módon a tézise lehetne – ahogy az az ötvenes évek történelmi filmjeiben meg is valósult –, hogy a múlt igazságtalanságait a jelen politikája felszámolta, nos, ezekben a történetekben kiváltképp szemléletes az ilyesfajta értelmezés elutasítása, avagy árnyalása, az átmenetiség jegyében. Egyik történetből sem hiányzik a társadalmi motiváció, de egyikben sem az válik a konfliktus tárgyává; az valóban csak motívumként áll elő, a konfliktus lelki-érzelmi és nem társadalmi-politikai szinten zajlik. S ez így van az egyre kielezettebb politikai viszonyokat bemutató filmeknél is. A *Bakaruhában* (Fehér Imre, 1957) századfordulós világa még igen távolinak láttatja a legyőzhetetlen társadalmi különbségeket, de a két világháború közötti években már fokozódik az „osztályharc,” a koalíciós időszak és az ötvenes évek bemutatása pedig ha kritikával nem élhet is, a korszak politikai aspektusának „kötelező”, vonalas ábrázolása előli kitérés a személyes érzelmek felé értelmezhető akár rejtett bírálatként, a korabeli politikai viszonyok elutasításaként is. A mindössze két, jelen időben bonyolódó paraszti melodráma sem tér ki az osztályharcos jelen-

tés elől, de azt szerelmi-érzelmi konfliktusba ágyazza. A *Zápor* (Kovács András, 1960) és az *Amíg holnap lesz...* (Keleti Márton, 1961) főhőse – csakúgy, mint a korszak paraszti témájú filmjeinek többségében (Szilágyi 1977, 232) – tévesz-elnök, vagyis a szövetkezetesítés második hullámának exponens alakja. S noha az *Amíg holnap lesz...* termelési konfliktusában éppen az új szerelem segíti a főhőst a helytállásban, a *Záporban* nincs is termelési konfliktus, s hiába nézi politikai felettese rossz szemmel az elnök szerelmi vonzódását egy férjes asszony iránt, ő a nőt választja, vele együtt elhagyja a falut, és máshol folytatják új életüket, legalábbis a film nyitott befejezése megengedi ezt az értelmezést. Vagyis még a korabeli paraszti világ társadalmi és politikai értelemben kiemelt, az éppen zajló szövetkezetesítés miatt kifejezetten osztályharcos szereplőit is utoléri a végzet – a róluk szóló klasszikus művészfilmeket pedig a melodráma alműfaja.

Máriássy Félix: *Csempészek* (1958)

„*Mi tőlünk kettőnktől olyan messze van az ég.*”

A *Csempészek* korát megelőző film – talán ezért is szorul méltatlanul háttérbe Máriássy Félix életművében és a magyar filmtörténeti kánonban egyaránt. Korszerűsége éppen melodráma alműfajából fakad: ez avatja nem csupán premodern, hanem modern filmmé (Varga 2003, 17), öt-hat évvel korábban a magyar modernizmus elindulása előtt. Egyedülállóságát fokozza, hogy maga az alkotó sem folytatja ezt az irányt, illetve a hatvanas években készült modernista filmjei nem érik el ezt a színvonalat. A *Csempészek* Máriássy legjelentősebb és legnagyobb ívű, hat filmet számláló neorealista korszakának középső darabja. Megelőzi a *Budapesti tavasz* (1955), az *Egy pikoló világos* (1955) és a *Külvárosi legenda* (1957), követi az *Álmatlan évek* (1959) és a *Hosszú az út hazáig* (1960). Csakhogy amíg az utóbbi két film visszatér a neorealista témához (háború és szegénység), addig a *Csempészek* továbblép a neorealizmuson a modernizmus felé. Teszi mindezt 1958-ban, amikor Fellini már túl van a *Cabiria éjszakáin* (1957), de még innen *Az édes életen* (1960), Antonioni leforgatta *A kiáltást* (1957), de még előtte áll *A kaland* (1960), Pasolini pedig csak készülődik első rendezésére (*A csóró*, 1961). Máriássy neorealista korszaka kissé megkésett az olaszhoz képest, a *Csempészek*kel viszont ő előzi meg itáliai kollégáit.

Különlegessé teszi a filmet az is, hogy múlt idejű és paraszti környezetben játszódó történetként képes a modernizmus nyelvén fogalmazni, ráadásul a harmincas években született irodalmi művek segítségével. A történet szegény emberekről szól, akik a magyar–román határ két oldalán kényszerülnek a címadó tevékenységre: Anyica Romániából jár át Magyarországra, Mihály Magyarországról Romániába. Egyikőjük sem bűnöző, legfeljebb „megélhetési” értelemben. Véletlenül találkoznak, s élnek meg egy szerelmes éjszakát, majd másnap együtt vágnak neki a határnak, de csendőrökbe ütköznek, dulakodás alakul ki közöttük, üldözik őket, helyzetük kiszámíthatatlanná válik – s az is marad, csempészként, szerelmespárként egyaránt. A történet főhősei nem reflektálnak melodramai helyzetükre, amelyet ily módon nem felfokozott, explicit

érzelmeikkel élnek meg, hanem csendes belenyugvással fogadják el sorsukat, amelyről maguk sem tudják, mit hoz számukra. A legyőzhetetlen erőt nem egymásban látják, hanem kiszolgáltatott élethelyzetükben. A kiszolgáltatottság fokozódik egzisztencialista létélménnyé véletlenül, egymás karjaiban megélt határhelyzetükben, amely ugyanakkor nem vezet sehová: ott marad a senki- és semmiföldjén.

Miképpen képes ezt a modern gondolatot megfogalmazni a film? A kérdésre kétféle módon is válaszolhatunk: egyrészt az irodalmi alapművek felidézésével, másrészt a neorealista stílus jelenlétének és meghaladásának bemutatásával.

A *Csempészek* irodalmi adaptációként is különleges eljárást követ. Kortárs író, Szabó Pál három, 1930-as években írt és abban a korban játszódó elbeszélését (*A trombitás*, *Boldizsár bajba keveredik*, valamint a címadó *Csempészek*) fűzi össze a rendező Thurzó Gábor és az író segítségével egységes narratívává. Az eljárást magyar filmben éppen a neorealizmus előfutárjának tekintett Szóts István-film, az *Emberek a havason* alkalmazta először, amely Nyíró József elbeszéléseiből állította össze történetét, s hasonló módon készül el a *Csempészekkel* egy időben Gelléri Andor Endre novelláiból a szintén melodráma alműfajú *Vasvirág* (Herskó János, 1958). Szabó Pál elbeszélései a harmincas évek szegényparaszti világát mutatják be, s elsősorban e létállapot egzisztenciális színezetű drámáját hangsúlyozzák, semmint annak osztályharcos jellegét. *A trombitás* az első világháborúban hadirokkanttá vált férfi megalázó kálváriáját meséli el, akinek alacsony segélyét tovább csökkentik, s aki belebolondul megaláztatásába. *A Boldizsár bajba keveredik* szegényembere éppen munkát kapna, ám ahhoz csizma kell, a vásárban azonban egy csaló szerencsejátékos kifosztja nehezen összekuporgatott pénzéből. Mindkét elbeszélés, ahogy a *Csempészek* is, a szegénység fokozódásáról mesél, amely már nem a szociális nyomorúságra, hanem az egzisztenciális színezetű kifosztottságra mutat, hiszen egy anyagi értelemben eleve kilátástalan helyzet válik még reménytelenebbé.

Szabó Pál elbeszélései általában, de a három adaptált munkája különösképpen erőteljesen fogalmazzák meg hősei kiszolgáltatottságának egzisztenciális léptékét. A paraszti világot kifejező archaikus, népies nyelve gyakran stilizálódik filozofikus jelentésű, metafizikus távlatú mondatokká. *A trombitás*ban a címszereplő összeomlását jelző őrült tettetnek záróakkordját így írja le: „Sötét, meleg huppan le rá a zengő égről, arccal előrebukott, és kezéből messze repült a hűséges jószág, a kürt” (Szabó 1956, I. 54). A pénzéből kifosztott Boldizsár helyzetét pedig ilyen kérdések fejezik ki: „De honnan szakadt rá, ami rászakadt? Könnyes, sírós szemekkel nézett körül a roppant legelőn, s amott, mintha rég elnémult kolomp kolompolt volna. Egy futó ménes árnyéka ült fel a horizonton, vagy nap elé került felhő árnya talán?” (Szabó 1956, I. 82). Mivel a *Csempészek* esetében nemcsak a szegénység fokozódása okozza a konfliktust, hanem két ember váratlan találkozása, az ilyesfajta, a helyzet különlegességét, beláthatatlanságát, sorszerűségét megfogalmazó mondatok még nagyobb számban fordulnak elő. Amikor a férfi az épphogy megismert nő mellé, intim közelségbe kerül, úgy érzi, nem húzódhat közelebb hozzá, „[m]ert menten belezuhan egy ismeretlen, fergeteges szakadékba...” (Szabó 1956, I. 419). S amikor a vihar elől

befogadják és házaspárnak nézik őket, majd megágyaznak nekik éjszakára, a férfiban az erotikus vágy és földönfutó élete ütközik össze egy nagyszabású kozmikus képben: „Házastársa a rettent nappal és a feketén borongó éjszaka. Ismert legalább húsz embert és asszonyt, akik csempészetből élnek a faluban, de ezeknek egynek sincs házaselete. Mára teljesen kiszakadt belőle ez az érzés, egyszerűen csak ember volt, aki önmagában próbál egésznek lenni. Szinte visszaesett százezer évvel előbbre. Mikor még az őslény nem szakadt ketté különmemű egyedeire. Csók? A tengeritáblák félelmes zörgése. Minden idegét, minden erejét lekötötte a kenyérszerzés. Magának, a gyermekeinek és az asszonymnak. Hogy ők házások? Na, az hiányzik még” (Szabó 1956, I. 419). S végül az elbeszélés legerősebb, modern életérzést megfogalmazó költői képe: „De hiába minden, darabokra omlik szét a világ” (Szabó 1956, I. 422). A kapcsolatuk, illetve sorsuk lehetetlenségére utaló, a mottóban idézett mondat pedig Mihálytól hangzik el a filmben, a szerelmes éjszaka után, immár a kijózanodás nyugtázásaként. Anyica felnéz az égre. „Milyen szép az ég!” – mondja vágyakozva. Mire Mihály: „Hja, az ég. Mi tőlünk kettőnktől olyan messze van az ég.”

A *Csempészek* című elbeszélés tehát valóban ihletője lehetett egy modern filmnek, Máriássy élt is ezzel a lehetőséggel, hiszen ezt a történetet állította munkájának középpontjába, s nem véletlenül ezt a címet is adta filmjének. Az eredeti elbeszélés retorikus mondatait azonban nem használta fel (nem alkalmazott narrátort), filmjének elbeszélésmódjával viszont saját médiumában alkotta újra az elbeszélés világgépét. A filmet epizodikus szerkezetű, a véletlent sokszorosán exponáló, nyitott végű elbeszélésmódja avatja elsősorban modernizmus-hoz közel álló művé; a melodramai cselekményszál is így kerül a történetbe, s noha ebben megjelennek a műfaj hagyományosabb stíluselemei, motívumai is, meghatározóbbá válik a modernista narráció.

A film dramaturgiai felépítése rendkívül különleges: miközben egységes narratívává fűzi össze a három elbeszélést, meg is őrzi önállóságukat. A *Csempészek* története vezeti be a cselekményt, ahogy a nő és a férfi szökés közben véletlenül találkoznak, pontosabban csak a nő veszi észre a menekülésekor a csendőrt halálosan megsebesítő férfit. A véletlent a kettőjüköz kapcsolódó tárgyi motívumok is fokozzák: a férfi zsebéből kiesik a lányainak szánt baba, amit a nő talál meg, s adja saját gyermekének; míg a nő fejről kendője hull le a bokrok között, s ez mint bűnjel a nyomozás fontos elemévé válik, az asszonyra irányítva a gyanút. E véletlen és drámai (gyilkossággal végződő) találkozás után útjaik elválnak, s két cselekményszálra ágazik el a film története is: hol Anyica, hol Boldizsár életének sorába kapunk önálló epizódnyi bepillantást. Anyica gyerekét egyedül nevelő, apjával közös háztartásban lakó özvegyasszony. Apja révén kerül be a filmbe *A trombitás* drámai története. Mihály két kislányával és feleségével él, vele esik meg a *Boldizsár bajba keveredik* című elbeszélés rosszul végződő „kalandja”. A két epizód a film neorealista eleme, tematikusan és stilisztikailag egyaránt.

A melodramát a filmbe a történet utolsó harmada hozza be, méghozzá részben a műfaj klasszikus fogásait idéző módon, részben viszont, nevezetesen az elbeszélésmód révén, modernista szellemben. Ahogy az első találkozáskor a nő

látta meg a férfit, úgy a második alkalommal is ő a kezdeményező. Mihály is észreveszi a fa alatt hűsülő asszonyt, ám Anyica lesz az, aki megszólítja, hogy vele tartson az útján. A melodramai jelenés pillanata tehát kölcsönös, ám a férfi–nő vonzalmat beárnyékolja a tevékenységük miatti gyanakvás. A nő kezdeményezése mindenestre femme fatale-vonásokkal ruházza fel az egyébként feltűnően szép – e tekintetben Mihály feleségének karakterével hangsúlyosan szembeállított – asszonyt. Anyica nem csak kezdeményez, hanem többlettudása van Mihályhoz képest, hiszen tanúja volt a gyilkosságának, s ezt a megtalált babával bizonyítani is tudja. Így indulnak el tehát együtt, ám ebből még nem lenne szerelmes éjszaka. Csakhogy jön az újabb véletlen, ezúttal melodramai túlzással, legyőzhetetlen erőként: egy hatalmas vihar. Felveszi őket egy szekér, amely – újabb csodás véletlenként – egy vendégszerető román családhoz tart, ahol – ismét véletlenül – névnap ünnepség zajlik. Kint a tomboló vihar, bent zene, tánc, alkohol: minden együtt van tehát a melodramai szenvedélyek felizálásához. „Ki akarta ezt, hogy így legyen, Anyica?” – teszi fel Mihály a melodramák örök kérdését. Anyica egyszerűen válaszol: „Én nem tudom, csak azt tudom, hogy itt olyan jó –, majd lélegzetvételnél szünet után még hozzáteszi – kicsit megpihenni.” És voltaképpen ennél nem történik több, nagyobb, örökérvényűbb, avagy sorsfordító esemény azon az éjszakán. De történhet-e ennél több vagy nagyobb, legalábbis a szegény, kiszolgáltatott – de ugyanígy a modern, elidegenedett – emberrel? A szociális szegénység a melodramai helyzet által stilizálódik a létezés szegénységének, kiszolgáltatottságának tapasztalatává; pillanatnyi boldogsággá a sivár és küzdelmes hétköznapiakban.

Vendéglátóik házaspárnak nézik őket, amit – már csak konspirációs okból is – elfogadnak, így aztán természetes módon egy ágyban készítenek nekik alvóhelyet. S a „háaspár” elhálja a „nászéjszakát” – erre a film egyértelmű, de visszafogott utalást tesz. A melodramai helyzet külső körülményei mintegy klasszikusak (a felfokozott természeti erők, a mulatság, amelyen persze ők is isznak és táncolnak), belső megélése viszont modern. Másnap reggel a pár szinte rideg racionalitással nyugtázza az éjszaka történetét, pontosabban egyáltalán nem utal rá. Mindketten a családjukról beszélgetnek, és fel sem merül, hogy együtt új életet kezdhetnének. Mintha tisztában volnának és eleve leszámolnának azzal, amit a klasszikus melodramai hős még reménytelenül is remél, s ezért akár (ön)gyilkolni is képes. A másik melodramai megoldás az egyik fél lemondása, avagy a csoda lehetne. Itt egyikről sincs szó: a (természeti) csoda a kapcsolat létrejöttét segítette, míg lemondással mindketten egyformán élnek. Így válnak modern melodramai hőssé, akikből hiányoznak a túlzó karakterjegyek, sőt, azok inkább lefokozott módon jelennek meg, ily módon hiányoznak az explicit érzelmek is. Ehelyett a modern melodramai hősök rezignált és kölcsönös belátása uralja helyzetüket: nincs változás, nincs megváltás, még ennek a csodálatos találkozásnak és együtt töltött éjszakának köszönhetően sem.

A zárlat nyitottsága, a teljes egzisztenciális kiszolgáltatottság, a határhelyzet kitérítése térben és időben ezt erősíti fel. Két ember szorongva húzza meg magát a külső erőkkkel szemben. Nem össze-, hanem megbújnak. A külső, legyőzhetetlen erővel szemben tehetetlenek együtt is, külön is. Pontosabban minderről

a film már nem mond semmit. Megmenekülnek? Elfogják őket? Ha megmenekülnek, együtt maradnak, avagy különválnak útjaik, ahogy ezt egyébként a forró éjszakát követő kimért társalgásuk jelezte? Melodramai történetük modern módon, nem szélsőséges érzelmek, hanem józan belátásuk szerint ér véget. Az újabb drámai fordulat a határon ezt a létállapotot prolongálja s avatja végtelenné, a modern ember elidegenedett, sziszifuszi sorsa jegyében.

Szakirodalom

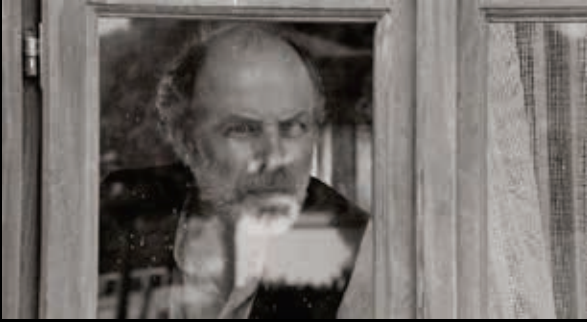
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Miklós Sággy*

Afterlife of the Holocaust in a Small Hungarian Village. The Intermedial Encounter of Ferenc Török's *1945* and Gábor T. Szántó's *Homecoming, 1945*

The topic of the Holocaust is portrayed from several perspectives in *1945*, a film by Ferenc Török (released in 2017), but the film digresses considerably from the majority of other films depicting the same topic. Firstly, it starts where other films usually end: the “liberation” of the country and the starting over after the war. Another irregular aspect is that it does not focus on Jewish victims but on non-Jewish Hungarians who, after the war, had to face up to what they had done or had not done during the Holocaust. The shift in focus is also signalled by the fact that we hardly get to know anything about the two Jewish men, the real victims, who arrive in the village where the story is set. Török's movie portrays with copious details the relationships, motivations, and inner struggles of the village's community, upset by the appearance of the Jewish men. In this respect, the movie *1945* follows quite faithfully the original short story it was adapted from, entitled *1945, Hazatérés (Homecoming, 1945, 2017)* by Gábor T. Szántó. The narrator of the short story portrays the Jews who return home to the village entirely from the external point of view of Hungarian Christians, granting access solely to the thoughts, internal comments and ideas of the latter. This is how the narrator portrays the villagers who are staring at the Israelites through the windows of the pub: “The procession [consisting of Mihály Suba and his brother-in-law sitting on the carriage and the two Jews, Herman Sámuel and his son, walking behind them] slowly approaches the pub. Those inside swarm to the window and door to follow the spectacle. ‘Like birds of death,’ whispers one of the guests, gulping and repeatedly licking his chapped lips. ‘These ones just can’t stay out of trouble,’ the conductor says, trying to satisfy the attention directed toward him [...] ‘They came back. So what? They came back.’ The barkeep shrugs. [...] The majority of those present keep silent. This isn’t so simple, they think with a tint of uncomfortable embarrassment, considering the furniture, carpets, linen and clothes that they bought at rock-bottom prices at the auction in the market square last summer. It dawns on them how it might feel if the previous owners, returning to the village, were to meet their possessions face-to-face. They’re ashamed, and this feeling

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Figures 1–2. Jews are targets of the worrying and inquisitive gazes of the villagers

angers them even as they proclaim their innocence” (Szántó 2019). What can be observed in the scene above, and in the entirety of the short story, is that while the Jews marching silently as passive targets of the worrying and inquisitive gazes, the thoughts, feelings, and fragmented dialogues of the villagers inspired by them are copiously staged by the text [Figs. 1–2].

The short story, however, shows a lot smaller part of the community than the film. The text concentrates primarily on the fears and thoughts of Mihály Suba (he transports the Jews from the train station to the village) and the notary of the village, while the film, eventually, draws the social tableau of a Hungarian micro-level community through the examples of the young communist, the militant police officer, the calculating peasant woman, the self-destructive alcoholic, and others. Despite the differences in focus, it is fairly obvious both in the film and in the short story how serious the damages caused by the lack of solidarity, trust, and lawfulness were, and also all that trickles down from these. Especially from the point of view of feeling at home, the fact that based on religion certain Hungarians disenfranchised their own compatriots, sent them towards death camps, and then took and shared their valuables indirectly backfired on those who commissioned, committed, and witnessed the acts of disenfranchisement, ghettoization, and deportation because the surviving message of their action (or lack thereof) is that in this particular community anybody can be disenfranchised, deported or executed at any moment in the name of any political or racial ideology. The tragic irony of fate is that a few years after 1944 other Hungarian communities had to suffer the existential and mental consequences of

disenfranchisement, this time in the name of communism. Péter György in his book *Apám helyett [In My Father's Stead]* describes the process detailed above as a phenomenon of being alienated in one's own homeland and characterizes it as follows: "Those who deprived others of their homes, country, or lives eventually became countryless even if they were conscious of what actually they were doing, or, more probably, even if it took years for them to grasp that by occupying spaces belonging to others, they themselves have become aliens and have turned everything alien around themselves. It isn't only the surviving victims who lost their homeland together with their safety, which has become an illusion. Those many tens of thousands people who robbed the victims unwittingly deprived themselves and their descendants of their own homeland. Being surrounded by the things of an unknown deceased person, looking out of the window of their apartment, and happening upon and using their everyday objects proved to be such a traumatic experience, subsequently such irrefutable shame, which, in turn, eventually rendered many people defenceless against communists. The guilt of those who were living in constant fear and turmoil could not be dissipated; their fear, however, presented an unprecedented chance for the Hungarian Working People's Party [Magyar Dolgozók Pártja, MDP] to play with and to abuse coldly, cruelly, and cleverly." (György 2011, 30–31)¹ Based on those human relationships which are portrayed in *1945*, it is possible to conclude that, having lost their moral integrity, the village and its leaders were not to lay any obstacles (at least as a community) in the way of communist takeover.

By diverting attention to the consequences and aftermath of the Holocaust which actually concern every Hungarian, the film by Ferenc Török grants the audience a larger space to empathize and to grasp the historical event which had such a determining effect on their lives and homeland – because, even though *Son of Saul (Saul fia, 2015)* by László Nemes Jeles gives us insight into the interiors of gas chambers, crematoriums, and the “dark heart” of death camps through an unequivocally gruelling visual experience, this intense (cinematographic) gesture drives away the spectators from what they have seen as the horrific effect of its visual universe (further intensified by the atrocities of the soundtrack) and serves a deep-seated aversion rather than sympathy or receptive identification. It is, no doubt, essential to face the operations and the internal system of the death camps, but *1945* suggests to its audience that they recognize the effects and the barely recognizable consequences of the Holocaust in their familiar surroundings.

The year 1945, the title and the time of the story of the film, lives in the collective unconscious in Hungary in iconic (as displayed in newsreels and history books), well-known pictures of bridges blasted into the Danube, bullet-riddled, war-torn apartment buildings in Budapest with people in rags meandering among the ruins and so on. Török's film, however, is set in a prosperous village, ready to start harvesting, where the traces and destruction of the recent war are not visible

1 The quotes from Péter György's book are my translations.



Figure 3. Soviet soldiers do not seem dangerous

in any form. There are no news about the pillaging and violence of the Red Army, and the Soviet soldiers visiting from time to time seem just as dangerous as if they stopped by to tease and heckle the locals from the next village [Fig. 3].

There are surely several reasons for choosing the flourishing little village instead of the damaged capital: on the one hand, the deportation of Jews was complete in the countryside, that is, tens of thousands of well-known, probably well-respected and hard-working members of the Hungarian communities vanished. On the other hand, the untouched, pristine condition of the village suggests that the trauma of the collective sin lingers in the depths of normal-looking social practices and interactions, undetectably (or behind the unscathed facades) up until the point when the two Jewish men arrive in the village by train.

While Török's *1945* depicts the society of the period with many realistic details of the era in terms of characters and setting, it also foregrounds (not necessarily real) components of genre stylization and dramaturgy. The director mentioned in several interviews that he had been looking at the characteristic traits of Western films (particularly Fred Zinnemann's *High Noon* from 1952) as models during the adaptation of Szántó's story. The fundamental conflict of the story is as simple as the ones in Western films: unknown Jewish men arrive at the train station and then march towards the cemetery along the main street, following a horse-drawn carriage packed with their luggage and boxes. The villagers, who have reason to lurk, see the mysterious men as the angels of death or as the silent dealers of justice of American Westerns [Figs. 4–5].

It is not their weapons but the sheer presence of the Jewish men that, inadvertently, casts fear over the others: those who had disenfranchised them and their accomplices. They also wound, still unwittingly, mentally, not physically, the sinful villagers. However, *1945* also digresses from the tradition of Western movies as the tension that has been built up gradually remains unresolved: there is no ultimate showdown or final confrontation.

The short story that served as the basis of the adaptation for Török's film also operates with methods of building tension and the scheme of revenge. Compared to the cinematographic adaptation, the short story focuses more on the duel between the righteous aliens and the sinful notary (probably because it lacks the social tableau staged in *1945*). What is more, *Homecoming, 1945*, the short story exposes more intensely fear from the vengeance of Jews than the film. For example, while looking at the two "aliens," István Szentes, the notary, thinks to himself, "These two want to exact revenge even for those Jews who were sent to die in the arenas in ancient Rome with their papashas [Soviet machine guns] on their side" (Szántó 2017, 27).² Or Mihály Suba, who, without any prior discussion, is asked to dig graves in the cemetery, is convinced that he is going to be shot there as payback: "He remembers that on the front some were made to dig their own graves and then were shot in them. At least these people don't have guns" (Szántó 2019). The lack of a (visible) murder weapon offers only temporary relief to Suba when he hears a terrifying sound, a "pen-knife clicks open in the hands of the younger man. Mihály Suba raises his head suddenly" (Szántó 2019). The possibility of retaliation turns into reality once more; the blade, however, does not penetrate his flesh but the argillaceous soil. Even though the prospect of vengeance looms during the entirety of the short story (as well), the final shootout does not happen, just like in the movie. As a consequence, all the anger and rage that have built up in the villagers turn not towards the aliens but towards themselves: "István Szentes stands against the counter, and under his summer jacket his shirt's wet with cold sweat. His legs are trembling and he has to sit. He pours a glass of water from the jug on the table. Having prepared for a confrontation, he suppressed his nervousness, his doubts, but now all the tension caused by the arrival of the newcomers, and the waiting, the tension that he finally didn't have to turn against them, turns against himself" (Szántó 2019). On the larger social horizon of the film, all the high-flying tempers that were expected to be turned against the (much awaited) aggression of the outward enemy had to be turned inwards, or, in other words, they fall back on the villagers [Fig. 6].

Some signs of this are the facts that: the bride of the notary's son sets fire to the chemist's shop, the origin of the sin (a place stolen from Jews); Kustár, the alcoholic, hangs himself; the villagers turn their back on the notary – for a second at least (as nobody moves when he invites them to participate in putting out the fire); Árpád, the notary's son escapes from the village for good.

There is no such payback in the short story even though the son of the notary also leaves the village behind. The question arises, of course, whether it is possible at all for Árpád, having escaped the web of lies, to find a community in Hungary that does not have to face such traumas and silenced past events. Obviously, the partial atonement in the film does not save the village or acquit the villagers of their sins. The notary and his assistants (the police officer and

2 My translation; since this part is strangely missing from the English translation.



Figures 4–5. Two mysterious men as the silent dealers of justice of American Westerns

the priest) remain in power and keep on taking care of the issues of the community so they can set out towards a 21st-century Hungary a bit ruffled maybe, but basically safe and sound.

In his book mentioned above, Péter György asks: “When did they [those Hungarians who welcomed deportations and who exploited them] understand, or have they ever understood that their aryanized hometown and county would never be the same as it used to be?” Then, as an answer to his own question, he continues, “As if we still didn’t understand today what irreparable damages have been inflicted on the mentality of the Hungarian population and on the search for identity by the series and horrendous sets of inadmissible experiences and unspeakable memories. How many types of silence and muteness have been built into the everyday life of the society and have been influencing those minute details that determine forms of coexistence” (György 2011, 28–29). A fundamental virtue of both the film and the short story is that they can prompt the comprehension and processing of the collective trauma of the Holocaust in such a way that it is depicted as an organic part of Hungarian history. Or, in other words, the film and the short story portrays the everyday, banal consequences of deportations and fratricide in terms of the history of mentalities. They do not blame Germans or the Axis Powers and do not paint the monstrosity of the Holocaust as the rampage of the humanly unfathomable universal evil but as a process which was engendered by the choices of the inhabitants of a quiet little village in a particular situation. Even though one cannot forget that the motivations and ambitions of the inhabitants are not independent of the overall



Figure 6. István Szentes, the village notary looks at the Jews with fear from the windows.

tendencies of Hungarian history, from the perspective of the film and the short story the former are in focus because they expand the conception of victim indirectly to Hungarians who assisted in fratricide. Those who turned away from it and those who wanted to act against it are victims in the story and the film, both holding a mirror to all those behaviours that survived the Holocaust and the subsequent decades of dictatorship.

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1. kép. *Koccanás* – a helyszín. Pest. A város közepe



2. kép. *Gesztusokba merevedve* (Anger Zsolt, Thuróczy Szabolcs, Ónodi Eszter)

Varga Balázs*

Moccanatlanul. Török Ferenc *Koccanás* című filmjéről

Film és intermedialitás kapcsolatával foglalkozó könyvének bevezetőjében Pethő Ágnes (2011) azt mondja, hogy struktúrák helyett a kapcsolódásokra és a viszonyokra érdemes figyelni. Hogyan értsük ezt? Például úgy, hogy azt nézzük meg közelebbről, mi történik a köztes terekben és kontaktzónákban. Kapcsolatokat és relációkat keresünk, variációkat és módosulásokat követünk nyomon. A film (poszt)medialitásának változatos változatait elemezzük. Ez a köztesség és sokféleség az intermedialis vizsgálódások egyik legjobb és legizgalmasabb kihívása. Film, szenvedély, metamorfózis és határtalanság: ami a filmre irányul, az túlmutat a filmen. Nem véletlen, hogy a filmes intermedialitással kapcsolatban gyakran kerülnek elő a térbeliségre, térképzetekre utaló metaforák: kinyúlás, megnyúlás („expanded cinema”), határátlépés.

Keresztkapcsolatok kereszteződéseiben kíván forgolódni ez a szöveg is, miközben a fókuszát igyekszik elég szűkre venni. Arra vagyok kíváncsi, hogy egy szokatlan megoldásokkal dolgozó film, Török Ferenc *Koccanás* című 2009-es, televíziós Spiró-adaptációja hogyan olvasható a kimerevített mozgás és idő mozgóképbe foglalásának különböző kontextusai, irányai és hagyományai felől.

A *Koccanás* leginkább feltűnő hatás eszköze a szereplők mozdulatlansága, hiszen a történet szereplőit, egy tömeges karambol elszenvedőit mindvégig élőképekbe merevedve látjuk. Senki sem mozog, még csak meg sem moccan. A szereplők mindvégig mozdulatlanok, a kamera azonban folyton mozog: előre- és hátrakocsizások keretezik újra a teret, lassabb, rövidebb és hosszabb svenkek pásztázzák az élőképeket, mutatják közről a gesztusokat, az arcokat vagy épp a különböző szituációkba helyezkedő, szoborszerűen mozdulatlan szereplőket. Az alaphelyzet végtelenül egyszerű: Pest kellős közepén egy füledt nyári napon tömeges koccanás történik. Rengeteg autó szalad egymásba, és lesz a baleset miatt a helyzet foglya. A film a kocsijukból kipattanó emberek közötti interakciók sorozata. Ez a kiindulópont magában hordja az erős érzelmi töltetet: a koccanás és az elakadás miatt mindenki frusztrált, ideges, sietne és siettetne, el van foglalva a maga bajával, és szívesen a másokra, másokra tolná a felelősséget.

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A kimerevített pillanatok tehát egy feszült, konfliktusos alaphelyzetből következnek. A szereplők jellemzően egy-egy erős gesztus karikatúraszerűen kiemelt mozzanataiba merevednek. Mondhatjuk azt is, hogy „pózolnak”, vagy még inkább „pause”-olnak, akárha a pillanatmegállítást (*pause*) gombot valamilyen különös érzéssel vagy érzékenységgel megáldott szupernéző mozgatná, aki minden egyes jelenetből és interakcióból kikapkodná a legjellemzőbb, mert érzelmeket-dinamikát magába sűrítő és plasztikus momentumokat. Másfelől érthetjük úgy is mindezt, mint egy sorozatnyi elkapott, véletlenszerű pillanatfelvételt, és akkor épphogy nem a poentírozást, a gesztusokra irányuló szelektív figyelmet hangsúlyozzuk, hanem azt, hogy szinte bármilyen (érzelmileg túlfűtött) hétköznapi szituációból kiszedegethetünk hasonlóan beszédes gesztusokat és pillanatképeket.

Mégsem állítható, hogy minden mozdulatlan vagy moccanatlan a filmben, hiszen a szél olykor meglibbenti a szereplők ruháját, a kocsik kipufogója füstöt pöfékel fel, és egy-két alkalommal a szereplők is mozgásban vannak, ugyanis dollykocsin haladnak a kamera felé. Továbbá, ahogy már szó volt róla, már csak azért sem nevezhető statikusnak a *Koccanás*, mert a kameramozgás folyamatosan újrakeretezi a látványt, más-más oldalról mutatja be a szereplőket. Ennek azonban korántsem pusztán dinamizáló szerepe van, és nem is csak a körbejárás, az új oldalról való megmutatás (a térteremtés és a *mise-en-scène*), illetve a részletek kiemelésének (a közeljutásnak) eszköze. A kamera szinte végig mozog, ám a svenkeket, daruzásokat, előre és hátra mozgásokat folyamatosan éles vágások tagolják. Ettől egyfelől még mozgalmasabb a látvány (vizuálisan érdekesebb, leköti a nézői figyelmet), másfelől a pásztázó kamera mozgását megszakító éles vágások azért is alapvetőek, mert részben ezek a váltópontok (valamint az egyes szereplőkről elmozduló kamera nézőpontváltásai) teremtik meg a lehetőséget arra, hogy akár ugyanazon dialóguson belül a szereplők testtartást, gesztust váltsanak, módosítsanak, elmozduljanak. Ami megint csak a film dinamikusságát szolgálja.

Az eredeti helyszínen leforgatott film a kellékeket, tárgyakat, autókat, ruhákat, egyszóval a közeget tekintve a naturalisztikusság és a hétköznapiság hatására tör, a fekete-fehér színhasználat azonban erőteljes stilizációs, elvonatkoztató gesztus. Akusztikus hatásait és a dialógusokat tekintve egyfelől végig az élőképekbe sűrített szituációknak megfelelő (azokkal szinkron, diegetikus) párbeszédet hallunk, aminek azonban a szereplők mozdulatlansága okán mégis elidegenítő-ironikus-stilizált jellege lesz (mintha hangjátékként elevenedne meg a Spiró-dráma szövege). Ugyanakkor a kísérezene, és ami még fontosabb, az ironikus hatást erősítő hangeffektek (dudálás, háttérzajok és zörejek) poentírozzák még tovább a szituációkat. Azaz a hang megformáltságról is elmondható, hogy van egy naturalisztikus rétege (dialógusok, szövegmondás), amelyet ellenpontos, idézőjelek közé helyez a hangeffektek karikatúrisztikussága, továbbá az a tény, hogy ezáltal a hangkulissza már önmagában sem realisztikus, hanem játékos-stilizált karakterű lesz.

A *Koccanás* ezen sajátosságait a következőkben három különböző irányból fogom megközelíteni. Mindhárom a mozgás és a mozdulatlanság, a kimerevített pillanat mozgóképi megmutatásának valamilyen változatát képviseli. A három irány: az élőképszerű megjelenítés filmes hagyománya, a kortárs látványfilmek, reklámok és számítógépes játékok vizuális effektjeinek technikája, illetve az állóképek filmbe illesztésének kérdése. Élőkép, megállított pillanat, állókép: mozgás és mozdulatlanság dinamikájának, kölcsönkapcsolatának három variációja. Mindegyik jelenthet belépési pontot a *Koccanás* elemzésébe, ám Török filmje mindegyiktől különbözik valamiképp. Elemzésemben ezeket az eltéréseket és elmozdulásokat fogom áttekinteni. Mozgást és mozdulatlanságot a kortárs posztmédia korban amúgy is jellemzően nem ellentétpárként, hanem egymás relációjában szokás elemezni. Ebben a relációban és a fent jelzett kontextusokban próbálom elhelyezni Török Ferenc filmjét.

Az élőképek és tablószerű beállítások sokszálú filmtörténeti hagyománya a kortárs filmben igen eleven, a kortárs közép-kelet-európai és magyar filmben pedig különösen emlékezetes példákkal van jelen. A *torinói lóban* (Tarr Béla, 2011) megidézett halott Krisztus-ábrázolások, a *Taxidermia* (Pálfi György, 2006) zárószekvenciájának élőképbe merevedett múzeumi bemutatója, a *Bibliothèque Pascal* (Hajdu Szabolcs, 2010) (rém)álomszerű tablói – csak néhány az elmúlt években részletesen és gazdagon elemzett, táblóbeállításokkal dolgozó kortárs magyar filmek közül. Ezen aspektusok értelmezései (Pethő 2014, Király 2015, Pieldner 2016) többnyire az álló- és mozgóképek közötti kontraszt és váltás kérdésére, a lassúság és lassítás kontextusaira, a narratívát megállító, lelassító vagy abba valamilyen speciális módon beépülő, beékelődő élőképbe, a *tableau vivant* beállítások vagy szekvenciák érzéki, figuratív működésére, illetve a mozgásba hozott kulturális kódokra (mint a Kelet–Nyugat kapcsolatrendszer dinamikája) hívják fel a figyelmet. A képzőművészeti és magaskulturális vonatkozások, a piktorialitás esztétizáló megoldásai, az absztrakció és az érzékiség összekapcsolódása nagyon sűrű és intenzív rendszerré állnak össze az elemzett filmekben. A *Koccanás* azonban más utat és eltérő logikát követ. Török filmjében nem a mitikus történeti és kulturális regiszterek, hanem a profán hétköznapi hangok és gesztusok szólalnak meg. Amíg az élőképszerű beállításokkal dolgozó kortárs magyar és közép-kelet-európai filmek jellemzően a magaskultúra és a kontemplatív, lassú filmes esztétika kontextusaiban formálódnak, a *Koccanás* kimerevített pillanatai a mondén és hétköznapi kelet-európai valóságokat tolják előtérbe. Az MTK-stadion körüli utcakép semmilyen magasművészeti referenciával nem kíván élni. Az egymásra öklüket rázó autósok gesztusai nem klasszikus festményeket idéznek, hanem legfeljebb saját élményeinket a városi közlekedés dzsungelharcából. A fekete-fehér képek sem artistikusak, hanem nyersen hétköznapiak. A melankólia alakzatainak helyét a frusztráció figurációi és frusztrált figurák foglalják el. A kimerevített jeleneteket csak fragmentumokban, rövid szekvenciákban és folyamatosan változó képkivágatban látjuk. Nincsenek lassú és bonyolult kameramozgások. A nézői élményt épp a folyamatosan mozgó kamera mozgásának megszakítása, a vágás ugrópontjaival (a mozgás

folyamatosságát nem megtörő vágásokkal) összekapcsolt szekvenciák mozaikossága jellemzi. A folyamatos beszéd, nyüzsgés és zajongás szintén azt a benyomást erősíti, hogy itt valamilyen furcsa és feszült akció zajlik. Nincs idő a pillanatba való belefeledkezésbe. Ha a fent említett kortárs kelet-európai filmek gyakran a visszatérés alakzatát jelenítik meg, ahogy Pethő Ágnes (2014) érvel, úgy a *Koccanás* a jelenben-lét, a felzaklatott jelen idő frusztrációit viszi színre sajátos profán élőképeiben.

A második irányt a kortárs látványfilmek, reklámok és számítógépes játékok vizuális effektjei, a megállított pillanat populáris digitális változatai jelentik. Ez kétségkívül nem a piktorializmus és a magaskulturális referenciák univerzuma, hanem a látványos akciók és trükkök világa. Robbanékonyosság, dinamizmus, sebesség – és olykor a tér és idő szabályainak felfüggesztése. Ha Török filmjét relációk és effektusok hálójában akarjuk elhelyezni, itt egészen másféle variációban jöhet be a képbe a mozgás és mozdulatlanság kérdése, a kimerevítés és megállítás problémája. Vegyük példának a *bullet-time* effektust, amely a tér- és idődimenziók megcsavarására épít. *Mátrix* és *Koccanás*? Ég és föld. Azért közelítsünk mégis. Van ugyanis közös pont, érintkezési felület, mégpedig az idő/mozgás lelassítása, kimerevítése és a tárgyak, szereplők körbejárásával szereshető sajátos, nem sztenderd tér-idő tapasztalat élménye. A különbségek azonban természetesen egyértelműek. A *Koccanás* fanyar humorú fekete-fehér esztétikája óriási távolságban áll a *bullet-time* olyan akciódús és bombasztikus példától, mint a Gondry-féle Smirnoff vodka-reklám még az 1990-es évekből vagy a Wachowski-testvérek emblemikus filmje az ezredfordulóról. Az eltérések technikai szempontból is számottevőek, ezért is érdemes számot vetni azzal, hogy egy sok aspektusában hasonló effekt (a kimerevített szereplő körül pástázó kamera) miként jelenik meg a különböző esetekben.

A *Koccanás*, mint szó volt róla, egyszerű, tulajdonképpen analóg megoldásra épít: a beállított jelenetben a szereplők belemerevednek egy adott gesztusba, és csak a kamera mozog körülöttük. A *bullet-time* effektus pedig egy digitális vizuális trükk, amely a tér-idő komplexum dinamikájának megcsavarásával játszik. A középpontban általában egy akciójelenet van, gyakran levegőben (ugrásban) kimerevített szereplővel vagy valamilyen mozgásban lévő tárggyal (legyen az lövedék vagy vodkásüveg). A felvétel során (green boxban, műteremben és nem *plein air* környezetben) a szereplő körül félkörívben vagy akár 360 fokban apró digitális kamerák helyezkednek el. A mozgás adott fázisát ezen kamerák mindegyike rögzíti, a digitálisan előállított képsorban pedig az egymást követő kamerák pillanatképei kapcsolódnak össze, ebből áll össze egy szimulált (kamera)mozgás képe. A *bullet-time* tehát a kimerevített pillanat megragadására törekszik, és mintegy az idő felfüggesztésével (az adott időpillanat képét térben megjelenítve) teszi „körüljárhatóvá” az adott pillanatot. A szekvencia folyamatos, a kameramozgás virtuális, tehát a néző számára ugyan „telik az idő,” a megjelenített időtartam lényegében az idő tériesítése, térbe fordítása. Eivind Røssaak ezt így fogalmazta meg: „A trükk lényege a megdermedt idő képeinek egymás utáni, filmszerű megmutatása. A tér és az idő mintha helyet cserélne. Az idő egy szeletét térben kiterjesztjük,

a teret (egy testet) pedig időben vizsgáljuk meg. Az idő megnyílik” (2006, 324 – saját fordítás).

Mozgás és mozdulatlanság, gyorsaság és a mozgás megállítása, tér és idő váltódnak így és itt egymásba. Az a tény, hogy általában lebegő, levitáló szereplők vagy tárgyak vannak az akció középpontjában, csak tovább erősíti az effekt hatását, és azt sejteti, hogy a fizikai valóság törvényeinek felfüggesztésével szembeesünk. A gravitáció és a tér-idő komplexitást megcsavaró *bullet-time* digitális trükkje tehát épp ellentétes a *Koccanás* földre gyökerezett szereplőinek jeleneteivel. Török filmjében az (idő)tartam megszakítatlanságáért alapvetően a dialógusok felelnek, azaz a film hangzó, akusztikus dimenziója, illetve a kameramozgások és a vágások ritmikája. Nem az idő, nem a pillanat merevedik ki, hanem „csak” a szereplők, és ez adja az effekt irrealitását. Ahogy a *bullet-time* effektus szuperlátványossága az ezt használó filmek, főképp a *Matrix* trendteremtő és korát megelőző imázsát erősítették, úgy a *Koccanás*ban a fekete-fehér képi világ és a bemerevedett pillanatok egyfajta ismerős ismeretlenséget sugároznak.

A harmadik lehetséges belépési pont az állóképekkel dolgozó filmek hagyománya. Láttuk, hogy az élőképek kortárs közép-kelet-európai (lassú) filmes variációitól többek között a naturalizmusa és a vizuális feldolgozásmódja (a lassú filmes folyamatos kompozíciók és hosszú beállítás helyett fragmentált szerkezet) miatt is különbözik a *Koccanás*. Török filmjében a kimerített szituációt és szereplőt körüljáró kamera azonban a *bullet-time* digitális effektjével is csak laza érintkezésben lehet. Nézzük akkor meg, hogy milyen egyéb variációs lehetőségei lehetnek a statikusságnak és a mobilitásnak? Állókép és mozgókép kombinációja mindenképp idetartozik. A fotók filmbe illesztésének és használatának végtelenül gazdag és szerteágazó területét azért egyrészt leszűkíteném a kizárólag állóképekre építő filmek csoportjára [*still image films*], és ennek kapcsán érintem röviden a mozgás és az időbeliség kérdését.

Jóllehet a filmbe illesztett fotók kapcsán (ahogy a *tableau vivant* esetében) is gyakran előkerül az az állítás, hogy ezek a képek megakasztyák vagy akár felfüggesztik a film (vagy a narratíva) áramlását (Bellour 1987, 6; Peucker 2007, 66), a filmekben szereplő fotók gyakran nem statikusak – és ez alatt nem azt értem, hogy egy szereplő mozgatja őket. A fotót vagy bármilyen állóképet pásztázó kamera mozgással és dinamikával ruházza fel az adott szekvenciát. Ez már akkor is hangsúlyos gesztus, ha pusztán egyetlen, hosszan kitarított snittben látjuk az adott fotót, és a kamera lassú közelítéssel emel ki és keretez át bizonyos részleteket. A kizárólag állóképekből építkező filmek esetében pedig, ha ilyen eszközzel élnek, még lényegesebb funkcióval és nagyobb hangsúllyal bír ez a megoldás. Ken Burns egész történelmi dokumentumfilmes életműve például a részben a kamera pásztázó, közelítő mozgásával és a vágás, keretezés ritmikájával mozgásba hozott, animált és életre keltett fotókra és dokumentumokra épül. „Burns kétségkívül a mozdulatlan fényképezés [*motionless photography*] mai mestere. Ez egyszerre a filmjei témája, módszere és jelentése” – írta John C. Tibbets (1996, 121) Burns első nagy dokumentumfilmjei kapcsán, de



3. kép. Moccsanatlanul (Ónodi Eszter, Anger Zsolt)

még azelőtt, hogy a digitális technika révén bármilyen átlagos számítógép-felhasználó számára elérhető funkció lett volna a „Ken Burns effect”, azaz a fotók virtuális kamerával pásztázása és az előre-hátra zoomolás bennük. Ez a fajta kiemelés és pásztázás, a fotók animálása vagy mozgásba hozása hatásában hasonlít a *Koccsanás* néhány képsorára, még akkor is, ha Török filmjében egészen más technikáról és szituációról van szó. De például a *Koccsanás* elején, amikor az utcán a karambol után összeecsúszott, egymásra torlódva álló autókön és mozdulatlan sofőrjeiken pásztázunk, egy felületes pillantás alapján akár azt is hihetnénk (vagy úgy is láthatnánk), hogy egy fotót mustrál lassú mozgással a kamera. Máskor, a svenkkel és egyéb térbeli (3D) mozgással dolgozó képsoroknál már nem érvényes ez: ott már érezzük, hogy térben haladunk előre-hátra oldalazva vagy kanyarodva. Miközben tehát világos, hogy a *Koccsanás* semmilyen szinten és semmilyen értelemben nem fotófilm, a moccsanatlanná merevedett szereplők és a film vizuális eszköztára mégis izgalmas, sajátos prizmatiként mutatja meg állókép, mozgás és film szimbiotikus viszonyát.

Ahogy az állókép és a mozgás sem egymást kizáró fogalmak, úgy a fotográfia, az állókép és az idő kapcsolata is sokkal összetettebb annál, hogy könnyedén állítsuk: a fotográfia, lévén nem időbeli művészet, kevésbé érdemleges vonatkozásokkal bír az idő, időbeliség és tartam kérdésében. A *Koccsanás* kapcsán azonban itt és most csak annyi az érdekes, hogy akár egy kizárólag állóképekből építkező film is lényegi módon veti fel egyrészt az időtartam (milyen hosszan mutatunk/látunk egy „kitartott” állóképet), másfelől a képváltások, vágások és a szekvencialitás problémáját. Milyen képeket látunk? Milyen plánokat, milyen beállításokat, milyen képkivágatban? És hogyan következnek ezek egymásra? A bevezetőben már szó volt arról, hogy Török filmjében a megállított pillanatok és pózok egyszerre jellegzetesek és véletlenszerűek. Hogyan működnek ezek a kiemelt pillanatok? Miért épp ezeket látjuk? Ezen a ponton kapcsolhatjuk be a modern film egyik emlékezetes alkotását, Chris Marker 1962-es filmjét, *A kifutópályát* (*La Jetée*). Mégpedig elsősorban azért,

mert állóképek sorozataként megvalósuló álomszerű, hallucinatórikus világában a képváltások ritmikája nemcsak a modern filmre oly jellemző tér- és időkristályos mozaikszervezetként mutatja magát, hanem a klasszikus elbeszélés, térszerkesztés és vágás rendszerét is felidézi. Chris Markerről szóló könyvében Catherine Lupton (2004) arról ír, hogy *A kifutópályát*, annak ellenére, hogy a film alapját egy Pentax típusú fényképezőgéppel készített fotók adják, félrevezető lehet egyszerű fotófilmnek nevezni. Lupton szerint ugyanis egyfelől a fix képek tartama (milyen hosszan látjuk azokat), illetve a képváltások hagyományos elbeszélést és snittelést idéző logikája (megalapozó beállítás, nézésirányhoz illeszkedő vágások, beállítás-ellenbeállítás párok) nagymértékben közrejátszik a film különleges atmoszférájának megteremtésében.

Mozgás-kép című kötete elején Gilles Deleuze Bergson-kommentárjaiban fejti ki azt az állítását, hogy a film olyan rendszer, amely a folyamatosság érzetét egyenlő távolságú pillanatok reprodukálásával kelti (Deleuze 2001). A film tehát, még ha úgy is látszik, nem kitüntetett pillanatokból táplálkozik. A *Koccanás* furcsa gesztusokba és testtartásokba merevedő szereplői figyelemre méltó pillanatokot szakítanak ki az időből és a mozgás folyamatosságából, de hát maguk az alkotók sem tudják és nem is akarják leplezni, hogy ez egy film. A kamera mozog, a benzingöz felfelé száll, olykor ajtók is becsapódnak. A kimerevített gesztusok pedig akár véletlenszerűek is lehetnek.

Ez a rövid esszé korántsem azt kívánta bizonyítani, hogy a *Koccanás* valamilyen unikális, formabontó és formateremtő alkotás lenne. Lehetne persze annak nevezni, de épp elég, ha szokatlan és egyszerűségében kihívó filmnek mondjuk. Az intermedialitás köztes terei és relációi pedig azért lehettek érdekesek, hogy a film néhány rendhagyó formai és stílári megoldását kontextusba helyezték. Amúgy tudjuk, olykor a hétköznapok rutinjának elhagyása, a megszokott cselekedetekből való kilépés vagy kiesés igen hasznos tud lenni. Vagy frusztráló. Mint egy tömeges koccanás utáni tehetetlen és mozdulatlan várakozás. Megállás. Egy furcsa szünet, felfüggesztett pillanat, amelyben akár az öntelt és tehetős HR-menedzser és a bizonytalan, kicsit suta, sokdiplomás bölcsész is hangot talál egymással. Időlegesen? Időn kívül? Valami furcsa, köztes tér-időben?

Kivételes pillanat lehet.

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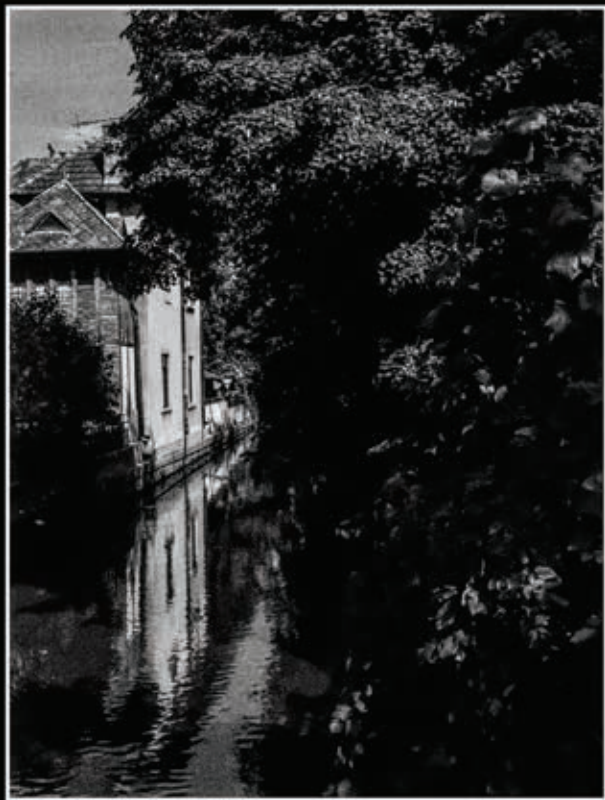
Mira Marincaș*
Timeless Travels

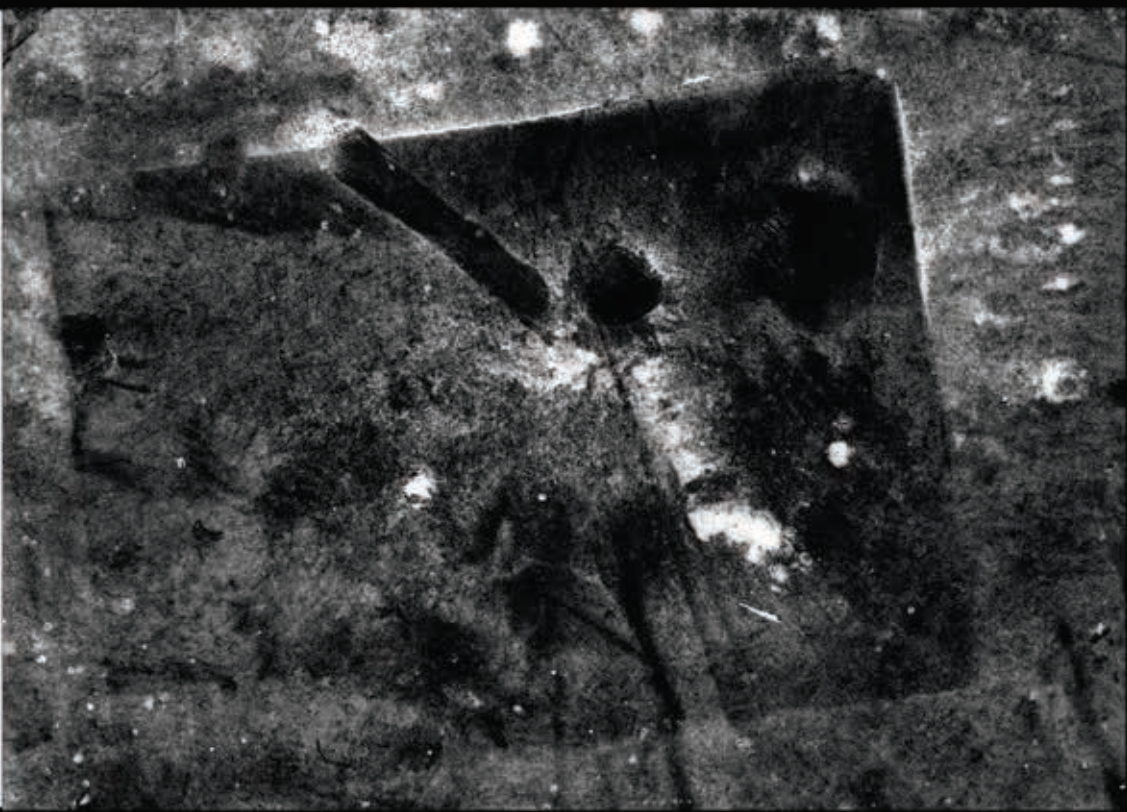


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EMBODIED VISIONS
MEGTESTESÜLT VÍZIÓK

László Tarnay*

A Critique of Intermediality: On Contemporary Polish Cinema

1. Liminality and Betweenness in Ontology

The idea of intermediality, especially the use of tableau, as a particular form of what is called the cinema of sensation, presupposes that things are constellations, *assemblages* which are not more or less real than their constituents. Material ecocriticism, a fairly new discipline, explains how things come together to form assemblages. “Things are a kind of liminal space made of other things. Art happens in and as this liminal space, this *between*, which is just what a thing is. The artwork acts as a gathering point, a kind of lens that focuses the attunements between beings. The artwork is a *thing*, a meeting place of other beings. What is called *present* is not a universal container or an atomic point. *Present* and *presence* are simply the uneasy, shifting relative motion between different beings” (Morton 2014, 271–272). In-betweenness stands for another crucial term, “nothingness,” which does not mean something like an Ur chaos, an origin of things but that things should not be posited as such, or reified as in an ontological theory: “Forest clearings, ecosystems, and biomes are all similar – they are made of Nothingness. This does not mean that there are no such things as environments. It means that there are, only that phenomena that now affect all life-forms on Earth quite directly – and at present fatally – are not susceptible to being easily posited as constantly present, or as reducible, in ways that the metaphysics of presence has demanded” (Morton 2014, 278). Nothingness *is* something, but it always eludes us.

This ontological argument borrowed from material ecocriticism is congruent with the idea that “the *tableau vivant* emerges as a ‘container’ that may effectively hold and fold together the artificiality of being composed and framed as a self-enclosed ‘image’ with the sensuous experience of the vibrancy of ‘life,’ manifest in contingency, corporeality, texture and gesture” (Pethő 2015a, 169). In ontological terms, Life and Art are intertwined to the extent that they are not independently identifiable but form an ensemble vibrantly living together in a common space. Quoting Chévrier, she contends that the “tableau implies not simply a way of seeing but a way of being in the world, that the *tableau* always presents more than it represents” (Pethő 2015b, 104). In other words, the tab-

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leau can operate below the level of reflexivity, actually as an encouragement to participate, to *be*, to share.

Furthermore, Pethő associates a series of opposites with the two poles of aesthetic experience: the self-enclosed image as Art and the sensuousness of life. Still image and cinematic movement, non-narrativity and narrativity, the immobility of the pose and its dissolution into slow movement, a visibly subjective and surreal universe of enigmatic pictures and gestural imprints of a long lost lifestyle – they all reproduce the same problematic of Art and Life.

Paradoxically, the contrast, or rather the *gap*, between Art and Life is irreducible and dissoluble at the same time. When Pethő describes the filmic space in the post-cinematic experimental works of Majewksi, Bartas, and Podolchak as a world “in which house, family, art, perception and memory, present and past become parts of the same organic rhizomatic network” (Pethő 2015a, 175), she comes very close to Timothy Morton’s ecocritical explanation about the *Twilight Epiphany* built by James Turrell, a large wafer-thin square of metal with a square hole in it resting on top of a pyramid covered in grass, reminiscent of Aztec and ancient British and Egyptian burial sites. The rhizomatic network of the house in the experimental films can be aligned with the nothingness of the installation. Recall the liminal space, the *betweenness* where Art happens. “In the structure of the house, we have a sensuous, liminal space, merging the outside with the inside, the natural with the artificial” (Pethő 2015a, 176); “*Twilight Epiphany* [...] is made of twilight, that evanescent time at which things seem to change yet remain the same, a time of shadings and deceptions” (Morton 2014, 278).

Now compare the following two descriptions: concerning the installation, “[t]here is a deliberate confusion of hierarchies of foreground and background here: a square of sky colour on a large pale background, or a square of pale on a gigantic sky background” (Morton 2014, 270). Pethő at this point cites Beugnet, who talks about the dissolution of the figurative into a “formless” haptic image: “one way or another, the cinema of sensation is always drawn towards the formless (*l’informe*): where background and foreground merge, and the subjective body appears to melt into matter” (Beugnet 2007, 65 – quoted in Pethő 2015a, 177).

The novelty that Pethő introduces into this picture of the vagueness and hapticity of the filmic image is that it is not only that “[i]mages are saturated with the sensation of forms, colours, and sounds” (Pethő 2015a, 176) creating a unique combination of sensuousness, but there is an opposite force that turns “this process of disfiguration around, back to the territory of figurativity and pictorial composition” and “an obsessively repeated reconstruction of the [figurative] image” (Pethő 2015a, 177, 179). There is a vibration, or modulation, even a “loop” between the formless and the form when “bodies become images within a *tableau vivant*, just as much as images become bodies, or the cinematic characteristics of painting in such an image are also made visible at the same time as cinema acquires the quality of painting” (Pethő 2015a, 181).

There is, however, an important difference between the filmic space captured in the “loop” of (eternal) transformation and the ontological space. While the former can be seen as an assemblage of things, artworks, and other objects like

the forests, clearings or ecosystems are not like that. What we are warned to do by an ecological approach is precisely *not* to turn the “nothingness” of the world of things into an assemblage of things. Nothingness in this context stands for the Deleuzian “formless” (*l'informe*) that Pethő's argument relies on.

Obviously, such criticism assumes that there is a shift from what Deleuze calls the immanence of the world to the cognitive process of perception when we start to distinguish between elements, parts and wholes, etc. Note that the figure-ground distinction is probably a hardwired human perceptual trait, a Gestalt, the loss of which seriously jeopardizes survival. No wonder that the “confusing” aspect of haptic vision is often understood as a threat or blow to, or even the death of, a unified subjectivity. If there is a lack of things to see, as Laura Marks (2000) summarizes haptic vision, the viewing subject seems to be in danger. If the haptic threatens with the death of the subject, the optic in contrast reassembles the figurative and redeems the subject in its perceptual capacity.

However, as Martine Beugnet quotes Laura Marks: “[w]e need not respond with dread to cinema's threat/promise to dissipate, or even wrench away, our unified subjectivities. A tactile visuality may be shattering, but it is not necessarily so” (Marks 2000, 151 – quoted by Beugnet 2007, 70). But an amalgam of Deleuzian immanence and Merleau-Ponty's idea of flesh may help at this point. “The concept of *flesh* is precisely what allows [...] a renewed notion of subjectivity, one which introduces *alterity* into the very definition of ‘selfsameness’” (del Río 1996, 103–104). The subject is not dead but splits within the Self to receive the Other. To paraphrase it in Pethő's terminology, the opposition or vibration of Art and Life is not simply reflected in *tableaux vivants*, that is, the filmic space; the vibration is *lived* by the embodied viewer. To paraphrase Sobchack, what is seen reverberates in the seer. It means that it is not the particular painting that is perceived *within* the moving image for it transmutes in the filmic space embodied by the film and becomes part of the film's unique body, which would reverberate in the viewer's body. The painted image of Christ in *Corpus Christi* to be analysed below is more than a metaphor: it *becomes* an embedded form of life within the filmic space. The haptic/optic modulation is more than an aesthetic phenomenon. Every film produces an *affect* in the viewer that is immediate and not mediated by the narrative. It is the affect that can impregnate the subject with alterity. It can also be equated with a “felt sense of motility” that expresses a “motor meaning” as a pre-reflective response and dialogue with the physiognomic structure of the things that surround us and that we use. The body in its movements is expressing meaning: “The body is essentially an expressive space” (Mazis 2016, 191). It is this pre-reflective meaning that grounds any reflective and reflexive ones.

To sum up: my contention is that the modulation of form and the formless, the optic and the haptic, or Art and Life is not in intermediality but in the immanence of *ethical becoming*, when the point is not that we can tell a previously identified medium such as painting from the still or moving image; for they do not form an “assemblage” but possess a unique being. This uniqueness entails that film space and real space are both embedded in the Flesh, and, to use another term from Merleau-Ponty, they constitute a chiasmatic relationship (Merleau-Ponty

1968, 131–132; Mazis 2016, 47). Like the two hands touching each other, they are reversible, not paradoxically self-referring or forming a loop “ad infinitum.” Art and Life *communicate* in and through the embodied viewer, affecting him or her “to creatively construct correspondences” (Okely 1994, 36) between his or her emplaced experiences *here* and others’ experiences *there* embodied by the film.

In the second part of the paper, I would try to show how the medium of painting amalgamates with the moving image and becomes the image through engulfing the filmic space. I argue that the three contemporary Polish films re-contextualize intermediality, trans-mediality, the interpenetration or transformation of media in terms of the ethical import of the filmic space. The first one enacts Hans Holbein’s *Dead Christ*. The second one is appropriately titled as *Corpus Christi* and frames a particular Corpus Christi painting as part of its pro-filmic material. The last one uses the tableau most creatively in that it does not echo or mimic any particular painting but frames its characters in a way that is reminiscent of both painting and photography. I contend that the intermedial elements cannot, and probably should not, be singled out as independent constituents of other media. The painting as another medium does not pre-exist the film and is not necessarily identifiable *within* it. I will take the films one by one and show that the viewing experience in itself does not require the intermedial knowledge or reflexivity that, say, a Godard movie most probably does. What the films do require is a sensitivity to the sensory mode of intermediality.

2. Contemporary Polish “Queer” Cinema

Let me begin the short trip through contemporary Polish cinema with Małgorzata Szumowska’s *In the Name of...* (*W imię...*, 2013), which tells the story of a homosexual priest, Adam, who works in a rural village in Poland assuming a couple of religious and social functions. Besides regularly holding masses, he deals with teenagers with serious behavioural problems in a juvenile centre. The children are a heterogeneous group with mentally handicapped members, they are bawdy and noisy, play soccer, smoke, and even use dope. Adam is an all-round man who knows how to help someone in an epileptic seizure, use a cement mixer, hold order in the lunchroom, or befriend the toughest guys, Grovy and Adrian. He also rejects the advances of a young woman and seems to accept his celibacy through jogging, drinking, and masturbation. At least until a young guy, Lukasz, appears in the youth centre. He is everything Adrian is not. After the first exchange of looks through glass windows, we see Adam teach Lukasz how to swim. Our hunch that they start to like each other is proven. The film’s crucial scene is in the cornfield where Lukasz disappears while Adam starts chasing him. They both emit sounds like bird calls which reverberate through the corn-stalks. It is the first moment that the body, flesh is associated with spiritual life. It recalls Adam’s first sermon when he epitomizes a spot of innocence in every man’s soul, “a spot of nothingness which belongs to God.” The innocence of flesh is pre-social and is rooted in our animal being. Bird symbolism should be kept, however, at a literal level. Birds are known for their life-long partnership. Animality is not the opposite of the human



Figure 1. Reference to Andrea Mantegna's *Lamentation of Christ* (1475–1501) in *In the Name of... (Wimie...,* Małgorzata Szumowska, 2013)



Figure 2. Reference to Hans Holbein's *The Body of Dead Christ in the Tomb* (1520–1522) in *In the Name of... (Wimie...,* Małgorzata Szumowska, 2013)

but its literal apotheosis. Running, drinking, and sex literalize spiritual faith. Some would say debunk it. But Szumowska reframes and re-evaluates it through intermediality.

There are two explicit but not literal quotations of well-known paintings of the dead Christ. The first is a brief tableau shot from the point of view of Mantegna's *Dead Christ* (1480). It is a passing prefiguration of Adam's profane apotheosis at the end of the film [Fig. 1]. Besides an obvious reference to Pasolini's *Mamma Roma* (1962), where Ettore is shown chained down in a similar way, it thematizes the fleshy character of the body from a perspective close to ground level. The second moment is a much longer and definitive tableau which re-enacts Holbein's famous *The Body of Dead Christ in the Tomb* (1520–1522) [Fig. 2].

In the light of Julia Kristeva's thorough analysis of the painting, it is enough to point out that Holbein's Christ displays more human than transcendent features. There is no sign of transfiguration, death is not the result of sin but a more natural – immanent – fact. But it is equally important to note that the tableau is squeezed between the final love-making night between Adam and Lukasz, which immediately precedes the tableau, and the lively garden scene of novices conversing among themselves, which must follow the tableau at a longer interval. Slowly, a face in which we recognize Lukasz turns towards the camera as if noticing someone and returning his look [Fig. 3]. It could be Adam – did he not die then? – or someone, a “new” Adam, a would-be lover – will he run a career similar to Adam's? – we will never know. What we know, however, is that there is a certain transfiguration of the body, not towards the beyond but towards the in-



Figure 3. The last shot of *In the Name of...* (*W imię...*, Małgorzata Szumowska, 2013)

nocence of carnal love, the spot that belongs only to God. What matters is not the tableau's identification, as it was with Mantegna's Christ, but its place in the closing sequences of the film. The image of Adam-Christ sanctifies or seals off Adam and Lukasz's love and prefigures Lukasz's future as an earthly and heavenly act. It literally glues Adam's and Lukasz's life together – heavenly in the sense that “every day we die and are reborn again” as we hear in Adam's last sermon. It is a “heaven on Earth,” not a transcendent but immanent truth like Bartosz's *ars poetica* in *Corpus Christi*, analysed below. God is in every one of us: “In each of us there is a spark of holiness,” says Adam at the beginning of the film. Rebirth is redemption if we can recreate ourselves from that spot of innocence.

The second example is Jan Komasa's latest work, *Corpus Christi* (*Boże Ciało*, 2019). It tells the story of Bartosz living in a juvenile detention centre. One of the leaders of the centre, Father Tomasz, has a favourable opinion of him and promotes him to be transferred to a secular workplace, a sawmill in a rural village. Bartosz sets out on his errand alone, but upon arrival in the village he decides to visit the church first. He has always been dreaming of becoming a seminarist; he feels totally devoted, but his criminal record renders him ineligible to get admitted. In the church, he, probably spontaneously, pretends to be a priest and grabs the chance to substitute the vicar who is expected to be hospitalized for general treatment. He starts holding masses, hearing confessions, giving extreme unction to the dying, etc. While he can learn the formalities on the Internet, his sermons and the way he treats the congregation is by no means ordinary. He does everything to put in practice the lesson taught by Father Lukasz to do good things *otherwise* than by becoming a priest. “God is outside the church,” he professes to the people in the church, and he takes it literally. When he learns that six young people died in a car crashing another one driven by a notorious drinker, he gets involved in the relatives' mourning. He becomes a therapist inventing various ways for them to get over their grief. By being a false priest, he becomes a hero in the village. His fall, however, is precipitated by one of his ex-inmates, who discovers the truth and betrays him. He sticks

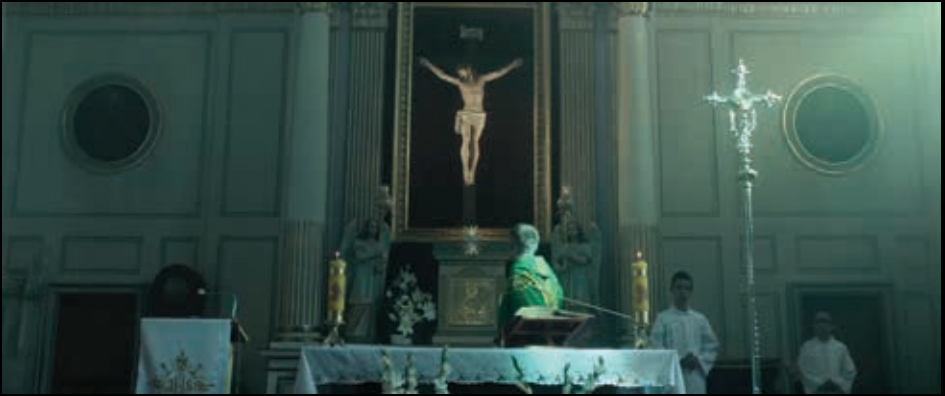


Figure 4. *Corpus Christi* altar painting in Jan Komasa's *Corpus Christi* (Boże Ciało, 2019)

to his faith that God is outside the church even after Father Thomas ordered him to stop practising and preaching. The retaliation arrives in the body of his inmates, who brutally beat him up before he almost kills their leader.

The film is replete with references to the flesh (drug, alcohol, beating, love-making). Paradoxically, the plane of immanence is reified by a painting over the altarpiece representing Christ. It is one of those simple crucifixions you find in a rural church. But this one is different. If Holbein's Christ is earthly and humane, that of Bartosz is radiating [Fig. 4]. The figure in shining colour is set off against the dark background. Yet it is not the transfigured God of which Bartosz proclaims in his first sermon that he cannot be imitated. "Jesus, how can I imitate you? You are so pure while I bring you all this dirt with me," Bartosz preaches to the crowd. But it is pure rhetoric. How can man imitate God? The meaning of his sermon is immanent: if God is outside, the only thing I can do is to purify myself. "Silence is also a prayer." But silence means listening to one's own inside to find his or her spot of innocence and to achieve rebirth. It is the same "spot" Adam talks about in *In the Name of...* It is a *place* where man could become pure, if not as pure as the crucified Christ in the rural church. It is like the cornfield that both hides the homosexual lovers and lets them find each other. It is impossible not to notice the difference between the two dead Christs. For he encourages the crowd to go out and get rid of the dirt to become pure like the Christ on the cross. Imitation recurs when the ex-inmate to betray Bartosz says that he envies him because he knows he could never become like him. So, he is jealous of his "spot of innocence."

Both Bartosz and Adam have their own testimony that "heaven is on Earth." Both display certain traits reminiscent of Christ. They appear through the paintings as the dead body of Christ. Bartosz professes his faith without being ordained outside the church like Jesus did with the Pharisees. And he is betrayed out of jealousy by one of his "disciples." But the figurative understanding is fundamentally modulated by the sensuous, at times animal images, the intensity of the soundtrack, the use of rock music during the procession, drinking and dancing,



Figure 5. *United States of Love* (*Zjednoczone Stany Miłości*, Tomasz Wasilewski, 2016). Note Renata's gesture of washing Marzena as if she were dead.

running and beating. It is not that the presence of embedded paintings modifies or in any sense interprets the filmic space. It is rather the opposite. The haptic images function as “a kind of sensual ‘gateway’ into intermediality through which cinema becomes ‘readable’ through characteristics attributed to painting” (Pethő 2011, 115); although I doubt that the film becomes “readable” in terms of the paintings. Indeed, I argued for the opposite. What the two films highlight is what Merleau-Ponty calls “motor meaning,” a *pre-reflective* reaction to the environment (Merleau-Ponty 1958, 162–163). It is the visceral nature of the images which is beyond normal hapticity and is a recurrent feature of extreme cinema. Motor meaning is literal and performative. It appears when Jesus explains the meaning of the parables and his sermons to the apostles by telling them to “go and do likewise.” Let me briefly conclude with my third example, Tomasz Wasilewski’s opus, *United States of Love* (*Zjednoczone Stany Miłości*, 2016).

The film tells the stories of four women (Marzena, the young dance therapist, her sister, Iza, the headmaster, Agata, the family mother, and Renata, the lonely Lesbian) who are all involved in unrequited love. But while the first three turn to “substitutes,” Platonic and physical, Renata succeeds in *contacting* (physically reaching) her object of desire, Marzena, after the latter being violated by a photographer. She washes, i.e. purifies Marzena’s abused naked body on which the photographer masturbated. What she performs is nothing less than a Lévinasian *caress* (Lévinas 1969, 257). However, Renata’s act of infinite love is marred by the fact that Marzena lies unconscious on the bed and is unable to react [Fig. 5]. Therefore, Renata’s gesture remains also unrequited. But the film does not end here. Marzena’s body by means of Renata’s purifying gesture has the air of a dead body lying on the bier. The scene displays the performance of the caress and the loss of the body caressed at the same time. It is only enhanced by the next shot in which Renata is lying stark naked on her back in a similar posture to that of Marzena. However, she is not dead. Compare the framing with Holbein’s *Dead Christ* [Fig. 6].



Figure 6. *United States of Love* (*Zjednoczone Stany Miłości*, Tomasz Wasilewski, 2016). Note the similarity with the tableau of the dead Adam in *In the Name of...* (*W imię...*, Małgorzata Szumowska, 2013).

After a couple of seconds, she turns to her side and looks towards the camera. Still, the film has another shot to cut to, and it is indeed the last one. We see Marzena get up from the bed and teeter towards the bathroom. She fetches a wash dish, puts it beside the bed, and vomits. Throughout the entire scene, Marzena is shown from a low camera angle, her head cut out [Fig. 7]. The shot seems to coincide with the point of view shot from Renata's reclining position even though we know that from her own room Renata cannot see Marzena stand up. The spatial construction is suggestive of a heterogeneity similar to the closing shot of Michel Haneke's *Amour* (2012), where George's awakening after committing suicide, his dead wife's appearance, their leaving together, and the arrival of their daughter long after they're gone are all set in the same flat. Real, imaginary, transcendent spaces are superimposed in a long take. Yet the heterogeneous space here is radically different. The vomiting Marzena turns Renata's caress inside out, debunks it and exposes it as superfluous, irrational, and empty. But Renata's love, although in a very different and definitely *ethical* guise, is also expropriating. In *Amour*, heterogeneity intensified intimacy. Here it reveals the impossibility of intimacy. Marzena lays unconscious during the violence *and* Renata's purifying act. There is no motor meaning and entirely no communication. The world has indeed become an assemblage, a mere panopticon of unrelated bodies. The irony in the title reveals a world bereft not only of any transcendence but of any possibility of movement. It is immobilized, frozen, not even visceral, a plane of innocence folded on itself. Although we do not find any reference to painting or photography, the final tableaux of Renata and Marzena accomplish, or, using the key term of *Corpus Christi*, imitate their stillness. It is an in-between state of Life and Death, a chiasmatic encounter without the dynamism or modulation of the optic and the haptic of the cinema of sensation.



Figure 7. The last shot of *United States of Love* (*Zjednoczone Stany Miłości*, Tomasz Wasilewski, 2016). Note that it shows Marzena from the impossible point of view of the lying Renata.

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Laura U. Marks*

A Queasy Sensation: Intermediality in *Neighboring Sounds*

Movies are monads, representing the cosmos from their interested point of view: some parts distinct, some dimly perceived, some not at all, and their interrelationships. This representation takes place not just in the narrative but in point of view, point of audition, and generally as a sensory centre. Some movies impose the mind on the body strictly, all the parts falling in to express a dominant view, as in Hitchcock or Kubrick. Others are loose and rangy, not too concerned about where their borders end. Movies that are very involved in their bodies, such as through special effects, elaborate *mise-en-scène*, or showy editing, distract from the movie's idea, while movies that are too idea-driven eschew the support of the many organs that compose their bodies. (I further explore this monadic reading of cinema, informed by Leibniz and Deleuze, in *Enfolding-Unfolding Aesthetics: From Your Body to the Cosmos*, forthcoming from Duke University Press.) As Nathaniel Dorsky suggests, shots give empathy, as camera and filmmaker are “selflessly present” with the subject-matter; cuts “are the clarity that continually awakens the view” (Dorsky 2005, 49). A movie like *Birdman or (The Unexpected Virtue of Ignorance)* (2014) by Alejandro González Iñárritu, whose insistent cinematography and few cuts give the impression of a single-shot film, traps the viewer in an almost suffocating empathy. To map this idea onto a monadological reading of cinema: *mise-en-scène* and camerawork are like the body of the monad, editing is like its mind.

Some movies give the sense of navigating the interior of a body. Surfaces close in on all sides, it is impossible to see the outside, and every twist and turn leads to another enclosure. It is like swimming inside the guts of a giant creature. This is especially the case with movies that remain in interiors, often in mimicry of the theatre, slightly suffocating movies where the air feels dense and humid. *Birdman* is the quintessence of an intestinal movie. It takes place almost entirely in the cramped backstage interiors of a Broadway theatre. The small number of long-duration shots that conduct us through the space of this movie imprison us inside its body, never allowing the moments of breath and perspective that are granted by editing.

All single-shot films, even those with plenty of outdoor views, have this interior, intestinal quality. We are inside the guts of filmmaking, uncomfortably

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Figures 1–2.

aware of mechanics that usually are gracefully concealed by editing, the *how* of *mise-en-scène* and cinematography trumping the *why* of the plot. The camera cannot freely travel to where the action is; instead, action converges on the camera, as in Sebastian Schipper's *Victoria* (2015). *Rope* (1948) is the most compressive, inverted film in the cerebral oeuvre of Hitchcock. Aleksandr Sokurov's ethereal *Russian Ark* (2002) propels its phalanxes of characters through spaces both airy and confined, as food passes through ever-narrow channels as it is being digested. Yes: the single-shot film yields the point of view of a turd.

A multitude of media converge in the cinema, usually rendered as though transparent; however, as Ágnes Pethő argues throughout her oeuvre on cinematic intermediality, these other media become perceptible in cinematic reflexivity, break in the image's transparency. The virtuosic reflexivity of the single-shot film makes it a clear candidate for an intermediality reading. Single-shot movies celebrate the daredevil choreography of cinematography and *mise-en-scène*, and it is often difficult to immerse in their stories as we applaud their performative arts. But a movie need not be highly stylized or formally experimental to disrupt the illusion that we perceive a continuous world (Pethő,



Figures 3–5.

2011b). Cinema yields its sovereignty, showing its porosity to and synthesis of other art forms.

Here I would like to focus on Kleber Mendonça Filho's *Neighboring Sounds* (Brazil, 2012), whose intrusive architectural presence constitutes the reflexivity that Pethő describes. *Neighboring Sounds* is a city film that shares the intestinal quality of the single-shot films mentioned above. It has this quality because so many scenes are compressed within the narrow confines of the luxury condo.

Neighboring Sounds is set in a wealthy Recife neighbourhood of recently erected condominiums. The buildings are difficult to see: white tile walls face the street, and the inhabitants are confined to a cramped, barely legible *mise-en-scène* of courtyards, lobbies, passageways, staircases, and elevators, which reach apartments whose windows open onto their neighbours' homes just a few feet away. In the film's very first scene, two cosseted children cycle and skateboard not on the street but in the compressed space of the condominium's indoor parking lot. Their privilege, the sequence indicates, results in confinement. When they pop out into a public basketball court, the children are a little bit undone; their privilege and safety come into question [Figs. 1–5].



Figures 6–7.

We are reminded frequently that most of the property belongs to Francisco Oliveira (referred to by all as Seu Francisco), also a plantation owner, and that the condos replaced modest single-family dwellings such as we saw in the opening shots. Seu Francisco’s son João sells real estate in the neighbourhood. Property and security are front of mind for these owners, and with these comes surveillance. A group of condo owners meet in the building’s blindingly clean common room to discuss how to get rid of their elderly concierge, who has been sleeping on the job, without the expense of severance pay. Illustrating their concerns, the concierge watches João and his girlfriend, Sophia, embrace on the security cameras. Security cameras constitute another set of cramped interior passages in the film [Figs. 6–7].

Among Pethő’s numerous illuminating case studies, those on cinema’s intermediality with architecture come closest to what is at play in *Neighboring Sounds*. Pethő characterizes architecture in Antonioni’s films as “an entity wedged into the lives of people, dividing their existence, confining them to separate spaces, obstructing their communication” (Pethő 2011b, 113). In Mendonça’s film, the architectural space of the neighbourhood is also illegible, imposed, divisive. Similarly to Antonioni’s urban quartet, *Neighboring Sounds* disorients the



Figures 8–10.

viewer by playing optical against haptic experiences of the space; so, we cannot establish ourselves in an objective (optical) point of view. Unlike the cold and imposing modern architecture in Antonioni of which Pethő writes, the façades of the condominiums are never visible; we only experience the passageways and openings/orifices. To the haptic-optical dynamic that Pethő observes in Antonioni, I would add a proprioceptive sense, that woozy gut feeling I described previously (see Barker 2009).

Intermediality, Pethő argues, is neither textual (like intertextuality) nor conceptual, but sensational: here she refers to Henk Oosterling, as well as Gilles Deleuze, and Jacques Rancière’s observation that in cinema sensible and intelligible are undifferentiated, “captured in the same texture” (2006, 3). Intermediality works on us physically; it is something we feel, and to analyse intermediality requires an embodied spectator (Pethő 2011a, 62). Referring to my terms enfolding and unfolding (see, for example, Marks 2014), Pethő argues that cinema enfolds and unfolds other media: “the mediality of the moving pictures becomes perceivable (‘unfolded’) through interactions between the senses and between media” (2011a, 60).

Ultimately, *Neighboring Sounds*' monad, its body and mind, maps onto the class stratification of the film. The film's suffocating point-of-view shots reflect its wealthy protagonists' paralysing ignorance with regard to class power relationships. The movie suggests that the condo residents' freedom and sovereignty lie in inverse proportion to their real-estate holdings. They are hemmed in by high walls and security systems; their visitors are escorted in and out like prisoners in a courthouse.

In another scene that seems emblematic of this ignorance, a woman and her daughter are examining a prospective apartment in the condominium. A boy's soccer ball lands on a balcony and, seeing the girl peering over the railing above, calls up to her to throw it back. She gives him a helpless shrug, but she does not trouble to explain to him that the ball landed on the balcony below her, and he finally leaves in frustration.

Only the security team who negotiate passages into and from the neighbourhood have a sensory and epistemic grasp of the space as a whole. Working-class and darker-skinned than the condo dwellers, they embody and possess the knowledge of historical violence that the wealthy inhabitants repress, but that will explode in the film's last moments. It is a testament to *Neighboring Sounds*' intermediality that this uneasy knowledge is sensed, rather than stated, throughout the film's queasy and suffocating duration.

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Hajnal Király*

Guilty Landscapes and Landscapes of Guilt in Contemporary Cinema

The tradition of landscape depictions in the fine arts, greatly relying on the opposition between nature and culture, has been adopted by cinema throughout its history in connection with changing social and cultural ideologies of masculinity, femininity, morality, or other philosophical/existential approaches. Of all arts, the affective power of landscape is most effectively built in cinema on the so-called “death drive” of film narratives, coined by Laura Mulvey to explain the urge of the cinematic movement to freeze into stasis, very often a landscape, a still frame associated with death (Mulvey 2006, 70). Beyond consecrated genres like the western, the road movie, or the melodrama, in contemporary cinema enhanced by digital effects, landscape increasingly becomes a sensuous experience, situated “between proximity and distance, body and mind, sensuous immersion and detached observation” (Wylie 2007, 1). The contrasting representation of nature and civilization in films reiterates the question of anthropologist John Wylie whether landscape is “the world we are living in, or a scene we are looking at, from afar?” (Wylie 2007, 63). This is a question that equally refers to the spectatorial attitude and the actions and events in which cinematic landscapes participate. Ágnes Pethő, writing about the pictorial and photographic landscapes of contemporary films “at the peripheries of global cinema,” implicitly argues that in these films the two landscape concepts – a scenery for contemplation and a setting for human actions – coexist. As she points out, “in these films the tableau compositions pictorialize nature in all its grandeur together with the destructive effect of human aggression which blows apart a harmonious coexistence of nature and culture” (Pethő 2021, 41). Accordingly, in her analyses of three films from 2014, *Timbuktu*, directed by Abderrahmane Sissako, *Test (Ispytan!ye)* by Alexander Kott, and *Nabat* by Elchin Musaoglushe, she emphasizes “the incongruity between the beauty of the photographic frames and the themes of violence and destruction at the core of the narratives” that “adds an affective charge that ranges from the melancholic to the melodramatic” (Pethő 2021, 42).

This duality of the cinematic landscape concept, as well as the experimentation with the natural picturesque as opposed to or as alternative of an over-

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Figure 1. The national landscape of an island with a pine forest that does not provide shelter for the children in *Utoya – July 22*

whelming, urban modernity can also be placed within the tradition of contemporary noir or pseudo-noir films, TV series from different countries belonging to the so-called “Scandinavian noir” (or “Scandi noir”) trend, in which landscapes become silent witnesses of human brutality fed by unspoken social tensions of modern, welfare societies. In order to emphasize the social, political implications of murders and crimes framed by landscapes, I will use the concept of “guilty landscape,” which refers to a pastoral setting, presented as idyllic, inviting, and peaceful, that becomes the scene of a horrible crime and in the process loses its innocence. As such, despite its beauty and explicit photogenicity, it turns into a metaphor of the degeneration of a community, a society, and a civilization.

The term “guilty landscape” has been used before in crime fiction criticism to capture the topophilic desire of literary tourists, readers, and TV viewers for the particular Nordic criminal peripheries (Stigsdotter 2010). The term appears as a fitting figure in the description of an intriguing phenomenon, namely that comparatively non-violent, peaceful, harmonious welfare states are producing what appears to be an un-sustainable surplus of violent crime fiction. As Stijn Reijnders points out, even before that, the term “guilty landscape” was introduced by Dutch artist and writer Armando to describe the landscape surrounding concentration camps. As he puts it: “The natural beauty was so luxuriant that it seemed impossible that the murder and torture could have taken place here. But the woods around the concentration camp had witnessed horrible war crimes, and were, according to Armando, accomplices. They constituted, in other words, a guilty landscape” (Armando 1998, cf. Reijnders 2009, 175). Reijnders reiterates the term in his 2011 book for the Utoya massacre in Norway, when an idyllic island hosting a youth summer camp became the scene of a

BROADCHURCH



Figure 2. The enormous rock evolving into an ever-present, silent character and witness in British TV series *Broadchurch*

society's worst nightmare, the killing of its children (2011, 42). The film *Utoya – July 22* (Erik Poppe, 2018) presents a landscape, an insensitive Nordic pine forest that does not provide shelter for the groups of children, who need to split up in order to save themselves. The isolating character of a national landscape – the island with pine forest – in this film participates in a social allegory of a welfare society that individualizes and isolates, equally nurturing potential perpetrators and victims [Fig. 1].

Intriguingly, the killing of innocents in a natural setting has been a recurring topic of Nordic crime fiction, novels, films, and TV series in the last at least two decades. In novels such as *Spring Tide* (Cilla and Rolf Bjorlind), *The Snowman* (Jo Nesbo), and *Blood on Snow* (Jo Nesbo), just to name a few, and their fiction and TV film adaptations,¹ as well as other series, such as the Icelandic *Trapped* (2015–) or *The Valhalla Murders* (2019–2020), the Finnish *Bordertown* (*Sörjönen* 2016–2020) and *Deadwind* (*Karppi* 2018–2020), the Nordic landscapes as national landscapes, with fjords, seaside, forests, islands, and snow function as vehicles for projections of community emotions stirred by secrets and taboos, isolation, loneliness, and sense of guilt. British TV drama *Broadchurch* (2013–2017) follows in the footsteps of the same Nordic tradition of guilty landscape, at its centre with the monumental seaside rocky wall (West Bay in Dorset) under which the 12-year-old boy is found dead at the beginning of the story [Fig. 2].

Other British TV series, such as *Shetland* (2013 to present) and the more recent *Hidden* (2018 to present) and *Hinterland* (2013–2016), both set in Wales and

1 See, for example, the TV series *Spring Tide* (*Springfloden*, 2016–) and the feature film *The Snowman* (Tomas Alfredson, 2017).



partially spoken in Welsh, are also following the “Scandi noir” tradition in their stories of isolated small communities, taking place against picturesque, monumental, and sombre landscapes emanating loneliness and anguish. In these films and TV series, the landscapes are not simply sceneries, crime scenes but witnesses, characters themselves, not passive but somehow active, always present protagonists of the story, which deliberately hide and reveal traces and proofs.

Relying on the aesthetic tradition of still media, both painting and photography, these series often start with a landscape that signifies a view of nature emancipated from the presence of human figures and offering itself for contemplation. They use temps morts, long takes, and relative stillness in the depiction of often empty natural spaces framing the dead body, before the quest and investigation is launched and the photographic turns into cinematic action and movement. Stillness, slowness, and the introspection of the main character, the detective – regularly in an existential crisis – bring this tradition close to that of slow cinema and a modernist heritage of “pseudo-noirs” in which crime, its solution, and the endless landscape remain figurative reflexions of the struggles of a troubled subjectivity.

The Landscape of Guilt: *Once Upon a Time in Anatolia*

Martin Lefebvre finds that empty photographic landscapes can look “deserted like the scene of a crime” (Lefebvre 2011, 26). As he argues, paradoxically, however, this “crime scene” is haunted by the memory of those very characters, actions, and events – those narrative components – that have been “chased” from the visual field (2011, 70). This characteristic of photographic landscapes



Figures 3–5. In Nuri Bilge Ceylan’s *Once Upon a Time in Anatolia*, the landscape evokes both the Western genre and the modernist cinema, appearing, in turns, as a guilty landscape and a “landscape of guilt.”

is deliberately exploited in noir films and TV series. Recurrence due to the obsessive return of protagonists – detectives, family members, even that of the murderer – to the crime scene confers temporality and thus cinematic quality to this still landscape. The landscape becomes a sight of memory, a mnemonic presence, as Lefebvre would put it (2011, 74). In an anthropological approach, this mnemonic quality belongs to the very nature of the landscape: in Tim Ingold’s words, to perceive a landscape “is [...] to carry out an act of remembrance, and remembering is not so much a matter of calling up an internal image stored in the mind as of engaging perceptually with an environment that is itself pregnant with the past” (Ingold 1993, 152–153).

The perception of landscape as an act of remembrance is beautifully thematized in the pseudo-noir of the Turkish Nuri Bilge Ceylan, *Once Upon a Time in Anatolia* (2011). Entering in a dialogue with the western genre already with its very title alluding to Sergio Leone’s *Once Upon a Time in the West* (1974), this film greatly relies on the figurative potential of the spectacular landscape as a witness to human brutality and a projection of loneliness and existential crisis. Set in Anatolia, Turkey, the film is the one-night story of a murder investigation: willing to close a murder case as soon as possible, a group composed of a doctor, a prosecutor, a few policemen, and a driver is taking a confessing murderer to the place where he buried the corpse. Visibly under shock and in a state of confusion, the killer only remembers two distinguishing landmarks of the crime scene, a spring and a tree. But in the dark all landscapes seem similar and become potential crime scenes: the quest starts in the evening and lasts all night long, gradually turning into an inner journey for each of the protagonists. The natural setting, a passive, senseless guilty landscape, becomes at the same time a witness to their own confessions and revelations of individual guilt: the



Figures 6–7. The “guilty landscape” becoming a “landscape of guilt” in László Nemes Jeles’s *Sunset*

prosecutor speaks about the unusual circumstances of the death of his wife, and we also find out about the divorce of the doctor leading to his self-exile to this remote place. The crime scene, a landscape with the shallow grave, guarded by a black dog and found only in the morning, is thus not only a guilty landscape that hid the traces but also a “landscape of guilt” that effaces narration for a moment, and it becomes immersive and loaded with symbolic, personal meanings for both the protagonists and spectators [Figs. 3–5].

In this difference, we can grasp Martin Lefebvre’s distinction between “intentional landscape,” composed by the director, and the so-called “impure landscape:” in the case of the latter, the spectator can still direct his or her attention towards the landscape in such a way as to momentarily break the narrative bond and fill it up with subjective content” (Lefebvre 2011, 66). That is, the spectator will project on the landscape his or her personal interpretations conditioned by own social and cultural background as well as experiences that resonate (or do not resonate) with those represented in the film. Embedded in a pseudo-detective story, in Ceylan’s film landscape seems to require a form of contemplative autonomy, a severing of narrative subservience, while, on the other hand, it seems to acquire its significance relative to our ability to get immersed in it. In *Once upon a Time in Anatolia*, immersion in the landscape is occasionally conveyed through the hapticity of the image often paired with a soundscape of noises from the nature. What has been traditionally regarded

as natural expressionism – the style of Ceylan’s outdoor scenes harks back explicitly to that of Andrei Tarkovsky’s *Mirror* (1975) – appears here as an emotional fusion with nature revealing deep existential turmoil. More specifically, the crisis of masculinity is conveyed here by a fusion of very different aesthetic approaches to landscape from two different cinematic traditions: the distant, panoramic, cinemascope views of the western film genre and a landscape animated by the sensorium and emotions of a struggling subjectivity more characteristic of European modernism. This duality resonates with Ceylan’s previous films in which geographical distance, the depiction of distant, spectacular landscapes reveal an insurmountable alienation between people, couples, and family members (see, for example, *Distant* [*Uzak*, 2002], *Climates* [*İklimler*, 2007], or *Winter Sleep* [*Kuş Uykusu*, 2014]). At the same time, in these films landscapes, while occasionally being guilty of passively witnessing crimes, often become landscapes of guilt, that is, sites on which the sense of guilt over individual or collective sins is projected. This is also the case of László Nemes’s *Sunset* (*Napszállta*, 2017), an allegorical panorama of civilizatoric factors that shaped the guilty history of the 20th century. In this film, the slow slide into the darkness is represented as a collapse of the divide between culture and nature, the surfacing of brutality from behind beauty and refinement, and leading to the horrors of the Great War.

Culture vs. Nature – László Nemes Jeles: *Sunset*

Visually designed as a contrast between elegant and decorative interiors, a hat salon and loud and chaotic, unidentifiable cityscapes of a beginning of 20th-century Budapest, as well as deserted rural settings and landscapes, the essence of László Nemes’s unlikely costume drama *Sunset* can be reduced to a meaningful remark of a protagonist: “Hats! Behind a lot of beauty, the monstrosity of the World!” The film about an orphan girl, Iris, returning to Budapest to work in the hat salon of her parents who died under unclarified circumstances, just to find herself in the middle of an identity quest launched by contradictory news about an infamous brother of whom she did not know, also thematizes the psychological dangers of too many and confusing (visual) details and obsessive quest for signs and traces. Nemes intentionally undermines the grand narrative form of epic drama by providing insufficient and confusing visual clues and relying on gossip and news, mostly auditory information about an imminent political conspiracy at the highest level. The effect of the desperate, obsessive quest for the brother is visually represented by the close-ups of Iris, her gaze revealing a state of mind that balances on the brink of insanity, often paired with the haptic quality of the image.

The images loaded with visual details, fashion items, mostly hats, also become part of a pseudo-detective story, in which clues and traces are being intently sought but do not take Iris closer to the solution of the political puzzle, a possible conspiracy leading to the First World War. The few scenes presenting pastoral landscapes are based on the classic nature–culture/civilization oppo-

sition: while inside the hat salon everything seems structured and organized, the streets are loud with disturbing news, and in the settings outside the civilized city a violent mob is on the loose. The killing of the alleged brother by Iris also happens in a pastoral setting, by the river, at Sunrise. In this scene, the image of nature does not appear as a landscape to be contemplated from a safe distance but a blurred, haptic environment surrounding Iris closely to convey her fear that traps her in her own body. When she later returns to the same place, she finds a spotless landscape, calm and distant: the immersive landscape, thoroughly involved in the act of killing, now appears as a painterly object of contemplation, a picture concealing the traces of violence [Figs. 6–7].

The two experiences of the natural setting correspond to the difference between immersion, that is, a lived experience of the landscape and distant, emotionless contemplation. In the scene of killing, nature almost merges with, becomes an extension of Iris’s body and sensorium, and an accomplice by taking in the corpse floating away in the river. In contrast, in the second scene of the return, this setting is already framed as a landscape, a quiet, distant surface onto which the protagonist’s sense of guilt is projected.

Ceylan’s and Nemes’s experimentation with the natural picturesque as opposed to, and as effect of, an overwhelming, urban modernity can be placed within the tradition of contemporary noir or pseudo-noir films and TV series. The term of guilty landscape in relation with the tradition of detective fiction describes our impure perception of criminal natural settings, that is, our tendency to confer symbolical existential meanings to landscape in film. Both directors experiment with a contrasting use of landscapes characteristic of epic genres on the one hand and of the pseudo-noirs of European modernism, some films by Jean-Luc Godard, François Truffaut, and Michelangelo Antonioni on the other. Additionally, the Hungarian director also experiments with the grand epic form in terms of creating an opposition between the visible and the audible, as well as a tension between a visually loaded urban environment of the first decades of modernity and an isolated landscape that becomes the scene of brutality. The term “landscape of guilt,” proposed by me, describes a landscape permeated by emotional projections of the protagonist and the spectator identifying with him. Either distant or close, these landscapes of real or pseudo-noirs serve not only to host our thoughts, as Martin Lefebvre has put it, but also to sublimate our innermost emotions of fear and guilt.

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Figure 1. During the rehearsal



Figure 2. After the performance

Beja Margitházi*

Trauma behind the Scenes.

The Creation of Female Authorship and Agencies through Rehearsal in *The Euphoria of Being* (2019)

Réka Szabó's documentary film *The Euphoria of Being* [*A létezés eufóriája*], (2019), is part of an extensive, cross-referenced, intertextual, and intermedial network of life documents of an exceptional person. Holocaust survivor Éva Fahidi began to tell her story in 1989, after decades of silence. Dozens of public speeches, interviews, articles, and several editions of her two books – *Anima rerum: The Soul of Things* (2005) and *The Subject and Object of Love* (2019) – recount her childhood memories, the story of the deportation and murder of her family in Auschwitz-Birkenau, the loss of her 49 relatives, the months she spent in a Nazi labour camp, and the life events of the following decades. The various documents have already created the impression of a multiply reflected experiential material and reported about advanced stages of trauma processing when Réka Szabó, the director and choreographer of The Symptom dance company, invited in 2015 the 90-year-old Éva Fahidi and the 30-year-old dancer Emese Cuhorka to participate together in the dance performance *Sóvirág – The Euphoria of Being*. The documentary film about the rehearsals of the performance (also directed by Réka Szabó) fits into the international (but also Hungarian) post-millennial revival of Holocaust memorial documentary filmmaking, related to the beginning of the post-witness era; these films were marked by going beyond the talking-head, “testimony” tradition and attempted to engage survivors in dialogue with later generations, through performative gestures (as seen, e.g., in *Granny Project* [*Nagyi projekt*, 2019] by Bálint Révész or *Born in Auschwitz* [2021] by Eszter Cseke and András S. Takács).

Hungarian film reviews and academic discourse (Takács 2020) have already linked these interpretative frameworks to Szabó's film; I would, however, like to suggest a different perspective. In my opinion, *The Euphoria of Being* should be understood not only in the rich web of meanings (or the shadow) of the personal memoir(s), the theatrical performance, or the Holocaust memorial but as a sovereign work detached from all these, in so far as it applies a creative approach to realize a unique documentary experiment. I would like to argue that Szabó's

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documentary, despite its protagonist being a Holocaust survivor, is not primarily a Holocaust film (i.e. relevant for its Holocaust representation), nor a classic trauma film (in so far as it does not focus on the original trauma event and the way it was experienced). I see the uniqueness of the film more in the fact that it uses the medium of rehearsal to become both a “rehearsal film” and a “(female) body film,” capturing trauma as a physical and psychological work, in the double performativity of the filming act and the theatrical rehearsal process.

In the following, I would like to point out the interconnection of these concepts, the rehearsal format and its documentary framing, the resulting performativity which invites the moving, sensing body into play, and the way all these set up a unique opportunity for the formation of different female agencies.

Rehearsal as Test and Medium

The less researched but promising concept of the rehearsal involves several contradictions: while it is an essential part of the work in performing arts (music, dance, theatre, and film) and directly determines the final result, it is at the same time the least accessible and most private part of the creative work, whose intimacy, sensitivity, and even privacy are repeatedly emphasized by its participants. Rehearsal is the essential, dynamic process of creative work, happening in secret, closed off from the general public, who only encounter the elaborated, mature product, the “finished” artwork.

The problem of rehearsal and the questions of its observability and researchability have been thematized only since the second half of the 1990s in German and Anglo-Saxon theatre theory. In these descriptions, rehearsal appears both as a methodological question and as a medium, as something through which one can speak of the representation of the artistic production process as well as of the critique of institutional power relations (Lafer, Ruhm, and Bluchmann 2016). Due to this volatile, difficult-to-grasp nature of the rehearsal and its different functions in different practices, there is still no unified view of its nature, but in its definitions the relationship to the final performance is a recurrent point of reference.

One group of definitions (Ginters 2013) stresses the *transitory*, in-between nature of the rehearsal and claims that it is mainly a necessary means to achieve performance; rehearsal thus never reaches, cannot reach, the quality of performance because it lacks the most important ingredient, the audience. *Fusion* theories, on the other hand, state that the performance begins at the rehearsal stage, in so far as the rehearsal may resemble the performance in intensity and excitement, and the two actually converge, “play into” each other, especially in post-dramatic theatre (Lafer, Ruhm, and Bluchmann 2016, 11). One variant of the latter is the idea that the “rehearsal transcends performance.” Australian theatre historian Gay McAuley, who in the 1990s was one of the first to develop an ethnography of rehearsal observation, puts it bluntly: “My own experience as an observer of rehearsals is that, far from being boring, they often provide more powerful and compelling theatre than the performances I see in the theatre.

There is something utterly fascinating about the openness and fluidity of the meaning making process in rehearsal, the way a tiny detail [...] can introduce a whole new direction and unleash a new wave of inventiveness” (McAuley 2006, 10). McAuley also promotes the demolition of the romantic notion of “rehearsal as magic:” behind the scenes, there is no magic but hard work, “artistry, skill (...) to tease out the complex web of relations that link theatre to the broader culture” (McAuley 2008, 277).

In their foreword to *Putting the Rehearsal to Test*, which explores the notion of rehearsal in all its forms – in fine arts, theatre, and cinema –, the editors cite examples of such films “experimenting with rehearsal” as Shirley Clarke’s *The Connection* (1961), John Cassavetes’s *Opening Night* (1977), or Chantal Akerman’s *The Eighties (Les années 80)*, 1983), which “demonstrate the comprehensive meaning of improvisation and rehearsal as a tool for questioning the foundations, routines, restrictions, and limitations of institutionalized genres.” Similar phenomena are captured in 2010s feature films such as Alejandro González Iñárritu’s *Birdman* (2014), Olivier Assayas’s *Clouds of Sils Maria* (2014), or Antoine Barraud’s *Portrait of the Artist (Le dos rouge)*, 2014), in which “rehearsal constitutes not only the framework for, but becomes the actual production: the ‘work’ and its documentation or staging overlap” (Lafer, Ruhm, and Bluchmann 2016, 13).

Since the 1990s, with the spread of video cameras, it has become common practice in many theatres to document and record not only performances but also rehearsals. This is the starting point for Stephen Geene to distinguish between the phenomenon of “rehearsal *on* film” and “rehearsal *as* film” (Geene 2016). Unlike the filmed rehearsal, in the case of “rehearsal *as* film,” “the process and circumstances of creation are included in the work itself” (2016, 236). The final, finished work blends, incorporates, includes the frame into the image, the *off* into the *on*, or as Geene puts it: “The profoundly diachronic relation implicit in any rehearsal – here the rehearsal, there projected into some future, the rehearsed object (the final performance) – gets disrupted when rehearsal and rehearsed become one thing (or film)” (2016, 236).

In the case of *The Euphoria of Being*, the rehearsal is the premise of the performance, not of the documentary; the original documentary purpose of the recording is surpassed by the deep layers that are stirred up and developed during the rehearsal process, which provide valuable lessons not only as a background to the dance performance but also as a trauma work of Éva and a mirror play in the relationship of Éva and Emese [Figs. 1– 2]. By making a film from the rehearsal material, Réka Szabó joins the line of those recent documentaries about the rehearsal process of theatre performances of traumatic stories, such as Nebojša Slijepčević’s *Srbenka* (2018) about the reading rehearsals of a tragic family story of the Serbian–Croatian war conflict or Oren Rudavsky’s *Witness Theatre* (2018), documenting a year-long rehearsal process of Holocaust survivors and high school students. What these films have in common is that their creators do not simply intend to create self-reflexive gestures or making-ofs



Figure 3. Imagining the performance

but documentaries in their own right, by which they claim that the rehearsal process can be as relevant and cathartic as the performance itself because it displays the tension and drama of the “working-through” process in a different performative framework.

Documentary Framing and Becoming

In this sense, the question of frame and framing is a key one: how does the film frame the rehearsal and define itself as a documentary? Where does it place the line between rehearsal and film? What is left in the picture from the off-screen and why? These questions seem even more significant if we think about the ontological and aesthetic relevance of framing in the case of documentary. As Ilona Hongisto points out, what distinguishes documentary from all other cinematic forms is its intensive contact with a world that continues beyond the frame. Hongisto even sees framing as a performative practice “with which documentary cinema participates in and contributes to the real as process” (Hongisto 2015, 11–12). Ontological and aesthetic qualities are thus interwoven when the documentary “brings more life into the real by framing actuality in its becoming” (2015, 21).

To illuminate this layering in *The Euphoria of Being*, I use the term “backstage gaze,” which in the rehearsal film essentially stages itself and which simultaneously dismantles the theatricality of the final performance by building up in its place another performativity, based on experimentation, improvisation, mistakes, and continuous corrections. Szabó also frames the rehearsal with a formal gesture: the recurring image of the journey in the tunnel after the prologue and before the epilogue [Fig. 4.] leads in and out of the “other space-time” often mentioned in relation with theatre rehearsal. This “other world” is detached from the events of the “outside world” (here Éva’s journey to Debrecen for the unveiling of the *Stolpersteine* ‘stumbling stones’) and establishes a clear



Figure 4. Travelling through the tunnel

relationship with the planned performance. The seemingly clumsy “staging” of the correspondence inviting to the rehearsal (by loud reading) is not only an open indication of this, but it also makes explicit the attitudes represented at the point of entry: Réka constantly refers to it as a “crazy idea” [Fig. 3.], while Éva considers it a reckless undertaking: “I have never been a professional dancer;” “in this genre is hard to be authentic.” This captures the stakes of the future performance, the risky nature of the experiment: success is by no means guaranteed, the presence of the elderly, frail, amateur Éva, even if she owns an authentic experience, may not be convertible into the language of the dance performance, and it is questionable whether the performative style of the women of different ages can be brought together in one performance.

By showing the *transitive* processes of performance-production, the film actually accomplishes *fusion* when it emphasizes the emotional impact of the participants on each other and the moments of dramatic tension that are already created in rehearsal. One example is the evocation of the murdered sister, Gilike: as a warm-up, ice-breaking exercise, Réka suggests to Emese to personify in dance someone Éva is thinking of, without knowing who the person actually is. Emese’s improvisation with a bag of sand and an oversized beach slipper is watched by Éva without a word. She follows the movements with such a deep excitement that she cannot speak for minutes afterwards. She gets so tired that the “rehearsal” has to be suspended for the day – but all three became convinced about how memory and imagination can be activated by non-verbal, physical dramatic exercises.

Agency, Authorship, and the Body-Stored Trauma

The rehearsal in *The Euphoria of Being*, on the other hand, can reveal the details of working with the body more viscerally than seen in the finished performance. In the course of the work, the bodily codedness of Éva’s trauma be-



Figure 5. Working with the body

comes palpable very early on, something that several trauma researchers have written about. Bessel Van der Kolk, in his book *The Body Keeps the Score*, emphasizes the biological and neurological embeddedness of the trauma experience, which is reorganizing perception and imagination, as “trauma is held in the body” (Van der Kolk 2014, 26). Thus, for trauma victims, it is not enough to put their story into words; for real change to take place, the body must also realize the end of danger and learn to live in the present. Van der Kolk considers talk therapies important but advocates body-based therapies that can bring to the repossession, the reclaiming of the body (2014, 20).

Éva, who sees a physiotherapist twice a week at home, starts talking about bad, unwanted touches after the first contact exercises with Emese [Fig. 5]. She uses the word “untouchable” to describe her own teenage-girl self: “Until your teenage years you think of the ideal woman as an untouchable, beautiful woman. And for a long time I was really taken by this idea of being untouchable... Especially when very bad things happened to me, because what touched me this way was a throng of stinking, shitty, filthy female bodies, in Auschwitz-Birkenau. Those terribly cramped conditions, all that filth and stench... Being around naked female bodies always, touching me whether I wanted it or not.”

In another moment, looking together at photographs and talking about bodies leads to the recollection of Éva’s naked dance in front of the mirror, which becomes an iconic visual element of the rehearsal and later the finale (and also the poster) of the film. When Emese admires the posture and musculature in Éva’s youthful swimsuit pictures, Éva bursts out: “See, this is what happens to them. It’s terrible when youth passes. It is impossible to prepare for. You have to live with it. With your old, rotten, disgusting body. You have to live with it. I can’t be unhappy because of this, as I can’t change it.”

These “outbursts”, which emerge as a result of various triggers (photographs, conversations), remind us of the opening of wounds, which in the process of rehearsal, in working with the body make the corporeal codedness of trauma ev-



Figure 6. Formation of various agencies

ident. For Éva, trauma is articulated through the relationship to her own body, and at one point her talking about the body is akin to talking about trauma: one cannot prepare for living with an unchangeable, aging body, just as one cannot prepare for trauma. And likewise, bodily decay cannot stand in the way of survival, of the joy of living – any more than trauma can.

In the shots of the final dance performance, we see the rehearsed, coordinated movements of Emese and Éva, dressed in airy white dresses – in the rehearsals, we are witnessing not only the sight of the ageing body but also Éva’s personal, profane, physical experience of it, embodied through specific body parts: the “probably” cracked rib, the broken toe, the “crumbly” bones, the leg covered in bruises, which still want to function. This is the way through which Éva’s special agency is produced and constructed. In the context of trauma therapies, Bessel Van der Kolk refers to agency as “the feeling of being in the charge of your life,” meaning interoception, which is the “awareness of our subtle, sensory body-based feelings” leading to the regaining of the control over somebody’s body and life (2014, 94). The performance shows Éva and Emese as confident, fluent, coordinated characters – the “backstage gaze” of the rehearsal reveals the process of the formation of this agency similar to childbirth and labour.

And this is both a “regained” agency over the body on Éva’s part and a collective agency in that – without this being the explicit intention of the film or the project – it becomes a document of a non-erotic, body-based, female cooperation. Women are seen as acting and creating, in the process of becoming authors and partners, in the formation of their various agencies [Fig. 6]. Éva’s trauma work, Emese’s body-giving, alter-egoing, and self-exposing process is supervised by Réka’s inspiring and reactive directorial presence, who instructs and cares about both of them as a midwife. Szabó’s directorial work here shapes and forms the future performance in the tension between observation and participation, taking the risk of fumbling, dead ends, and wrong decisions. The documentary framing of the rehearsal thus not only reveals “the naked mo-

ment for the actor and director, too” (Andrews 2000, 123), but places the performers’ and the director’s presence into a double refraction, showing them in the process of simultaneously becoming involved in a theatrical and cinematic staging.

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György Kalmár*

The Invisible Body of Cinema

Let me begin by provoking (my fellow) art film enthusiasts: I claim that from the point of view of the basic representational strategies that turn images of the human body into film there is not much difference between what some of us call (in a somewhat old-fashioned way) “art film” and what is called “popular,” “commercial,” or “mainstream cinema.” Following a tradition of representation that can be traced back at least to Plato (most notably his *Timaios*), ninety(-nine) percent of so-called art films do not problematize the body: they use it as a reliable signifier, as a mark of something else, of something non-corporeal, non-visible, of something more essential or ideal. They use the body as a means of making characters and narratives visible without questioning the ideological and cultural patterns that construct it, thereby producing an unaccounted for bodily base that simultaneously enables, subverts, and undermines cinematic signification (Shaviro 1993). Recent body theory does not tend to believe in the accessibility of a “natural body:” what we experience as the body (either the one on the screen or the one watching it) is always already a cultural construct, a meaningful body – or, to use Judith Butler’s pun – a piece of matter that matters (see Butler 1993, Toffoletti 2007). In other words, body theory does not believe in the body that most films use: it sees this usage as an abuse, an invisible operation that defines what it means to “have” a body, an operation that – even in a visual system of (re)presentation such as film – always (ab)uses the visible for the sake of something non-visible (like emotions, meaning, narrative, truth).

Pretty Woman, a Hollywood romantic comedy that can undoubtedly be called a contemporary classic (directed by Garry Marshall, 1990), can be seen as a typical example of the use and abuse of the body in mainstream filmmaking. Through its close reading, one may understand some of the ways the body is woven into highly ideological narratives and the ways gender and the body are connected to a general social-symbolic code. Through such films as *Pretty Woman*, one may better understand the ways visual image, identity, body, and gender are connected and produced together. The film shows well how the female body is constructed in cinema (and, more general, in globalized Western culture), the way the body is used as a false grounding that sustains certain ideologies, and, of course, it also illustrates what Michael Henry, the French phenomenologist calls the miraculous disappearance of the body in the social texture that is woven around it, built and written on it (Henry 2003).

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Luce Irigaray's remark that "[within] the teleology of discourse [...] there is no possible place for the 'feminine,' except the traditional place of the repressed, [and] the censured" (1985, 68) holds true (or even truer) for the female body and the female body in cinema as well. According to Irigaray, the systems of representation of culture are born exactly where the female body is repressed, covered, and lost, that is, at the site of its absence. This absence or loss is the price paid for the existence of representation. Within this radical perspective (influenced by both psychoanalysis and feminism), the condition of possibility of meaning (as we know it, that is, in its phallogocentric forms) is precisely this repression: the rendering of femininity, materiality, and corporeality mute, depriving the female body of its voice and powers of signification. This process is completed when the repressed feminine (or corporeal) is replaced by a social fantasy about it, a fantasy created by order and its ideological metanarratives. The main question at this point is, of course, whether Irigaray's views about the feminine, the body, and their relation to the discourse of philosophy hold true in the case of film as a system of representation as well. What do we see, what can be seen of (a) "woman" or of the body in general when we watch the mainstream representation of a "pretty woman?" What does this system of meaning hide and what does it show? And – what may be the most important question – can the body (the living body, the real body, the extra-discursive body) "shine through" a cinematic medium that uses its images for its own purposes?

As it is well-known, *Pretty Woman* tells the love story, or fairy tale, of a charming millionaire and an even-more-charming prostitute. The two poles created by the two protagonists create a highly ideological binary system of meaning, in which not only man and woman oppose each other but also the rich and the poor, the successful and the unsuccessful, the subject who buys others to satisfy his desires and the object who is bought to satisfy other's desires. One of the main (so-called) "messages" of the film is obviously the (ideologically overloaded cliché) that ideologically overloaded clichés are wrong, common-sense opinion may be mistaken, and a seemingly subordinated poor prostitute may carry the human values that can redeem the life of the cold-hearted unhappy millionaire. Thus, *Pretty Woman* tells the evergreen story of salvation, redemption, and the fulfilment of love in a modern fairy tale, which incorporates an age-old ideological framework into the modern technological medium of commercial cinema.

What I find interesting in this all-too-predictable, commonplace scenario is the role that the body plays in the construction of this bipolar fantasy world and its communication towards the spectator. Of course, if one consumes the film the way one is expected to, this role of the body is as invisible as the body itself behind the story and the set of symbolic meaning built on it.

The introduction of the two protagonists already lay the bases of this phantasmal order. In the first scene, we enter a high-class party in a luxurious house at Beverly Hills above the town. The way the male protagonist, Edward Lewis, is introduced exemplifies the Platonic (or metaphysical) underpinnings of cinema: first, we see the social context (the party, social status, money, wealth,



Figure 1. Lewis's body is almost totally covered by his power and social status

fame), then we hear his name mentioned as being the guest of honour, and it is only after this that we can see him in person, as bodily presence. In a truly Platonic fashion, the invisible precedes the visible, as the symbolic and the social precede the corporeal. Moreover, Lewis's embodied person is contextualized not only by all that introduced his entrée but also by the symbolic nature of the situation that we find him in. He is upstairs, *above*, even higher than the high society of the banquet, facing a window, *looking down* on them, with his back to the camera, talking on the phone. Because of the medium close-up and the uniform-like suit that he wears, we can hardly see anything of his body. Lewis is almost totally covered by his social function [Fig. 1].

The second scene of the film introduces the female protagonist, Vivian, the young hooker. First, we see the social context again, a rather poor and disfavoured part of the city, and then for a second we see a cheap motel that she lives in. This kind of contextualization reinforces material wealth as the dominant value system that frames all actions. In the introduction of the sleeping Vivian (who is just about to get up for work), the camera starts with her almost naked backside and then tracks along her body. The slow movement of the camera gazing at the sleeping woman makes the spectator a voyeur and eroticizes Vivian's body from the first instant [Fig. 2]. The moment we reach the face (covered by an arm), the alarm clock goes off, and together with Vivian's day the music also starts. Her theme (rock) song is "I'm a wild one." (This may be read as another figurative detail meaning: "When Vivian is up, it is rock and roll.") In a few seconds, we can see her dressing for work. In this scene, which is cut like a music video, we can always see *only one part* of Vivian's body, parts that never come together into a whole, complete image of the body.

If one compares these two introductions, the basic principles of the two representational strategies immediately transpire: while Edward Lewis's male body is a social body dressed up not only in elegant, non-personal clothes but also in symbolic functions, power and responsibility, Vivian's body is con-



Figure 2. Vivian's body eroticized by the voyeuristic gaze of the spectator

structured as an erotic body of a collection of sexually invested fetishistic partial objects that cannot be totalized as a complete body or full human being [Fig. 3]. Of course, these different bodies are constructed by radically different gazes: we see Lewis as a member of the company, through a gender-neutral social view, and we watch Vivian as a voyeur, with an eroticized, gender-biased gaze. Though both characters are partly defined by their social positions (and work), these roles are written on different surfaces: on Lewis's suit and Vivian's naked skin. Another significant difference is that while in the case of the male protagonist the body was shown only after *the name* was heard (that symbolic badge which establishes and fixes identity within the social matrix), the female protagonist does not have a name when she is introduced; she does not speak (does not have a voice of her own), is not spoken to – she is just a (pretty) sight. The spectator never learns the family name of Vivian; she is almost naked in this sense too since she does not wear the family name which could connect her to a family, a nexus of social relations, the father and his law. She is outside patriarchal order. When her name is asked, she usually responds with the question “What would you like it to be?” Her identity seems one hundred per cent reflexive, always mirroring her male clients' desires. This is one more factor that constitutes her as a fantasy being: Vivian is a flexible, elastic being, like a Barbie doll one can dress up in whatever costumes one fancies (Toffoletti 2007), a plastic template for erotic fantasies, someone who is no one since her imaginary pleasure-body-and-soul is not structured by symbolic identifications [Fig. 4]. In a way that smells a little bit of psychoses (and fulfils perfectly Lacan's definition of the *ex-centric* subject), she expects the definition of her self from the men around her. For her, men are the embodiments of the social-symbolic order (of the Lacanian Big Other), some kind of symbolic fathers. When she satisfies their desires, she creates a temporary identity for herself.

Thus, Vivien's plasticity puts the male spectator into a quite unique position (a position unavailable outside the realm of perversion in “real” life): he can be



Figure 3. Vivian's body is constructed as an erotic body of a collection of sexually invested fetishistic partial objects that cannot be totalized as a complete body or full human being

the (father-like) agent of the symbolic order and, at the same time, the subject who tastes the joys, the forbidden *jouissance* that was given up for the sake of that very order. In other words, the space of the film for a male spectator is an impossible one, a phantasmal space of completeness, one without lack, a space in which he can enjoy both the joys that are “normally” given up or disciplined and at the same time the (somasochistic) pleasure of identification with the order that makes one give up certain modes of enjoyment (this is what Lacan [1966] calls *plus-de-jouir* and Derrida calls “the hypereconomy of sacrifice” in *The Gift of Death* [1999]). The joys that the film can offer to spectators that identify with Vivian are somewhat simpler: they have to make do with the enjoyment of being an object of desire, a “pretty woman,” someone desired by both the charming millionaire and the cinematic gaze.

In a manner reminiscent of Laura Mulvey's classic formulation of gendered structures of cinematic processes, Lewis is seen in the first scene as an almost superhuman figure looking down on the world (the active, powerful subject of the gaze), while the identity of Vivian is defined by her passive *body as an erotic spectacle*, something to be watched and enjoyed by others (the passive object of the gaze). While Lewis's body is covered (which reflects the way it is constructed by symbolic figures), Vivian's one is always on show, a spectacle, a body of enjoyment created by erotic fantasies. While we can catch a glimpse of Lewis's face, Vivian (in this first scene) lacks both a complete body (that would signify a complete person) and a complete face that would guarantee the transcendental-ity of the personality in the Levinasian sense. In other words, the construction of Vivian's character through these images of her body lacks the metaphoric and metaphysical figurations that produce what we call a human being, the figurations that could unite the parts and supply them with a (non-bodily) centre: she is nothing but surface, spectacle, a collection of objects of vision and desire.

However, there is a “twist” to this all too familiar representational framework. Though the visual presentation of Vivian produces a plastic, non-hu-



Figure 4. Vivian's reflexive identity, always mirroring her male clients' desires

man female body without a(n ideal) centre or completeness, this body nevertheless remains *idealized*, even before the “necessarily” idealizing romantic plot really starts. Vivian’s body is as pure as it is eroticized: the film never shows Vivian as a “real” prostitute, her body is never used as that of a hooker is, no rough touch or harm may humiliate or degrade her. There is nothing transgressive about her; the boundaries of a “proper,” “nice” person are kept intact. Throughout the film, she remains pure, innocent, and uncorrupted. This “twisted” or paradoxical complexity of Vivian’s body is due to its twofold role in the film. On the one hand, it has to express something outside of, or alien to, order, it must signify a being who needs to be tamed, led into the normal order of things, something in which “we recognize and lose ourselves at the same time,” as Foucault says (quoted by Cahill 2000, 37). On the other hand, this body has to signify this above-mentioned outside of culture in a way that does not frighten or disillusion the spectator. It is only through the joint operation of these two expectations that Vivian may be simultaneously perceived as an object of idealized love *and* the promise of the beyond of order. The film is full of the clichés of the lovely, sexy but untamed, undisciplined body. She is the dream of the outside, the wishful fantasy of a real, living woman: she never scandalizes the spectator, everything that is supposed to be scandalous within the film is presented as funny, cute, and lovely. *Pretty Woman* wraps all sharp contours in wealth and happiness, all otherness in laughter and desire, and all the bodies in some kind of ideal, divine light. Thus, Vivian’s position, similarly to that of Lewis (discussed above), is one only available in the realm of perversion in “real” life: she is simultaneously a “wild one,” the embodiment of *jouissance*, a plastic toy to be enjoyed in innumerable ways, yet she is as pure as a saint or a child. The price of this fantasy construct is the effacement of the living body (which can get bruised, hurt, violated, or infected with venereal diseases), as well as the erasure of

symbolic (metaphysical) constructions of subjectivity (which would hinder the proliferation of fantasies about her).

Yet, not only the characters and the (pleasurable) fantasies surrounding them are created by different kinds of bodily representations. The story and its arc of character developments are also told mainly by bodies. The way the two poles start moving towards each other and Vivian is becoming more and more like a “normal” high-class lady while Lewis changes from a cynical shark into a complete human being with emotions and plans of constructing things are all explained chiefly through the bodies. Vivian is re-dressed like one re-dresses a Barbie doll; her old cheap and kinky clothes are changed for elegant, expensive ones; she shows less and less of her body, learns how to walk and talk, and throws away her blond wig, chewing gum, and extreme make-up. Her body and identity are gradually overwritten by the markers of the new social world that she enters. Though the film treats Lewis’s male body in a much more cautious way, his changes are also signified in similarly physical ways, by a new, less conservative tie or by his barefoot walk in the park.

Of course, in all these scenes, the body remains a signifier, one that always signifies something other than itself. The body is never meant to talk about itself, it is meant to produce and carry the (non-material) meanings of the film’s narrative. The body is, therefore, absent in its apparent presence. It is only apparently present: it is used, it is needed, but it remains an instrument from the beginning till the end. Its visibility and plasticity are always in the service of an invisible and ungraspable (un-real, phantasmal) meaning. The body is never allowed to start a life on its own, the meanings that it generates are always controlled by the ideological metanarrative. In this sense, commercial cinema remains true to its Platonic roots: it follows the representational paradigm in which the invisible and non-material are always more important and more highly ranked than the visible and the material. The meanings of this system of representation are always located, placed at the spot where the material or corporeal used to be; they are born at the price of the body’s effacement. Thus, in this sense, *Pretty Woman* highlights the paradoxical nature of filmmaking, that it is a *visual* system of representation that focuses on *invisible* meanings. It is a system in which everything that is shown stands in place of something hidden and covered, in which objects and bodies tend to be “dressed up” in metaphors and metonymies, symbols and fantasies (depending on their position in a gendered order), in which everything that seems to be material is always already something ideal. Everything that we see signifies something invisible, and when we watch these films properly, we see only these invisible entities, the things that cover the body as much as they cover our eyes.

Thus, as my analysis of the film’s corporeal representational strategies has indicated, our theories of visual pleasure need to be slightly reframed: there seems to be another layer beneath the surface of visual pleasures where cinematic enjoyment can be better defined as the joy of something ideal shining

through the material body, the pleasure of overcoming the visual, material body, which is closer to the religious ecstasy of transubstantiation than to that of eroticized voyeurism.

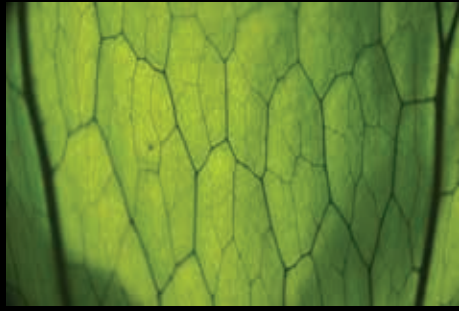
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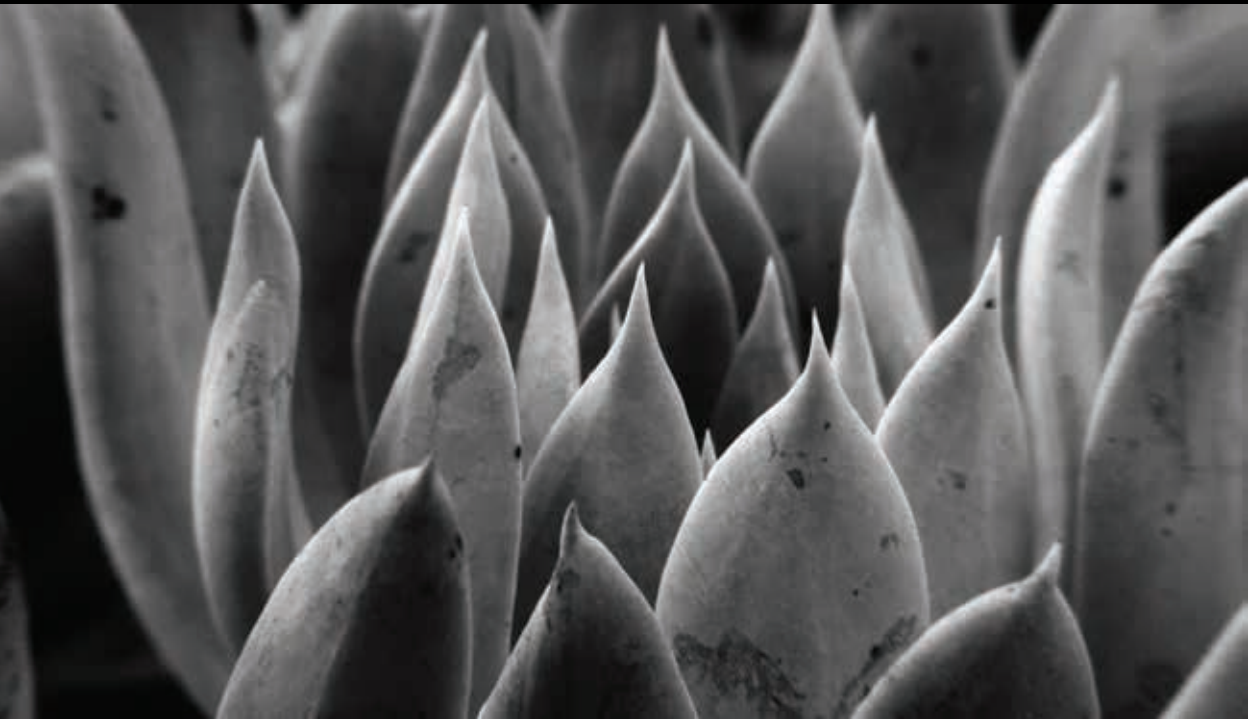
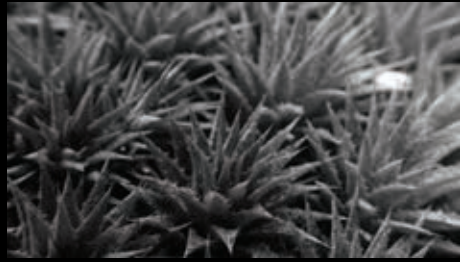
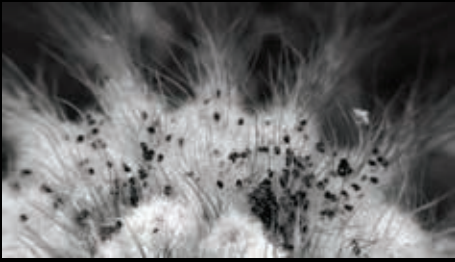
Zsófia Ferencz and Előd Török

5 x 5 Dedicated to Ágnes Pethő

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THE REAL AND THE INTERMEDIAL
A VALÓS ÉS AZ INTERMEDIÁLIS

Lúcia Nagib*

The Reality of Art: An Intermedial Analysis of *Ossessione*¹

This chapter explores film's intermedial dialogues with opera, a medium associated since Wagner with the concept of "total artwork." As Ágnes Pethő (2020, 42) has observed, intermediality seems indeed to chime – perhaps deceptively – with the Wagnerian ideal of the total work of art thanks to its focus on the correspondences between the different art forms. In the context of this chapter, however, "totality" must be dissociated from a Wagnerian absolutist endeavour as much as the totalitarianisms that led Europe into a world war in the 1940s. *Obsession* (*Ossessione*, Luchino Visconti, 1943), the film in question here, was born in the middle of the Second World War as the first cinematic rebellion against fascist propaganda, accomplished not least by bringing a then fashionable opera film genre down to the reality of life, or "the reality of art," as Visconti (1978, 84) famously put it.

Ossessione is a universally recognized masterpiece and foundational work of Italian Neorealism, the most influential film movement of all times, which has inspired new realist film currents and independent productions around the entire world. Accordingly, it has been scrutinized from a variety of angles by successive generations of scholars.² Yet, as is the case with any masterpiece of this magnitude, the possibilities of novel approaches to it are inexhaustible. In this chapter, I shall revisit the crucial topic of realism in *Ossessione* through a perspective hitherto underexplored in scholarship on the film, namely the contribution of opera and music to its realist endeavour.

As is well known, Visconti was an active opera and theatre director, occupations he maintained throughout his film-directing career and which had a profound effect on the way he directed actors and contributed to set and costume design, as well as to the general *mise-en-scène* of his films. However, probably because opera is perceived as a sophisticated, expensive, and extremely artificial

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1 This chapter is a condensed version of chapter 8 in Lúcia Nagib (2020), *Realist Cinema as World Cinema: Non-cinema, Intermedial Passages, Total Cinema*, 201–224. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

2 *biblioVisconti* in three volumes (ed. Antonella Montesi 2001–2009) compiles thousands of publications on Visconti and his films. Blom (2017a, 25 n61) also lists an extensive number of publications on Visconti in several European languages.

form of art and entertainment, attention to the operatic inflections of his oeuvre has hitherto been reserved to his ostensibly opulent films, focusing on aristocratic or royal dramas, such as *Senso* (1954) and *Ludwig* (1973), made long after the dissolution of the neorealist project. To all appearances, *Ossessione* falls out of the operatic bracket given its focus on the poor and partially illiterate echelons of the Italian population, composed of tramps, peddlers, innkeepers, and prostitutes, with emphasis on physical, rather than intellectual, phenomena, such as dirt, hunger, sex, sweat, and vomit. However, opera is not only played in the film's diegesis but is a key element of its plot.

From its very beginning, the film assails the spectator's senses with Giuseppe Rosati's loud, menacing non-diegetic orchestral music, played out here in the manner of an opera overture, over the tracking shot of a dirt road, as seen through the windscreen of a fast-moving truck. Strings and wind instruments swirl up and then cascade down repeatedly, ending with banging drums and screeching horns that anticipate the double deaths on the road ensuing from the adulterous love story that follows. Such onomatopoeic and symbolic musical motifs, rife in the opera genre, transition smoothly into the diegetic opera and other musical pieces played in the following scenes as a means to describe the main characters. The first of them is the Andante aria, *Di Provenza il mar il suol* (The Sea and Soil of Provence), from *La Traviata* by Giuseppe Verdi, sung by the innkeeper, Giuseppe Bragana, before his on-camera appearance, whose lyrics – a father's plea for his son to return home – present a remarkable parallel to his own story in the film (a subject explored later in this chapter). The other two protagonists are also linked to diegetic musical motifs, Bragana's wife, Giovanna, to a then popular song, Carlo Buti's "Fiorin Fiorello," which she also sings off-camera before being revealed to the viewer, as a kind of siren song that entices the wandering tramp, Gino Costa, into her husband's inn and bed; and Gino's tune played out on his harmonica, in the manner of American western heroes. A legion of other symbolic and ominous tunes and sounds populate the audio track, culminating in the central scene of the opera contest, in which the protagonists' fate is sealed against the backdrop of popular opera arias delivered by a succession of amateur singers.

Ascents and descents, sloping surfaces and rooftops suggesting falls and deaths are among the visual motifs borrowed from expressionist (and anti-realist) cinema in *Ossessione* (among its multiple film and art references), starting with the very film title displayed diagonally across the frame and lavishly expanded on by a camera choreography that travels low to explore the characters' ragged footwear and high to enhance the universal reach of their feelings and plights. The film's rollercoaster opening tune presents a perfect match to these visual motifs, which are suggestive of danger as much as providers of a link between the characters' low social status and mythical – in this case Oedipal – drama. As Gramsci (n/d: 1954) observes, a propos of Verdi, "Italian artistic 'democracy' had a musical, rather than literary, expression," creating a cultural vocabulary that circulated across all social classes, from aristocrats, such as Visconti, to roadside innkeepers as represented by Bragana in *Ossessione*. With

its array of humble opera and music lovers, singers and players, *Ossessione* provides eloquent illustration of this cultural phenomenon.

In fact, opera lies at the very genesis of the film. Just before engaging with an (unauthorized) adaptation – in collaboration with a host of legendary neorealist and literary personalities³ – of James Cain’s *The Postman Always Rings Twice* into what was initially known as *Palude* (or *Marshes*) and then *Ossessione*, Visconti had contributed to the directing, designing, and editing of *Tosca* (also known in English as *The Story of Tosca* – Carl Koch and Jean Renoir, 1941), a film adapted from the play *La Tosca* by Victorien Sardou and its opera version, *Tosca*, by Giacomo Puccini on a libretto by Luigi Illica and Giuseppe Giacosa. Moreover, as Blom (2017b, 150) reminds us, in the 1930s, in fascist Italy, it was fashionable to make films with opera singers or adapting operas to the screen. This combines with an artist who himself claimed – according to his biographer Laurence Schifano (1990, 40) – to have been “born 2 November 1906, at eight o’clock in the evening [an hour before] the curtain went up at La Scala on the umpteenth première of *La Traviata*.”

The pride of place given to *La Traviata* in Visconti’s very first film as a director testifies to his life-long devotion to Verdi, which would resurface in his later works, notably in *The Leopard* (*Il Gattopardo*, 1963), in the form of the hitherto unpublished “Valzer Brillante” by Verdi, discovered by Visconti and played out in an adaptation by Nino Rota for the famous ball dance between Burt Lancaster and Claudia Cardinale. Visconti’s own career as an opera director climaxed with the staging of *La Traviata* at La Scala in Milan in 1955, starring the world’s most celebrated diva, Maria Callas, as Violetta Valéry and Giuseppe di Stefano as Alfredo Germont.

Despite all evidence, however, the structuring presence of opera and music in *Ossessione* continues to be either overlooked or misinterpreted as a satirical device. Fabbri (2019, 19), for example, explains away the use of opera in the film as a means of ridiculing Bragana and his love of Verdi, “an author who, with his tales of lost homelands, is crucial to the development of Italian nationalism.” Blom’s (2017b) first serious analysis of the hitherto little seen and underestimated film *Tosca* perceptively locates procedures of narrative suspense which Visconti would expand on in *Ossessione*, some of them concerning sound, but stops short of noticing the operatic links between the two films. Taking advantage of this gap in Viscontian scholarship, my argument here will be that opera – and the use of music in general – in *Ossessione* is perhaps where realism is most profoundly at play, a realism derived from the “reality of art,” to use Visconti’s expression in his 1943 manifesto *Anthropomorphic Cinema* (1978, 84).

3 The “official” collaborators on *Ossessione*’s screenplay are: Mario Alicata, Antonio Pietrangeli, Gianni Puccini, Giuseppe de Santis, and Luchino Visconti. However, *biblio-Visconti* (2009, 263) cites a host of other confirmed and non-confirmed collaborators, including Alberto Moravia, Mario Puccini, Michelangelo Antonioni, and Sergio Grieco, demonstrating the team work prevailing in those days of fight for liberation.

Deceptive Realisms

Ossessione's realism seemed so raw at the time that it caused, as the legend goes, film patron Vittorio Mussolini (Benito's son) to storm out of the film's preview, shouting: "This is not Italy!" (Schifano 1990, 179–180). But where exactly does the film's realism reside? *Ossessione* is far from Cesare Zavattini's (1978) idea of the ultimate neorealist film, in which the story has been abolished and cinema is a mere observer of everyday life, "a life," in André Bazin's famous words, "during which nothing happens" (2009, 103). There is nothing quotidian in this film's highly melodramatic and action-packed story. Right at the beginning, Giovanna, the wife of the innkeeper Giuseppe Bragana, entices into the inn and seduces the drifter Gino Costa, whom she tries to involve in a plan to eliminate her husband. Unable to take Giovanna away with him, Gino hits the road again by himself and meets, on a train, the peddler Spagnolo, who also immediately falls for him and takes him under his wing. Rediscovered by Bragana on a fairground in Ancona, Gino rejoins the couple and attends the opera contest from which Bragana comes out victorious. Again coaxed by Giovanna, Gino ends up killing Bragana in a simulated car accident. From here onwards, the story takes on an air of film noir, with detectives constantly on the lookout for Gino, while he tries again to escape Giovanna's grip by becoming involved with the prostitute-dancer Anita. Gino ends up returning to Giovanna, who is now pregnant by him, and both run away in Bragana's truck, but they suffer an accident, this time for real, in which Giovanna is killed.

Thus, narrative-wise, *Ossessione* is closer to the Hollywood crime dramas of the time than to the documentary realism that would soon become the staple of Italian cinema. In terms of character construction, it takes even further distance from documentary reality by adhering to the myth. Gino, an unlikely Adonis in rags, irresistible to women and men alike, falls prey, like in the Oedipus complex, to the Jocasta-like figure of Giovanna, a scheming enchantress, younger than her husband Bragana, but clearly older than Gino and a commanding mother figure to him. Bragana, in turn, feels an immediate and inexplicable fatherly attachment to Gino, a kinship at the centre of the Andante aria of *La Traviata* he constantly sings, in which a father begs his son to return home. Nonetheless, Gino ends up killing him. Finally, as usual in Greek tragedy, fate intervenes to punish the culprits, here with the death of the woman, the typical punitive closure of the opera genre, as Catherine Clément (1989) has famously pointed out.

In terms of mode of production, *Ossessione* apparently abides by some key tenets of cinematic realism, as defined by André Bazin, such as on-location shooting and the frequent use of long shots and long takes aimed at preserving the space-time continuity of the profilmic event. Nonetheless, a high degree of manipulation can be detected as regards the locations in the Po Valley, within the Emilia Romagna region, in Northeast Italy – which would become recurrent in Italian cinema thereafter –, whose various towns are abundantly cited by name with geographic coherence: Ancona, Codigoro, Ferrara, Polesella, etc. This is

one of the most fertile and wealthy regions in the country, and yet it is shown here as a barren, dusty, and desolate landscape, inhabited solely by the poor.

Another traditional realist procedure at the point of production is non-professional acting, which Visconti will adopt in his next film, *The Earth Trembles* (*La terra trema*, 1948), set in Aci Trezza, a small fishing village in Sicily, featuring exclusively non-professional actors cast from among the local population. In *Ossessione*, however, there is a considerable degree of betrayal of this principle given that the majority of actors with any speaking role are professionals. Gino is played by Massimo Girotti, a rising star in Italian cinema at the time, who from *Tosca* onwards will appear in several Visconti films. Giovanna is played by a 1930s Italian cinema celebrity, Clara Calamai, replacing the formidable Anna Magnani, originally cast, who became pregnant just before shooting started. This star-studded mode of production was not foreign to the neorealist movement developed thereafter. Though a defender of non-professional acting, Bazin himself was aware of the high number of professionals featuring in neorealist films, not least Magnani, the queen of melodrama, who stars in the neorealist landmark *Rome, Open City* (*Roma città aperta*, Roberto Rossellini, 1945); he, however, accepted this fact provided their professionalism was kept at the service of realism (Bazin 2011, 36). Visconti, too, in his 1943 manifesto *Anthropomorphic Cinema*, though championing non-professional acting, concedes to the use of professionals so long as there could be a unity between “the man-actor and the man-character” (1978, 84).

Bazin was also aware of the importance of the subjective “reality of the actor,” whose larger-than-life personas, as in the case of his idols Eric von Stroheim, Michel Simon, and Falconetti, offered themselves to a documentary approach. In this respect, then, he chimes with Visconti’s search for the “human reality” of the actors themselves, perhaps even above the “fascinating simplicity” that makes non-professionals more “genuinely sane” and “better men,” as Visconti states in his manifesto (1978, 84). In *Ossessione*, however, the numerous local extras are given next to no opportunity to demonstrate these qualities, serving instead, in most cases, as a decorative audience in the background for the utterly theatrical, often literally operatic drama taking place in the foreground, as enacted by thoroughly accomplished professionals. Indeed, the long shots abundantly employed in the film as a means to contextualize the characters in a real world always include extras engaged in extraneous activities, such as playing cards, playing bocce, serving customers, having meals, or threshing wheat, while the main action takes place in the foreground. They are undoubtedly displayed with exquisite pictorial sense and stunning mastery of detail in a film by a first-time director. But this very compositional care excludes all spontaneous documentary capture, changing the spontaneous presentation of reality into its staged representation.

Alongside the artifice introduced by professional acting, the actors’ voices, together with the whole soundscape, are the result of manipulation given that the entire film was post-synchronized, as was the rule at the time, when direct sound recording was a rarity. This means that all actors were dubbed, either by themselves or by others. Calamai, Girotti, and other Italian actors in the film are dubbed by themselves; however, Juan de Landa, who plays Bragana, was

a Spanish-Basque actor, whose name was made through his work in Spanish parodies of Hollywood films. In his numerous performances in Italian films, he had to be dubbed by others due to his foreign accent. He even had a regular dubber, Mario Besesti, himself an actor and a legend in the Italian dubbing world for his powerful voice, suitable for corpulent actors such as Charles Laughton as much as the rotund de Landa. His foreignness, notwithstanding, in *Ossessione* de Landa was given the role of the quintessential Italian character, an accomplished patriot who includes in his cherished possessions the feathered helmet from when he fought with the Sixth Regiment of the Bersaglieri, which defended Italy in the First World War. It is the realization that Gino had also been a Bersagliere, thus a “figlio de La Marmora” (or the son of the famous founder of this military unit, Alessandro Ferrero La Marmora), which legitimizes Bragana’s instant comradeship towards him.

Thus, in order to fully grasp *Ossessione*’s realist effect, one must look beyond the film’s deceptive surface, and, as I suggest, into the art historical realism inherent in it.

Art Historical Realisms

Several intradiegetic opera pieces are heard in *Ossessione*, the most significant of which is the aria *Andante*, of Verdi’s *La Traviata*, which constitutes a leitmotiv and a narrative theme in the film, as will be discussed in the next section. As far as realism is concerned, this choice could not be more appropriate given that *La Traviata* marks a realist turn in Verdi’s career and the history of opera as a whole. It is an adaptation of Alexandre Dumas fils’ novel and play *La Dame aux camélias* (in English, *Camille* [consulted edition: 2004]) with which Verdi became acquainted during a sojourn in Paris in the mid-nineteenth century. Based on Dumas fils’ own love affair with courtesan Marie Duplessis, the story revolves around a consumptive *demi-mondaine*, Marguerite Gautier (changed into Violetta Valéry in the opera), who inspires both ardent passions and social reprobation. This down-to-earth, even scandalous story for its time gave Verdi an opportunity to put aside the revolutionary and patriotic themes hitherto prevailing in his oeuvre in favour of a more realistic and contemporary narrative. Bianchi (2013) highlights how psychological tendencies in French realist literature, by the likes of Émile Zola, overlapped with the highly symbolic, even mythical elements of Italian *verismo*, as exemplified in opera by Puccini and in literature by Giovanni Verga. The contrasting tendencies towards myth on the one hand and realism on the other, so apparent in *Ossessione*, are probably what attracted Visconti to Verga’s novella *L’amante di Gramigna* (first published in 1880 [consulted edition: 2017]) in his first serious attempt at a film directorial debut, which failed to materialize but is recorded in a fully-fledged script, written in collaboration with Giuseppe de Santis and Gianni Puccini, both of whom would subsequently contribute to his adaptation of Cain’s *The Postman Always Rings Twice* (Micciché 1990, 24). Confirming his attachment to *verismo*, Visconti’s next film, *The Earth Trembles*, would be a loose adaptation of Verga’s

major work, *I Malavoglia*. Carl Dahlhaus (2009, 64) describes Verdi's *La Traviata* as "a realist enclave in an oeuvre which as a whole is representative of Italian romanticism." The same could be said about *Ossessione*, a realist enclave within Visconti's openly operatic films, such as *Tosca*, *Senso*, and *Ludwig*. More remarkably, *Ossessione*'s particular brand of realism resulted from an Italo-French connection in all respects similar to that which, a century earlier, had given birth to *La Traviata*.

As is well known, Visconti's entrance into cinema is a result of his acquaintance with Jean Renoir's filmmaking and left-wing politics in France in the mid-1930s. Thanks to Renoir, in Visconti's words, he "realized that films could be the way to touch on truths we were very far away from, especially in Italy" (Schifano 1990, 143). In turn, Renoir, since the introduction of sound in cinema, had concentrated on themes and modes of realism developed in dialogue with French realist and naturalist novelists such as Gustave Flaubert, Émile Zola, and Guy de Maupassant, all of whom were regulars at his painter-father Auguste's home (Andrew 2018, 128–129) and some of whose works he would adapt to the screen. One of these adaptations was Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, directed by Renoir in 1934, a story of a love triangle within a provincial context similar to that of *Ossessione* and with obvious formal influences on it. Renoir's realist style is often associated with the apex of French "poetic realism," whose main features are summarized by Dudley Andrew, with reference to Marcel Carné's 1938 *Port of Shadows* (*Le Quai des brumes*) and *Hôtel du Nord*, as "evocative locations, characters from the lower social class, a downbeat ending, and a quartet of fabulous actors" (1995, 3).

As much as some of Renoir's films, Visconti's *Ossessione* is very much in line with this description, with its evocative locations in the Po Valley, low social class characters, tragic ending, and "the quartet of fabulous actors," Clara Calamai (Giovanna), Massimo Girotti (Gino Costa), Juan de Landa (Giuseppe Bragana), and Elio Marcuzzo (Lo Spagnolo), whose outstanding performances mark the peak of their careers. Having met Renoir through the mediation of fashion designer Coco Chanel, Visconti immediately started to collaborate in his films, being credited as trainee in *Toni* (1935) and as third assistant and prop man in *A Day in the Country* (*Une partie de campagne*, 1936), as well as making an uncredited contribution to the set design of *The Lower Depths* (*Les Bas-fonds*, 1936) (Schifano 1990, 144–145; Micciché 1996, 5). Connecting all these films is Renoir's preference for on-location shooting, depth-of-field cinematography, and long takes (as much as allowed by the technology of the time), all of which were hailed by Bazin and the young *Cahiers du Cinéma* critics as typical realist devices. Thanks to his connections with Visconti, Renoir is often seen as a precursor of Italian Neorealism (Reader 2013, 445). Renoir and his group of friends and collaborators were also responsible for changing Visconti into a life-long communist, at a time when he was "not a full-fledged Fascist, but a fascist fellow-traveller [...] Someone who knew nothing and understood nothing. Someone whose eyes, in politics, were as closed as those of newborn kittens" (Visconti apud Schifano 1990, 147).

Official Realism and *Tosca*

At the same time, in Italy, the fascist government was busy drafting its own recipe of cinematic realism (see Fabbri 2019, 7). Film buff Vittorio Mussolini, in the role of director of the film production company Era-Film and editor-in-chief of the magazine *Cinema*, was a keen promoter of a realist-style drawing on the official culture's "lacquered, inert and jingoistic vision" (Micciché 1996, 6), at the heart of which was the idea of Italy's racial unity. Paradoxically, however, in the early 1940s, *Cinema* became an organ of fascist opposition, in whose pages Visconti (in unacknowledged collaboration with Gianni Puccini) published his two famous humanist manifestoes, *Corpses* (1941) and *Anthropomorphic Cinema* (1943), as well as the scripts at the basis of *Ossessione* (Micciché 1996, 6). Another apparent paradox was Vittorio Mussolini's enthusiasm for Renoir, whose left-leaning films had met with censorship in Italy but whose *The Great Illusion* (*La grande illusion*, 1937) had been a hit at the Venice Film Festival. As Blom (2017b, 151) details, in the late 1930s, French cinema had occupied the vacuum left by the interdiction of Hollywood films in Italy, and it is in the wake of this phenomenon that Vittorio invited Renoir to shoot a screen adaptation of the opera *La Tosca*. According to Blom (2017b, 151), this came at a convenient time for Renoir, who was reeling from the critical and commercial failure of his latest *The Rules of the Game* (*La Règle du jeu*, 1939) in France and whose political position had recently shifted from communism and the Popular Front to liberal humanism, under the influence – Blom suggests – of his new Catholic Brazilian partner, Dido Freire, whom he had met during the shoot of *The Rules of the Game* (2017b, 151). Renoir immediately liaised with his friend Visconti for collaboration on *Tosca*, and Blom gives a detailed account of the process of location scouting led by the latter. Real locations were key for Renoir, who "wanted to give the film a documentary-like character," as if "the cinematographer already existed in the 1800s" (Blom 2017b, 154). Realism was also sought for through cinematography, here in the hands of experienced DoP Ubaldo Arata, a master of long takes, crane and tracking shots, who would direct the photography of another neorealist milestone, *Rome, Open City*.

In the meantime, however, Italy declared war on France, and Renoir had to hurriedly return home after overseeing only five on-location takes for *Tosca*. The role of film director was then taken over by German filmmaker Carl Koch, who had previously collaborated as co-scriptwriter and assistant director in Renoir's *The Rules of the Game*. The copy of *Tosca* circulating in Italy today credits Koch as the film director (alongside Jean Renoir), Lotte Reiniger (Koch's film-animator wife) and Luchino Visconti as his "artistic collaborators," and Ciro Betrone as his "technical and editing collaborator." Whatever their actual roles were in the film, the result was felt as "realist" by the young *Cahiers du Cinéma* critic and future filmmaker Jacques Rivette (in Bazin 1971, 260), who praised the realism of *Tosca* specifically with reference to those shots directed by Renoir, which are also the film's opening shots, following the initial credits.

The fact remains, however, that the changes occurred during the shoot could not but result in a hybrid, uneven aesthetics that made Visconti reject the film (Schifano 1990, 163; Blom 2017b, 150). Nonetheless, *Tosca* remains a highly interesting case of different, at times conflicting, “realisms,” which will then reappear – already perfectly integrated with and almost indistinguishable from one another – in *Ossessione*. Suffice it to look at the takes of *Tosca* overseen by Renoir and conducted by Arata in an exquisite combination of tracking shots, pans and crane shots, pursuing the horsemen carrying a message from the queen to baron Scarpia. The aim of these takes is to describe the monumental Palazzo Farnese and Castel Sant’Angelo, including detailed visual surveys of statues decorating the fountains and the bridge to the Palazzo, some of them edited into the footage for visual effect only, since they do not make geographical sense with the locations (Blom 2017b). If there is realism in the capture of this Roman imagery, including some stray cats and the then unusual live-recorded sound of the horses’ hoofs on the stone pavement, this is also entirely in tune with the fascist nationalism and racial ideals then informing the official concept of cinematic realism. Granted, these initial location shots animate with real life the static prints of Roman scenes and monuments on which the initial titles are superimposed. But over these titles what conveys actual, physical realism is Mafalda Favero’s sensational rendering of *Vissi d’arte* (*I lived for art*), the famous aria sung by the opera’s heroine, Tosca (who is a singer in the story), in praise of art and love. Favero does not feature in person in the film, which is also the case of Ferruccio Tagliavini, the singer of Scarpia’s part, but both are credited in the initial title cards as stars, not of the film but of the opera played in the sound track. This beginning, therefore, displays documentary realism, official realism, and the reality of art (in this case, that of opera) in perfectly distinguishable form.

Operatic Realism and the Reality of Art

Now let us revisit *Ossessione*’s beginning, where the three types of realism pointed out in *Tosca* can be identified in perfectly integrated form. After the title sequence with the dramatic incidental music by Giuseppe Rosati, the film cuts to the truck stationed outside Bragana’s inn, called Dogana (or “Customs”). The truck driver hoots for attendance, and we hear Bragana’s voice singing the *Andante* of *La Traviata*. The driver and the other passenger get off the truck and quench their thirst from a bottle they get from a compartment next to the truck’s front door. The men’s humble, working outfits and their gestures, including the pouring of the bottle’s liquid straight into their throats, their wiping of the sweat on their face and neck with a handkerchief, and the barren, dusty scenery around them, including some chickens crossing the frame, compose the typical realist contextual description that situates the characters socially, culturally, and geographically. The fact that the scene takes place out of doors and on a real, apparently unadorned location configures realism as a mode of production so treasured by Bazin and subsequent neorealist films.



Figure 1. *Ossessione*: Gino's face is finally revealed to us: one of the most handsome men ever shown on screen.

The driver has to call Bragana again, this time by name – denoting familiarity –, and finally Bragana's singing and the accompanying piano sound stop to make room for Bragana's entrance into the scene, coming through the bead curtain of his trattoria's front door – as if he were appearing from the backstage onto the main stage of a theatre to greet the audience. Because of all the other Renoir-style social-realist elements in the scene, Bragana's theatrical entrance and operatic contours are entirely naturalized, contributing to, rather than clashing against, the general reality effect.

Bragana's chat with the truck men is about his own broken-down truck and about sound – the sound of customers' hooting, disturbing him even during the night – and about chickens too, whose allegorical functions encompass his ex-combatant credentials (mentioned above with relation to his feathered helmet) and manhood. The three men then discover Gino still asleep amidst the hay bales on the back of the truck. His face is hidden by a hat and, as he is chased out of the truck, a famous crane shot captures him from behind, searching his pockets and making a slow entrance into the inn for food. From the heights of the crane the camera descends to peruse Gino's ragged shoes as he makes his way into the place, and another customer's pair of dogs (a black, bony dog and a heavily pregnant bitch) sniff his feet suggesting smell, when he is then attracted by another singing, "Fiorin, fiorello" – "flower, little flower/love is beautiful near you" –, in a woman's – Giovanna's – voice and turns to the kitchen.

Another semi-open curtain separates Gino from the kitchen, where he now enters to inspect, so to say, the theatre's backstage. There he finds Giovanna, though his body hides her from our sight except for her feet in clogs hanging from the table where she is sitting. A reverse shot then presents her to us as she looks at the intruding tramp for a first and then a second time, when Gino's face is finally revealed to us, focused on in a zoom that highlights his perfect features and clear, shiny eyes: one of the most handsome men ever shown on screen [Fig. 1].

Gino will then nonchalantly enter the kitchen and try the food from the saucepan with his fingers. Just like his character Massimo in *Tosca*, he will proceed to take off his ragged jacket – under the pretext that “it is hot here!” – revealing a minimal filthy vest and exposing his shoulders, which are compared by Giovanna to “those of a stallion.” Sculptural beauty without any comparable sculptures around, singing and theatrical devices combined with the lowest physical levels of life, including dirty clothing, smelly feet, hunger, and sex drive, again naturalize all representational artifice, not least the official racial realism apparent in *Tosca*. Thus Gino’s perfect, god-like features, rather unlikely in that milieu, could be seen as the very representation of a new realism, for example, by *Ossessione*’s assistant director Antonio Pietrangeli, who reportedly said: “Shall we ourselves baptize Gino in *Ossessione*? We could call him, if you like, Italian neo-realism” (Nowell-Smith 2003, 26).

Blom (2017b, 163) notices in *Tosca* the procedure of making a character’s voice precede their on-camera appearance: for example, the voice of Renoir’s regular actor and screen legend Michel Simon, in the role of Scarpia, is heard before his face is introduced to the viewer several scenes later, and even then with a further delay of an extraordinary cone-shaped mask that covers it while his hair is being powdered by a servant. The prevalence of the aural over the visual sense is used here as a cinematic device of suspense construction which delays the revelation of a protagonist played by a great star. In *Ossessione*, this device is further sophisticated with the addition of opera singing by the characters themselves, most notably by Bragana, in a gesture that characterizes opera as the very origin of his (and the film’s) drama. Unlike *Tosca*, where opera runs on a parallel, extradiegetic track to the story, in *Ossessione* it fuses with the diegesis through the character of Bragana, whose recurrent singing of the Andante of *La Traviata* summarizes a key element of the plot: his inexplicable and irresistible fatherly attachment to Gino, who is, however, having a torrid affair with his own wife, as I shall now explain.

Opera as the utmost reality of the characters reaches apotheosis during the opera contest scene, significantly located in the middle of the film at the story’s turning point. After resuming his wandering life without Giovanna, who preferred the security of her husband’s home, Gino accidentally bumps into her and her husband again, as previously mentioned, on a fairground in Ancona, where he was peddling with Spagnolo. Ecstatic with the reunion, Bragana reprehends Gino for having left their home and drags him to the opera contest at the Caffé Amici del Bel Canto, where he, among several amateur singers, finally has the opportunity to exhibit his talent. This episode is lifted, with minor changes, from James Cain’s novel, but it is also entirely in tune with the lyrics of the Andante of *La Traviata* sung by Bragana, in which the character of old Georges Germont implores his son, Alfredo – fallen captive to courtesan Violetta – to return with him to their native Provence, in verses such as: “Ah, your old father/ You don’t know how much he has suffered!/ With you far away, with misery/has his house become full.”



Figure 2. *Osessione*: Bragana sings his cherished Andante from *La Traviata*.

The scene in the café depicts opera as entrenched in the characters' lives. The sense of opera's immense popularity among that society is conveyed through the realist devices of the long take and the long shot, here combined in a dazzling near-double 360° pan, lasting a full minute without a cut. The camera starts by focusing on a poster on the café wall, announcing the lyric contest. It then pans to the right, where it captures on the stage the decrepit female pianist and the row of contestants of all ages and genders sitting in chairs next to one another and fanning themselves in the overcrowded place. A female singer is standing and delivering the famous *Habanera* aria from Bizet's *Carmen*, which warns against the dangers of love. The pan continues, surveying, past the stage, the packed venue, with crammed tables and standing customers occupying all available space, until it reaches the café's entrance, where Bragana, Giovanna, and Gino are coming in. The camera follows them past the contest poster, where it had started the pan, and proceeds as the three make their way through the crowd towards a vacant table, continuing to capture Bragana giving his name to the jury board and climbing up onto the stage, where he takes a seat. This formidable long take situates in an unbroken time and space unit the drama going on between the three protagonists, whose mad love and betrayal are described in the various arias. The following contestant delivers an Italian version of the aria *Je crois entendre encore* (*I think I still hear*), from Bizet's opera *The Pearl Fishers* (*Les Pêcheurs de perle*), whose subject-matter is the love of two inseparable friends for the same woman. Then it is Bragana's turn to sing his cherished *Andante* from *La Traviata* [Fig. 2].

As he delivers it, reverse shots show the barely repressed passionate dialogue between Gino and Giovanna, who must find a way out of their ménage à trois.

Meanwhile, Bragana's performance is infused with the same pathos observed in Cain's novel about the betrayed Greek husband on whom his character is based: "He had a tenor voice, not one of these little tenors like you hear on the

radio, but a big tenor, and on the high notes he would put in a sob like on a Caruso record” (Cain 1992, 8).

Sobbing notes, a common melodramatic ornament in bel canto, have been identified in *La Traviata* by Carl Dahlhaus (2009, 68) as a realist device that jet-tisons formal tradition “for the sake of dramatic truth.” Bragana’s singing is littered with these sobbing notes, characterizing both his pride in singing and genuine feelings. He is followed, on stage, by a hilarious contestant, an adolescent whose breaking voice turns the sobbing effect into the very reality of his body morphing into adulthood, while delivering the aria *È il sol del’anima* (*Love Is the Sunshine of the Soul*), from Verdi’s *Rigoletto*, holding the hand of an old lady – his mother, perhaps, or even grandmother – standing for his implausible lover but also evidencing opera as a family, day-to-day affair. Social realism is written all over this entire scene, where opera is naturalized as the privileged and authentic expression of the Italian populace.

The film, moreover, though an inaugural work, contains the total artwork drive that characterizes Visconti’s most ambitious works. It is not the scope of this chapter to dissect the myriad artistic – particularly painterly and sculptural – citations and models that inform it. Modigliani, Cézanne, and expressionist painters can be easily detected in the scene compositions, set and costume design in this film, which also contains endless cinephilic references – obviously to Renoir, but also to Chaplin, westerns, film noir, and German expressionism. Like the extensive use of opera, other arts and films within *Ossessione* are there to bring to the fore, beyond social injustice and the plight of the poor, the universal human drama, whose palpable reality can be best expressed and experienced through art.

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Cecília Mello*

Jia Zhangke and Liu Xiaodong: An Intermedial Encounter with Reality

In the past two decades, Jia Zhangke, seen as the main representative of the sixth generation of Chinese cinema, has emerged as one of the world's most innovative and important film directors. From the 1990s onwards, his cinema has played a crucial role in documenting and reflecting upon China's era of intense transformations, which began in the late 1970s with Deng Xiaoping's "reform and opening-up" policy. As I have suggested elsewhere (Mello 2019), a belief in cinema's natural inclination towards realism transforms Jia's camera into a source of power. On the other hand, this articulation of reality shares aesthetic resources with other Chinese artistic traditions, which are able to unearth a memory both personal and collective, still lingering within the ever-changing landscapes of contemporary China. Jia's poetics, therefore, stems from the amalgamation of a realist impulse and cinema's impure essence, and it opens a door into China's complex reality at a time when the country is at the centre of the world's attention. This not only confirms the hybrid nature of cinema but also the complex web of temporalities that exists in Jia's films, capable of containing both the China of globalization and the China of millennial traditions.

Within Jia Zhangke's highly engaging oeuvre, one of his most overtly intermedial films is the documentary *Dong* (2006), dedicated to the work of renowned painter Liu Xiaodong, one of the main exponents of the so-called Chinese New Realism of the 1990s. This is now a sort of companion piece to Jia's famous feature film *Still Life* (*San Xia Hao Ren*, 2006), winner of the Golden Lion for Best Film at the Venice International Film Festival of 2006. Both films were shot in Fengjie County, located in the southwest of China, but the documentary came first in this genealogy, drawing the director to the region to observe and to film Liu Xiaodong in action composing a large-scale collective portrait of migrant workers engaged in the demolition of a city soon to be flooded by the Three Gorges Dam's reservoir. *Dong* is therefore a film moved by the desire to observe a work of art in progress, from the placement of the "models" in a certain pose to the stroke of Liu's brush in the vast canvas. It is composed of two parts, the first happening in Fengjie and the second in Bangkok, Thailand, where Liu is seen composing a second large-scale collective portrait, only this time of 12 bargirls. The paintings are called *Hot Bed No. 1* (温床1) and *Hot Bed No. 2* (温床 2), the Chinese term *wenchuang* having a

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similar meaning to its English translation, meaning both “hot bed” in agriculture (a bed of soil covered with glass or plastic) and “hot bed” figuratively, a breeding ground that promotes the growth of something unwelcome.¹

Liu Xiaodong was born in 1963 in Liaoning, China, in a small industrial town called Jincheng. He moved to Beijing when he was 17 to study art at the Chinese Academy of Fine Arts (CAFA), where he finished a BA in Fine Arts in oil painting in 1988 and an MA in oil painting in 1995. Between 1998 and 1999, he continued his studies at the Academy of Fine Arts in Madrid, Spain. He has since had many solo exhibitions in China and abroad and now holds a tenure as a professor in the painting department at CAFA. Director Jia Zhangke also teaches at the same institution, and the two artists are not only from the same generation but also long-term friends and collaborators. Liu Xiaodong’s connection with cinema harks back to the early 1990s, when he began working with artists connected to the Chinese Independent Film Movement. As an actor, he played the lead role in *The Days* (*Dong Chun De Ri Zi*), Wang Xiaoshuai’s debut film from 1993, and in the same year he also worked as art director for *Beijing Bastards*, directed by Zhang Yuan.

Both *The Days* and *Beijing Bastards* are landmark films of what became known as the sixth generation of Chinese cinema, emerging from the trauma of Tiananmen (1989) and signalling a shift from the previous fifth generation of filmmakers such as Chen Kaige and Zhang Yimou. The sixth generation, spearheaded by Wang, Zhang, as well as Lou Ye and a little later Jia Zhangke, was mainly concerned with contemporary issues set in a historical and urban landscape (Xudong 2010). Its realist turn meant a penchant for images and themes that expressed feelings of alienation, anguish, a certain revolt against the status quo and dealt with contentious issues such as alcoholism, prostitution, sex, drugs, and violence. This emphasis on a youth subculture was hitherto largely absent from Chinese cinema, and it is no wonder many of these films were banned in China while being secretly taken to Europe to be shown at festivals.

That Liu Xiaodong was involved in the work of the sixth generation from the start is not incidental, and it actually attests to his own artistic credentials, operating under similar realist premises. His figurative art has been seen as tributary to Chinese Socialist Realism, whose legacy can be attested in his usual choice of subject-matter – workers at work, so-called ordinary people in large-scale portraits, painted with casual brushstrokes and captured *en plein air*. In various interviews and documentaries about his work, Liu has stressed the importance of the connection between people and landscape: “Society and art,” he says, “should be like breathing – one breathes in and the other breathes out” (2008). And more recently, in an interview for *Art21*: “A common thing among artists is that they are in love with this world. That’s why they paint part of the world that touches them. ... This world has stimulated me, what can I do in return?” (2020). Attuned to the importance of place and landscape in relation to contemporary issues such

1 The ancient meaning of the term also referred to children warming the bed for their parents as filial piety.

as immigration, border tensions, and the environment, Liu's work method also speaks of his realist impulse, being reliant on the extensive use of photographs of real people and real spaces, whose indexicality will then inform its iconic translation onto the canvas. Significantly, he has been called a "documentary painter," and his diaries and photographs often accompany his gallery exhibitions.

The union of two realist artists in *Dong* invites a reflection on the proximity between painting and cinema through the documentary impulse and through intermediality. The obvious reference here is Henri-Georges Clouzot's *The Mystery of Picasso* (*Le Mystère Picasso*, 1956), considered by André Bazin (2002) as a perfect example of ontological realism, where the painter is not "explained" but shown in action. In Lúcia Nagib's words, the filming of a work of art in progress, where production becomes concomitant with its reproduction, "celebrates reality as captured through the cracks of representation, thus offering the living proof of art's physical link with the historical contingent" (Nagib 2011, 158). Realism and reality are thus at the heart of Liu Xiaodong and Jia Zhangke's art, in the same way that intermediality – understood here as the relationship between different art forms – also defines their poetics. I argue that the documentary *Dong* is exemplary of what Ágnes Pethő has termed "paradoxes (?) of an intermedial cinema of immediacy," with the interrogation mark signalling the incertitude of the paradox between the real and the intermedial in the cinema – a claim that can be extended to Liu's painting. Both *Dong* and Liu Xiaodong's work seen in progress in the film are re-mediations of the real which employ "markedly intermedial techniques," but that "fold back to the 'redemption of physical reality'" (Pethő 2020, xxiv). Pethő's powerful insight into the unparadoxical pairing of intermediality and immediacy opens up a new understanding of the relationship between cinema, painting, and reality, and it shows how cinema's impure essence and its indexical nature are, in fact, intertwined. Intermediality, she argues, has a sensual nature, it is "deeply grounded in the complex experiences of the embodied spectator and the inter-sensuality of perception" (2020, xxiv). Therefore, it also implies immediacy and is open to reality.

***Shanshuihua* – Mural Painting and Socialist Realism in Liu and Jia**

Both *Dong* and *Still Life* are paradigmatic of how Jia Zhangke's cinema combines the real and the intermedial in non-paradoxical ways. Filmed on location in the Three Gorges region, both films take place in Fengjie, a 2000-year-old city on the brink of being submerged by the reservoir of the Three Gorges Dam and in the course of being torn down to allow the new waterway to be fully navigable, as well as for the recycling of bricks and other construction material. Liu Xiaodong, the demolition workers and the characters in *Still Life* all move around against the backdrop of derelict buildings, collapsing walls, piles of rubble and rocks [Fig. 1].

Behind the grandeur of the project of the Three Gorges power plant – today the biggest one in the world – lay one of China's most iconic landscapes, formed by the three Yangtze gorges, and whose importance and centrality to the country's cultural and collective memory is largely due to their recurrent presence in classical poems and paintings from the Tang, Song, and Yuan Dynasties. Today,



Figure 1. Demolition workers in Fengjie

this landscape's historical sites that existed along the riverbanks have mostly been submerged by the rising water level, some moved to new locations, others disappearing forever.

The importance of the iconic landscape of the Three Gorges can be understood in the light of its main constituting elements, that is, the Mountain and the Water. In the Chinese language, the expression “Mountain – Water” (山水) means, by way of a synecdoche, “landscape.” Landscape painting is thus known as Mountain-Water painting, that is, *shanshuihua* (山水画). As François Cheng explains, in Daoist tradition, the female Yin is identified with the fluid receptivity of water, whilst the male Yang is identified with the mountains and the hardness of stone. According to the Confucian tradition, the mountain and the water correspond to the two poles of human sensibility, the heart (mountain) and the spirit (water). From this, we can infer that to paint a landscape is also to paint the portrait of a man's spirit. Mountain and Water are therefore more than terms of comparison or simple metaphors for they incarnate the fundamental laws of the macrocosmic universe and its organic links with the microcosm of Man (see Cheng 1991, 92–93).

Still Life and *Dong* are, as mentioned before, close relatives. They share almost the same exact crew, with Yu Lik-wai as director of photography, Zhang Yang as sound recorder, and music composed by Lim Giong. Their affinity also extends to their formal allusion to the tradition of *shanshuihua*, expressed in their adherence to the horizontal tracking shot, also known as the scroll shot – paralleled in Liu's art in the horizontal canvas. Jia Zhangke explains how classical painting has a strong relationship with his cinema and with Liu's painting “in that the two principles of yin and yang are united to become a complete world. In my films, as well as in the painting of Liu Xiaodong, these are intimately associated” (Jia quoted in Ciment and Codelli 2007, 9). *Dong* meaningfully opens with a shot of Kuimen, the first of the Three Gorges of the Yangtze [Fig. 2]. We see a man looking at a landscape of rain and fog, and the music fuses with the



Figure 2. Liu Xiaodong watches over Kuimen

horns of boats sailing down the river. In this opening shot, Jia employs a vertical tilt that seems to link both earth and sky, river and cloud, re-enacting a Daoist idea of a circular transformation, yin/yang, the water (female) and the mountain (male) turning into one another through empty space, respiration, and the clouds.² This opening gesture of the camera is then substituted in the film by the tracking shot, whereby the camera scans the landscape horizontally in a movement that is analogous to the scroll landscape painting.

The use of the tracking shot as an aesthetic echo of the scroll painting tradition has been studied in the cinema first and foremost in relation to the work of Japanese master Kenji Mizoguchi (1898–1956). Noël Burch (1979), based on the idea of decentring and in the self-reflexivity innate to Japanese art, coined the term “scroll shot” in order to describe the type of tracking shots employed by Mizoguchi in films such as *Sisters of Gion* (*Gion no shimai*, 1936) and *The Story of the Last Chrysanthemum* (*Zangiku monogatari*, 1939), aimed at emulating the mobile experience of a traditional Japanese scroll painting, known as the e-makimono. Burch saw Mizoguchi’s aesthetic option for the “scroll shot” in opposition to the classical decoupage or continuity editing of Hollywood cinema, given that the long take in a lateral movement (the tracking shot) dispensed with the spatial decomposition of shots and their subsequent amalgamation in the editing. Mizoguchi could thus be seen as a modern director *avant la lettre*, before modern cinema emerged as a notion or as a trend in Europe and the United States, challenging as such the traditional binary opposition of Classical versus Modern in film history and theory.

2 Both films also adhere to a Yin-Yang/Female-Male composition by containing two parts, one focused on a group of male workers or a male character and the other focused on a group of female workers or a female character. This aspect is further explored in my book *The Cinema of Jia Zhangke: Realism and Memory in Chinese Film* (2019).



Figure 3. Liu Xiaodong painting *Hot Bed No. 1* in Fengjie

If Mizoguchi's use of the "scroll shot" was mainly an aesthetic option directly connected with the *e-makimono* and other Japanese artistic traditions, in *Dong* and *Still Life* it appears in combination with vantage points and street-level views in order to convey the relationship between the human figure and its surroundings, bringing to the fore the superimposition of temporalities that defines Fengjie and, ultimately, the whole of China. As a result, human figures in both films are seen contemplating a space, traversing a space, as well as being themselves "traversed" by the camera gaze that moves across spaces and provides a multiple and moving perspective in the style of a scroll painting. In this sense, Jia Zhangke follows Mizoguchi and other directors, such as his compatriots Zhang Yimou and Chen Kaige, by attributing this aesthetic choice to the influence of the scroll format: "The river, the mountains and the fog are taken from the fundamental elements in Chinese painting. That is why I use those panning shots, recalling the gesture of unrolling a classical scroll painting, opening it out in space." (Jia 2008, 15.)

In a similar vein, Liu Xiaodong's two paintings observed in progress in *Dong* can be seen as two gigantic horizontal scrolls, composed with a shifting perspective. Jia's camera gaze thus operates a *mise-en-abyme* by observing horizontal scrolls with a horizontal scrolling movement. But if the two paintings allude to the tradition of *shanshuihua* in its horizontality and the use of the multiple perspective, the subject-matter and the painting style employed by Liu differs quite radically from it by featuring, first and foremost, large-scale human figures, painted in large brushstrokes, contradicting the minute presence of the human figure in Chinese landscape painting. The large scale of Liu's paintings and of the human bodies portrayed contain echoes, as he explains, of Northern Qi (550–577 AD) and Northern Wei (386–535 AD) mural painting and



Figure 4. Liu Xiaodong painting *Hot Bed No. 2* in Bangkok

sculpture,³ and he claims to be an artist who enjoys looking to the past, where he finds sublime, mysterious, and potent elements. Yet they are also indebted to the socialist realist style of twentieth-century Chinese arts – via the Soviet Union, characterized by large-scale works such as those of Dong Xiwen, one of the PRC’s most prominent painters and, not by chance, also a great inheritor of mural art (especially the paintings at Mogao Caves at Dunhuang, dating back to the 4th century AD and spanning one thousand years).

The sensual nature of Liu’s work, captured by Jia Zhangke in his film, is also related to how his body becomes engaged in his painting. He is, first and foremost, a corporeal painter, engaged in the practice of Kung Fu, with martial arts allowing him – as he remarks in the documentary – to become strong, able to defend himself, and to have an awareness of his body. This connection between his body and his mind becomes the spinal cord of his corporeal work [Fig. 3]. His brushstroke is vigorous and thick, producing a distinctive noise as it touches the canvas. And while in Fengjie landscape is still an important background to his paintings, it becomes completely absent in Thailand, where the film cuts to from a ferry to boat in the Yangtze to the famous “floating market” of Bangkok. In the new country, he remarks, all is unfamiliar to him, and even the light seems different. The landscape becomes implied, and Liu paints the bargirls in a studio setting, with strong colours and scattered fruits such as durians on the floor [Fig. 4].

Liu’s two “Hot Beds” are exemplary of his interest in painting the vitality and beauty of young bodies, minimally dressed, with muscles and flesh showing. In *Dong*, Jia observes Liu as he “directs” his models, positioning them exactly as he wants them. He explains to the camera his method of photographing the models in different poses in order to first sketch and compose the overall struc-

3 Such as mural paintings of court life in Xu Xianxiu’s Tomb, Northern Qi Dynasty, AD 571, located in Taiyuan, Shanxi Province, China.

ture of the painting in a rational fashion. Yet once he starts painting, he purposely imposes upon himself a physical limitation such as painting on all fours, less than a metre away from the canvas. This uncomfortable position limits his rational side and leads to expressive vigour, physically preventing him from painting in a perfect way. This allows for a work of art whose visual impact also derives from its unfinished aspects, a mark of Liu's painting.

In *Dong*, Liu's corporeal poetics fuses with Jia's own poetics in a combination of a documentary impulse and intermediality, a concept understood here through Pethő's original phenomenological redefinition (2020) that shifts it from an analogy with intertextuality towards an awareness of an embodied spectator, sensually engaged with the film. The sensual dimension of intermediality also does away effectively with the paradox haunting the pairing of hypermediacy and immediacy, pointing the needle towards contemporary reality. Jia and Liu are complex artists, in dialogue with the weight of history and engaged with the fast-changing reality of China. Through a realist approach that embraces different layers of mediation, their art helps us navigate and make sense of this world in all its complexity.

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Anne Gjelsvik* and Jørgen Bruhn**

A Cinematic Mediation of the Anthropocene. Zhao Liang's Intermedial Strategies in *Behemoth* (2015)

Can a Chinese documentary about mining help us grasp both the abstract idea and the sensible aspects of the Anthropocene? How can intermedial studies approach cinematic media products and how can intermedial studies and ecocriticism interact fruitfully? These are the core questions we want to address in this short article.

Our starting point is Chinese director Zhao Lang's experimental documentary *Behemoth* (*Beixi moshou*) from 2015, which depicts the terrifying working conditions and devastating environmental effects of the Mongolian mining industry. The film offers one answer to the comprehensive question of how to represent the Anthropocene epoch. We argue that Zhao's strange representation of the Anthropocene condition, by combining an observational documentary style with poetic avant-garde aesthetics referencing Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy*, goes beyond what more traditional filmmaking can achieve.

We approach these questions by merging two academic disciplines that until now have rarely been combined: we take our analytical approach from intermedial cinema studies, while letting our thematic questions be informed by contemporary ecocriticism. Our aim is to demonstrate how two apparently diametrically opposed representative strategies, an observational documentaristic style, and a reflexive mode inspired by intermedial video art make *Behemoth* an exceptional experience with eye-opening potential.

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Ecocriticism and Intermedial Cinema Studies

From early on, film studies was marred by a debate over mixed versus pure art forms, which has a much longer history than film and film theory. The concept of *paragone* (roughly corresponding to ‘comparison’) originates in Renaissance art theory and relates to a ranking competition among the arts – each form vying to be deemed the best and most valuable. An appraisal of the aesthetic virtues of the innate mixedness of cinema, in combination with analytical rigour, is rarer with Ágnes Pethő’s *Cinema and Intermediality. The Passion for the In-Between* as a valuable exception (Pethő 2011). Pethő provides a history of methodological and aesthetic questions concerning film and intermediality, as well as stimulating interpretations of a number of modern and postmodern auteurs. In *Cinema between Media. An Intermedial Approach* from 2018, we discussed cinema as a mixed medium and proposed a three-step model for performing intermedial film analysis (Bruhn and Gjelsvik 2018).

Ecocriticism was initially developed in literary studies, where it focused on anglophone nature writing and the notion of wilderness and pre-modern nostalgic longings. The field has broadened its views considerably over the last years in terms of both media types – by including cinema, visual art, gaming, music, and design – and theory and methodology, where the entire panoply of literary and cultural theory has entered the field. With our text, we wish to pursue the intermedial aspect of the ecocritical themes, more specifically the Anthropocene, and we intend to approach it from an intermedial studies perspective. Intermediality here is defined broadly as the study of the combination and transformation of different media types, starting from the a priori idea that all media are mixed media (see the introduction in Bruhn and Gjelsvik, 2018, for a more thorough description).

The question of cinema’s ability to offer representations of the Anthropocene condition has been at the very centre of contemporary discussions of ecocritical cinema, both fiction and documentary (see, for instance, Mirzoeff 2015, Känd and Gustafsson 2013, Hulme 2009). In line with our understanding of representation (see also Bruhn 2021), film scholar Jennifer Fay has argued that there are many things that are “visible and perceivable related to climate change and the terraforming culture,” and therefore the Anthropocene is “ripe for cinematic capture” (Baer 2018). Due to cinema’s affinity to modernity, industrialization, and what Fay describes as the medium’s “uncanny defamiliarization of the world,” she has even termed cinema “the aesthetic practice of the Anthropocene,” a medium able to represent the uncanniness in transformations of landscape and environment that (almost) happen “too fast to capture” (Fay 2018).

Zhao Liang and *Behemoth*

Behemoth premiered at the Venice International Film Festival in 2015 and was by many considered to represent a change in theme and style for documentary filmmaker and artist Zhao Liang (b. 1971). Originally trained as a photographer,

he is a representative of the independent documentary filmmaking at the turn of the century and was already known outside of China as a socially minded filmmaker focusing on Chinese social issues. His films have gained entry into international film festivals, providing him status as an international auteur and securing him funding and distribution in Europe. His works have also been exhibited in a number of art venues in the West. As Elena Pollacchi argues, Zhao's position in the West has not only brought him funding and distribution but has also given him some leverage with Chinese authorities, allowing him to exhibit in galleries in China (Pollacchi 2019). However, his participation in Venice was ignored by Chinese media, and *Behemoth* is now banned in his home country.

Most renowned of his earlier films is *Petition* (2009), which follows poor, rural Chinese citizens travelling to Beijing to try their cases concerning wages or land or house seizures before The State Bureau for Letters and Calls (Hays 2013). With *Behemoth*, Zhao has continued on the path of what has been described as guerrilla filmmaking, shooting film undercover without the authorities' knowledge (Ide 2016, Sempole 2009). Departing from the dogmatic documentaristic realism dictated by the party, Chinese documentarists developed an ethically reflective and observational documentary style called *Jishi zhuyi* (meaning on-the-spot-realism) during the 1990s (Edwards 2013). Zhao, who also works with video installations and photography, said in interviews that he had been looking for ways to combine his two modes of expression and to reach beyond the boundaries of traditional documentary film. While *Behemoth* started as an ecocritical documentary based on observational footage and interviews, Zhao, according to an interview, decided to rely on the "strength of the visual" (Film Society Lincoln Centre and MOMA 2016).

The film exists in two versions, with and without voice-over, the latter distributed in art galleries (Pollacchi 2019). Our discussion is based on the version that premiered in Venice featuring a voice-over with excerpts from Dante's *Divine Comedy*. The idea of using Dante came late in the process: only midway through the shooting of the film, its producer encouraged Zhao to read the *Divine Comedy* when Zhao referred to his travels to Inner Mongolia as "going back to hell" (Film Society Lincoln Centre and MOMA 2016). After reading "Inferno," "Purgatory," and "Paradise", Zhao was struck by the resemblance between a 700-year-old poem and what he was experiencing in China – as we shall later see, the Dante dimension of the film is crucial.

Three-Step Intermedial Analysis of Film: Cataloguing, Structuring, Framing

In the following analysis of *Behemoth*, we use an abbreviated and somewhat simplified version of our own suggested intermedial methodology (Bruhn and Gjelsvik 2018), which was tested on classic modernist cinema, documentary, and blockbuster film. It is a three-step approach moving from constructing a list of mediality presences into structuring these presences and ending with



Figure 1. *Behemoth*. An excavation site somewhere in the grasslands of Inner Mongolia

a framing that attempts to explain the presence and function of intermedial aspects.

The first step consists of localizing and cataloguing the different representations of media products, types, and aspects in the film. In step two, this list is transformed into a comprehensible and coherent structure. In the case of *Behemoth*, we discuss the *paragone* tradition of arts competing to be the “best” art form. In step three, these dichotomies (or whichever structure that has been established in step two) can be contextualized into some larger context that may fall into numerous different categories – for instance, a biographical context for a filmmaker or more comprehensive aesthetic, theoretical, or art-sociological patterns or formations. In this case, we discuss *Behemoth* as a cinematic representation of the Anthropocene.

First Step: Complex Media Presence

Behemoth opens with dramatic images and sounds from a series of detonations on an excavation site somewhere in the grasslands of Inner Mongolia [Fig. 1]. The explosions are followed by slow-motion shots of stones and gravel flung into the air, accompanied by Mongolian throat singing. Then follows a frame with the caption in Mandarin and English: “God created the beast Behemoth on the 5th day. It was the largest monster on Earth. A thousand mountains yield food for him.”

A few panoramic shots of the smoky mountains are then followed by images of a naked person lying curled up in the barren landscape. These images featuring the human body are made with prisms and consist of three segments producing a constellation or collage of three similar but not identical images. They are accompanied by a voice-over in Mandarin, as well as printed text with the narrator’s words. The words are a mix of modified Dante quotations and new additions in English:



Figure 2. The green and grassy steppe landscape

Midway on our life's journey
I seem to have had a dream.
In the dream,
I was suddenly awoken by the sounds of heavy explosions.
I open my eyes onto a boundless smoky haze.
The smoldering ground beneath my feet makes me feel
I am in some dark, desolate place.
Only looking all around me do I discover
I have arrived at the pit's end of the inferno.

After a pause, the narrator continues:

This is a place that has been destroyed.
Once upon a time it gushed with mountain springs
And was lush with vegetation
Now not a blade of grass survives.
A land of deadly silence

Next we see a man walking with a large mirror on his back, as the narrator tells us: "There, I met a guide" and that the mountain his guide comes from has "no road to paradise." This is a man who does not know poetry, the narrator asserts, "yet the eloquence his heart exhales is no less powerful than the *Divine Comedy*."

From here, we are guided to the green and grassy steppe [Fig. 2] where the (semi)-nomads are living with their horses and sheep, before we descend, on trucks, into the grey excavation area with all its machinery, smoke, and noise. After seeing the workers' hard toil in the dark, we follow them, covered in dust, to their simple lodgings, descending into the deep dark of the coal mines. With a soundtrack consisting of a mixture of machine noise and music (both throat

singing and other traditional forms), the industrial area and workers are juxtaposed with the green landscape and the shepherds. The film moves between the landscape in green, but mostly in black, and the humans working there. Sometimes our travels pause to dwell on the faces of the workmen in close-up.

After a while, we move from the black coal mines to the glowing red heat of the factory, where the extracted coal is used to produce steel. Here the soundtrack consists of the sounds of the fire and the furnaces and the men's tools. The predominant colours in this section of the film are red and black, and the focus is on manual labour and the toll this hard and hot work has on the workers' bodies and health. The penultimate section of the film includes footage of hospitalized men suffering from pneumoconiosis (also known as Black Lung disease), pictures of widows holding photographs of their late husbands, and the cemetery next to the mining area.

At last, we follow the steel as it is transported from the factory on large trucks, and the narrator returns:

Through the dusty haze, the raging flames, the graves,
And through the shattered homeland
All the sacrifices transmuted into steel
And carried off to build the paradise of our desires

To the sound of throat singing, we drive through a tunnel towards the light of Ordos city, with large yellow apartment buildings, where nobody lives and where the streets are empty, except for a lonely street sweeper and our guide with the mirror on his back. In his mirror, we briefly see a miner walking with a green plant in his hands. The narrator concludes that "we are the monsters," and in the end we/the camera stay(s) behind while the guide walks through what the narrator has sarcastically described as a paradise.

The film closes with texts explaining that this is one of several hundreds of idle and vacant ghost towns in China, that a hundred thousand workers have died of lung disease, and that 20% of the lake area of Inner Mongolia has been ruined by coal extraction.

Visual and Auditive Strategies

Three major visual strategies are employed in the film. First, we have the undercover recordings, depicting the harsh and often dangerous working conditions of workers in the mining industry in accordance with the conventions of observational documentary filmmaking. Second, we have the part of the film that represents the nature of the Chinese Mongolia province. While a majority of the working life representations are strikingly unwelcoming and gritty, the nature photography is often stunningly beautiful, closer to imagery associated with nature and wildlife documentaries.

And then there is a crucial third visual strategy, where non-realistic devices are added: 1) extreme slow motion (most notably in the opening explosion



Figure 3. Non-realistic visual strategies

scene), 2) images of a naked male human figure curled up in the landscape throughout the film [Fig. 3], and lastly 3) perspective changes produced by way of prisms, creating barely noticeable distortions of the images. These unrealistic elements deviate from the conventions of both documentary and nature film, leaning more towards “art” film. Summing up the visual strategies from an intermedial point of view, we might say that the film employs three different qualified media types: “documentary,” “nature film,” and “art film.”

The sound dimension of the film also consists of three relatively distinct layers: first, the conventional diegetic sound recording coming from working conditions in the mines; second, the verbal voice-over, occasionally a conventional verbal commentary accompanying the images, but more often reciting a modified Chinese translation of Dante’s *Divine Comedy*; third, the soundtrack of the Tuva deep-throat singing, an ancient Mongolian tradition.

This short cataloguing demonstrates the intermedial richness and complexity of *Behemoth*: a descriptive catalogue that we will interpret in the next step.

Second Step: Between Realism and Allegory?

Among the many possible ways to interpret the medial presences in the film, we focus on the fact that they can be divided into two opposing positions. On the one hand, we have the medial aspects that offer realistic depictions of the world: background sounds like factory noise and recordings of dehumanizing and dangerous living and working conditions for miners and steel workers. On the other, non-realistic side, we have the poetic voice-over, the prismatic, partly split-vision of some of the nature photography, the rather mysterious figure inserted into the landscapes, the extreme slow motion, and the use of the beautiful but – to Western ears – somewhat monotone Tuva throat song.

Behemoth, thus, on the one hand, follows a realist documentary tradition but, on the other, is structured and ordered by a highly non-realistic, even allegorical



Figure 4. Hell (the underground factories)

model, as signalled by the extensive and creative use of Dante Alighieri's visionary allegorical poem. Whereas the documentary form seemingly renders a direct representation of the world, the use of the *Divine Comedy*, together with other alienation effects, contributes to a highly idiosyncratic and complex combination of several philosophical and theological ideas, in combination with contemporary political conflicts.

Intermediality studies offers different ways to think about this question. The constellation of medial devices can be seen as two opposing tendencies that stand competitively against each other in a *paragone* relationship. Following that line of thought, two aesthetic positions – the documentary style versus the experimental style – struggle for dominance in the work.

Another conceptual model for a medially complex film such as *Behemoth* is the 19th-century idea of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*. The *Gesamtkunstwerk* took no notice of what was considered anachronism or delimiting media borders or conventions; the more the merrier, and from such a point of view, the internal mixedness of media forms does not breed competition for dominance but rather lets them unite in service of the common goal, which is to produce as strong an impact as possible on their receiver.

On the one hand, the film is clearly serious and scrupulous about exposing the disastrous effects of mining in Mongolia – on people and nature alike. To this end, the film employs the direct, confrontational traditions of the documentary. Taken alone, this part of the work produces a strong, political, highly critical stance. On the other hand, *Behemoth* obviously also enters a much more relativizing, questioning, alienating tradition, where sound and imagery work in the direction of questioning, investigating, and surprising rather than strictly documenting. *Behemoth* actually uses *both* strategies in one total work of art in order to produce an impression that is probably even more powerful than a work employing only one of these two strategies could have been.



Figure 5. Purgatory (the everyday life of the workers)

Third Step: With the Film Camera through Three Worlds: *Behemoth's* Dantean Vision

If we consider *Behemoth* a result of earlier reproduced and transformed inspirations, it seems reasonable to speculate that there are two sources behind the film: the Anthropocene condition and *Divine Comedy*. The film has been discussed as a critical response to the Anthropocene condition (see also Salmose 2019), and, in the same vein, the film must be described as a representation of the destruction of nature due to mining exploitation.

But the entire film may also be read as a kind of adaptation of Dante's work. A micro-description of Dante's epic poem, arguably the most influential work in Western medieval literature, should be enough to demonstrate *Behemoth's* remarkable similarities with the *Comedy*. Dante used the popular medieval religious form of the "vision" (where people describe how they have had access to visionary experiences of heaven or hell) to describe how he, "in the middle of his life" (the famous first words of the *Comedy* and also the first words in *Behemoth*) had an extraordinarily vivid and detailed vision of the three worlds of the human afterlife: Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise.

Zhao opens his film with a shocking explosion that has the same function as Dante's violent breakdown: from that moment, the spectator is thrown into a hypnotic and deeply strange universe of cruelty, disaster, and beauty. The plot of the *Comedy* goes from a problematic beginning to a joyous end – from hell via purgatory to paradise; a comparable allegorical journey can be detected in *Behemoth*, where the shocking reality of a hell on earth in the subterranean mines is followed by the alienated but liveable everyday life on the steppes, leading towards what may appear to be paradise: Ordos City. Characteristically, Zhao takes care to direct the spectator towards what appears to be a "paradise" only to demonstrate the literal emptiness of Ordos City.



Figure 6. Paradise? (Ordos City)

The use of the prisms that divide the images into three different segments could also allude to this structure (Pollacchi 2019). Dante had the ancient master writer Virgil as his guide through hell and purgatory, echoed in Zhao's film by the person carrying a mirror in front of the spectator and wanderer in the strange Mongolian universe. Dante is allowed to wander through the realms of the dead, and as the only human being in history he is given the unseen privilege of experiencing even the eternal paradise, where he famously gets to see his love, Beatrice. The spectator of the film may feel comparably privileged in seeing almost unbearable things, in being a witness.

Therefore, in this third and concluding step, where we have moved outside the confines of the autonomous work to try to find a suitable framing, *Behemoth* works both as an adaptation of the *Divine Comedy* (with the idea of a guide, the shocking introduction to another world, and, of course, the direct quotations) and as a structural imitation of the *Comedy*, because the way Zhao Liang, though ironically, has constructed his film follows the Hell (underground factories) [Fig. 4] – Purgatory (everyday life) [Fig. 5] – Paradise (Ordos City) [Fig. 6] structure.

We mentioned that the film has been criticized by Chinese authorities, but if we take the Dante–Zhao comparison one step further, it is worth mentioning that in the Middle Ages Dante used his allegorical set-up to lead a political fight against his enemies while still partly hiding under the cover of allegory. Zhao's blend of extreme realism and abstract allegory has a different effect: the sharp critique of working conditions and ecological degradation *is* political, and as such the Chinese authorities' critique is a "correct" reading of the film, but that reading is blind to the fact that what is going on in China is typical for many other places on planet Earth.

The effect of the Dantean allegorical level of the film – in combination with the realist documentary aspect – is to demonstrate the global nature of what are depicted as local phenomena.

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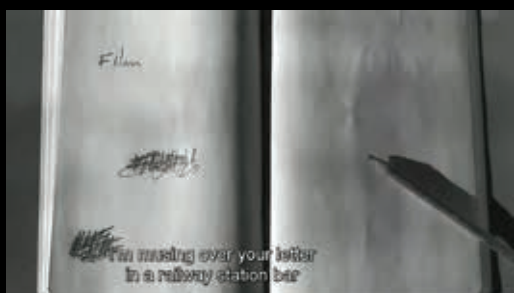


Figure 1. The blank page is a recurrent figure in Guerín's films; here, it represents latent possibilities.



Figure 2. Images "in becoming" on the streets of Paris



Figures 3–4. The discovery of the "imageness" in a Japanese drawing and in the shadow cast by a tree

Melinda Blos-Jáni*

Getting in Touch. (Un)Framing Reality in Jonas Mekas's and José Luis Guerín's *Filmed Correspondences* (2011)

“Art is real and concrete.
Art’s workings are real and concrete.
The soul is real and concrete.
The workings of art upon the soul and the workings of the soul through
art are real and concrete.
And now I’ll tell you a story. My story could be called *A Story About
a Man Who Went to the Frick Gallery to Look at Vermeer.*”
Jonas Mekas 2016 [1968], 316.

Taking part in the larger *The Complete Letters. Filmed Correspondences (Todas las cartas. Correspondencias filmicas)* project¹ curated by Jordi Balló at the Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona, José Luis Guerín and Jonas Mekas exchanged nine video letters from December 2009 to April 2011, resulting in an intriguing dialogue between two authors, two concepts about cinema, and – the main argument of this article – also two modes of mediating between the real and the medial. Furthermore, the conversations have something of the spirit of a Socratic dialogue, as Mekas, the master, and Guerín, the disciple, are paying homage to him (and also other filmmakers), albeit their relationship is far from being hierarchical. Not surprisingly, the outcome of this dialogue is quite film-philosophical, just as theories of self-reflexivity or cinematic intermediality are. Some of the reasons I have chosen to write the essay honouring Ágnes Pethő about the exchange of ideas and images between Mekas and Guerín is precisely the master and disciple dynamic of the two filmmaker-authors, as well as the shared passion for experimenting with the paradoxes of a Lumiéresque cinema’s realist and hypermediated impulses.

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1 Following the creative outcome of the filmed correspondence between Víctor Erice and Abbas Kiarostami for the exhibition *Erice-Kiarostami. Correspondences* (Barcelona, 2006), a new project brought together another five pairs of filmmakers: Kawase Naomi (Japan) and Isaki Lacuesta (Spain), Wang Bing (PRC) and Jaime Rosales (Spain), Jonas Mekas (U.S.) and José Luis Guerín (Spain), Albert Serra (Spain) and Lisandro Alonso (Argentina), and Fernando Eimbecke (Mexico) and So Yong Kim (U.S./Korea).

The string of films as a whole has been considered as an essay film proper, constructed in an epistolary form (Canet 2019). The result is a unique, multi-layered reflection on cinematic artistry that has already been analysed from different perspectives, most prominently as a form of self-reflexivity (Canet 2019), of relational address (Munro 2017), and as a letter and a narrative, (Lee 2018). As Fernando Canet argues, the entire correspondence project is an example of transnational cinema that refuses to be characterized in geographical or national terms, but it also relates to contemporary essayistic film practice (2019, 41). Borrowing the term “refractive cinema” from Timothy Corrigan, Canet places the *Filmed Correspondences* project within the lineage of Dziga Vertov’s anti-illusionary cinema, self-reflexivity being one of the main features of the essay film (2019, 44). The Guerín–Mekas “letters,” just as their counterparts are evaluated as an exchange of ideas about cinema: “an important part of these filmmakers’ lives is the cinema; more than just a profession, it is their passion. It is thus not surprising that these correspondence projects should turn into a perfect excuse for engaging in reflective dialogue about the nature of their own medium of expression” (Canet 2019, 43).

Still, the interpretive framework focusing on the refractions of the medium, on outspoken/exposed thoughts about cinema overshadows questions regarding what precedes it: the real or the pre-cinematic and the ways in which the mediation of reality by the moving image is constantly renegotiated [Figs. 1–4]. As emphasis is laid on reflexions on the nature of cinema and on the notion of the author, it seems that the complex and ambiguous connections with the concrete, material world that an epistolary essay film maintains are tempered down, although these films are far from being *l’art pour l’art* gestures. The purpose of this article is to break down the evident self-reflexive style of the Guerín–Mekas experimental conversation as a meditation on the possibilities of the image and of the medium of film in relation with the physical reality and the autobiographical.

The Epistolary Essay as Remedial Cinema

Michael Renov calls the essay open-ended due to the process-oriented activity and “the mediation of the real through a cascade of language, memory, and imagination” (1992, 217). Thus, cinematic epistolary essays can be considered acts of remediation – to borrow Bolter and Grusin’s term – of the real and the personal – unfolding through strategies of visual and aural mediation. According to Ágnes Pethő, Bolter and Grusin’s work has potential “in rethinking the category of the ‘real’ in an increasingly mediated world” (2020, 350).

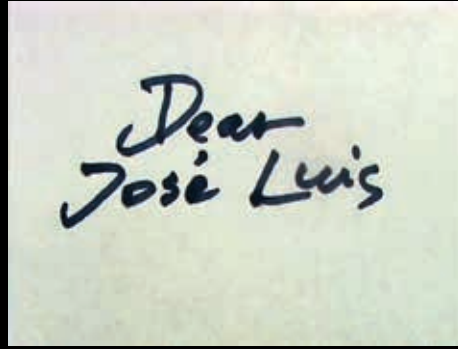
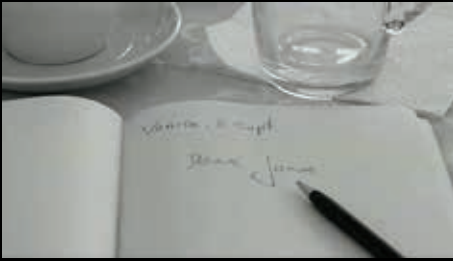
In an article written on Guerín and Agnès Varda Pethő calls remedial and self-reflexive the cinema which has “the purpose of achieving the sensation of almost palpable immediacy through [...] self-conscious intermedial techniques” (2020, 351). Remedial media is characterized by an intermedial structure which instead of conveying “a sense of infinite regress of signification, an entrapment within a text that merely refers to another text ad infinitum” characteristic to postmodernism, it “conveys paradoxically a sense of immediacy both

on a more general level (exemplifying the multiple faces of media versus reality or media within reality) and on a more specific, personal level (in the sense of recording one's own personal experiences handling these media)" (Pethő 2020, 351). The double logic of mediation (immediacy and hypermediacy) is very much present in the Guerín–Mekas letters through the self-conscious use of the medium in order to make a record of a very personal reality – which is also de-doubled by the presence of two authors holding a mirror to each other. All this happens with the purpose of creating “real” contact between filmmakers who have previously been mere virtual acquaintances, by watching each other's films. In fact, the idea of media remediating the real, mediation being part of reality (Bolter and Grusin 1999, 56) lies at the core of the entire *Filmed Correspondences* project. The exposition catalogue speaks overtly about it: “this exchange of video-letters responds to a reality: a filmmaker's homeland is being on the same wavelength as other filmmakers around the world. In this film continent, creators always pay attention to works by others. The simultaneous and juxtaposed presentation of these filmed correspondences in a single exhibition area provides a space for dialogue and reflexive intimacy.”² The epistles created real connections between filmmakers, but the gallery space was also designed to provide real contact for the beholder with the films as images and as objects in a room to be walked to; furthermore, the dialogues were exhibited juxtaposed, simultaneously, providing space for sampling what to watch; hence a more dialogic communication for the spectator.

Questions of impurity and an affinity towards generic border-crossing have already been discussed as characteristics of the essay film that makes it almost impossible to define it as a genre (Hollweg 2019, 165–166). Recent interest in the essay form shifts focus from classic features such as subjectivity and self-reflexivity, openness and dialogism (Renov 2009, Rascaroli, 2009, Corrigan 2011), towards dialectics: “the dialectical disjunction that is at the basis of the essay form creates in film in-between spaces that must be accounted for, inasmuch as they are central to the essay film's functioning. It is this in-betweenness that calls for investigation” (Rascaroli 2017, 8). Based on Gilles Deleuze, Rascaroli calls the essay a medium that thinks interstitially by creating gaps, disjunctures between the interacting, juxtaposed filmic elements, creating possibilities for new thought (2017, 11).

The *Filmed Correspondences* project – albeit imagined as a dialogue between geographically distant artists who share similar ideas as cineastes – does use disjuncture in order to provoke new thought. Film scholarship coined the epistolary essay as a form closely related to the experience of the exile that is “driven by distance, separation, absence, and loss and by the desire to bridge the multiple gaps” (Naficy 2001, 101). This project is not about traumatic displacement and loss in this sense, yet it operates with cultural gaps, as its curator Jordi

2 See it on the website of the organizing institution: <https://www.cccb.org/en/exhibitions/file/the-complete-letters/38071>. Last accessed 02. 08. 2022.



Figures 5–6. The handwriting and the epistolary formulas of Guerín and Mekas

Balló designed it as a transnational experiment which builds on the geographical locatedness and cultural membership of ten (extratextual/fictional) filmmakers (see Balló and Pintor Iranzo 2014). The accentedness was there even in the moment when five artists were asked to invite their favourite filmmakers of their own choice, all of them members of the Catalan community. This dialectic of the transnational is acknowledged even in the synopsis of the exhibition – “the cinema being made in Catalonia can spontaneously create an interesting and thought-provoking dialogue with the cinema of the rest of the world.”³

Filmed Correspondences was created with the intention of the dialogue, yet when viewed as a whole, the spectator’s attention shifts from the common denominators to differences within the series, a kind of field/counter-field gets to be created between enunciators. When juxtaposed, the pieces by Guerín and Mekas function like two shots of a montage, and the essayistic is activated at their juncture. Watching it affords much more than the knowledge transmitted by the autobiographical account of two filmmakers (in this sense, it does differ from the genre of autobiography and documentary it tackles). The succession of the letters becomes dialectical in the course of the epistolary dialogue; fissure and ambiguity is created in the fabric of the essay as one filmmaker’s response follows the previously received filmic message. When a letter reaches one of the well-known closing phrases, then a line of thinking ends⁴ (Guerín and Mekas even signs them in a final title). In that moment, the unfinished conversation leaps into a temporal and epistemological in-betweenness, trying to reach the addressee, another subject, another type of consciousness and empathy [Figs. 5–6]. The interval

3 The synopsis of the itinerary project is available on the website of CCCB: https://www.cccb.org/res_gene/Dossier_The_Complete_Letters.pdf. Last accessed 02. 08. 2022.

4 Actually, one of Jonas Mekas’s lines, “let’s keep in touch,” was the inspiration for the title of this article.



Figures 7–8. The reflection and the shadow of José Luis Guerín in his 1st and 2nd letter

between two letters implicates even the viewer in this process, like an invisible third party – waiting, anticipating without knowing what reaction to expect. The time passed between expedition and reception, the (re)location of the directors is always mentioned at the beginning of each Guerín and Mekas letter, anchoring these videos in a geographical and temporal reality.

In line with the specific focus of this article, the liminal phase between two letters is also related to issues of remediation: it adds a level of realism by pointing to the production process and by pulling the viewer into the middle(ground) of an ongoing conversation, resulting in realism at the level of reception. All these in-betweens make the separate letters into a film that thinks.

Although both Mekas and Guerín have in common a certain kind of flaneuristic sensitivity and the drive of an archivist as they record their everyday experiences, the fragmented and multivocal correspondence brings to the fore the differences in their cinematic vision. To borrow Jacques Rancière’s term, there are two distinct types of “imageness” revealed in this double-authored epistolary essay. In the following, I would like to examine the construction of the cinematic-autobiographic self, the handling of the filmic apparatus, and the resulting concept of the frame.

Keeping in Touch with the Real through the Personal

“I react to life” – this statement coming from Jonas Mekas is the focal point of Guerín’s first letter, and it sets the tone and focus of the correspondence. It is this “I” that becomes the strongest link between the medium of film and the world and that also creates a bond of another kind, by addressing the spectator. In the essay film, this is a key element of rhetoric, which was already addressed by a large body of scholarship, most prominently by Laura Rascaroli. Due to the problematic relationship between the narrator(s), the enunciator and author in an essay film, she argues that “authorship in the essay film is interstitial; it is

played, indeed, in the liminal spaces between the empirical author and his or her textual figures” (Rascaroli 2009, 184). Even a hypermediated, intermedial cinema can be placed in the context of the real world, and the personal is “perhaps the most archetypal level possible of the perception of the real” (Pethó 2020, 357). This also implies that the author, the enunciator is not seen as a figure in a text, built by a discourse, but rather as an empirical subject who exists outside and prior to the film. Authors are anchored in a geographical, physical world – this approach has also been brought back into discussion by Hamid Naficy, whose accented cinema theory is forthrightly an extension of the *auteur* theory that “runs counter to much of the postmodern theory that attempts to either deny authorship altogether or multiply the authoring parentage” to the point of blurring the origins of a creation (2001, 34).

In order to understand the role the extratextual author plays in the ambiguous, seemingly paradoxical relationship between the real and the medial, the letters will be analysed in terms of authorial presence, a term chosen to avoid the theoretical framing that words like “construct” afford. How is the two authors’ presence made felt in the texture and the style of the Guerín and Mekas videos? How does this presence affect the spectatorial position? What do the differences in the authorial positions demonstrate about our contemporary media and visual culture?

Guerín is the one to initiate the correspondence, and he is the one closing it; on the whole, he made five video letters for Jonas Mekas. His presence is mostly acoustic, as his disembodied voice hovers over his long takes abstracted by the consequent use of the black and white. The first-person accounts narrated in Spanish add a sense of presence to the images of urban locations such as a café, a notebook, the wrenches of a tree, a revolving door [Figs. 1–2, 7]. From these personal details, the spectator connects the voice-over to the author, who does not make a bodily appearance in front of the camera, with the single exception of a reused old footage in his fourth letter. Guerín’s presence is created in the in-betweenness of the voice-over and the image, and remedial self-portraits. Instead of a bodily or facial appearance before the camera, he has a penchant for the visual refractions of his figure: quite often he makes an appearance as a shadow or as a reflection in a window, or even as a mirror image in a girl’s eye. These reflections show the author as already mediated, as an intangible, ethereal image, yet intensely present in his videos. Projections of the author’s body set him as part of the world he inhabits, but these reflections and projections also appear to be a textual figure, which is further developed by his mode of address. There is evidence of figuration in the double address that the videos play out: the “I” of the enunciation addresses the conversing partner, whom he met prior⁵ to participating in this project, but in fact the spectator of the epistles

5 Guerín met Mekas during the shooting of his film called *Guest*, an essayistic documentary made during the filmmaker’s travels around the globe while accompanying his previous film, *In the City of Sylvia* (2007), on the festival circuit.



Figures 9–10. Jonas Mekas in front of his video camera encounters himself on an old 16-mm film in his 2nd letter.

is the real addressee. This paradoxical spectatorial position accounts for the openness of the film: “instead of guiding her [the spectator] through emotional and intellectual responses, the essay urges her to engage individually with the film, and reflect on the same subject matter the author is musing about,” thus calling for an embodied viewing experience, instead of a generic audience (Rascaroli 2017, 185).

There is a certain atmosphere of familiarity in this address, something more relatable to the films of Jonas Mekas, hailed as a diary filmmaker or the home moviemaker of the avant-garde – thus a forerunner of a type of subjectivity that is related to the bodily presence of the enunciating “I” and a direct relationship with the apparatus. In a short article, he even called this relationship between the artist and his tools the distinctive feature of a new cinema, the camera becoming his extension: “the camera movements are reflections of the body movements; the body movements are reflections of the emotional and thought movements – which, in their turn, are caused by what came in through the eye. A circle between the artist’s eye and the camera eye is established” (Mekas 1966, 266). Elsewhere, his style was called “gestural” (MacDonald 1984, 93), emphasizing the camera’s attachment to an embodied, “real” author instead of an abstract narrator. In an interview, Mekas revealed that the gestural style was in fact an embracing of “documentary poetry” in contrast with the two post-world-war documentary traditions – as a return to the poetic quality of fragments and subjective impressions (MacDonald 1984, 94).

In the four letters composed by Mekas, he is present diegetically, appearing on-screen or as a moving, trembling, murmuring man behind the movie camera, from time to time reinforced by his voice-over and direct address. Contrary to Guerín’s voice-over, Mekas recorded the sound simultaneously with the image, hence achieving a greater sense of immediacy. The efforts to handle or to hold the camera are present aurally, as noises and cracks are heard, making audible the grip of his hand, the very moment of touch. In his second letter, Mekas leads us



Figures 11–12. The camera is not the only object that becomes almost palpable in Mekas's videos. His 3rd letter dwells in haptic scenes involving physical activities such as eating and smelling.

into his editing room, where he views old footage that contains footage of himself as well [Figs. 9–10]. He pauses the projection of his portrait only to create a new one with his shaky video camera while holding his portrait as a younger man. The “artist is present” as a living, breathing entity, not just as an abstracted reflection like Guerín's. Yet, inasmuch as the images captured by Mekas conflate with the real, the non-cinematic, the gestural camerawork showcases the medium as something palpable, as a material process, and thus the effect of immediacy comes into being as a result of hypermediacy. The medium of the small-gauge film is graspable, the frames of his moving image portrait can be cranked back and forth, even paused, offering themselves to reflection and creating a moment of a sense of self-possession⁶ for Mekas. “Reality takes over the scene” (Mulvey 2006, 155) as Mekas enjoys the physical and indexical reality of his filmic image [Figs. 11–12].

The (Un)Homeliness of Filmmakers

Besides authorial presence and cinema, there are certain motifs that run through the letters, generating cohesion, a key one is the notion of the home and the sensation of being displaced. Mekas, the quintessential immigrant filmmaker leaves New York only once during the correspondence, when he leaves to Kraków with his children, while Guerín is perpetually on the move: he is traveling to film festivals around the globe to present his film *In the City of Sylvia* (*En la ciudad de Sylvia*, 2007) while making a documentary about the places he visits involuntarily and eventually remains a stranger, as the title of the film, *Guest*

6 According to Laura Mulvey, extracting the image from a narrative surrounding, pausing, delaying can create a proximity to the image but it can also intensify the encounter with the index: “the time of the camera, its embalmed time, comes to surface, shifting from the narrative now to the ‘then’” (Mulvey 2006, 155).



Figure 13. A rhizomatic branch representing abstract beauty and chance in Guerin's 2nd letter



Figure 14. The shadow of the airplane meets the wheels; reality and its image are superimposed.

(2017) suggests. The status of being a guest, the multicultural experiences, the gestures of giving voice to marginalized people, and an emphasis on everyday life resonate with accented cinema. The series of letters sent to Mekas can be viewed as an appendix to *Guest*, as an example of intercultural cinema recorded in the following cities: Paris, New York, Venice, Los Angeles, Harvard, Boston, Walden Pond, Barcelona, Lisboa, Tokyo, Izumozaki, and Kita-Kamakura.

In accented cinema, realism is very much part of production: films are made by actual displaced, exiled persons: “accented film authors are literally and figuratively everyday journeymen and journeywomen who are driven off or set free from their places of origin [...] Any discussion of authorship in exile needs to take into consideration [...] their (dis)location as interstitial subjects within social formations and cinematic practices” (Naficy 2001, 34). Furthermore, a significant opening towards the real occurs during communication in intercultural exchange situations. Naficy uses the term “border consciousness,” an embracing of ambiguity and chaos (2001, 31). Laura Marks even argues that “anybody can cultivate its own immigrant semiosis in order to see the world anew” (2007, 299), which consists in “taking back the semiotic flow, making meaning that matters,” and a sensory awareness (Marks 2007, 299). From this perspective, the correspondence appears to capitalize upon displacement as a way to have new experiences about the world, but also as about having new images, cultivating a refreshed vision. Mediation plays a key role in experiencing the heightened moments of reality, and the two directors have different artistic attitudes regarding it.⁷

7 Films mediating the experience of physical reality is a key issue in recent approaches to world cinema, e.g. Thomas Elsaesser's thoughts on this cinema's heightened realism (2009); but Lucia Nagib goes further and even suggests that “realist cinema” could be an alternative for the disputable “world cinema” term due to a shared ethics of the real. A



Figure 15. Mekas's face superimposed on his office space where he listens to the folk song: *Going Home*

Guerin's travelogue is motivated by the sensation of detachment and otherness in a new place, and it also recalls the cinematic *flânerie* of his previous films. In the first letter shot in Paris, he admits that he likes to wander about without direction in new places, yet awaiting for the revelation of an image or a character for a possible storyline. He seems to find a specific visual quality in a revolving door at the train station, in the pages of a notebook blown in the wind or at a merry-go-round. Guerin recognizes in these everyday, common situations a proto-cinematic quality, or a "cinema of the street" (Pethő 2020, 370). The imageness of unruly, rhizomatic tree branches or the uninhibited play of children with fallen leaves in a park all radiate a kind of photogenity or cinematicity waiting to be discovered and captured by a man with the movie camera. The director even imagines the slow descent of his landing airplane as a collage of movie scenes seen probably while travelling [Figs. 13–14]. The observation of the cinematic in natural or urban contexts is also emphasized in his voice-over in his second letter, where he mentions the Lumière brothers, *Nanook of the North* (Robert Flaherty, 1922), Roberto Rossellini's *The Flowers of Saint Francis* (*Francesco, giullare di Dio*, 1950), and Jonas Mekas almost in the same take. Even his host at the Harvard Film Archive is presented by the director as a real person shaped under the influence of his cinematic experiences, wearing Fred-Astaire-inspired garments. Reality is an already remediated affair, and the idea of the cinema, of the image persists in the world and even predates the camera. The director seems to gain a certain sense of comfort by searching for the cinematic in the reality of a foreign world.

Mekas practices another type of exilic vision. Living in a lifelong, voluntarily chosen exile in New York, he makes an inward journey within his chosen

taxonomy of cinematic realism and three modes of realist production are proposed in the book *Realist Cinema as World Cinema* (Nagib 2020).



Figures 16–17. Mekas begins his 1st letter with an image of his window during winter. There is an image of the same tree in springtime when “trees run amok” – mediating the enthusiasm of the filmmaker and referencing Henry David Thoreau’s *Walden*.

hometown, a fact even more emphasized by the intimate atmosphere of his films. Nicknamed the “home moviemaker of the avant-garde,” Mekas’s style was examined by Jeffrey Ruoff as deriving from a sense of artistic collectivity that he found in Filmmakers Coop and the Anthology Film Archive he had founded (1992, 292–312). From another perspective, the raw, precarious style of his films is related to the idea of homeland in a metaphorical, figural sense, although it all seems to be a simple gesture. As he puts it in *Walden*: “I make home movies, therefore I live” (see MacDonald 1984, 105).

Mekas’s films, perhaps most evidently *Diaries, Notes and Sketches* (also called *Walden*, 1969) and *Lost, Lost, Lost* (1976), do depict an intimate image of the avant-garde scene of the new American cinema, just as *Reminiscences of a Journey to Lithuania* (1972) or *As I Was Moving Ahead Occasionally I Saw Brief Glimpses of Beauty* (2000) do offer glimpses into the most private moments of the family and the sense of homeliness of the filmmaker. While the earlier films are about a nostalgic longing towards the native land, Lithuania, and a quest for a new place for oneself in the new world, the later ones, such as *I Was Moving Ahead*, are a collection of moments of “paradise” as Mekas calls it, where the glimpsed, fragmented, and captured beauty is not necessarily an image but rather a state of being, of familiarity, a sense of feeling at home in the world. The scenes captured in the video letters to Guerin are about homeliness in a spatial sense and in a medial sense. Most of the scenes are shot in New York (in his first letter, we even follow his lengthy route in a taxi, overhearing his indications to the driver about streets and places), at the Anthology Film Archives, where he works, and in his home (a first and recurring image is the view from his window, and another scene shows Mekas’s route in the apartment building until reaching his door), the sense of displacement and domesticity being reinforced by the folk song *Going Home* [Figs. 15–17]. In the first Mekas letter, we even see his superimposed face on the image of his office; thus his face, the space, and the home movie as a medium overlap in a



Figures 18–19. Spontaneous cinema: Guerín observing the passers-by against the backdrop of an inflated open-air cinema screen

single image – both in a metaphoric and in a real sense. Actually, Mekas uses the medium of the home movie as a means to confront his exile: by capturing everything around him, he makes a home for himself in cinema, in the realm of the film (becoming “a monk in the order of cinema” – as he calls himself in *Lost, Lost, Lost*).

In Jonas Mekas’s letters, the self-portraiture and the encounter with his on-screen image self is an uncanny encounter, but not a superficial one, as it is related to complex questions of being in the world, to the inner reality of the filmmaker. Filmmaking for Mekas is just a pretext to “go on” and to find himself – it is about the experience of grounding someone’s existence in the world and of facing the void, which Vivian Sobchack’s calls the ontological uncanny (2019, 214–215). His gestural, haptic, home-movie style suits his existential instability as a displaced, (un)homely person and by making the images ungraspable, unfixed, and less onscreen-dependent. Instead of attractive, structured compositions, his takes are centrifugal, gravitating towards unexpected, unknown directions. Eventually, this becomes an aesthetic of un-framing, which mediates the unruliness and complexity of reality through cinema. Regarding framing, the oscillation between chance and the control of a filmmaker are overtly addressed by Guerín also in his letters and interviews.⁸ In the letters, we witness at multiple occasions as the filmmaker sets the camera and awaits something to happen within the frame, or “some secret order to reveal itself” in the profilmic reality, the slow process of the becoming of an image [Figs. 18–21]. The pursuit of the filmmaker in this case is comprehension, or the epistemo-

8 “I think the history of cinema revolves around this idea: How much is control? How much is chance? In the Lumière Brothers? In Jean Renoir? In Hitchcock? In Ford? One function of contemporary cinema is to go further with this conflict. All of my cinematographic ideas are born in this dialectic.” (Guerín in Caputo 2011.)



Figures 20–21. The final letter was recorded in Japan by Guerin; it references the style of Ozu, but also that of the Lumière brothers.

logical uncanny (Sobchack 2019, 212) – about knowing oneself as a filmmaker who works with his imaginary when working in the in-betweenness of medium and reality and who eventually frames himself.

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Mihály Lakatos*

Memory Roll: Godard's Personal (Film) History through an iPhone Screen

At the moment of writing this article, the latest cinematic output from Jean-Luc Godard is a one-minute clip, released as a promotional spot for the 21st edition of Ji.hlava International Documentary Film Festival.¹ The spot is the latest in a string of commercials made for the festival by the likes of Icelandic director and composer Jóhann Jóhannsson, American director Godfrey Reggio, and the legend of Czechoslovak New Wave, Jan Němec. Marek Hovorka, the director of the festival described Godard's piece as an "intimate haiku" and added that "Godard remained loyal to his signature method of layering meanings and references" (Tizard 2018).

In the short clip, we see Godard's hand as he scrolls back and forth in the Photo Library of an iPhone. The first image in the Photo Library is a photograph taken on 8 December 2016, depicting Godard as he sits on a porch, watching a sunlit, green garden [Fig. 1]. The last image is a photo of Rembrandt's *A Woman Bathing in a Stream* (the photographed painting is a reproduction hanging on the wall of Godard's studio house)² [Fig. 2]. The timestamp on the last photo reveals that it was taken on the day the clip was made. Based on the previous photos (the Photo Library application of an iPhone sorts the photographs in chronological order), the last photograph was taken sometime in the first part of June 2018 (note: the clip was officially released on 2 July 2018, at the 53rd Karlovy Vary International Film Festival). Between these two images, we see selfies, film stills from Godard's latest feature film *The Image Book* (*Le Livre d'image*, 2018), screenshots of the iPhone's menu and of different applications (some of these seem accidental), animal photos (most notably Godard's dog, Miéville, who "played" Roxy in *Goodbye to Language* [*Adieu au langage*, 2014]), photos of different paintings and drawings (Expressionism, Neo-expressionism, and Picasso's paintings mostly), photographed texts (both handwritten and printed),

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1 The Ji.hlava International Documentary Film Festival is the largest festival of creative documentary films in Central and Eastern Europe. It draws attention to documentaries notable for their innovative visual style and a deeper social reflection and confrontation.

2 This reproduction was also exhibited as part of the art installation *Orpheus's Studio*. See: <https://thespaces.com/step-into-jean-luc-godards-office-recreated-at-fondazione-prada/#gallery>. Last accessed 20. 10. 2021.



Figure 1. The first photo in the Photo Library. Godard sits on a porch and watches a sunlit, green garden.

and snapshots of Godard's environment (the photo of the infamous front door of his Rolle residence stands out) – a stream of seemingly random images representing Godard's everyday reality between December 2016 and June 2018.

First and foremost, it is obvious to analyse the clip as a companion piece to Godard's latest feature film *The Image Book* (note: the photos on Godard's iPhone were taken during and after the production period of *The Image Book*). In this context, the clip can be seen as a cinematic (or post-cinematic) demonstration (or expansion) of the theorem borrowed from the Swiss writer and cultural theorist Denis de Rougemont, outlined in *The Image Book*: "man's true condition: to think with hands."

The first image we see in *The Image Book* is the photocopy-like image of the pointing hand of Leonardo da Vinci's *Saint John the Baptist*.³ Next, we see two hands sticking together two film reels at an editing table (taken from Godard's 1987 film *King Lear*). After that, we see two right hands writing on a white paper. The sequence is enclosed by a montage of archive images depicting hands. The voice-over commentary (Godard's own voice) states: "Fairy's five fingers, together they make up the hand. Man's true condition: to think with hands."

This opening sequence in a self-reflective manner demystifies the film's practice of image handling. Ágnes Pethő described these practices as "altering and mixing together clips from the history of cinema on a computer in order to self-reflexively engage with 'man's condition to think with hands'" (2020, 342).

The short clip also demonstrates a similar practice of the mentioned image handling: Godard mixes together images with his hand, but in this case he uses his own archive. However, since the legendary lectures presented at the Conservatoire d'Art Cinématographique de Montréal (these lectures were also published as a book in 1980, titled *Introduction à une véritable histoire du cinéma*), and

3 This image also served as the film's promotional poster.



Figure 2. The last photo in the Photo Library. A photo of Rembrandt's *A Woman Bathing in a Stream*

especially since *Histoire(s) du cinéma* (1989–1999) and *JLG/JLG – Self-Portrait in December* (*JLG/JLG – autoportrait de décembre*, 1995), it is unequivocal that Godard's personal history cannot be told without the context of film history and without the language of cinema. Based on Hans Belting's remarks, Pethő writes: "this work [*Histoire(s) du cinéma*] does not only connect the collective imaginary to the personal and subjective imaginary but also maps out how our memory works: memories imprinted in images, and images that free themselves from memories of concrete contexts over and over again (eventually it is impossible to locate the images in one particular film or another), so we can no longer tell whether these are memories through images or memories of images" (2020, 301–302).

The clip functions in the same manner: by mixing his personal photographs with film stills from *The Image Book* and with photos of artworks, Godard not only connects the collective imaginary with the personal and subjective imaginary but also maps out the operation of our memory: "we can no longer tell whether these are memories through images or memories of images." Moreover, Godard's diegetic, bodily presence in the clip demonstrates another kind of memory work. By scrolling through his Photo Library, he does what we all do when we flip through our personal photo archives: we summon memories with the help of images. The act of scrolling becomes an act of remembrance. Thus, Godard not just thinks (and creates) with his hand, but he also remembers with his hand.

The clip's soundtrack also emphasizes the act of remembering through Godard's bodily presence, whose murmured word fragments and body sound (shortness of breath, cough) are artificially synchronized with the altering of the images. It gives the impression that we hear Godard's inner thoughts summoned by the memories imprinted in the images. Besides creating a cinematic form of stream of consciousness, the interplay between sound and image also reflects a relatively new kind of memory work, made possible by the newly emerging technologies (e.g. digital photography, timestamping).



Figure 3. The last image of the clip: a selfie of Godard

By synchronizing the sounds emphasizing his bodily presence with the images representing himself on many levels (the author's bodily presence in the diegetic world, photographs of and made by the author, personal memories inscribed in intertexts), the problem of authorial self-representation (the problem of showing the directorial "I"), which was analysed by Nora M. Alter as Godard's continuous and fundamental distrust in visual imagery (2000, 78), is also resolved. John Kelsey observes that "Godard's latest films, especially *The Image Book*, are relentlessly shaped and informed by the up-close, bodily presence of the director and his clowning around exile and decline. With every cut and glitch, the viewer senses his fingers stabbing at the Sonosax mixer and DVCAM decks, his shortness of breath in the microphone, a direct transmission from his body in Rolle" (2020). Thus, we can put it like this: in this short clip, Godard transmits his memory through his body in the most intimate way allowed by the language of cinema.

As Godard's finger rests, some understandable fragments "surface:" "many times," "suffocated," "expectations would be vaster," "we were young," "expectations would stay," "utopia," "all continents," "necessary," "hope." The only complete syntagm (which also opens and encloses the clip) is: "And even if nothing turned out how we'd hoped, it would not have changed what we'd hoped for."

This assertion can be interpreted in the mirror of Godard's oeuvre on several levels: it can be applied to this short clip (or to the photographs shown in the clip), to Godard's personal and/or professional life, to film history, or to the whole of history.

The last photograph that we can see in the clip (which renders the mentioned assertion) is a selfie of Godard [Fig. 3]. This *mise en scène* (Godard facing an image of himself through a device) evokes the opening shot of *JLG/JLG*, in which we see Godard as he films an early childhood photograph of himself in a dimly lit room [Fig. 4]. This opening shot launches a rather pessimistic autobiographical meditation not only on his life and work but also on the unfulfilled promises of cinema.

In the conclusion of her analysis, Alter argues that in *JLG/JLG* Godard is mourning for himself, he mourns the spectre of cinema, and he also mourns



Figure 4. Still from the opening shot of *JLG/JLG – Self-Portrait in December*

the “concomitant death of Europe” (2000, 94–96). The issue of cinema’s inability to recognize and capture the tragedies and atrocities of the 20th and 21st centuries (an issue which can be directly linked to the decline of Western civilization in Godard’s view) is a recurring theme in Godard’s late period (for example, a section of *The Image Book* addressed problems regarding the representation of the Holocaust, the rise of ISIS, and the Israeli–Palestinian conflict).

In this context, the short clip’s word fragments and the enclosing assertion (as well as the fact that Godard is facing his present self, not a childhood self as he did in *JLG/JLG*) can be understood as coming to terms: Godard (even though in a slightly resigned tone) comes to terms with himself and perhaps even with cinema: “And even if nothing turned out how we’d hoped, it would not have changed what we’d hoped for.” A very intimate confession from one of the last great authors of cinema.

Speaking about Godard’s influence on contemporary cinema, Pethő states: “Two decades into the new millennium, if we try to assess the impact of Godard, the astonishing fact remains that the most important phenomenon of the ‘afterlife’ of Godardian cinema is still Godard, the author himself” (2020, 318). Besides transmitting Godard’s memory in a highly intimate way, the short clip also presents him as an author whose personal history is highly interlaced with the image-making practices, paradigms, and technologies. Godard presents a selfie, made in a “Godardesque” way, just as he presented his cinematic self-portrait in *JLG/JLG*.

Discussing the post-cinematic tendencies in Godard’s body of work, Ágnes Pethő gives many examples for interconnected works that explore new kinds of medial hybridities by using traditional media formats in a “Godardesque” way or by experimenting with newly emerged technologies and media formats. We can mention the CD box sets containing the edited versions of the soundtracks of *Nouvelle Vague* (1990) and *Histoire(s) du cinéma*, released by ECM Records

(2020, 299). Or we can mention the sped-up version of *Film Socialisme* (2010) uploaded to YouTube as a trailer for the movie.⁴

Lately, Godard has still been positioning himself in “the avant-garde of artists exploring cinema and installation art” (Pethő 2020, 318). In 2019, *The Image Book* was presented as an art installation which recreated part of Godard’s studio titled *Orpheus’s Studio* (*Le Studio d’Orphée*, 2019; see Pethő 2020, 318). Also in 2019, the Théâtre Nanterre-Amandiers in Nanterre, France, hosted a monumental exhibition, built around *The Image Book* but also incorporating almost every moving image made by Godard and Anne-Marie Miéville since 1970 (the short clip analysed in this article was exhibited too), titled *Parcours Livre d’Image* (see Francesco Zucconi’s analysis of the exhibition in Zucconi, 2020).

At the time of writing this article, the latest sequel in *The Image Book*’s post-cinematic afterlife is the soon-to-be-opened “living projection” (as stated by Godard himself)⁵ titled *Sentiments, Signes, Passions*. This “living projection,” curated by Fabrice Aragno⁶ in collaboration with Godard, will take place at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt, in Berlin, and, based on preliminary information, it will attempt to show *The Image Book* through 40 screens.

However, with this short clip, Godard explores another contemporary phenomenon, described by Raymond Bellour as “The convergence about to smack us in the face will mean you can use the same appliance to trade stock, watch a movie, e-mail or make toast.”⁷ Bellour predicted in a prophetic way (the quoted remark was first published in 2000) the appearance of modern smartphones, devices regarded as the perfect embodiment of media convergence.

Smartphones have revolutionized our lives in ways that go well beyond how we communicate. The way of consuming media, the way of perceiving ourselves and our environment, the way of getting in touch with the world as a whole has been drastically changed by smartphones. We communicate and socialize through our phones, we take, edit, and share photos and videos with our phones, we work and learn with and through our phones, we consume music, movies, books through our phones, we bank and shop through our phones, and so on. It is not a coincidence that most smartphones are marketed as part of a person’s identity.

Since its introduction in 2007, Apple’s iPhone has become The Smartphone in the collective consciousness. Fifteen years after its release, more than 2.2 billion units have been sold, and the iPhone has become a cornerstone product

4 See: <https://youtu.be/oLuWoz9OpqU>. Last accessed 10. 01. 2022.

5 See the event’s promotional trailer on Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/p/CZKUp2DoEXn/>. Last accessed 27. 01. 2022.

6 Fabrice Aragno, a frequent Godard collaborator since the 2010s. He is credited as the “cinematographer” of *The Image Book*. See an interview in which he talks about the film’s working method: <https://www.filmcomment.com/article/the-hand-of-time/>. Last accessed 27. 01. 2022.

7 <https://chrismarker.org/battle-of-the-images-by-raymond-bellour/>. Last accessed 28. 01. 2022.



Figure 5. Godard uses his iPhone as a mirror during a conversation conducted by Lionel Baier, broadcast live on Instagram.

of one of the most valuable companies in the world. Since the mid-10s, iPhones have made their way into the world of cinema and into the world of contemporary art. There are several feature films shot entirely with iPhone, for example, Sean Baker’s *Tangerine* (2015) or Steven Soderbergh’s *Unsane* (2018). The 2018 Turner Prize winner, Charlotte Prodger, considers herself an iPhone filmmaker (her awarded work, *Bridgit* [2016], was entirely made with an iPhone). In addition to being relatively easy to access and easy to use, iPhones offer an acceptable level of image-making technology. Thus, they make possible a very personal and a very intimate (and a very low-budget) way of filmmaking. Prodger stated during an interview with *The Guardian* that the iPhone felt like an extension of her: “Because of that ease of use and the way you can use it while you are going about the world. For me, everything is in there” (Brown 2018).

Back to Godard: in the past few years, the iPhone has become a crucial part of his personal and professional life. For example, see the Cannes press conference conducted via FaceTime⁸ (Mumford 2018). So, perhaps we can say that it was only a matter of time to incorporate the iPhone in his body of work.

Nonetheless, Godard uses and presents the iPhone in his own twisted, “Godardesque” manner not just as a camera but also as a *dispositif* of images. In this way, he not only unveils the image-making apparatus, but by showing intertexts mixed with genuine images in the same *dispositif*, he also reflects the converging media. The iPhone in Godard’s hand becomes the perfect mirror for medial self-reflexion (just as it became in reality [Fig. 5]).

As a conclusion, we can say that Godard, with the use of an ultimate consumer product (the iPhone), an ultimate form of contemporary extrovertism (the selfie), and an ultimate consumer format (after all, the short clip intended to be a commercial), created a very personal and an in every way avant-garde piece

8 FaceTime is Apple’s video and audio chatting platform.

– an “intimate haiku” that echoes Godard’s own words: “I know now that if I make a picture it’s just to speak about what I’m doing, about myself, but it’s also giving something to other people so that they can take a part of me” (quoted by Alter 2000, 75).

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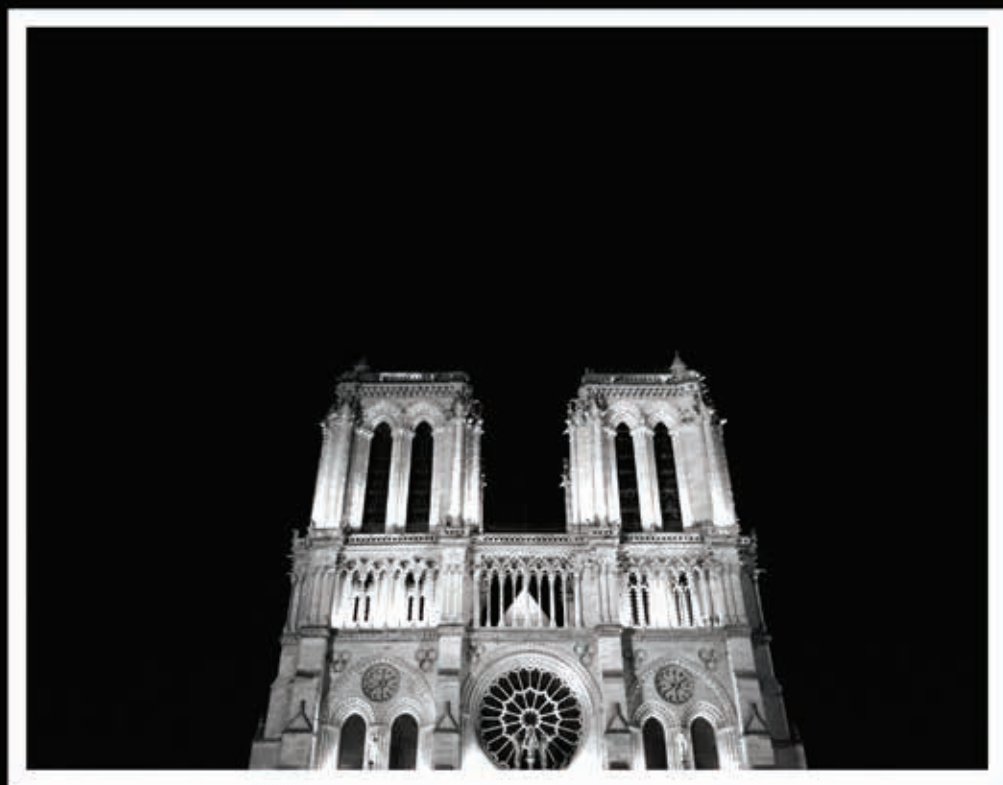
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**MIHÁLY
LAKATOS**

**FAIRE BANDE À PART
RUNNING THROUGH THE HISTORICAL AXIS
(PLUS TWO OR THREE THINGS)**

**PARIS
20 SEPTEMBER 2018**



NOTRE-DAME

(20:23)



PONT NEUF

(20:35)



OBÉLISQUE DE LOUXOR

(21:08)



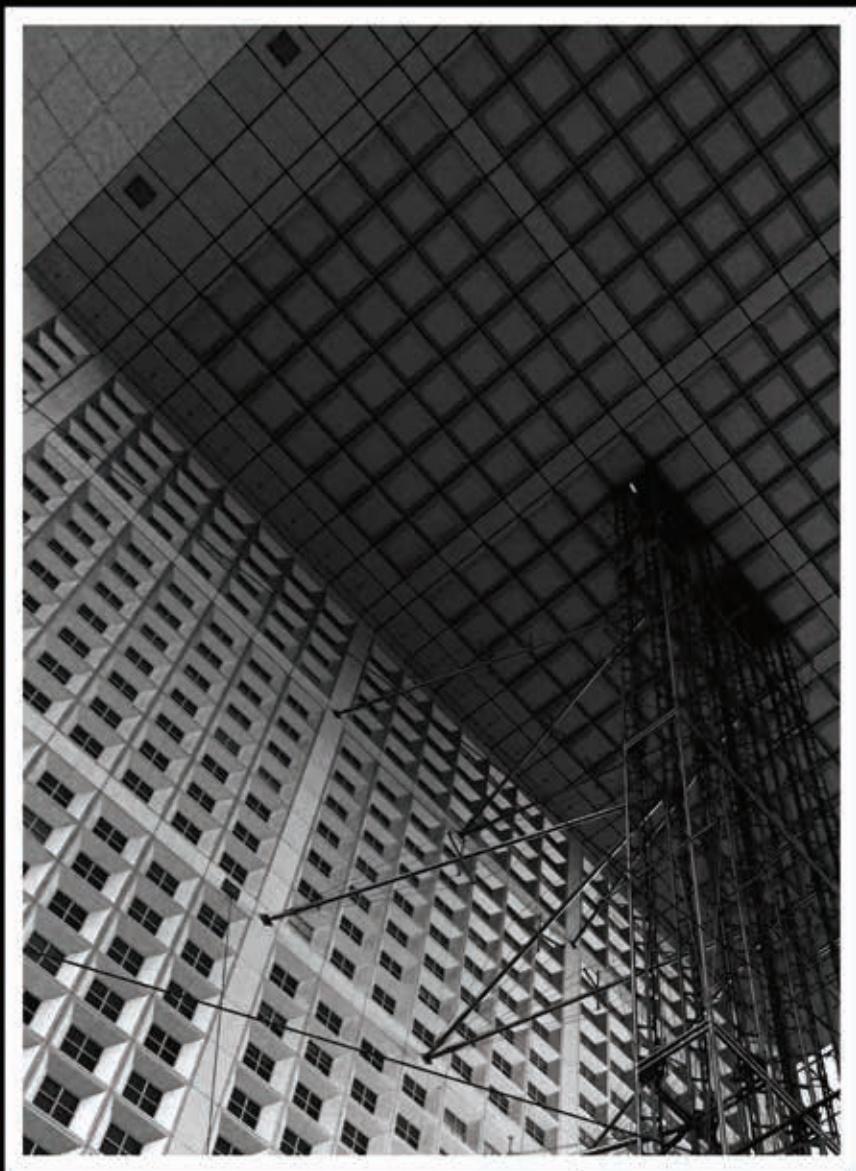
ARC DE TRIOMPHE

(21:47)



TOUR EIFFEL

(22:28)



GRANDE ARCHE DE LA DÉFENSE

(23:58)

SCENES OF *THE L'ENTRE-IMAGES*
A KÖZTES KÉPEK HELYSZÍNEI

Laura Mulvey*

Mark Lewis's *Rear Projection: Molly Parker* (Canada, 2004). Reflection on "In-Between-ness" and a Work of the Inter-medial Picturesque

This paper is based on the presentation I gave at the conference *The Picturesque: Visual Pleasure and Intermediality in-between Contemporary Cinema, Art and Digital Culture* organized by Ágnes Pethő at Sapientia University in October 2019. Ágnes had already invited me to participate in the 2015 conference: *The Real and the Intermedial*. During these events and subsequent correspondence (including her beautiful seasonal photographs), I have come to value the originality of Ágnes's approach to the theory and aesthetics of contemporary media, her own scholarship, and, very particularly, her hospitality and her companionship. I am delighted to contribute to this volume of essays in her honour.

My paper is primarily about Mark Lewis's use of cinematic rear projection and Canadian landscapes in his early 2000s installations. Between 2006 and 2009, he made four rear-projection pieces. I will concentrate on the first: *Rear Projection: Molly Parker* (2006). Later in the paper, I will explore the specifically "in-between" attributes of rear projection and Lewis's citation of its pervasive presence in Hollywood studio system cinema. But as an introduction I would like to locate *Rear Projection: Molly Parker* within two contexts particularly relevant to the topics of this conference: the inter-medial and the picturesque.

Lewis was born in Ontario, Canada in 1958 and spent most of his childhood there. His family moved to the UK when he was a teenager and he studied photography at Central London Polytechnic with the British conceptual artist Victor Burgin. Although his early photographic work was very much within the spirit of British conceptualism, in the mid 90s he began to work with film. This was, of course, a specifically inter-medial moment, as digital technology further opened up galleries to moving image installation. But a further historical accident complicated Lewis's response to film as a medium: the cinema's centenary in 1995 had prompted a revival of interest in the Lumière brothers' films, first exhibited in the Grand Café, Paris, 1895. Lewis has written about his admiration for these brief filmed moments, how they (almost magically) summoned up "photogenic" from the most ordinary events within a less than one-minute

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Figure 1. Still from Mark Lewis's *Algonquin Park, September* (2001).
Courtesy of the artist and Daniel Faria Gallery

reel of 35-mm film (Lewis 2003a). His films of the period echo the Lumières' fixed camera position and limited temporal duration. These very specific tributes to the constraints of celluloid as a medium (the length of the reel of film) were shown as installations in the newly liberated world of digital exhibition.

With his return to Canada in the early 2000s, Lewis's three Algonquin Park works reflect his re-encounter with nature, the seasons and the Canadian landscape, both a return to and transformation of childhood experiences and memories. Inevitably, images of the Ontario landscape evoke the first school of Canadian painting known as the Group of Seven, or the Algonquin School, that formed around 1919 and continued to work as a group until 1933. The artists in the Group of Seven were consciously influenced by the landscape of Ontario and aspired to create a Canadian-specific school of painting that would emerge out of this particular manifestation of "nature." Tom Thompson, who died before the Group was formed, figured as its pioneer, living and painting in the wild.¹ These artists' relationship to the landscape belongs to the category "picturesque," in their concern to document rather than to conceptually enhance natural phenomena or use nature for the grander purposes of the sublime or the beautiful.

Mark Lewis's first two Canadian works, *Algonquin Park, September* (2001) and *Algonquin Park, Early March* (2002), were both shot in landscapes that evoke the Group of Seven school. *Algonquin Park, September* captures a natural phenomenon characteristic of the region: at a certain moment in an autumn morning, the water in a lake is warmer than the air and very briefly, between 5.30 and 6.00, a mist rises up, shrouding its surroundings until dissolved by warmer air.

1 Tom Thompson died at the age of 39, under mysterious circumstances while on a canoeing trip in Algonquin Park.

Figure 2. Still from Mark Lewis's *Algonquin Park, Early March* (2002).
Courtesy of the artist and Daniel Faria Gallery



The two-minute-forty-second fixed-camera film records this moment of natural spectacle plus a human event: a canoe enters the frame and moves across the lake just as the mist lifts to reveal a wooded, autumnally coloured island. The landscape is timelessly beautiful, and there is something sublime in the brief phenomenon of the mist, but the presence of the canoe and its passengers shift the image towards the picturesque. Nature becomes inhabited, not only by the canoe's traditional connotations but also by childhood memories of the twentieth-century Algonquin Park [Fig. 1].

If *Algonquin Park, September* is a tribute to the Canadian autumn, *Algonquin Park, Early March* is a tribute to the Canadian winter. The camera in *Algonquin Park, Early March* is once again in a fixed position, and a slow zoom across the snow-covered landscape creates an "alliance" between the cinematic apparatus and the winter scenery. The film begins with a close shot of snow on a frozen lake, suggesting, for a few moments, the whiteness of a blank screen. Gradually, the zoom expands to reveal the contour of the lake, marked by the dark green of the surrounding pine trees. The dramatic and iconic beauty of the landscape also suggests a frozen, pristine, and remote sublime. However, at the furthest point of the zoom, smoothed out towards the edge of the lake, a little home-made "ice-rink" appears, on which small figures of children playing ice-hockey dart to and fro. The artificial square space is like a postage stamp in relation to the wider frame of the landscape, and it only stays on the screen for a moment before the film ends. However, the appearance of the ice-rink and its skaters is so surprising, so incongruous and strange that the human here seems to elude a more familiar or reassuring picturesque. In the last resort, the juxtaposition of the pristine snow and the frozen landscape with the fleeting image of childhood play suggests the petrified fragility of human memory, preserved as it were in ice but always liable to "melt away" as time passes [Fig. 2]).

These two films prefigure Lewis's *Rear Projection: Molly Parker*, shot (in 2006) just outside Algonquin Park and set in both the Canadian autumn and the Canadian winter. Before discussing this piece, I would like to introduce the significance of rear projection for Lewis's work as well as its relevance to the concept and an aesthetic of the "in-between."

It was the temporal and spatial discordances inherent to rear projection that first caught Lewis's attention. He wrote in 2003 that "the two elements march to different beats:" "Back projection, certainly early back projection, brings together so inefficiently two completely different types of film experience that we can hardly not notice their montage effect: we experience the two visual regimes as separate and unwoven, literally as collage. Therefore, that which is designed to make the transition scenes relatively seamless [...] in fact makes transition truly palpable. On the face of it, this is a paradoxical condition, achieved against the putative intentions of the scene itself." (Lewis 2003b.)

The two paradoxical, visual regimes emphasize the "in-between" nature of the device not only as a technology but also as an aesthetic of perceptual uncertainty. Whether or not the process was "truly palpable" in its heyday, rear projection was an essential part of the production processes of the Hollywood studio system. It was adopted widely in response to problems posed by the arrival of synchronized sound: how to record audible dialogue, on location, while preserving star impact? The answer: to split a scene or sequence into two parts, separating location/setting from performers/stars. The location, the narrative setting would be shot during pre-production; this footage, the "plate," would be projected onto a translucent screen in a specialized studio. Placed in front of the screen, the stars, carefully arranged and with limited mobility, could then be conveniently filmed in the studio space and their dialogue easily recorded.

In a further paradox of the in-between, the location footage sometimes seems incompatibly "realistic;" as Lewis has pointed out, almost as though documentary footage had intruded into wholly staged narrative dramas: "The juxtaposition can produce a unique and strangely beautiful montage effect. Highly artificial looking, these scenes of studio and location, of fiction and documentary quickly became the orthodox means by which actors and audiences were both 'taken' into a simulated real while also being distanced from it" (Lewis 2003b).

In his essay for the exhibition catalogue *Hitchcock and Art: Fatal Coincidences*, Dominique Païni argues that Hitchcock used rear projection for its dreamlike qualities – the uncertainty that double filming brought to the cinema –, and ultimately for its modernity. He says the effect "creates a semblance of reality without erasing the illusory device that goes with it" (2000). Païni uses the term "strata of scenery" to evoke a sense of "in-between-ness," the confusion caused as nature becomes "portable," and exteriors appear in the interior of the studio. The ultimate image emerges out of this "aggregation of spaces," in which film studio and the actual location sequence, filmed in the "real world," remain uneasily separate.

Lewis has argued more generally that this dislocation between the studio and the plate points directly to a contradiction at the heart of Hollywood cinema. In

principle, rear projection folds one level of time invisibly into another, and the figures in the studio foreground fuse with the projected space behind them. But, because of its inherent imperfections, the usually invisible mechanics and processes of film production could disrupt the seamless coherence of the spectacle and even intrude into the spectator's consciousness. As this kind of Brechtian visibility of production processes was, with some exceptions, a taboo within the strict conventions of Hollywood, for Lewis, rear projection introduced a touch of modernism into this bastion of mass culture. In its very clumsiness, the device embodied this complex contradiction: through rear projection, even if accidentally and unconsciously, the materiality of modernism found a way into the ultimate mass entertainment industry of modernity.

Lewis's involvement in film as a practitioner and as a cinephile has been constantly in dialogue with his engagement with painting and the history of art. For instance, his love of winter, of snow, and of skating drew him to certain Dutch paintings of which he said: "To me, a painted winter scene from the 15th or early 16th century can sometimes seem to contain early signs of the cinematic movement to come, so full of life can it be with the suggestion of unusual and unexpected movement and activities. Winter weather accomplishes magical transformations and suggests a vastly expanded realm of possibilities."²

During the period of his interest in rear projection, Lewis similarly discovered a precedent for its "in-between" effect, for Païni's "aggregation of spaces," and the uneasy separation between film studio and the actual location sequence. Just as rear projection "sanctified" the star image, so a certain kind of Renaissance painting places its sacred figures in "close-up," as it were "superimposed" on a far-away landscape that stretches into the distance. Lewis drew particular attention to this topography in the catalogue for his 2006 exhibition at the FACT Centre, Liverpool, where *Rear Projection: Molly Parker* was first exhibited. He included relevant images, Jan van Eyck's *The Virgin of Chancellor Rolin* (1435–36) and various portraits (Memling and others), in which the foreground, occupied by the central figure, is detached from its background in an arrangement that strangely prefigures the aggregated spaces of rear projection. In *Rear Projection: Molly Parker*, Lewis was referring particularly to the stratification of space: the strange and uneasy disjuncture between the flatness of both foreground and background.

The Hollywood film industry was axiomatically built around stars. The studio space could highlight their beauty, literally enhanced by controlled lighting effects, and their most highly dramatic moments and characteristic poses were exaggerated by the stasis enforced by the technical device of rear projection. Defined by characteristic attributes, these iconic figures are given a privileged position for the spectator's eroticized gaze, possible edification, and even adoration. Here again, there is a link to the spatial and conceptual organization of the Renaissance portraits that superimpose highly emblematic figures against

2 The quote is from an unpublished paper.



natural worlds. Whereas the holy figures (the Virgin, Christ, saints, or donors) had to be raised out of ordinary surroundings, brought close to the spectator for reverence, contemplation, or supplication, they were also embellished with extraordinary beauty and dramatized by characteristic gestures or poses. Furthermore, in some of the most beautiful examples, the drama of the sacred space and its iconic figures contrasts thematically as well as spatially with the background in which the artist has painted ordinary people in scenes from everyday life.

With the *Molly Parker* project, Lewis combined a more recent interest in portraiture with his longstanding interest in rear projection. Parker, as a Canadian actor who had achieved star status in the television series *Deadwood* (HBO, 2004–2006), offered the possibility of bringing these strands together. From an initial cinephile interest in rear projection, Lewis began a practical search for rear projection studios that were still functioning. Most were not. Ultimately, he found the Hansard Studio in Hollywood, which the Hansard family had run for three generations, and it was there that *Rear Projection: Molly Parker* was composed.

Following the traditional Hollywood method, the *Molly Parker* plate had been shot in the Ontario countryside, near Algonquin Park, across two seasons. An abandoned shack from a disused gas station, with its sign Howlin' Wolf still prominently displayed, stands in the background under a wooded hillside coloured by a few early autumn reds (prefigured in *Algonquin Park, September*). The scene suddenly mutates to the deep snow of a Canadian mid-winter (prefigured in *Algonquin Park, Early March*) [Figs. 3–4]. The landscapes cite a certain picturesque, as in the earlier *Algonquin Park* films, but seasons change with such a



Figures 3–4. Stills from Mark Lewis's *Rear Projection: Molly Parker* (2006).
Courtesy of the artist and Daniel Faria Gallery

sudden technological flourish that the image's content seems overwhelmed by its enigmatic means of production. The discourse relates to mechanics rather than nature, and the transformation exaggerates the duality of rear projection, its folding of doubled time and space within a single image. The road-side gas station and café contribute another temporal connotation to the scene. Lewis frequently returns – both in earlier (and later) films – to abandoned buildings, but here they carry the idea of the disused and the obsolete across from the technology to the image itself and vice versa.

Furthermore, the various levels of “in-between-ness” in *Rear Projection: Molly Parker* are enhanced by the studio camera work. Molly is filmed with a complex camera movement that combines a track with a zoom (a “trombone effect”), further flattening and making strange her figure's relation to the background screen. The camera movement exaggerates the discordance between figure and plate: the zoom brings Molly in to close-up, but the background plate stays still. The camera then repeats the “trombone effect” in reverse and moves back to its original position. As Elie During has pointed out: “The combined use of an optical tracking shot (zoom in) and a kinetic tracking shot (track out) leads to a variation of the focal length while keeping the framing unchanged. As a result, the entire space is affected by a strange distortion. The cinematic subject is eclipsed for a moment, since no ‘natural’ point of view can correspond to an event of this kind. It is as if the form of the shot presented itself in its truth: a pure movement of the mind. The power of fascination of the dolly zoom lies precisely in the fact that it superimposes – in a single gesture – two a priori contradictory movements (advancing and withdrawing, moving closer and

moving further away), at the cost of squashing all depth of field.” And he continues: “In all cases, the issue is indeed folding one time onto another, or refolding one time into another, in other words, inscribing simultaneously, within the same image, disjointed temporal perspectives, or distinct temporal orders and timescales” (During 2016).

In its combination of the two effects (rear projection and trombone camera movement), the *Molly Parker* installation disrupts the traditional securities of cinematic visual convention, creating on various levels of a modernist sense of distanciation and the in-between. Rear projection already confounds point of view, denying either protagonist or spectator a coherent relation to the screen space, and, also already, it folds “one time into another.”

Lewis’s interest in rear projection took another turn due to the time he spent filming in the Hansard Studio with the Hansard family. By 2006, the Studio was rapidly going out of business. Lewis, his imagination caught by the family anecdotes and the poignancy of this story of technological decline, returned to Hollywood in 2008 to make a documentary: *Back Story: Hansard Rear Projection* (2009), in which rear projection technology produces another layer of time and a further dimension of the “in-between”. Here, in a compressed and poignant form, is a first-hand account of the modern object’s trajectory to the “outmoded” that so fascinated Walter Benjamin. A mechanism, once incorporated into the everyday of its own historical moment, falls into disuse and finally becomes archaic: but recycled obliquely back into history, it can acquire new unexpected interest and aesthetic significance. The sense of dislocated time produced by a revitalization of the archaic, furthermore, conjures up the dislocation built into the rear projection mechanism itself. At the end of *Back Story*, the Hansard father and son discuss the end of the rear projection era. Billy is now employed by Sony simply as a projectionist, showing films, rushes, and so on to industry people who were once his clients. Both vividly evoke the present uselessness of their once productive equipment. Mr Hansard senior says: “I don’t see a couple of years in the future, it will be a couple of months before I take this stuff down to Catalina and use them as sea anchors...” And Billy adds “They’ll make a nice diving reef for the fishes.”

There is a sense in which Lewis is attracted to things, buildings, or objects that are marked by a history of human use; disused and abandoned buildings and places recur across his work – for instance, the abandoned gas station in *Molly Parker*. But Lewis’s use of rear projection revolves around the injection of new life into an archaic device and resonates directly with Walter Benjamin’s idea that a return to seemingly outdated objects might invest them with new value and meaning. As Benjamin puts it in his essay on surrealism: “Breton was the first to perceive the revolutionary energies that appeared in the ‘outmoded’ in the first iron constructions, the first factory building, the first photos, the objects that have begun to be extinct, grand piano, dresses of five years ago, fashionable restaurants when the vogue has begun to ebb from them” (Benjamin 1969).

In his vast *Arcades* project, Benjamin looked back at nineteenth-century Paris and suggested that obsolescence brings with it a kind of utopian detachment from use, which releases an outmoded building or technology for an altered aesthetic. To resurrect the paradoxes of a forgotten, widely despised technology is to project a parallel, non-teleological approach to history which zigzags and can leap-frog across time to make unexpected links between, for instance, a “then,” rear projection, and a “now” that quotes it. The act of quotation pays tribute to the hidden, overlooked complexities of the original device but also confuses the linear relation between past and present. Lewis’s installations reproduce these shifts across time and from use value to cultural value: recycled within a new context, the original object still refers to its history but from a new aesthetic rather than an old industrial context.

Mark Lewis’s installation *Rear Projection: Molly Parker* interweaves various film technologies to create an uncertain visual space and time, building on and out of the enigmatic images produced by the rear projection device itself. But the use of rear projection here moves beyond the inherent interest in its distantiating properties or pleasure in its intrusion of modernity into Hollywood. In *Molly Parker*, the device conjures up cinema’s memory, not as inscribed into either personal or collective experience but as an instance of the medium’s history as it reaches back into the folklore and archaeology of its machinery. Cinema has so often been seen as a simple vehicle, as mechanically projecting images that others have imaginatively projected onto it. But in Lewis’s rear projection works, the beauty of the Canadian seasons is somehow secondary to the spectacle of cinema itself, its power to reflect and to disrupt. *Rear Projection: Molly Parker* could only have been made precisely at that moment in time: on the one hand, rear projection had become sufficiently archaic to attract the theoretical attention of the artist/cinephile, and, on the other, the original production process, although breathing its last gasp in 2004, could still be found in Hollywood.

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1. kép. Teremnézet a Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien *X-Screen* c. kiállításáról.
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Ármeán Otília*

Mozgóképek vetített mozaikja

„A labirintus falai apró mozaikpöttyökből épültek, és a mozaik mintázata a szeletenként gyarapodó messzeségből is élesen kirajzolódott. [...]

Világoskék, sárga, bordó, fekete. Örök életemben le fog nyűgözni az a tudás, ami egyetlen kockában még semmi, nyomtalan nyom, de tekintéllyé, előrelátó bölcsességgé válik, mihelyt mellé helyeződik az új mozaikdarab.”

(Láng 2003, 67)

„A hátsó ablakok metaforája találóan érzékelteti azt, ahogyan a moziban a képek – egy jéghegy csúcsaihoz hasonlóan – csupán föltárulkozó momentumai egy sokkal kiterjedtebb »mögöttes« képi (és nyelvi, végső soron kulturálisan is differenciált) világnak, és ahogyan ezeket a filmnézés/értelmezés során folyamatosan minden »irányban«: a film tér-idő dimenzióiban és memoriálisan (asszociációk révén) más képekhez kapcsolhatjuk és szövegvázakba illeszthetjük, szövegekké egészítjük ki.”

(Pethő 2003, 80)

1. Felütés

Ezen írás a 2004 májusában, Kolozsváron, az *Egyidejűségek* címet viselő VII. Film- és Médiatudományi Konferencián elhangzott előadásnak az írott változata. 2021-ben újraolvasva is van aktualitása, hiszen a vetített képeknek az a többes száma, az egy térbe kerülés hozadéka, ami akkor foglalkoztatott, ma újra kérdés a képernyők megsokszorozódása, az egyes képernyőkre kivetített képek egymáshoz való viszonyításának retorikai műveletei, vagy a képernyőn megjelenő különböző műfajú, tartalmú, státuszú képek egymást értelmező, bonyolult kapcsolat-

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rendszere miatt. A következőkben aktuális példák keresésére és értelmezésére nem, csupán az akkori példáim újragondolására vállalkozom.¹

2. X-Screen és szimultaneitás

Egyidejűségről, egyidejűségekről szólva gondolatmenetemben a bécsi MUMOK 60-as, 70-es évek filmes installációinak és akcióinak szentelt időszakos kiállítására támaszkodom,² a bő kínálatból négy példát kiemelve és az általuk felvetett kérdéseket részletesebben elemezve. Egy kiállításlátogatás és annak az emléke az alapja a szövegnek, de utólagosan a kiállítás *X-Screen* című katalógusa is segít egyes aspektusok körvonalazásában (Michalka 2004).

A „vetített mozaik” szövszerkezet jelen szöveg címében a múzeumi térre utal, arra, ahogyan egy kiállítás szembeesítheti a báméskodó látogatót a mozgóképi technikák, effektusok térberendező vonatkozásaival. Hiszen teljes egyidejűségben látunk ebben a sajátos térben vetítógépet/gépeket és vetített képet/képeket, amelyek éppen a szimultaneitás miatt alakítanak ki olyan kölcsönviszonyokat egymással, melyek más térben elképzelhetetlenek lennének (vagy pedig: csupán el-kép-zelhetőek: a befogadó által teremtett összefüggésmezőre gondolok, melyben óhatatlanul vagy intertextuális markerek által irányítottan társulnak a különböző időpontokban, különböző helyeken, különböző médiumokban érzékelt, egymást magyarázó alkotások). A múzeumi bemutatás sajátossága egy közös referenciamező kialakulása, a bemutatott alkotások egymással dialógusba lépő, egymást néha erősítő, néha gyengítő, átfedéseket megképző jelenléte, mely – ebben az összefüggésben – mindenkori interpretációnk működésének kivetítése, metaforája is (lásd az 1. fotót). A kiállítás katalógusának nagy hiányossága, hogy nem közöl adatot vagy fotót a múzeumi térről, nem tudunk meg részleteket arról, hogyan

1 Ha valakit mégis ez az irány érdekelne, akkor Adrian Sitaru újabb színházi munkáit ajánlom figyelmébe. Idetartozik a 2018-ban Kolozsváron bemutatott *Illegitim* és a 2021-ben Temesváron bemutatott *Az ember, aki csak azt tudta mondani, amit olvasott*. Míg az *Illegitim* színház és VR párhuzamosságával, *Az ember, aki...* színház és kísérleti film kettősségével játszik. Az utóbbi bemutatója ráadásul online zajlott, amivel el is billent a mérleg a kísérleti film felé. A nézők a horizontálisan kettéosztott képernyőn egyszerre követhették a nagy asztal köré összegyűlt társaság beszélgetését két ellentétes nézőpontból: a képernyő alsó fele a nézőtér perspektívája, a képernyő felső fele a színpad mögött elhelyezett kamera vételezte kép. A két előadás több ponton (tartalmilag, formanyelvi megoldásokban) is kapcsolódik egymáshoz (lásd Sitaru, Adrian. 2018. *Illegitim*. Kolozsvári Állami Magyar Színház. Bemutató: 2018. február 17. <https://www.huntheater.ro/eloadas/447/illegitim/>. Utolsó megtekintés: 2021. 09. 26. és Sitaru, Adrian. 2021. *Az ember, aki csak azt tudta mondani, amit olvasott*. Temesvári Állami Csiky Gergely Színház. Bemutató: 2021. január 24. <http://www.tm-t.ro/hu/?page=piesa&pid=532>. Utolsó megtekintés: 2021. 09. 26.).

2 *X-Screen. Film Installations and Actions in the 1960s and 1970s*. Kurátor: Matthias Michalka. Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien. 2003. december 13. – 2004. február 29. <https://www.mumok.at/en/events/x-screen>. Utolsó megtekintés: 2021. 09. 26.

lettek az egyes alkotások, filmes installációk elhelyezve a rendelkezésre álló térben, illetve egymáshoz képest. Ez egyrészt érthető, hiszen a katalógus anyagának a kiállítás szervezése előtt össze kellett állnia, másrészt viszont a katalógus így csupán a bemutatott alkotásokkal van jelölési viszonyban, a kiállítás egészével inkább egyféle versengés, párhuzamosság tételeződik: ahogyan a kiállítás katalógusa leltárba vesz és értelmezési kereteket ajánl, úgy vesz leltárba és teremt meg egy közös teret a kiállítás maga is, anélkül, hogy egyik a másikra lenne utalva.

A múzeum tere kedvez az egyidejűségek, szinkronstruktúrák és koincidenenciák kialakulásának. Szinkronicitás és koincidenencia itt az egyidejűség két változata, ezzel kapcsolatban Beke László az avantgárd vizsgáladási köreinek behatárolásakor pontosít: „Ugyanazon jelenségek különböző helyeken való előfordulásakor *szinkronicitás*ról beszélünk, különböző idővonalak, például különböző nemzedékek idővonalainak egyazon helyen való találkozásakor *koincidenenciáról*” (Beke 1994, 260). A múzeumi gyűjtés egyszerre lehet olyan szinkronjelenségeket felmutató közös tér, mely megszünteti a térbeli távolságot az időben egybeeső jelenségek között, de lehet véletlen térbeli egybeesése is különböző idővonalaknak, legkézenfekvőbb módon a kiállított és a látogató eltérő, de időben épp találkozó útjainak.

Gottfried Boehm a művészettörténetet dokumentálni szándékozó „képzeletbeli múzeum”-ról írja, hogy abban: „Minden tárgy elveszti eredetét, és természetesen kerülhetnek egymás mellé. A legkülönbözőbb dolgok teljes egyidejűsége a szemlélő tudatban alakul ki” (Boehm 2000). Ez az egyidejűség a szemlélő idejét is magában foglalja, vagyis nem csupán múltbeli, megtekinthetővé konzervált és megtekintésre érdemessé kipreparált művekről van szó, hanem arról is, hogy ezek bármikor egyidejűvé válhatnak a néző-interpretáló kérdéseivel. Persze ezt az egyszeri múzeumlátogató inkább csak nyugtázza, hiszen saját értelmező munkáját a kiállítás szervezőinek szelekciós szempontjai megelőzik. Azt gondolom, a 60-as, 70-es évek filmes installációit, akcióit anyagul választó kiállítás az intermedialitás, interdiszciplinaritás kérdésköreit (is) problematizálja, egyúttal arról tanúskodik, hogy az akkori kísérletek kérdésfeltevésai (talán éppen szó szerinti) megjelenítései a jelen kérdéseinek. Ezt mi sem bizonyítja jobban, mint hogy az alkotásokból azóta is válogatnak, újabb és újabb kiállítások és párhuzamos rendezvények vállalkoznak arra, hogy teret adjanak a kísérletező, útkereső művészek válaszainak. Jelenleg (2021 júliusában) éppen Belgrádban értekeznek és vetítenek VALIE EXPORT munkáiról/munkáiból *VALIE EXPORT: Expanded cinema. Film screenings and discursive program* cím alatt.³

3 A kiállítás adatai: *VALIE EXPORT: Expanded cinema. Film screenings and discursive program*. Wednesday 28th and Thursday 29th July from 7pm to 10pm. Gallery - legacy of Milica Zorić and Rodoljub Čolaković. Speakers: Brigitta Burger-Utzer [co-founder and director of sixpackfilm (1990–2020), curator, author], Dagmar Schink (Managing Director, VALIE EXPORT Center Linz), Dejan Vasić (independent curator and editor of the art program of CZKD), Miroslav Karić (curator of MSU). Museum of Contemporary Art, Belgrade <https://>



2. kép. Kiterjesztett vásznon a Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien X-Screen c. kiállításáról.
© MUMOK – Közlés a MUMOK szíves engedélyével

A 60-as, 70-es évek filmes installációira és akcióira az *expanded cinema* gyűjtőfogalom használata a legpontosabb. Olyan kísérleti formákról van ugyanis szó, melyek arra vállalkoznak, hogy a mozi bevett, rögzített, általánosan elfogadott normáin lazítsanak, valamilyen irányba terjesszék a kereteket, legtöbbször szó szerint a vásznat. „Az *expanded cinema* (kiterjesztett mozi) a több vetítővel, több vásznonra, többféle technika alkalmazásával bemutatott műveket foglalja össze” (Fitz 2001).⁴ A kiterjesztés célja az, hogy a befogadó és film egyirányú viszonyán változtassanak: „[a kiterjesztett vagy nyitott mozi esetében] a főleg művészeti attitűdből fakadó újítások, reformkísérletek fő célja feloldani a befogadó és a film közötti távolságot, a film részévé, aktív alanyává tenni a nézőt, ezzel is elősegíteni egyfajta tudati nyitást a művészeti, társadalmi, politikai kritikák mellett” (Szilágyi 2017, 9).

Azt látjuk például, hogy a filmet nem egy vásznonra vetítik, hanem kettőre vagy háromra. Vagy a vásznon három nem egyforma méretű, látszólag egymástól független képsorokat mutató képernyőrészből áll össze, és a képek összefüggésének tisztázása olyan feladat, ami a rejtvények megoldási mechanizmusát igényli (lásd a 2. képet). Esetleg a vászonnak nincsen színe és fonákja, hanem két színe van: két filmet nézhetünk, miután mintegy belekerültünk a vetítés és

msub.org.rs/accompanying-program/valie-export-expanded-cinema-film-screenings-and-discursive-program/?lang=en. Utolsó megtekintés: 2021. 09. 26.

4 Itt rögtön eszünkbe juthat a kérdés, hogy Sitaru 1-es lábjegyzetben hivatkozott munkái a kiterjesztett mozi vagy inkább a kiterjesztett színház körébe tartoznak-e.

filmezés terébe: egy figurát elől- és hátulnézetből, amint a térben mozog. A vetítívászon rögzített, így fel is kelti az ábrázolt alakkal való azonosíthatóság illúzióját, de meg is cáfolja azt. Vagy pedig olyan elkerített vászontérbe kell belépnünk, aminek minden fala mozgóképet megjelenítő felület, s mihelyt belépünk ebbe a térbe, a takarással mi magunk is a vetítívászon részeivé válunk, illetve átveszszük annak szerepét.

Ha igaz az, hogy „a film igazi megnyilvánulási helye a vászon” (Metz 1998, 135, 136), akkor a filmvászon meghatározó jellegére irányuló filmes kísérleteknek igen nagy lehet a tétje. A filmvászon megsokszorozása, duplázása, triplázása, kiterjesztése a vetítés teljes (esetenként zárt) terére leginkább a film érzékelésének és a tér megtapasztalásának tematizálását, az egységes, kitüntetett és tárgyával szemben mérhető distanciát tartó nézőpont relativizálását, a látvány idejének delinearizálását vonja maga után. Egyúttal médiakritikai, illetve a technikai apparátus ökonómiájára vonatkozó kérdéseket is felvet (Michalka 2004, 7–8).

3. Példák és képviszonyok

A továbbiakban négy kiválasztott példa segítségével kép és kép lehetséges retorikai viszonyait keresem, az egyidejű vetítés okozta együttállás, egymásra vonatkoztatás változatainak kérdését tartva szem előtt.

3.1. Tautologikus viszony

A több vászonra vetített film kép és kép egyidejűségét mutatja. Andy Warhol *Lupe* című 1965-ös filmje⁵ egyike azon első filmjeinek, melyeket dupla, illetve tripla vetítéssel mutattak be. A latin-amerikai Lupe Velez halála előtti utolsó óráit látjuk (1944), a színésznő Edie Sedgwick. A film ürügyül szolgáló sztori: a sztár művészi(es)en szépre akarta volna megrendezni öngyilkosságát, mégis a WC-kagylóban végezte. A filmképet nemcsak a (MUMOK-beli kiállításon) dupla vetítés sokszorozza, hanem a lakás tereiben elhelyezett tükrök is kettőzik. A lineáris cselekményt a kettéosztások, megkettőzések, tükröződések és ismétlések megbontják, egyúttal a pszichikum osztottságát is jelölik. A belső feszültség növekedését és a személyiség felbomlását a kamera intenzív jelenléte, hirtelen mozgásai szemléltetik.⁶

A kettős vetítés egy folyamatos filmezés két tekercsét hangolja össze, az utolsó tekercsrészlet utólagos hozzáragasztás mindkét szalaghoz, tehát az utolsó jelenet végül megegyezik a két vásznon (bár külön felvett képsorokról van szó) (vö. James 2016). A két vetítés ritmusának, ütemének azonossága eredményezi itt az egyidejűséget. A szinkronban vetített két film egyidejű képei vagy egy film különböző idejű képei pontosan az egy-ség és a több-

5 Warhol, Andy. 1965. *Lupe*. <http://www.warholstars.org/filmch/lupe.html>. Utolsó megtekintés: 2021. 09. 26.

6 A filmből képek és rövid leírás itt: Michalka 2004, 33–35.

ség fogalmait problematizálják. Egy filmet nézünk? Amennyiben a vetítést kísérő, falra rögzített címet és „használati utasítást” tekintjük mérvadónak (egy cím és egy leírás szerepel), akkor ez egy film, amely éppen a képek valóságként való érzékelésének s így filmként való megtapasztalásának áll ellen, amikor megduplázza önmagát. Ha viszont kétségbe vonjuk a kísérő s a film médiumához képest mindig külsődleges szöveg autoritását, akkor tekinthetjük két filmnek, melyből érzékelésünk végessége folytán az egyiket nagyobb relevanciával tüntetjük ki, és azt nézzük, esetleg váltogatjuk nézőpontunkat (felváltva nézzük a két vásznat). Teljesen esetlegesen kerülnek a képkockák egymás mellé, itt a vásznon egy időben történnek meg egy szemlélyel életének egy este folyamán megélt, egymástól eltérő időintervallumra eső mozzanatai.

Ha viszont a film nem a bemutatott eseményekből nyeri lényegét, hanem a hangsúly a közlés „hogyanjára” helyeződik, a szinkronban vetített képsorok pedig csak az ábrázolt és nem az ábrázolás mikéntjének szintjén különböznek egymástól, akkor feltevődik a kérdés: nem pusztán tautológia-e az, amit látunk. Erdély Miklós hologram-modellje szerint a film felbontható olyan töredékekre, melyek az egészet hordozzák. „Ha találnánk olyan közvetítő struktúrát, mely az információt nem izomorf módon továbbítja, és az izomorfiát úgy kerülné el, hogy minden töredéke az egészet nyújtana, úgy szemléletes modell birtokába jutnánk. Szerencsénk van, mert a nemrég felfedezett hologram éppen ilyen. (Ismeretes, hogy egy hologram-felvétel minden töredéke lézersugárral átvilágítva a teljes képet nyújtja. Minél kisebb a töredék, a kép annál elmosódottabb.)” (Erdély 1998, 157) Talán hasonlatos ez ahhoz, ahogyan – az első mottóhoz visszakapcsolva – a mozaikdarabkák nyomtalan nyoma bölcs tudássá válik, ha az egészet szemléljük. Bölcs tudás, amely mindig is ott volt, de csak utólagosan, valamilyen egész felől szemlélve realizálódik. Ráadásul az egyes részekben ugyanaz a bölcs tudás, ugyanarra az egészre való mutatás jelentkezik. Ha részeket teszünk egymás mellé, a tautológia eszközével élünk, de éppen a tautológia felismerése sürgeti a keresztkapcsolások, az egész keresését.

3.2. Palindróma viszony

Következő választott példában a képernyőosztás hasonló, illetve rögtön felismerjük a hasonlóságot az egymás mellé vetített filmek között. VALIE EXPORT *Adjungierte Dislokationen* [Egymás mellé rendelt eltolódások] című 1973-as filmje⁷ egy akció anyagára épül, mely akció arról szól, hogy VALIE EXPORT hasára és hátára rögzített 8 mm-es kamerákkal a körülhatárolt térből (város) a szabadba tart, közben különböző testtartásokat vesz fel, különböző mutatvá-

7 VALIE EXPORT. 1973. *Adjungierte Dislokationen (Adjunct Dislocations)*. <https://www.sixpackfilm.com/en/catalogue/1659/>. Utolsó megtekintés: 2021. 09. 26. https://www.valieexport.at/jart/prj3/valie_export_web/main.jart?rel=de&reserve-mode=active&content-id=1526555820281&tt_news_id=1995. Utolsó megtekintés: 2021. 09. 26.

nyokat végez, nyilván a látható rögzítése kedvéért. Mindezzel a térérzékelést és tértapasztalást tematizálja úgy, hogy a technikai apparátust a test szenzoriális meghosszabbításaként használja fel. A testre szerelt kamerák a tér egymással szembeni oldalait mutatják. Az akcióművészt egy 16 mm-es kamera filmezi. A három különböző perspektíva képeit szimultán egymásmellettségben vetítve látjuk, így a látszólag semleges dokumentálással a testhez visszacsatoló nézetek kerülnek komplementárisan versenyhelyzetbe. (A filmből képek és rövid leírás itt: Michalka 2004, 154–155.) Bár magát az akciót rögzítő mozgóképnek nagyobb tér jut a vetítőképernyőn, jelentése kimerül abban, hogy megfejthetővé teszi a jobb oldali két képsor perspektíváját. Hiszen ez a két kamera épp annyira „szemponttalanul” (Mészöly 1993, 134) filmez, ahogyan Warhol azon kamerája, amelyikkel 8 órányi folyamatos képet vett föl az Empire State Buildingről (*Empire* című film, 1964).⁸ Erről a filmről jegyzi meg Mészöly Miklós: „A film technikai zérópontjáról – ti. hogy folyamatos kép – rögzíti a történő valóság zérópontját, a pusztá mozgásszövevényt: *egyenrangú* elemek *minden* fázisát, bizonyos *látszat-egyidejűség* érzését keltve” (Mészöly 1993, 134, kiemelések az eredetiben).

VALIE EXPORT filmje is olyasmit tud megmutatni, aminek a közvetlen érzékelése nem lehetséges: a mindenkori hátunk mögöttit. A palindróma terminus éppen a kétirányúság jelölője (retorikailag a visszafele olvasva is értelmes szavakra vonatkozik). Tulajdonképpen a különböző nézetek illetén egyidejűsége a lehetetlen kísértése: látunk előre, látunk hátra, és látjuk a filmezőt is oldalnézetből. Persze azt, aki az oldalnézetet filmezi, nem látjuk, a valóságérzékelések, a térszeletek teljes kitergetése sosem történhet meg, hiszen végtelenbe tartó képhalmaz lenne az eredmény.

3.3. Versengő viszony

David Lamelas *Film Script (Manipulation of Meaning)* című 1972-es filminstallációja egy filmből és három diasorozatból áll össze.⁹ A film egy galériában dolgozó asszisztensnő mindennapi tevékenységeit mutatja be jelenetek folyamatos egymásutánjaként. Az első diavetítés a cselekményt állóképek sorozataként adja vissza, a második változtat a jelenetek sorrendjén, a harmadik pedig az újabb sorrendváltoztatások mellett ki is hagy egy jelenetet. A tripla vetítés a narratív kulcselemek variálásával, a történés időbeli rendezésével kísérletezik. Mindez kihat a történetre és annak befogadására, azaz nyilvánvalóvá válik a film manipulatív hatása/potenciálja (Michalka 2004, 188). A versengés, a változatok próbálgatásának az a tétje, hogy kiderüljön, mi a hatásosabb, mi a követhetőbb, mire is képes a film, mennyi elég, mi

8 Warhol, Andy. 1965. *Empire*. <https://warholstars.org/empire.html>. Utolsó megtekintés: 2021. 09. 26.

9 Lamelas, David. 1972. *Film Script (Manipulation of Meaning)*. <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-works/lamelas-film-script-manipulation-of-meaning-t12978>. Utolsó megtekintés: 2021. 09. 26.

hagyható ki. A különböző változatok összehasonlítása mindig beindítja az önreflexív aspektus olvasatát: „én film vagyok, és te vagy az, aki épp filmet nézel”.

3.4. Felelő viszony

1967-ben a Knokke-ban rendezett Experimentális Filmversenyre jelentkezik Marcel Broodthaers a *Le Corbeau et le Renard* címet viselő munkájával (de Bruyn 2004, 165). A film¹⁰ csak a versenyprogram mellett és úgy kerülhetett bemutatásra, hogy a művész lemondott saját feliratos vetítővásznának használatáról. Mindazonáltal az alkotást a szervezők nem ismerték el filmként, a botrány kapcsán pedig akár egy második „Richard Mutt-esetről” lehet beszélni. (A „Richard Mutt-eset” Marcel Duchamp tárgyára, a *Kút [Fountain]* nevet viselő pissoirra vonatkozik, melyet az 1917-es New York-i Függetlenek Kiállítására nyújtott be ezen az álnéven. Vö. de Bruyn 2004, 184, 20-as végjegyzet.)

Ez a példa jól mutatja, hogy az *expanded cinema* olyan multimediális vászonra vitelekkel is próbálkozik, melyekben a képzőművészet, a fotó, a film, vagyis az elsődlegesen vizuális médiumok mellett a textualitásnak, az írott formájában megjelenő szövegnek is szerepet szán.

A film a kamera előtt felvonultatott tárgyakat, azaz virágokat, egy gumicsizmát, gravírozott üvegedényeket, fotókat (családi fotót, illetve olyat például, mint René Magritte portréja), egy telefonkészüléket mutat, amint azokat egy (láthatatlan) kéz rendezi vízszintes üvegpolicokon. Az üvegpolicok egy függőleges táblára vannak rögzítve, melyen Broodthaers szövege olvasható. A gyors egymásutánban a tárgyak pillanatnyi időre láthatóak a tipográfiai háttér előtt.

„Kiemelem a tárgyat a megszokott környezetéből, és egy másikba illeszttem. [...] Vers ez? A *Le Corbeau et le Renard* című film egy olvasási gyakorlat” (Marcel Broodthaers-t idézi de Bruyn 2004, 167). A kamera ide-oda mozgásában balról jobbra tart, s ezzel valóban végrehajt egyféle mechanikus olvasást, melyet a nézőnek kell kiteljesítenie.

Persze egy ilyen alkotás esetében a „mit jelent?” kérdését megelőzően azt a kérdést kell megválaszolni, hogy „mit olvasunk?” Azt a szöveget, ami a vászonra van nyomtatva? Azt, ami a tárgyak mögött háttérként szerepel, és elbizonytalanítja alak és háttér viszonyát (nem kiemeli, hanem maga is érvényességre tör)? A képen megjelenő tárgyak nevei között kell összefüggéseket teremteni (ennyiben Magritte fotója egyféle használati utasítás)? Képes szótár, ahol a képek az idegen szavak memorizálását segítik? Mi történik akkor, ha bizonyos információk nem érik el a néző érzékelési küszöbét? Illetve ha a különböző kommunikációs csatornák adatai egymás ellenében kódolnak? A tárgyak

10 Broodthaers, Marcel. 1967–1968. *Le Corbeau et le Renard (The Crow and the Fox)*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p4RSW-G5ZTE>. Utolsó megtekintés: 2021. 09. 26.

takarják a szöveget, ami ráadásul kilóg a képből, és valahol a közepén kezdi el mondani a magáét.

A legerősebb intertextuális marker a cím: La Fontaine *A holló meg a róka* című állatmeséjére utal, ezzel pedig a tanítómese, fabula hagyományára, a morális tanulságok világára. Mindez az iskolai tananyag kívülről megtanulandó része, itt mégis klisékkel, írásgyakorlatok példamondataival, kitalációkkal bővül.

A különböző médiákat működtető műhalmaz (film, vászon, plakát, tárgyak) az autoritás tartós birtoklásának lehetetlenségét példázza: a mindenkori hatalmi pozíció (holló) mindig aláásható (lásd a róka szubverzív tevékenységét). A felelés tehát lehetetlenné teszi azt az önreflexivitást, ami a versengő viszonynál annyira fontos. Itt kétségbe vonódik a film filmes mivolta, a vászon sem olyan vászon, amelyet elvárnánk, a kamera nem ered a történet nyomába, a kétségbeesett erőfeszítés, hogy a médium transzparenciája megszűnjön, itt megsemmisíti a médiumként való felismerhetőséget.

4. Következtetések

Mindegyik fentebb tárgyalt viszonytípusra érvényes, hogy kicsit kiesünk az időből, és egy olyan időben nézünk szét az egészre utaló képrészek egymáshoz való viszonyítása során, ami egy végtelenített jelen idő. Bár kétségtelenül van előtt és után, van mozgás, haladunk, és időben változik a perspektíva, a képek egymás mellé helyezése a történetként való megértés ellen dolgozik, és inkább a képek kapcsolataira, a rögzített képsorokkal való utólagos munkára, bemutatási szándékokra irányítja a figyelmet. A projekciós mező megsokszorozása tehát sajátos temporalitást kölcsönöz az ily módon egyidejűleg megjelenített tárgyakkal, eseménytöredékeknek, történeteknek, tulajdonképpen az értelmezői narrativizálás felfüggesztését eredményezve. Ezek a kísérletek az aposztrophé, azaz a megszólítás retorikai alakzata által implikált speciális időkezelést (Culler 2000, 383) működtetik, ezzel a líraiság mellett voksolnak egy olyan médiumot használva, melynek mindig is a történetmesélés ígézetével kellett szembenéznie.

A kiterjesztett mozi vásznai mintha egy képeskönyv terét is megidéznek: amikor filmes tanulmányokban filmképeket használnak szemléltetés végett, akkor a filmekből kivágott, a megmutatni kívánt lényegest hordozó részletek egymás melletti kis ablakokba kényszerülnek. A film képek sorozatává lényegül, narratíva nélküli képregénnyé. Az elméleti narráció ugyanis mást mond, mögöttes és talán elsőre nem nyilvánvaló kapcsolódásokat, jelentéseket mutat meg a képek között, ezzel a néző-olvasót annak meglátására tanítja, ami a képek között, mögött húzódik.

Pethő Ágnes egy visszatérő filmes metafora, a hátsó ablak (és Hitchcock 1964-es *Hátsó ablak* című filmje) kapcsán ír úgy a moziról, hogy abban a képeket mindig is egy folyamatos, többféle irányú kiterjesztésben nézzük. Egyrészt képi, nyelvi és kulturális referenciákat, megfeleléseket, párhuzamokat keresünk, másrészt törekedünk arra, hogy a részeket egy nagyobb egészbe, a kultúra szö-

vetébe illesszük bele (Pethő 2003, 80, a hivatkozott szöveghely szerepel jelen szöveg második mottójaként).

A kiterjesztett mozi kísérletei nagyon is szó szerint veszik és konkrétan értik ezt a kiterjesztést, ezzel felhívják a figyelmet arra a kiterjesztésre, amit mi magunk végzünk el a memóriánk, az asszociációink, értelmezéseink belső munkája eredményeképpen, hogy a kiterjedt képi, nyelvi, kulturális dimenziókban összekössük az ismétlődő tautologikus, elforgatott palindrómaszerű, versengő vagy feleselő részeket, elemeket, képeket, szövegeket.

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Figure 1. Kutlug Ataman: *Column* (2009)



Figure 2. Kutlug Ataman: *Dome* (2011)

Zsolt Gyenge*

Between Screens: Bodies, Frames, and Spectators in Moving Image Installations

When I came across Ágnes Pethő's research projects centred on intermediality, I was in the process of refocusing my phenomenological investigation of the moving image experience from the cinematic exhibition towards gallery and museum installations. The site-specific exhibition of moving images challenges many crucial aspects of the cinematic viewer participation and identification. The integration of the projection apparatus and its space (dissimulated in cinemas) into the perception of film works brought into the discussion the material presence of objects and the active bodily participation of the visitor. Simultaneously, a new, viewer-driven temporality has emerged, together with a new dynamic of distraction and attention and a new form of mobility – discussed by so many theorists and artists. Thus, for me, intermediality in moving images meant mostly the in-betweenness of Raymond Bellour's famous term "entre-images" and also the floating intermedial presence of moving images between different institutions, apparatuses, spaces, and forms of spectatorship. In what follows, I will provide brief phenomenological descriptions and interpretations of a number of installation works that seem to be able to highlight and critically discuss the intermedial character of moving images exhibited in museum or gallery contexts.

Kutlug Ataman's Geography of Space

It seems impossible to discuss Ataman's works without referencing them to the geographical and political region he comes from, and based on this Irit Rogoff comes to the conclusion that there is a relational geography present in Ataman's videos, which is basically "a reading strategy for the performance of place" (Rogoff 2009, 169). Developing this idea, Çakırlar considers that the artist's main strategy is related to scaling: through the use of "modern" and "Western" media technologies, he rescales and thus repositions the narratives, dramaturgies, and images of "Eastern" communities. "The medium, the installation form and the narration of the performative documentary aesthetic

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in Ataman's practice implicates an address that constantly questions [...] the *scale* and the *regionality* of the experiences on screen." (Çakırlar 2013, 688.) Ataman's practice is thus relevant here because it is precisely the exhibition of the video works, their installation, and the embodied viewer experience created by them that put on display this relational geography.

A remarkable example of such an approach can be identified in his video sculpture entitled *Column* (2009), part of the *Mesopotamian Dramaturgies* series, where one can observe in a monumental setting the residents of Eastern Anatolia quietly looking through television sets [Fig. 1]. The work first strikes with its dimensions and its hasty execution, the apparently accidental collection and matching of different television sets. This is a media monument that contrasts the spatiality and voluminosity of the construction with the illusionary and volatile characteristic of the poor-quality video images. The individual images lose their significance almost completely, as the figures looking silently at us can grasp our attention only for seconds. This gawky monument stands for a community that almost completely lacks the means to represent itself in the contemporary public discourse. These old and used television sets are also the mirrors of these rural people, who stare at them for long hours every day, being deprived of both the local-traditional and the metropolitan-cosmopolitan entertainment possibilities. In this case, it is the installation itself that re-scales its subject: it diminishes the importance of the individual and of the individual image, and thus creates the illusion of a monolithic community, whose virtual monument we are experiencing in the gallery. This strategy is identified as being a general characteristic of video art by Pascale Weber, who considers that a major part of the effect of a "projection-installation" originates from the fact that the space of the projection becomes the place of an artificial manipulation of magnitudes (Weber 2003, 19).

A particularly complex perceptual experience is offered by the work entitled *Dome* [Fig. 2]. The video shows attractive young people (termed provincial in the on-site artist statement) wearing counterfeit design clothing and exposing electronic gadgets; these people are floating on the screen in front of a cloudless blue sky as they are visibly hanging from cranes that move them slowly up and down and left to right. The video is projected on a horizontally installed screen just below the ceiling so that it can only be viewed lying down on a huge couch below. The horizontal body position in which we are forced to watch a video recorded vertically but projected horizontally makes us completely lose our bodily apprehension of what is up and down, a balancer function that works only if our body is positioned vertically. Thus, Ataman creates a powerful disorienting effect in the viewer, which is intended to make us bodily aware of the confusion felt by the Turkish youth lost in a peripheral position between so-called Western modernity and Eastern traditionalism.

The problematic nature of modernity, and especially of its aggressively imposed Turkish version, is at stake in Ataman's *Mesopotamian Dramaturgies*. He is especially involved in grasping those practices that people use to construct and communicate their own (collective) identities, and in many of his works one

can identify “a formal subversion of the documentary genre” (Perrella 2010, 20) in the sense that though the original footage has all the characteristics needed for authentic reproduction, the work as a whole distorts the original meaning or message of the video. It is the case of *Küba* (2005) where the individual testimonies of the people presented on 40 monitors become secondary to the spectatorial experience of the installation. The sense we get when we try to find a place, an empty chair in the gallery is one of disorientation and intrusion into a community that only communicates. The mediated nature of these interviews is put forth not only by the fact of video recording but also through its presentation on different television sets, which make us always first notice the changing apparatus and visual quality of the image and then force us to adjust our perception and body position (to move closer or further away, to bend forward, to lower our gaze, etc.).

Framing and Multi-channel Installation: Jesper Just

One of the most important decisions of an artist when visually representing space is related to framing, to the way the image relates to the frame, to the extent it foregrounds or, in contrast, ignores the presence of the frame. As pointed out by Catherine Fowler, already Bazin, when analysing the boundless cinematic space, contrasted the “centripetal” frame of the painting, which delimits the image and polarizes space inwards by focusing on what can be seen within the frame, with the “centrifugal” space of cinema, where only a portion of the space is shown and viewer attention is always directed towards the off-screen space, thus the frame becoming almost non-existent (Fowler 2008, 257). However, when video art emerged in the 1960s and 1970s, one of the main differences compared to mainstream cinema was observable in its radical and critical attitude towards the representation of space and towards the use of the frame. Based on this, we can talk about a centripetally experienced space in the case of painting and video art and of a centrifugal space in the case of cinema. Fowler describes two strategies operated by early video art: expanded cinema and gallery films. The first is the foregrounding of the frame and thus the edges of the image; the second is connecting the frame to the space that surrounds it, that is, the space of the gallery where the moving image is exhibited (2008, 260; 2004, 333).

These descriptions of the viewer experience showcase a contradiction that has already been acknowledged by Fowler as “inherent in the choice by gallery films to be narrative and illusionist and to incorporate a critical/reflexive attitude to the frame” (2008, 255). She identifies several cinematic techniques, such as camera movement, camera angles, *mise-en-scène*, eyeline match, and editing that are used by recent gallery films and that work towards coherence and where off-frame rarely remains off-frame. Jesper Just’s films are especially relevant to this, as all these cinematic techniques are regularly employed by him, and his use of space is very close to what has been termed as centrifugal by Bazin. But as Fowler concluded in her article, “those familiar elements of film



Figure 3. Jesper Just: *Romantic Delusions* (2008)

language we recognize in gallery films operate differently because of the space around the screen that is provided by the escape into the light of the gallery” (Fowler 2008, 266). What I am arguing here for is that the design of the space and of the screening conditions crucially define and change viewer experience: Just’s films display a highly cinematic character in their details, though as a whole they would not be understandable within a cinematic context.

In the case of *Romantic Delusions* (2008), the three screens are installed immediately beside each other, similarly to a cinematic split-screen projection [Fig. 3]. Thus, it is impossible for us not to look at them as being part of a whole; however, due to the size of projection, we are never able to focus on more than one of them. One of the effects achieved by Just is a territorial expansion of spatial representation, which allows him a condensed and spectacular apprehension of the Bucharest landscape: montage sequences are being presented on each individual screen and also by the combination of the three. Especially the beginning of the film can thus be read as enhanced cinema, similar to the practice of split screen often used in mainstream cinema and even blockbusters to quickly apprehend the atmosphere of a city. However, this spectacular strategy is rendered unstable by the redundancy of the images, as the three screens are not used to provide as much visual information as possible, but they mostly show the same object, building, or person from different perspectives or angles. Thus, the larger projection surface offered by the installation does not produce an extensive increase of the spatial representation but rather an intensive one, when few elements become investigated thoroughly.

In this respect, one has to point out those moments of very delicate editing – and this is where the issue of frame and multi-channel installation comes together – when some elements seem to cross the otherwise individual and unconnected frames. Around 2:32 into the film on the middle and the right-hand screens, we observe two tracking shots of the same building taken from two

different angles. However, at a certain point, the foliage of a tree seems to cross the frame from right to left, thus uniting the two images into one, geometrically impossible spatial unit.

Regarding temporality in Just's films, one gets the impression that time is not even moving back and forth, that, in fact, it is not moving at all. Sometimes the lack of any narrative thread gives the viewer the feeling of stepping out of the flow of time into an expanded space of timelessness or into a timeless expanded space. Here one has the chance to spend some time, or better "spend some space," in an infinitely extended moment of time and space. Or, as Fowler has put it, "in terms of film language the split-screen or diptych provides the opportunity to think about the difference between seeing images one after the other, so that what was just present swiftly becomes past and has to be remembered, and seeing them next to each other, so that past and present can exist simultaneously in a time of 'meanwhile'" (2004, 338).

Between Cinema and Gallery: Chantal Akerman and Julian Rosefeldt

No matter which model we accept regarding the attitude of the gallery visitor (that is, the critical or the consumer), it is clear that "where screens become the space of observation and participation, attention is shifted between the observer-participant's body and screen-based movement" (Chamarette 2012, 184). As Kristine Butler describes this issue, "by forcing the spectator to engage physically in an act of attention or distraction – by moving towards or away from the film itself – the film's critical discourses of the apparatus are complicated, and the spectator's own interest in continuing or discontinuing participation is actively engaged" (2003, 165). When analysing the role of the dialectics of attention and distraction in contemporary art, Peter Osborne declares that "art distracts and art is received in distraction" (Osborne 2004, 68). But this is not to be understood in a simplified way as being the sign of lust for entertainment of the masses: in the gallery space, "attention is distraction (from distraction); distraction is attention (to other objects). Their dialectic generates an embodied, non-perspectival, baroque space of distraction" (Osborne 2004, 69).

Chantal Akerman, in her famous documentary *From the East (D'Est, 1993)*, presented a 107-minute-long series of slow-tracking shots about Eastern Europe, recorded just moments after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The journey from West to East, beyond the recording of the state of a region in a moment of historical significance, was important for the director because it also represented a search for her family roots. The reason this work is brought up in this discussion is that after a theatrical release it migrated to the museum space in the form of a complex, multi-channel installation (*Bordering on Fiction: Chantal Akerman's D'Est, 1995*) [Fig. 4]. The significance of Akerman's intermedial shift is that with the two versions of *From the East* she plays off precisely attention and distraction against each other. The cinematic film cannot be valued without a heightened effort of attention, whilst the installation requires an openness



Figure 4. Chantal Akerman:
*From the East: Bordering on
Fiction* (1995)

to distraction, as the ambulation of a distracted spectator is crucial to draw his or her own trajectory.

In Akerman's case, distraction is an essential strategy not only in the case of the installation, it is also deeply rooted in the film that preceded it. Though the slow-tracking shots seem "attentive" at first glance, the way they do not react to what happens in front of the camera, the way they pursue their "obsessive seriality," their predefined structure, displays a lack of attention and interest towards the subject of inquiry. As Butler formulates it, "instead of organizing a sense-making search for authenticity around and through the metaphor of vision, the film's stubborn gaze complicates 'attentive' vision by forcing distraction" (2003, 174). The persistent execution of the pre-programmed scanning reminds of the ethic of the structuralist-materialist films of the 1960s and 1970s.

The tension between attention and distraction has become even more evident with the migration of the film from movie theatres to museums, where the very nature and perception of installations – as we have shown it – evolve around this issue. Watching *Bordering on Fiction* from this perspective, Butler provides an interpretation of the installation, which emphasizes that the core of the work lies in the ambulation provoked by the disposition of the screens in the museum space: "The very personal movement of each museum-goer, who walks, sits, looks or does not look, listens to out-of-sync noise and dialogue, leaves or does not leave, creates the movement of the installation itself; as we audience are caught up in the waiting, the absence of knowing when, or if something will 'happen.' Blurring the borders between the event and its reception, between spectator and participant, *Bordering on Fiction* is a contemplation of meaning in suspense" (Butler 2003, 176).

In the cinematic version of *From the East*, the constant lateral movement of the camera makes the viewer consciously aware of the simultaneous and in-

dependent presence of the off-screen space – that is, independent from the act of representation – and creates a permanent expectation in the viewer towards what is going to become visible. In the installation, however, for the visitor literally situated in-between screens, the off-frame is not necessarily constituted by the diegetic reality but by the neighbouring screen that displays another glance. Hence, instead of a perceptual focus on the everyday gestures, locations, and activities, the fragmented nature of the whole project comes into the foreground. Whilst in cinema one might have the impression of getting a rather comprehensive view on Eastern Europe in the early 1990s, in the installation it is the impossibility of such an endeavour that haunts the visitor. It is by no accident that for the installation version the title has been completed with the phrase “Bordering on Fiction,” emphasizing the constructed nature of this and each representation.

The migration from the cinematic exhibition to the gallery installation in Akerman’s project provokes a “double loss of reality.” Akerman’s cinematic use of the off-frame (cars and people tend to move with no regard to the frame; they leave the field of the image without even noticing it) generates in the film viewer the impression of a truncated view of the world, almost declaring that any image is just a partial apprehension of reality. When these images appear in the multi-channel installation format – as Westgeest (2016, 96) and Elwes (2015, 183) have described–, the visitor has to acknowledge that by choosing to watch only a few of the 24 screens his or her experience will only be a truncated version of the (moving) image, being thus even further distanced from the original, from “reality.” The documentary image, which is only capable of a partial representation, is only partially apprehended itself.

I have just called Akerman’s framing cinematic, but this is not completely accurate. Though people and cars most often cross the boundary of the image with seemingly no regard to the camera and the act of recording, nonetheless, as Akerman never uses continuity editing techniques, the off-screen space never becomes actual. When someone or something leaves the frame, they are forever gone for us; thus, after a few minutes into the film, after realizing that we are never going to see what happens around and beyond the image we are being offered and that nothing coming out of frame will occur to those already in the frame, we start to regard the frame of the film as the frame of a still image or of a video image – as Dubois formulated it, “everything is there, in the image (on the image, below the image)” (2011, 94). This is significant because all this could mean that though at first the film was destined for cinema viewing, the framing of the video installation was somehow integrated into it from the beginning.

One of the most important differences between the cinematic and installed versions of *From the East* can be grasped through its relation to narrative structure. If we watch the film from the beginning to the end, we notice a narrative thread reduced to a minimum, to an overall progression of time, as the individual shots advance from daylight to night and then dawn. Now it is precisely this temporal structure that gets exploded in the installation, where the shots are not organized to be watched in a predefined order. Time becomes even more



Figure 5. Julian Rosefeldt:
Manifesto (2015)

fragmented as the duration of the whole journey is dismantled into brief segments that have their own temporal progression, but there is no overall temporal structure that connects them. Instead, the linear time of the film gets literally unfolded in space, and the bits and pieces of the journey have to be collected by the viewer himself/herself. In order to get to the next segment, the gallery visitor needs to make a small effort, to actually move to another location, thus replaying in a miniaturized version the movements of Akerman, the displacements she needed to make for each shot to be recorded.

When the visitor enters Julian Rosefeldt's impressive installation, *Manifesto* (2015), at first he/she has a disorienting impression due to a multitude of screens (13, to be precise), each of them having its soundtrack at such a high volume that almost every projection can be overheard from any point of the large exhibition hall [Fig. 5]. No matter which "scene" the visitor is actually watching, he/she is constantly distracted by the intriguing soundscape or attractive musical score of another one around him/her. Moreover, each video comprises a brief "choir" sequence (when Cate Blanchett recites a part of her monologues on a musical pitch tone) that – due to the synchronized projection of all segments – happens at exactly the same moment, and this is how the different texts recited by her alone in each individual video create the impression of a choir. Such a synchronized projection makes perceptually evident for the viewers – situated literally in between screens – the simultaneous presence and significance of the other pieces. This is how the attentive viewing of one segment is disrupted all the time, forcing the viewer to look around for the source of a sound any time a scene becomes somehow monotonous.

In the case of Julian Rosefeldt's *Manifesto*, two differences must be pointed out. The first is that the direction of intermedial movement has been the opposite: a cinematic version has been put together after the gallery installation. The second difference is mostly related to the moment of its creation: *Manifesto*

is definitely part of the so-called gallery cinema format of video art, identified as such from the second half of the 1990s, when it benefited from the cheap availability of high-definition digital cameras and projectors. Rosefeldt's work – as has been argued even by Catherine Elwes (2015, 158) – definitely displays the characteristics of such a gallery cinema both thanks to its meticulous and expensive production design, its framing and editing techniques and through the choice of a mainstream cinema icon to star in the film.

What makes the cinematic version of *Manifesto* special is that it is not simply a one-screen version of the multi-channel installation. Beyond being around 30 minutes shorter than the overall length of the videos displayed in the gallery, what strikes the viewer most is that the unity of the individual videos has been dismantled by cutting back and forth among the different scenes. Most probably the drive behind this decision was that Rosefeldt wanted to recreate in cinema the distracted perception of the gallery visitor: we have the impression that what we see on the big screen is in fact the reconstruction of a visit where one would leave a scene after a few minutes of watching only to return moments later. Such a montage also attempts to partially imitate the experience of simultaneous presence of all the scenes one had in the gallery, which otherwise would have been completely lost due to the omission of the choir sequences described above (see Ljungbäck 2018: 142–143).

I hope to have shown that the site-specific design of moving image installations seems to be crucial in their perception and that the description of the embodied viewer experience of such works is able to provide a rich entry point to their interpretation. I consider this train of thought important especially in the pandemic context of these years, where the restrictions on mobility and on the accessibility of public spaces force artists invested in film to make their works available online. I am afraid that stripping down artist videos to their bare in-frame content through streaming will make most of these works much less significant and could endanger the relevance of the whole practice. Thus, all we can hope for is a quick return to the exhibited screens of galleries and museums.

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Asun López-Varela*

[Plat]forms of Intermedial Poiesis. From the Holodeck to Mez Breeze's V[R]erses

In celebration of my colleague, Ágnes Pethő, who has dedicated her academic life to research various aspects of intermediality, this paper explores *V[R]erses*, a collection of 3D online experiences of X-Reality – virtual, mixed, and augmented – created by Australian net.artist and game designer Mez Breeze in collaboration with other well-known E-lit artists. *V[R]erses* represent a novel intermedial association between text and image in three-dimensional space.

Introduction

Having to do with intermedial aspects, a central concern in Net.Art has been the role of software, considered by some a sort of disembodied haunting voice of the ghost in the machine. In *Deeper into the Machine: Learning to Speak Digital* (2002), N. Katherine Hayles mentions Mez Breeze as member of a new generation of artists who produce works where natural language mingles with the language of the machine producing a mixture comprised of English and computer code. For Hayles, this new trend is “not content to let code remain below the surface but rather [its purpose is to] show it erupting through the surface of the screen to challenge the hegemony of alphabetic language” (2002, 372). This is one of the aspects that I have been exploring in my own research; the fact that the combination of diverse languages, fitted to different medial formats, gives way to a certain openness I have termed “poiesis” (see López-Varela 2012, 2014, 2017). Indeed, in *Theory as Praxis: The Poetics of Electronic Textuality* (2002), Johanna Drucker turned to Jerome McGann’s *Radiant Textuality* to assert that the Aristotelian concept of “poiesis” – nowadays conceptualized only as theory – was, in its ancient Greek original meaning, a form of making or craft. Drucker affirms that “making things [...] pushes the horizons of one’s understanding” (2002, 684). How exactly does this happen?

The second term I use in my title also needs justification. The Holodeck is a fictional device from the television series *Star Trek*. It was first introduced in an episode called *The Practical Joker*, which brings interesting hermetic associations I cannot include in this paper (perhaps just a quick reminder that Hermes is the

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messenger of the gods, [s]he who brings information). Holography was possibly the first step towards virtual reality. In *Star Trek*, it allowed the introduction of multidimensional spatio-temporal contexts where the protagonists were able to question their self-awareness and pose metaphysical questions as to the nature of reality. Lewis Carroll performed a similar inquiry in his *Alice* books, in particular through his exploration of one of the earliest forms of optical platform: the looking-glass (see López-Varela 2019). What is the contribution of Mez Breeze's *V[R]jerses* in this regard? This is what we will try to find out.

Intermedial Babel

In 2011, Mez Breeze published a book entitled *Human Readable Messages [mezangelle 2003–2011]*. On the back cover of her volume, she poses the following question to the readers: “Q: wot do u get if u stitch 2gether standardized literary conventions [think: the monumental output of bill Shakespeare + the staccato pulsings of Emily Dickinson] with coded poetics steeped in digitally-drenched communication?” This is her description of *mezangelle*, a type of codework she developed in the 1990s, which she used to write her book in diary form. *Mezangelle*, which Breeze spells without capitals, is a new form of writing that combines English language with some code features of programming languages such as ASCII code, fragments of markup language, protocol code, and others. Her choice of denomination echoes not only her own name but also the game of voices in fugal imitation typical of musical pieces known as villanelle. For readers who cannot interpret code features, the simple bracketing of letters within words enables the emergence of multiple meanings. The result is similar to the portmanteau words used by Lewis Carroll in his poem *Jabberwocky*, James Joyce’s experimentation in *Finnegans Wake*, or William Burrough’s cut-ups, all of which examples struggle to break down the linearity of alphabetic writing (López-Varela 2014).

Breeze’s bracketed blends physically resemble the carrying handles of a travelling suitcase, known as *portmanteau*, used to refer to Carroll and Joyce’s poiesis fabrications. The meaning of *mezangelle* “travels” in the sense that it is fugitive. Its form enables a multitude of meanings emerging from a broken word. *Mezangelle* is also often satirical, calling attention to issues that need pressing solutions.

Indeed, Breeze’s *mezangelle* recombinations contribute to the emergence of a multiplicity of meanings that create an effect of “defamiliarization.” This mechanism, introduced in 1917 by Russian formalist Viktor Shklovsky in his essay *Art as Technique*, sought ways of removing the automatism of perception and cognition. Shklovsky considered that works of art should modify perception in order to raise cognitive awareness to how knowledge is produced by means of language. *Ostranenie* presented common things in an unfamiliar or strange way so that audiences could gain new perspectives and see the world differently. The technique deeply influenced 20th-century art and theory, from Dada to culture jamming, and it maintains a certain parallel with Sigmund Freud’s notion of the “uncanny,” also explored in Breeze’s *V[R]jerses*.

In his essay *The Electronic Revolution*, William Burroughs imagined language as a virus, spreading through institutionalized means and hegemonic structures. His cut-ups were conceived as a form of breaking the “order of things,” in Michel Foucault’s words. To use post-pandemic terms, *mezangelle* can be seen as an inoculation of a small portion of “pharmakon” (Derrida 1981, 63–171), a vaccine or antidote (but also a poison) that incorporates political antigens in order to subvert the infection of power. Roberto Simanowski writes that code is “an indispensable element in every discussion of digital arts because everything happening on the screen or on the scene is first and foremost subject to the grammar and politics of code” (2011, viii).

The introduction of codework in Mez Breeze’s work produces a virus-like infection at various levels, mobilizing, in poiesis, the aesthetic, the ontological, and the epistemological. Her work recalls encounters in the Anthropocene, where humans meet non-human agents whose “intra-actions,” signalled by markup language, indicate a condition in which none of the actants pre-exist their relationship, in a sort of a [multi]verse process ontology.

In *Meeting the Universe Halfway* (2007), quantum physicist Karen Barad proposed the concept of “intra-action” to explain that “relata do not preexist relations; rather, relata-within-phenomena emerge through specific intra-actions” (2007, 334). She adds that phenomena should be understood as “a matter of intra-acting; it is an enactment, not something that someone or something has” (2007, 235). Barad describes her “agential realist account” as one where discursive practices are “not human-based activities but rather specific material (re)configurings of the world through which local determinations of boundaries, properties, and meanings are differentially enacted” (2003, 828). In her account, “matter is substance in its intra-active becoming – not a thing but a doing, a congealing of agency. And performativity is [...] iterative intra-activity” (2003, 828). Furthermore, for Barad, agency is a distributed condition where we are not outside observing the world. “Nor are we simply located at particular places *in* the world; rather, we are part *of* the world in its ongoing intra-activity.” (Barad 2003, 828 – emphasis in the original.)

In this way, Mez Breeze’s works can be seen as performing a reflection on how code disrupts the so-called “natural” human language, forcing an inquiry into the possibility of agency beyond the human; an agency that depends both on machine languages and on the materiality of the platforms used to support language inter-intra-actions. Furthermore, she also highlights agency beyond the human in other ways.

From the Holodeck to Mez Breeze’s *V[R]jerses*

Breeze’s *V[R]jerses* allow a reflection on how we look at the world through the Holodeck lenses of our screens, which are also optical objects. If *mezangelle* “in-scribes” (in Hayles’ terms) human and machine languages in emergent forms of enaction, enabling a multitude of voices, the “incorporation” of 3D images in Breeze’s latest creations adds layers of semiotic inter-intra-actions.

V[R]jerses are ambiguously described by their author both as a sequence of video poems and as micro-stories. Each *V[R]jerses* is what Breeze calls a “storybox” that can be experienced in 3D in any WebXR device. Indeed, each *V[R]jerses* is a Pandora’s box that enables unexpected [en]actions. The original ancient Greek term for the container was *pithos*, a large jar used for storage of food supplies but also used ritually as a burial urn. The term is related to *pathos* (grief), for opening the box liberated the spirits who created great suffering and distress for humans. However, opening Pandora’s box came to signify that making mistakes and overcoming difficulties was the only way to become wise. Nonetheless, as in Eve’s biblical story, the key element of Pandora’s narrative was establishing who was to blame. In other words, with whom lies the responsibility for the actions? Breeze’s storyboxes inquire into the relocation of the blame and responsibility to the reader/user, thus remediating the social (Biggs) and engaging the audience into our global problems.

V[R]jerses, which first appeared in 2020, offers a “verbovicovisual” experience, to use James Joyce’s terms, enhanced with the inclusion of 3D images that incorporate (in its sense of being embodied but also embedded, see López-Varela 2022) text nodes. These nodes open up the different micro-stories and require direct manipulation by the reader/user in order to reconfigure the sequence in a given direction. However, their numbering helps the reader build the first sequence, which [s]he can later alter. Almost like an Artificial Neural Network (ANN), the nodes seem to be organized in a sort of directed acyclic graph where each input creates an adjustment. Interestingly, the nodes occupy the entire body of the non-human entities under display, signalling the semiotic embodying of language and communication. In ANN systems, layers “talk” to one another until the “output” layer is reached, serving as the network’s “answer.” This is what happens in each of Breeze’s storyboxes.

A recent review¹ in the online journal *Neural* describes *V[R]jerses* as “virtual objects of literature.” They are exactly that, skeletal objects that ooze poem lines from their joints. They include hybrid human/non-human entities, cyborgs, human-animal-plant hybrids, mythological beings such as dragons, or aliens and ghostly creatures from other dimensions. The reading experience re-embodies these entities when they are manipulated in three-dimensional space. This manipulation in space offers a glimpse to life in other planes of existence. Each storybox is also packed with intriguing sonic backgrounds.

At the moment, there are thirteen 3D video pieces with micro-stories authored by well-known E-Lit artists. Like the Holodeck in *Star Trek*, all the video stories explore different aspects of the self, contemplating a sort of metamorphous [multi]verse, where the famous statement by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin echoes: “We are not human beings having a spiritual experience. We are spiritual beings having a human experience.” In a few words dedicated to each piece, I try to explain what it has meant to me.

1 <http://neural.it/2020/07/the-vrjerses-virtual-objects-of-literature/>. Last accessed 31. 11. 2021.

- +V[R]erse 1: “Anteloper” [Author: Mark Marino] Having memories of the future helps us project ourselves backwards. Happy looping!
- +V[R]erse 2: “Vinity” [Author: Davin Heckman] What looks down while we look up? Are we them? “Vanus;” unsubstantial; empty. We fill with vanity what we cannot know.
- +V[R]erse 3: “Bracement” [Author: Scott Rettberg] The shrapnel of our scars serves in the Magnus Opus that grows a treasure-box of fractal glassy flowers. Pain opens our [uni]verse.
- +V[R]erse 4: “The Wraggied Bonemen” [Author: Annie Abrahams] “‘The question is,’ said Alice, ‘whether you can make words mean so many different things.’ ‘The question is,’ said Humpty Dumpty, ‘which is to be master — that’s all.’” (Carroll, *Through the Looking-Glass*)
- +V[R]erse 5: “Curve” [Author: Jeremy Hight] “I have stared into the gaping maw of death,” (*Star Trek: Voyager* 1995) Or was it the smiling face of the Cheshire cat? I’m bound to get somewhere if I walk long enough.
- +V[R]erse 6: “Her Ribbon Flip” [Author: Andrea Phillips] Flip, Dancing Queen!. you can dance you can jive having the time of your life! Light is the reverse side of darkness.
- +V[R]erse 7: “The Inchoate Arts” [Author: David Thomas Henry Wright] Craft your dreams. Pull the tab, Pygmalion! Galatea is willing to vent her verses.
- +V[R]erse 8: “The Touch” [Author: Michael Maguire] “What is human is only one end fixed, the other end wide open, in terms of human consciousness” (Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev)
- +V[R]erse 9: “Formu[E]lation” [Author: Auriea Harvey] Slings turned swing-rides. No regrets, [Hum]let[s].
- + V[R]erse 10: “Artemisianum” [Author + Audio: Anna Nacher] “I am powerless against the reaping” (Katniss Everdeen)
- +V[R]erse 11: “[Power_B]Ar[k]cing” [Author: Mez Breeze] #hackactivism
- + V[R]erse 12: “Bridall Day” [Author: Rhea Myers] Bridle Day! “I’d rather be a cyborg than a goddess” (Donna Haraway)
- + V[R]erse 13: “Two-Faced|Rat-Faced|VictimHooder” [Author: Mez Breeze] Flip him off, warts and all! Have you tried cursing him at the bitching hour?

Posthuman Agency

One of the characteristics of online E-Lit and Net.Art is the fact that it incorporates greater possibilities for interactivity. Audience participation serves to illustrate how agency is the emergent product of semiotic enactivism. Material Engagement Theory MET considers that things operate as signs and that “meaning is not the product of representation but the product of a process of conceptual integration between conceptual and material domains” (Malafouris 2013, 90). Thus, MET can be seen as an attempt to decouple agency from human consciousness and to modulate intentionality towards the non-human. MET is the

last stage of the so-called 4E cognition – embodied, embedded, enacted, extended –, which affirms that things can show forms of agency beyond the human.

Breeze’s disquieting hybrid bio-mechanical figures and the micro-stories that accompany them conform to the stage of a Holodeck that allows the questioning of human reality. In her 1999 book, *How We Became Posthuman*, Hayles traced the different waves of cybernetics and explained how the “posthuman” is made up of shifting forms of “embodiment” and “inscription.” Breeze’s *V[R]jerses* enable these new forms, where materiality is not relegated to a second order of things but beyond. In an earlier 1993 paper, Hayles spoke of “flickering signifiers characterized by their tendency towards unexpected metamorphoses, attenuations, and dispersions” (76), a process that, she explained, takes place at various fractal levels, where “a signifier on one level becomes a signified on the next higher level” (77). Hayles affirms that this is the “moment when the human confronts the posthuman” (1993, 79). Indeed, this encounter of hybrid languages “enacts” (for a recent discussion on Enactment and 4E cognition, see López-Varela 2022) an unstable semiotic form that is not merely a chain of signifiers ending up in unveiling code as text or as anti-text.² For John Cayley, “code is not necessarily transparent or visible in human-readable language,” but if “read primarily as the language displayed on a screen[,] then its address is simplified. It is addressed to a human reader who is implicitly asked to assimilate the code as part of natural language” (2002). He concludes that “The Code Is Not the Text (Unless It Is the Text)” and goes on to highlight the double political and aesthetic intent in codework creations, making visible the agencies of inscription performed by the machine (Cayley 2002).

Roy Ascott was prophetic when he forecasted the future of art as a synthesis of different art forms, a *Gesamtdatenwerk* (“the integrated data work”) that emulates the 19th-century concept of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*. “While it is concerned with both technology and poetry, the virtual and the immaterial as well as the palpable and concrete, the telematic may be categorized as *neither art nor science*, while being allied in many ways to the discourses of both.” (Ascott 1990, 241 – emphasis added.)

Indeed, Mez Breeze’s *V[R]jerses* exemplify the new multidirectional STE[A]M “topologies of knowledge” (Braidotti 2013, 165) that emerge with the posthuman. Her micro-stories question “one’s locations in terms of both space (geo-political or ecological dimension) and time (historical and genealogical dimension)” (Braidotti 2013, 164). Concrete examples are, for instance, +*V[R]jerses* 1: “Anteloper,” in +*V[R]jerses* 2: “Vinity,” in +*V[R]jerses* 5: “Curve,” or in +*V[R]jerses* 8: “The Touch;” all of which stress “the limited nature of all claims to knowledge” (Braidotti 2013, 164). Reporting on Transmediale 2017, Berlin’s festival for art and digital culture, Benjamin Busch asks the question: “Does agency lie in the human, the machine, or the mediation in between?” He goes on to define machine agency in two ways: “a negative freedom-from (a refusal of things as they are) and a positive free-

2 Codework, a term used for the first time by Alan Sondheim in 2001 and was described by Talan Memmott (2011) as an “anti-genre.”

dom-to (a refusal and simultaneously future-building project)” (Busch 2017, n. p.). Freedom and resistance are related to will and agency, a topic that many of Breeze’s *V[R]erses* also pick up (see, for instance: +V[R]erse 3: “Bracement,” +V[R]erse 9: “Formu[E]lation,” or +V[R]erse 11: “[Power_B]Ar[k]cing”).

Coda

This paper has focused on work by Australian net.artist Mez Breeze, briefly exploring her collection of poems/micro-stories entitled *V[R]erses*. I have argued that her use of *mezangelle* and mixed XR produces new forms of agency materialization that contribute to making visible the emergence of non-human actants in the Anthropocene, also enabling an inquiry into the newly emerging multidimensional topologies of knowledge. In Breeze’s creations, the languages of the machine emerge as an expression of agency. In *V[R]erses*, this inquiry is directed towards different forms of symbiosis enacted from the encounters or couplings between the human and the non-human.

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Ágnes Karolina Bakk*

Theatrical Simulations: New Experiments with Gamification Mechanics Using Intra-ludical Communication for Creating New Audience

It took a while for performing artists to discover possibilities in the playfulness of adapting video game mechanics in theatrical productions. Game studies often relate themselves to or define themselves against theatre (Laurel 2003), but performance studies often reflect on playfulness and games as well, as do authors like Richard Schechner, who writes about performance art and the meaning of playfulness in a performance-art context (Schechner 2013). Thematizing the relationship and the interface between computer and theatre already has a longer history. Brenda Laurel in her work *Computers as Theatre* applies Aristotle's model to the human-computer relationship and explores how the plots of theatre plays and human-computer activities also formulate a potential "progression from possibility to probability to necessity" (Laurel 2003, 85). In this paper, I describe how play and game can be interpreted as two types of performances within the genre of mixed-reality theatre: those we can consider taking place in a real, physical space (using various kinds of programmable robots like Arduino, as can be seen in the case of machine eX's performances) and those that use new technology tools (by taking the shape of a smartphone application, as in the case of Blast Theory).

Interpreting Espen Aarseth's typology of cybertext (Aarseth 1997), Markku Eskelinen says: "To generalize: in art we might have to configure in order to be able to interpret, whereas in games we have to interpret in order to be able to configure, and proceed from the beginning to the winning or some other situation" (Eskelinen, 2001). Based on this idea, I will describe an in-betweenness of games and performing arts, whereas the creators, by using various techniques or mixtures of game-creation techniques (as in the case of *ludus* vs. *paidia* that I discuss below), enable their users to create new meanings by participating

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in such mixed-reality performances. “Creating new meanings” here refers to the creation of situations of communication and experimentation that help the individual player learn more about his or her own context.

Theoretical Framework

Schechner puts forward the idea that “performances are actions” (Schechner 2013, 1) and that “[...] a performance takes place as action, interaction, and relation. In this regard, a painting or a novel can be performative or can be analysed ‘as’ performance. Performance isn’t ‘in’ anything, but ‘between’” (Schechner 2013, 30). This “in-betweenness” is where the meanings and interpretations can be created. My aim is to explore how a particular type of mixed-reality performance installation can be described with a ludological approach, especially focusing on various interactions between the audience and the interface of the game performance. (It includes all the set elements and even the actors whose role is mainly functional, giving information but not taking new initiatives or decisions individually on the basis of new input from the audience).

My research focus is on situations in which the audience guided by a gamified path and various theatrical situations that are created by theatre professionals use their own medium’s possibility in order to give a more theatrical aspect to the game. In this way, they offer a participative approach to the audience and turn them into participants. Graeme Kirkpatrick states that “the most important thing about computer games is not their content, if this is understood to mean a message that is transmitted and then interpreted by the audiences” (Kirkpatrick 2013, 160). My aim is to point out where performing arts can enter in creating a message or meaningfulness for their participants in these gamified situations. To point this out, I will use Judith Ackermann’s theory of intra-ludic communication and its role in making meaning in such performances.

Judith Ackermann discusses in her paper the possibilities of intra-ludic communication in creating meaning in such gaming performances that she defines as “Hybrid Reality Theatre performances” (Ackermann 2014). She defines Hybrid Reality Theatre as a concept that connects digital media usage to performing-art practices. “By locating digital gaming in the sphere of hybrid spaces one has to enlarge the concepts of co-presence and liveness to both spheres, which enables us to talk about avatars and players in terms of co-presence and to acknowledge the liveness of the happening – even though it inevitably contains a mediation.” (Ackermann 2014.) She takes Klaus Lazarowicz’s notion of triadic collusion (Lazarowicz 1997, 97), which describes the interdependency between multiple participants that are involved in a theatre performance or are in charge of a specific part of the performance, as in the case of *machina eX*’s performances. The meaning of intra-ludic communication is also based on Lazarowicz’s concept of intra-theatricality, that is, the structure of how actors

and spectators meet and understand each other during the theatrical performance used to create meaning between the performers (Lazarowicz 1997).

The performances that use this specific set of semiotics can also be considered simulations (and not narratives), in accordance with Gonzalo Frasca's term of "simulation," which he uses for video games (Frasca 2003). He uses Roger Callois's game-categorization terminology of "paidia" and "ludus," which captures the distinction between a play and a game. *Paidia* has (almost) no rules, while *ludus* identifies who can be a winner of the game based on the rules of the game. Frasca states that "the binary logic found in *ludus* stands out when delivering games set in fairy-tale-like environments, where things are generally black or white. When you move onto other topics, such as human relationships, suddenly distinctions are not so clear-cut. Only *paidia*, with its fuzzier logic and its scope beyond winners and losers, can provide an environment for games to grow in their scope and artistry" (Frasca 2003, 230). We can see that *ludus* is the structure in which "simauthors" – in this case, the authors of these simulated and gamified performing-arts situations – can more easily implement their own moral certitudes with emphasis and create the simulated environment with more precision and with fewer hacking possibilities for the participants. The concept of the "hacking abilities of the audience" is strongly connected to Rancière's idea of the emancipated audience: "Being a spectator is not some passive condition that we should transform into activity [...] We do not have to transform spectators into actors, and ignoramus into scholars. We have to recognize the knowledge at work in the ignoramus and the activity peculiar to the spectator. Every spectator is already an actor in her story; every actor, every man of action, is the spectator of the same story." (Rancière 2009, 17.)

My aim with quoting Rancière's thoughts from his *The Emancipated Spectator* is to emphasize that performing arts also recognize the meaning-making act in the collaboration with the audience, without exposing the audience. This is an important step, as this process resulted in various interesting artistic productions that I am going to analyse below. In the next section, I will have a closer look at the Germany-based group *machina eX*, and I will offer an in-depth analysis of their performance *The Right of Passage*. The section that follows focuses on Bristol-based performance group *Blast Theory*.

Game on the Real Stage

The performance *The Right of Passage* by *machina eX* premiered in Düsseldorf in 2014. Its title is a playful word combination, as they are making an attempt to point out that passing a border is also a rite of passage, a ceremony which promises people a better future. The *machina eX* performing group was founded in 2010, and their performances are often considered a certain re-enactment of video games. *The Right of Passage* takes place at a border camp between the Loeric Republic and Pradea. The narrative elements are present only at the beginning of the performance as a cut-scene, when each audience member, who

later becomes a player, receives a passport and some instructions. We cannot consider these performative, as the waiting room is organized in such a way as to become a narrative environment and allows the players to receive information about their current situation. The rules are the following: everybody wants to cross the border as the political situation is unstable, and whoever fails to cross might become the victim of various power games and be deported as an illegal immigrant.

This crossing the border situation is, of course, not new in the theatre context, as the Danish–Austrian SIGNA company’s performance *The Ruby Town* also begins with a similar situation. But the creators of *machina eX* were also inspired by the video game *Papers, Please!*, a dystopian video game in which the player is an immigration officer who has to make decisions about various immigrants’ lives, based on their papers. We must also note that refugee games are well known in the field of video games, as part of the serious game genre, aiming beyond entertainment and with a special educational goal.

The narrative follows the same point-and-click adventure game strategy with a multi-user game situation, as the audience is admitted every 15 minutes in the first part of the 3-hour-long performance. Unlike in a multiplayer game, here there is no chance for the audience to develop individual characters. Rather, the aim of the game is to create empathy towards people who are in a situation represented by the narrative, which is made easier by the use of live co-presence, which is not found in the above-mentioned serious video games. The basic rule of the game is to gather all the necessary documents throughout the bureaucratic labyrinth in order to be able to pass the border in time. The time set of the game is divided into several days and nights: during the days, the paperwork can be done, and during the night additional information can be found out. The players (members of the audience) receive help from different information points such as by calling phone numbers that sometimes provide useful information, from actors (performers of the company presented as non-player characters) who tell the participants from where or when they can receive a document for the next step. It also matters in what order the documents are gathered. The game performance is based on the total automation not only of the devices but also of the actors, who are “working” at the border whether as a guard or as a bartender. This also has an alienating effect, which is more emphasized by its liveness, meaning the co-presence of the performers and audience. As Erika Fischer-Lichte remarks, “reversing roles, creating communities, or motivating physical contact are possible only under the condition of liveness” (Fischer-Lichte 2008, 68). This liveness can motivate the participants’ community, who all have the same wish to pass the border, to communicate with each other in order to exchange information about possible ways to gather the documents. The participants can find out which device can be tricked sometimes or about the opening programmes of different offices. During the game, different participant characters can be observed as well: there are the helper types, who do not care if time is passing and are ready to give information and sometimes even resources to help other

players, but there are also participants who answer only very curtly and focus only on their next step. However, the game is designed in a way that during the three hours of playing time only two or three participants can cross the border.

The participants themselves are responsible for creating meaning on their own. Some of them can take the role of a rebel, who is running across the border (and will get caught for sure, as the border line is equipped with movement sensors that immediately sound an alarm, and the night guard brings those who wanted to flee back to the camp). There are also information-spreaders who help other players, but there are also players who are concerned only to achieve their own goal to cross the border. In *The Right of Passage*, the intra-ludic communication is used in order to create meaning between the performers to be able to study each other's behaviour and also to study the physicality of the bureaucratic labyrinth. This communication type is enabled by the physical co-presence of the participants in the set design.

As Joost Raessens shows in his study, players' identities can be influenced by the above-mentioned serious games, but only to the extent they themselves understand who is in control: "we have seen that players may activate different interpretative strategies: they can either surrender to, try to understand, or deny the importance of these kinds of games (and their ideological frames). The fact that, unlike other media, computer games give players the sense that they are 'co-creators' of the game – most of the time a 'participatory illusion' – inclines me to see serious games as a forceful discursive space and practice, with real enough power to influence the terms in which people think, feel, and act" (Raessens 2015, 258). However, it is important to consider how this co-creational effect could be more enhanced dramaturgically. Wood argues how mimetic and diegetic player experiences can be combined and can therefore offer the players the role not of a story protagonist but of an experience protagonist. In these gaming situations when dramatic irony is applied and the player knows more than the character, the players' experience as a protagonist can be enhanced more (Wood 2017).

The Choice Is in Your Hands

One of the most prominent creators in the field of immersive theatre nowadays is the Bristol-based Blast Theory. Through games, videos, and live art forms, the company deals with topics such as data protection, consumerism, or financial crises. One of their recent productions from 2015, in co-production with National Theatre Wales, is the app *Karen*. For this production, the creators used the narrative design technique as it is used in video games. Based on this system, the player character and others (one or more non-player characters) can engage in simulated conversations. What qualifies this application as a theatrical act? Nick Tandavanitj, one of the leading artists of the company, explains: "We have always made works that have a mission to maintain a sense of liveness and participation. They are accessible and adopt

references, languages and motives that draw on popular culture. Many of our pieces of work are designed to allow audiences to think about or to experience how technology is transforming our social relationships” (Tandavanitj 2016).

This app applies branching narrative design strategies to enable interactive situations between the life-coach app and its users. The main protagonist is the sensible and inquisitive Karen, who becomes part of the user’s life for a certain period of time until the user finishes the therapy sessions (or deletes the app from her/his own phone). The app also interferes with the user’s daily life. For example, if for a certain period (10 days) the user does not activate the app, the protagonist calls or messages the user. As Nora N. Kahn explains in her article about the app: “*Karen* models a speculative future in which one’s digital personal companion will use any psychological or narrative technique available to extract information about you. The app uses a combination of mood repair tests and psychometric evaluation systems, like the five-factor model, which companies routinely use to construct our consumer identities.” (Kahn 2016.)

In Blast Theory’s app, users are able to choose only from a predefined set of answers, and the life coach Karen gives answers according to the user’s chosen response. By this, the creators were aiming to point out how social media networks and the Internet make use of each single-user’s data. The users also have the chance to interfere with and influence Karen’s personal life by suggesting different ways to behave in some situations. This narrative design tool carries the risk of making some players feel that they have a predefined character along with a predefined storyline or quest. According to the user comments on Blast Theory’s website, the most common problem was players expecting a unique live-art product. However, after playing for several times, they realized that in many cases it did not matter how they answered to their personal life coach, as she always acted the same way. After a lot of time spent “with her” in conversational situations and also answering all her questions, the app provides you a personalized psychological report, which is based on your answers, offering at the same time a comparison of the user’s behaviour with that of other users.

The app makes use of the psychological concept of chat room addiction, meaning that some users can get slightly dependent on Karen, as she can be surprising and interested in her chat partner but also giving some personal insights into her daily, intimate life. There is no narrative path that unfolds through the sessions with Karen, which are rather uncannily simulated situations between a too personal virtual life coach, the user, and also the everyday environment of the user, as it can pop up at any time. The app requires a certain telepresence mood from the user, telepresence (presence at a distance) in this case meaning virtualizing the interaction and creating a de-materialized self in interaction with the life coach. This dematerialization causes a virtualizing effect of the user’s awareness, but it does not change the user’s experiences of

his or her own body; rather, it creates a mixture of reality and fiction by creating an undefinable interaction simulation.

In the case of *Karen*, the intra-ludical communication is, with some delay, between the creators, the interface, and the single-user. By answering, the users provide various sets of information (which all get stored by the developers of the app according to personal data storage protocols) that do not change the course of the application in any way but interfere with the psychological profile.

At first sight, the *Karen* app would seem to strictly follow the framework of ludus games. On the one hand, it uses a strict programming rule set, as the application allows almost no deviation (perhaps besides allowing the user to postpone answering *Karen*'s calls and messages) and uses manipulation rules (as defined by Gonzalo Frasca as rules that, unlike goal rules, do not imply a winning scenario – Frasca 2003, 231). On the other hand, it differs from ludus games, as there is no winning scenario in this app and is more curiosity-driven. Based on Wood's arguments, here the app's user changes his or her role from the story protagonist to the experience protagonist (Wood 2017), as in the middle of the app's syuzhet one begins to know more about *Karen*'s secrets and behaviour when, instead of *Karen*, the app connects to her flatmate. By using this trick, the user can experience various changes in his or her point of view, and these changes can also function as a manipulative hook-up.

Conclusion

As Lars Konzack already articulated in 2009, “the challenge of future video games is to design games that go beyond mere entertainment” (Konzack 2009, 33). Serious games can be counted among those games, but the theorist also expects game designers to figure out how to turn metaphysical ideas into game constructions. He predicts that the future of games, after we get bored of different propaganda games, is for “open-ended games based on philosophical ideas and interesting ethical systems [that] are much more exciting to experiment with and explore, [which turns] them into fuller experiences of meaningful play.” In line with these ideas, we can conclude that the *machina eX* performance is rather a direct transfer of a video game into a real-stage simulation, where the participants can actually experience the physical boundaries of such spaces, have a sensory feedback and a real sense of incorporation. The other novelty here for experienced gamers is that the characters that belong to the set are real, incorporated personalities even though they are acting within the boundaries of the game and do not make individual moves, just maintain their functional character. And while in the case of *Karen* both the player and the app are interacting in the virtual “third” space, in this case virtualization affects only the actors' presence, as their individuality is questioned by the participants, wherefore they do not take them into consideration as “real” self-driven forces.

Blast Theory's *Karen* can be considered as a game-based performing-arts simulation, as it also uses game mechanics techniques in order to keep the user

engaged, but the “simauthors” – in a genuine and almost visible way – have made use of various manipulation tricks in order to make the users increasingly engaged. However, the outcome is very personalized, and Blast Theory’s practice shows us how metaphysical ideas can be transposed into interactive settings by game mechanics. In both cases, the audience can find out how various intra-ludic communication strategies can enhance meaning making, but while in the case of machina eX’s performance this strategy helps audience members to find out more about other participants, in the case of Blast Theory the participants are on an ego trip that is re-compensated with a personal psychological profile.

Video games and performing arts will continue striving to interact with each other. Video game mechanics offer different techniques for performances to create new ways of engaging the audience and of shaping various new senses of communities. Even though at first glance it might seem a very individualistic form of participation, participants will end up forming various kinds of communities. As Rancière says, the theatre is still the only place where we face a community (Rancière 2009, 17).

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CURRICULUM VITAE

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS AND ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES PUBLIKÁCIÓK ÉS TUDOMÁNYOS TEVÉKENYSÉGEK LISTÁJA

dr. Ágnes Pethő
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Doctoral dissertation / Doktori disszertáció

- 2000. *Filmstílus – irodalmi stílus. A multimediális szöveg elemzése: intermedialitás és önreflexió a filmben* [Film Style – Literary Style. The Analysis of the Multimedial Text: Intermediality and Self-Reflexivity in Cinema]. Tudományos irányító: Prof. dr. cons. Szabó Zoltán.

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- A kinematográfia passiója Jean-Luc Godard A film története(i) című művében. In *JLG/JLG – Jean-Luc Godard dicsérete, avagy a filmművészet önfelszámolása*, ed. László Petelényi, 308–326. Budapest: Francia Új Hullám Kiadó, 2012.
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- Jean-Luc Godard’s Passages from the Photo-Graphic to the Post-Cinematic. Images in between Intermediality and Convergence. In *Film in the Post-Media Age*, ed. Ágnes Pethő, 81–125. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012. Újraközlés, eredeti megjelenés / The essay was first published in *Acta Universitatis Sapientiae, Film and Media Studies* 2011. vol. 4: 23–61.
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- Jean-Luc Godard’s Passages from the Photo-Graphic to the Post-Cinematic. Images in between Intermediality and Convergence. *Acta Universitatis Sapientiae, Film and Media Studies* 2011. vol. 4: 23–61.
- Intermediality as Metalepsis in the “Cinéécriture” of Agnès Varda. *Acta Universitatis Sapientiae, Film and Media Studies* 2010. vol. 3: 69–94.
- Intermediality in Film: A Historiography of Methodologies. *Acta Universitatis Sapientiae, Film and Media Studies* 2010. vol. 2: 39–72.
- Media in the Cinematic Imagination: Ekphrasis and the Poetics of the In-Between in Jean-Luc Godard’s Cinema. In *Media Borders, Multimodality and Intermediality*, ed. Lars Elleström, 211–225. Basingstoke–Hampshire, England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009. Átírt, bővített változat megjelent ezen a címen / A substantially enlarged, revised version was published with the title: Ekphrasis and Jean-Luc Godard’s Poetics of the In-Between, in the volume *Cinema and Intermediality. The Passion for the In-Between*, 293–315. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011.
- (Re)Mediating the Real. Paradoxes of an Intermedial Cinema of Immediacy. *Acta Universitatis Sapientiae: Film and Media Studies* 2010. vol. 1: 47–69.
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- cinéma*, in the volume *Cinema and Intermediality. The Passion for the In-Between*, 317–338. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011.
- A kinematográfia passiója. A mozi narratív médiumának dekonstrukciója Jean-Luc Godard *A film története(i)* című művében. *Kalligram* 2009. március: 76–84.
 - The Screen is a Blank Page: Jean-Luc Godard’s Word and Image Plays. In *Words and Images on the Screen. Language, Literature, Moving Pictures*, ed. Ágnes Pethő, 159–187. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008. Kibővített, újabb változat / A rewritten, longer version published with the title: From the “Blank Page” to the “White Beach:” Word and Image Plays in Jean-Luc Godard’s Cinema. In *Cinema and Intermediality. The Passion for the In-Between*, 265–291. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011.
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 - A mozaiktól a muzikalitásig. Paradigmaváltás Jean-Luc Godard filmjeiben. In *Film, filozófia, tudomány. A X. Laterna Filmakadémia előadásai*, ed. László Tarnay, 146–164. Pécs: Passim, 2005.
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 - A „fehér lap”-tól a „fehér part”-ig. Szavak és képek közé író alakzatok Jean-Luc Godard mozijában. In *Köztes képek. A filmelbeszélés színterei*, ed. Ágnes Pethő, 135–180. Kolozsvár: Scientia Kiadó, 2003.
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 - A filmvászon fölülírásai. *Nyelv és Irodalomtudományi Közlemények* 2001. 1–2: 3–29.

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- Modelling Time and Space in Intertextual Cinema. (Some Aspects of Mircea Daneliuc's *Glissando*). In *Modellierungen von Geschichte und Kultur / Modelling History and Culture. Proceedings of the 9th International Symposium of the Austrian Association for Semiotics and Institute for Semiotics*, University of Graz, 22–24 November 1996, Vienna. ÖGS. Vol. II. Signs, Texts, Identities, Ch. Film and Photography, eds. Jeff Bernard-Peter and Grzybek-Gloria Withalm, 2000. 947–959.
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- Antonio García-Berrio: A Theory of the Literary Text [könyvrecenzió / book review]. *Nyelv- és Irodalomtudományi Közlemények* 1996. vol. 1: 106–108.
- Stílusról, stilisztikáról napjainkban. *Nyelv- és Irodalomtudományi Közlemények* 1995. vol. 2: 209–211.
- Létfilm az ezredforduló előestéjéről. *Iskolakultúra* 1995. 6: 94–110.
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- Kelet-Európa, nulla év. Filmgyártás, fordulat után. *Filmvilág* 1992. 4: 63–64.
- Jolly Joker filmkockák. *Tett* (Képvilág) 1986. 2: 49–54.
- A költői film nagy művésze: Tarkovszkij. *Iffjúmunkás* 1987. 22: 8–9.
- Mozgó kép és filmművészet. *Echinox* 1985: 18–19.
- Filmnyelv, filmelemzés (Michelangelo Antonioni: *Napfogyatkozás*). *Korunk* 1985. vol. 2: 124–129.
- Képi struktúra, nyelvi struktúra. *Korunk* 1985. vol. 3: 258–259.
- Filmtechnikai elemek József Attila *Nyár* című versének szerkezetében. *Nyelv- és Irodalomtudományi Közlemények* 1984. vol. 1: 55–58.
- Régi és Új Hollywood. *Korunk* 1983. vol. 6: 467–471.
- 1979 és 1991 között: 22 kisebb cikk, filmkritika, amely a *Hargita, Hargita Népe* című napilapokban és az *Új Élet* című folyóiratban jelent meg. / Between 1979 and 1991: 22 shorter articles and film reviews published in the *Hargita, Hargita Népe* daily newspapers and the monthly review entitled *Új Élet*.

Editing Scientific Publications / Tudományos kiadványok szerkesztése:

- *Acta Universitatis Sapientiae*: main editorial board, member / szerkesztőbizottsági tag
- *Acta Universitatis Sapientiae, Film and Media Studies* (ISSN 2065-5924): executive editor / felelős szerkesztő
- I. B. Tauris: *Film Thinks* series: editorial board member / az I. B. Tauris kiadó *Film Thinks* sorozatának szerkesztőbizottsági tagja
- *Convergence. The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies*: editorial board member / a folyóirat szerkesztőbizottságának tagja
- *Studies in Eastern European Cinema*: editorial board member / a folyóirat szerkesztőbizottságának tagja

Research Programmes and Grants / Kutatási programok és grantok:

- 2022–2024. *Affective Intermediality. Cinema between Media, Sensation and Reality*. Exploratory Research Project supported by a grant of the Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digitization, CNCS – UEFISCDI, project number PN-III-P4-PCE-2021-1297, within PNCDI III, 01. 06. 2022 – 31. 12. 2024. Project director. / *Affektív intermedialitás. Mozgóképek a médiumok, érzékek és a valóság között*. A CNCS – UEFISCDI által támogatott kutatási program, kód: PN-III-P4-PCE-2021-1297, PNCDI III. Kutatásvezető.
- 2017–2019. *Rethinking Intermediality in Contemporary Cinema: Changing Forms of In-Betweenness*. Exploratory research project funded by the UEFISCDI (Executive Unit for Financing Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation), code: PN-III-ID-PCE-2016-0418. Project director. / *Intermedialitás a kortárs filmekben: a köztesség változó formái*. Az UEFISCDI (A Felsőoktatást, Kutatást, Fejlesztést és Innovációt Finanszírozó Főosztály) által támogatott kutatási program, kód: PN-III-P4-ID-PCE-2016-0418. Kutatásvezető.
- 2013–2016. *Re-mediated Images as Figurations of Intermediality and Post-Mediality in Central and East European Cinema*. CNCS-UEFISCDI, exploratory research programme IDEI, code: PN-II-ID-PCE-2012-4-0573. Project director. / *A re-mediált képek mint az intermedialitás és a poszt-medialitás alakzatai a kelet-európai filmekben*. A CNCS – UEFISCDI által támogatott kutatási program, kód: PN-II-ID-PCE-2012-4-0573. Kutatásvezető.
- Jan.–May 2011. *For Knowledge on a European Scale*. A programme financed by the European Union and co-financed by the European Social Fund (code: TAMOP 4.2.1/B-09/1/KMR-2010-0003). Elaboration of two courses for the MA programme of Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest: Jean-Luc Godard and the Poetics of Intermediality in Film, Reflexivity in Film. / *For Knowledge on a European Scale* kutatási projekt keretében az Európai Unió és az Európai Szociális Alap társfinanszírozásával (TAMOP 4.2.1/B-09/1/KMR-2010-0003),

két kurzus kidolgozása az ELTE MA képzése számára (Jean-Luc Godard és az intermedialitás poétikája a filmben, A filmes önreflexió).

- 2011–2012. European Virtual Academy. European Union, Lifelong Learning Programme. Elaboration of a bilingual electronic course, later published in print / online kurzus kidolgozása két nyelven: *Reflexivity in Film – Reflexivitas a filmben*. Nyomtatásban megjelent az Ábel Kiadónál 2013-ban.
- 2011–2013. *Moving Images, Representation and Regionalism in the Post-Media Age*. Sapientia Foundation, Institute for Research Programmes, group research project, project director. / A kutatás témája: *Mozgóképek, reprezentáció és regionalizmus a poszt-média korban*. Sapientia Alapítvány – Kutatási Programok Intézete, csoportos kutatás, kutatásvezető.
- 4–6 June 2009. *Intermedialities: Theory, History, Practice*. European Science Foundation (ESF) (EW08-219 SCH) scholarship for an “expert meeting.” Exploratory workshop held in Amsterdam. Organizer: dr. Ivo Blom (Amsterdam), co-organizers: Francesco Casetti (Milano), Ágnes Pethő (Cluj-Napoca), Jens Schröter (Siegen), Antonio Somaini (Milano), Yvonne Spielmann (Ayr, Scotland), Ginette Verstraete (Amsterdam).
- 2008–2009. *Remediation in the Cinema* – group research project. Sapientia Foundation, Institute for Research Programmes, head of a research team. / *Mozgóképi remedializációs jelenségek* – csoportos kutatás. Sapientia Alapítvány – Kutatási Programok Intézete, kutatásvezető.
- 2006–2008. *Jean-Luc Godard and the Mediality of Modern Cinema* – group research project. Sapientia Foundation, Institute for Research Programmes, head of the research team. / *Jean-Luc Godard és a modern film medialitása* – csoportos kutatás. Sapientia Alapítvány – Kutatási Programok Intézete, kutatásvezető.
- 2004–2006. *The Changes in the Synchronic Structures of Cinema (Image, Text and Sound)* – group research project. Sapientia Foundation, Institute for Research Programmes, head of the research team. / *A mozgóképek szinkronstruktúráinak (kép-szöveg-zene viszonyainak) változásai* – csoportos kutatás. Sapientia Alapítvány – Kutatási Programok Intézete, kutatásvezető.
- 2001–2003. *Contexts of Moving Images, Intermediality and Inter-art Relationships in the Cinema* – group research project. Sapientia Foundation, Institute for Research Programmes, head of the research team. / *A mozgóképek kontextusai, médium- és művészeti kapcsolatai* – csoportos kutatás. Sapientia Alapítvány – Kutatási Programok Intézete, kutatásvezető.
- Febr.–Aug. 2001. *Image and Text Relationships. Dialogue of Arts and Forms of Communications* – group research project. Sapientia Foundation, Institute for Research Programmes, head of the research team. / *Kép és szöveg kapcsolatok* – csoportos kutatás. Sapientia Alapítvány – Kutatási Programok Intézete, kutatásvezető.

Memberships in Scientific Committees and Collectives / Tudományos bizottsági és egyesületi tagság:

- Since March 2021, Head of the Centre for Cinematic Intermediality and Visual Culture at the Department of Film, Photography and Media, Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania, formerly known as Film and Media Studies Research Centre. / 2021 márciusától a Mozgóképi intermedialitás és vizuális kultúra kutatóközpont (korábban Film- és médiatudományi kutatóközpont) vezetője a Sapientia Erdélyi Magyar Tudományegyetem filmművészet, fotóművészet, média szakán.
- Since January 2020, member of the expert committee at Art, Art History and Literature, Research Foundation Flander, Bruxelles, Belgium / 2019 januárjától a Flamand Kutatási Alap Művészet, művészettörténet és irodalom szakértői bizottságának tagja, Brüsszel, Belgium.
- Since 2019, member of the Hungarian Film Studies Society / 2019-től a Magyar Filmtudományi Társaság tagja.
- Since 2015, member of the expert association AHRC Network: Film and the Other Arts, initiated by Edinburgh University, Edinburg, UK / 2015-től tagja az Edinburghi Egyetem által létrehozott AHRC Network: Film and the Other Arts szakértői egyesületnek, Edinburgh, Egyesült Királyság.
- Since 2015, member of the committee of expert evaluators for UEFISCDI projects (Executive Unit for Financing Higher Education Research), Romania / 2015-től tagja az UEFISCDI (Felsőoktatási Kutatásfinanszírozási Végrehajtó Egység) projektek szakértői értékelő bizottságának, Románia.
- Since 2015, member of the expert committee at Linnaeus University Center for Intermedial and Multimodal Studies, Sweden / 2015-től a Linnaeus Egyetem Intermediális és Multimodális Tanulmányok Központja szakértői bizottságának tagja, Svédország.
- Since 2014, member of the SCMS (Society for Cinema and Media Studies) / 2014-től az SCMS (Film- és Médiatudományi Társaság) tagja.
- Since 2012, executive board member of the International Society for Intermedial Studies / 2012-től az Intermediális Tanulmányok Nemzetközi Társaságának igazgatósági tagja.
- Since 2009, member of the expert committee of the European Science Foundation (ESF – Member of the Pool of Reviewers) / 2009-től az Európai Tudományos Alap szakértői bizottságának tagja.
- Since 2008, member of the NECS (European Network for Cinema and Media Studies) / 2008-től a NECS (Film- és Médiatudományok Európai Hálózata) tagja.
- Between 2004, and 2012 member of the NORSIS (Nordic Society for Interart Studies) / 2004 és 2012 között a NORSIS (Északi Művészetközi Tanulmányok Társasága) tagja.
- Since 1996, member of the International Association of Semiotics / 1996-től a Nemzetközi Szemiotikai Társaság tagja.
- Since 1996, member of the International Society of Hungarian Studies / 1996-től a Nemzetközi Magyarstudományi Társaság tagja.

Visiting Professor and Keynote or Plenary Speaker / Vendégtanári és plenáris előadói meghívások:

- 17 June 2022. Studies in Eastern European Cinema, online conference – keynote speaker. The title of the presentation / Az előadás címe: *The Past is a Ready-Made? Rethinking Collage Effect, Affect and Intermediality in the Films of Radu Jude and Sergei Loznitsa.*
- 1–3 July 2021. University of L'Aquila (Italy), ICLA Research Committee on Literatures/Arts/Media (CLAM) Conference: *Transcodification: Literatures, Arts, Media* – keynote speaker. The title of the presentation / Az előadás címe: *From Crossing Media Borders to Rethinking In-Betweenness. Shifting Vantage Points in the Interpretation of Cinematic Intermediality.*
- 26–27 April 2019. Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania, Miercurea Ciuc (Romania). *Köztes terek / Spații intermediare / Spaces In-Between* conference – keynote speaker. The title of the presentation / Az előadás címe: *Theorizing Intermediality: From Crossing Borders to Being In-Between.*
- 9–10 May 2018. University of Gdańsk, Gdańsk (Poland). Erasmus+ visiting professor. The title of the presentation / Az előadás címe: *Cinema and Intermediality. Theory and Typology.*
- 6–8 November 2017. Reading University, Reading (UK). *II InterMedia Conference: The Moving Form of Film: Exploring Intermediality as a Historiographic Method* – plenary speaker. The title of the presentation / Az előadás címe: *The Double Helix of Intermediality.*
- 30 September 2016. Corpus Christi College, Cambridge (UK). International workshop: *Film, a Plastic Art*, organized by AHRC Research Network– keynote speaker. The title of the presentation / Az előadás címe: *Inflecting the Photo-Filmic, Incorporating the Arts: The Tableau Aesthetic in Post-Cinema.*
- 13 April 2016. Reading University, Reading (UK). International workshop: *Understanding Intermediality* – keynote speaker. The title of the presentation / Az előadás címe: *Understanding Intermediality in Contemporary Cinema: Changing Shapes of In-Betweenness.*
- 2 December 2014. Centre de Recherches sur les Arts et le Langage (CRAL) et L'École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS), Paris (France). The title of the presentation / Az előadás címe: *The Tableau Vivant in Contemporary Cinema: Between Narrativity and Intermediality.*
- 18 September 2014. Stockholm University, Stockholm (Sweden). The title of the presentation / Az előadás címe: *Becoming an Image. Theorizing the Tableau Vivant in Contemporary Cinema.*
- 17 September 2014. Linnaeus University, Vaxjö (Sweden). The title of the presentation / Az előadás címe: *Theorizing the Tableau Vivant in Contemporary (East European) Cinema.*
- 22 June 2012. University of Lisbon, Centre for Comparative Studies (Centro de Estudos Comparatistas), Lisbon (Portugal). The title of the presentation / Az előadás címe: *Jean-Luc Godard and Cinema's Intimacy with Words and Literature.*

- February 2012. Interdisciplinary Doctoral School, University of Pécs, Pécs (Hungary). The title of the presentation / Az előadás címe: *Intermedialitás a filmben*.
- 2010–2011, second semester / második szemeszter. Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest (Hungary). Two courses in the MA programme / Két előadás-sorozat az MA program keretében: *A filmes önreflexió; Jean-Luc Godard és az intermedialitás poétikája*.
- 10–12 December 2010. University of Pécs, Pécs (Hungary). *XII. Laterna Film Academy: Images Moving across the Arts and Disciplines* conference – keynote speaker. The title of the presentation / Az előadás címe: *Reality as a Media Maze: Sensual and Structural Gateways of Intermediality in Cinema*.
- 12–14 June 2009. Amsterdam (the Netherlands). European Science Foundation Exploratory Workshop on *Intermedialities: Theory, History, Practice* – co-organizer– keynote speaker. The title of the presentation / Az előadás címe: *Intermediality in Film: A Historiography of Methodologies*.
- 11 June 2009. Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam (the Netherlands). The title of the presentation / Az előadás címe: *Intermediality: Theory, History, Practice*.
- October 2005. Centre for the Study of Moving Image – Film Studies, University of Pécs, Pécs (Hungary). Visiting professor. The title of the presentation / Az előadás címe: *Jean-Luc Godard művészete*.
- 25–28 April 2005. University of Szeged, Szeged (Hungary). *Image/Text/Multi-media* – workshop presenter. The title of the presentation / Az előadás címe: *Pictoriality and Nothingness in Modern Cinema*.
- April 2004. University of Pécs, Pécs (Hungary). Workshop organized by Kerényi Károly Szakkollégium – presenter. The title of the presentation / Az előadás címe: *Intermedialitás és önreflexivitás a filmművészetben*.

Dissertation Committee Memberships / Részvétel doktori vizsgabizottságokban:

- 2018. Eugen Oprină: *Cinematograful stereoscopic, contribuții la fundamentarea teoriei realizării imaginii artistice*. I. L. Caragiale National University of Theatre and Film, Bucharest, Romania.
- 2013. Judit Pieldner: *Szöveg, kép, mozgókép kapcsolatai Bódy Gábor és Jeles András filmművészetében*. Babeş–Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania.
- 2012. Alexandru Sterian: *Influențele noilor media în estetica filmului de ficțiune*. I. L. Caragiale National University of Theatre and Film, Bucharest, Romania.
- 2012. Melinda Blos-Jáni: *A mozgókép domesztikációja családi kontextusban. Antropológiai vizsgálat*. Babeş–Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania.
- 2012. Imola Mikó: *Testpoétikák kortárs irodalomban és filmen. A beteg test reprezentációja*. Babeş–Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania.
- 2011. Anna-Mária Szalma: *A fénykép a mindennapi életben. Vizuális antropológiai közelítések privát fényképkorpuszokhoz*. Babeş–Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania.

- 2010. Katalin Turnacker: *Fausti szellemiség és festői kép Werner Herzog filmművészetében*. University of Pécs, Pécs, Hungary.
- 2010. Katalin Sándor: *A vizuális költészet intermedialis aspektusai (különös tekintettel a konkrét költészetre, a betűköltészetre és a kollázsokra)*. Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania.
- 2009. Andrea Virginás: *Crime Genres and the Modern–Postmodern Turn: Canons, Gender, Media*. University of Debrecen, Debrecen, Hungary.
- 2008. Miklós Kiss: *Between Narrative and Cognitive Approaches. Film Theory of Non-linearity Applied to Hungarian Movies*. University of Jyväskylä, Jyväskylä, Finland.
- 2007. Gábor Zoltán Kiss: *Kulturális és mediális átvitelek*. University of Pécs, Pécs, Hungary.
- 2007. Györgyi Vajdovich: *A filmes adaptáció. Az irodalmi művek filmre adaptálásának elméleti és gyakorlati kérdései*. Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary.
- 2007. Hajnal Király: *A könyv és film között. A hűségelv feloldásának elméleti koordinátái az adaptációértelmezésben*. Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary.
- 2006. Beja Margitházi: *Attrakció és interakció. Arc a közelképen és a filmstílus közegében*. Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary.

CONFERENCES KONFERENCIÁK

CALLS FOR PAPERS WRITTEN AND DESIGNED BY ÁGNES PETHŐ

PETHŐ ÁGNES ÁLTAL MEGFOGALMAZOTT ÉS
MEGTERVEZETT KONFERENCIAFELHÍVÁSOK

20–21 October 2022

UNCANNY INTERMEDIALITY

International workshop organized within the framework of the Exploratory Research Project supported by a grant of the CNCS – UEFISCDI entitled: *Affective Intermediality. Cinema between Media, Sensation and Reality*



We invite you to join us on a two-day workshop launching our new research project, *Affective Intermediality. Cinema between Media, Sensation and Reality*. In this project, our goal is not to provide or refine a widely applicable set of abstract concepts regarding the connections between media; quite the contrary, we seek to map areas where intermediality appears as most elusive and mutable, where it is registered as a sensation altering our perception of a medium, and where it connects to us in an affective way. Acknowledging the historicity and embeddedness of media within an ever-changing material world and the fact that on both ends of all media processes of creation and reception there is a sensitive, cognizant subject, we set out to investigate the performative potential of media juxtapositions or ambivalences. This performativity, however, hinges on the experience of in-betweenness, something that is very hard to define and that may actually drift into the territory of the uncanny. As Nicholas Royle explains in his seminal book, in the most general sense, the uncanny “has to do with strangeness of framing and borders, the experience of liminality” (2003, 2),

and as such, according to its most prominent theorists (Ernst Jentsch, Sigmund Freud, Tzvetan Todorov), it is most often associated with the uncertain, the oscillation between ontologies (reality or fiction) and states of being (life or death). All of these resonate with our perception of intermediality, which also means “sensations oscillating in-between media, the perception of the characteristic of one medium in another like a strong sense of déjà vu, like an ‘otherness’ or an ‘interworld’ that is suddenly revealed to us but resists total unravelling,” and therefore “always has the potential to appear to us as something deeply uncanny” (Ágnes Pethó: *The Photofilmic Diorama*, 2020, 185). Moreover, the digital age has produced new sensations of ambivalence between animate and inanimate, human and non-human, natural and artificial, immediate and hypermediated, eliciting visceral uncanny effects in contemporary art and in everyday media phenomena alike, often involving a sense of intermediality and unsettling our familiar concepts of “self” and “affect” (see Kriss Ravetto’s *Digital Uncanny*, 2019). Starting our project, we propose a friendly debate around some of the issues that puzzle us in this regard, and in which bringing together the concepts of intermediality and the uncanny may prove productive.

Suggested topics:

- cinema “haunted” by the other arts; uncanniness generated through contamination between cinema and painting, photography, installation art, etc. and vice versa; the uncanny cinematic tableau;
- the strangeness of framings, perspectives, and viewpoints introduced by techniques of intermediality;
- images making their “unhomely” home in-between the arts; the uncanniness of repeated remediations;
- intermediality and the digital uncanny;
- the uncanny oscillation between emotional engagement, immersion, and alienation effects introduced through intermediality in cinema and contemporary art using moving images;
- intermediality in conjunction with interculturality and the uncanny experience of otherness;
- presentations of practice as research approaches to the “uncanniness” of intermediality;
- a metatheoretical approach: the “homelessness,” i.e. the in-between status of intermediality studies, a survey or a personal testimony regarding the conditions and the state of the art in research in the field.

On this occasion, we will also proudly launch two books written by members of our research team:

Hajnal Király’s *The Cinema of Manoel de Oliveira: Modernity, Intermediality and the Uncanny*, published by Bloomsbury Academic, 2022.

Judit Pieldner’s *Adaptation, Remediation and Intermediality: Forms of In-betweenness in Cinema*, published by Editura Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2020.

22 June 2021

INTERMEDIALITY AND WORLD CINEMA

International workshop (online) organized by Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania (Cluj-Napoca, Romania)



The aim of this workshop is to discuss the relevance of an intermedial approach to the study of world cinema. We bring together scholars working in different parts of the world who have been engaged in extensive research in the past few years that fit under the umbrella defined by these keywords and who have produced exciting new books, along with several journal issues and articles (with more on the way). Through short individual reflections and a roundtable-style debate, we intend not only to showcase the major findings of these researchers by summarizing the results and highlighting the specific areas that they have covered but also to dissect key issues that have emerged through their work.

The workshop will officially launch our own book, *Caught In-Between. Intermediality in Contemporary Eastern European and Russian Cinema* (edited by Ágnes Pethő, published by Edinburgh University Press, 2020), a collection of essays that explores intermediality as a new perspective in the interpretation of the cinemas that have emerged after the collapse of the former Eastern bloc.

In addition, discussions shall be based on the following publications presented by their authors:

- The special dossier of *Screen* (Volume 60, Issue 1 – Spring 2019): **Intermediality in Brazilian Cinema: The Case of Tropicália** and the special issue of *Alphaville* (19/2020): **Performing the Intermedial across Brazilian Cinema**. These contain some of the output of a massive research project led by Lúcia Nagib that attempted a widespread investigation of the intermedial history of Brazilian cinema and teamed up researchers from the University of Reading (UK) with scholars from the Federal University of São Carlos (Brazil).
- **Lalitha Gopalan's *Cinemas Dark and Slow in Digital India*** (published by Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), which explores contemporary independent Indian cinema with a special attention to the complexities of intermedial connections.

- **Marion Schmid's *Intermedial Dialogues. The French New Wave and the Other Arts*** (published by Edinburgh University Press, 2019), a comprehensive study of the French New Wave's relationship with the older arts.
- **Lúcia Nagib's *Realist Cinema as World Cinema. Non-cinema, Intermedial Passages, Total Cinema*** (published by Amsterdam University Press, 2020), which proposes that we see world cinema as a cinema connected to reality through specific modes of production, and intermediality as a channel to historical and political reality.

The event is planned as a relaxed, friendly meeting and exchange of ideas among scholars working in a similar field, as well as a possible source of inspiration for further endeavours.

Organizers: The Centre for Cinematic Intermediality and Visual Culture, Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania in collaboration with the Regional Committee in Cluj of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

25–26 October 2019

THE PICTURESQUE: VISUAL PLEASURE AND INTERMEDIALITY IN-BETWEEN CONTEMPORARY CINEMA, ART AND DIGITAL CULTURE

International film and media studies conference organized by Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania (Cluj-Napoca, Romania) within the framework of the research project supported by the UEFISCDI: *Rethinking Intermediality in Contemporary Cinema: Changing Forms of In-Betweenness*



Continuing our series of conferences dedicated to rethinking intermediality in contemporary cinema and visual culture, we propose to initiate a discussion around aspects of intermediality that may unfold from the perspective of the picturesque.

The much-debated notion inherited from the art theories of the late 18th century originally denoted both an aesthetic quality (something pleasing to the eye situated between the serenely beautiful and the awe-inspiring sublime) and a particular visual impression (something that looks like a picture in nature). It

anticipated and later became deeply entangled with many of the ideas of Romanticism, of modernity and postmodernity by shifting the appeal of images from knowledge to imagination, sensation and mood, by applying the frame of art to life, or the frame of one art to another, and emphasizing the abstract aesthetic value of a kind of pictured vision. Photography appropriated it as a strategy of so-called pictorialism and popular culture perpetuated it in various forms of spectacularization from the early dioramas and panoramas to today's ubiquitous digital screens through which we continually reframe our lives in picturesque images. The picturesque emerges therefore not only as a transversal concept in art history or visual culture but also essentially connected to issues of intermediality and in-betweenness that we would like to bring into focus. In a "beautifully circular" dynamics (Rosalind Krauss), in a "conjunction of nature, picture, eye" (Geoffrey Batchen), a given moment of the perceptual array is connected to recognizable patterns in a picture which always reveals the form of one medium perceived in another (e.g. painterly tableaux in photography, film, installation art, photographic frames in film, photos that look like film stills, etc.). As such, the picturesque directs our attention to the sensuous aspects of intermediality and their relevance in our so-called post-media age, when the "photographic," "the cinematic," or the "painterly" can be seamlessly merged through digital technologies.

We would also like to address the controversial aesthetics of the intermedial picturesque that foregrounds instead of a sublime Gesamtkunstwerk-like effect the sheer visual pleasure of imageness and to highlight its range in this respect from the decorative and the playful to the contemplative. Keeping in mind the potentially "troublesome" aspects of "pretty" images (Rosalind Galt), we encourage proposals to consider their "politics" as well, which can either align with what John Ruskin described as the "heartlessness of the picturesque" (i.e. delighting in images of ruin and decay) or can imply a reflexive acknowledgement of their underlying tensions between art and life (by engaging Raymond Bellour's and Laura Mulvey's "pensive spectator"). Accordingly, we invite proposals to explore the variety of intermedial strategies that generate visual pleasures associated with the picturesque in a broad sense and to uncover their intricate relations of in-betweenness.

Suggested topics:

- Cinema and the picturesque across time and media: the history and poetics of the picturesque in film;
- The tableau vivant as a visual attraction between high art and popular culture and in-between painting, photography, sculpture, theatre, and film;
- Synaesthetic pleasures: picturesque impressions in conjunction with tactility, soundscape, and music;
- Picturesque landscapes in slow cinema, slow TV, and experimental films;
- Media reflexivity and the picturesque in contemporary documentary and essay films;
- Moving image installations and the immersiveness of picturesque images;

- The picturesque world and the ruins of civilization: nature versus culture in images of the Anthropocene;
- Painterly images and remediations in heritage films and bio-pics;
- Gender and postcolonial perspectives of the picturesque intersecting with intermediality;
- The picturesque in-between the analogue and the digital, the natural and the artificial;
- Theorizing what “looks like a picture” today;
- The intermedial visual pleasures of VR;
- The picturesque and the spectacular in video games.

Keynote speakers:

Steven Jacobs (Ghent University)

Laura Mulvey (Birkbeck, University of London)

Exclusive video lecture:

Lúcia Nagib (University of Reading, UK)

19–20 October 2018

INTERMEDIALITY NOW: REMAPPING IN-BETWEENNESS

International film and media studies conference organized by Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania (Cluj-Napoca, Romania) within the framework of the research project supported by the UEFISCDI: *Rethinking Intermediality in Contemporary Cinema: Changing Forms of In-Betweenness*



Connected to our exploratory research project *Rethinking Intermediality in Contemporary Cinema: Changing Forms of In-Betweenness* funded by the UEFISCDI and following up on the topics of our previous conferences, we would like to bring into focus the idea of “in-betweenness” set in a wider context of contemporary visual culture and to re-evaluate its relevance regarding the state of the art in research on intermediality. Digital media have not only prompted a reassessment of the relationship of the “old” and the “new” through their extraordinary capacity for absorption and remediation but have literally flooded our life with their

ubiquity and sheer excess. The technological convergences of devices producing and displaying media, the fusions, expansions, relocations taking place have effectively challenged our perception of media differences. If the idea of intermediality is based on the assumption of a productive interaction of media, then there should be no more pressing issue regarding intermediality studies today than fine-tuning its core concept of in-betweenness to the phenomena of the so-called post-media age, in the spirit of Raymond Bellour's concept of *l'entre-images* (i.e. images in-between/inter-images), in which novel forms are continuously "hollowed out from within surrounded by the new forces that irrigate it" (2012, 21). On the other hand, however, as recent theoretical approaches imply by viewing media products embedded in their palpable, real-life environment (i.e. in the *dispositifs* we experience them, in their phenomenology that links them to our bodies, or in their concrete, historical, and socio-political context), the relevance of intermediality is not limited to what happens to media, but it extends, even more importantly, to what happens through the in-betweenness of media and to the agency of in-betweenness in our contemporary multimedia environment. Besides the analysis of new configurations, we should also examine what is inscribed and communicated through various intermedia relations and what new types of passages are established in-between art and life, in-between the emotional, spiritual, and the material, as well as the imaginary and the real, and so on.

We invite proposals to unravel the complex new relationships that define our contemporary visual culture and to map new, relevant areas of in-betweenness that may enrich our knowledge of intermediality today.

Suggested topics:

- Classical cinema vs. expanded cinema in the digital age, cinema, and other forms of moving images;
- The cinematic, the photographic, the theatrical, the painterly as transversal concepts (applicable "outside" their media boundaries) in the aesthetic of contemporary art and media;
- *L'entre images* (inter-images) today: new passages between the visual arts in the digital age;
- In-between the real and the intermedial, the immediate and the hypermediated, bodies and media, the sensual and the abstract;
- Intermedial strategies in the aesthetic or the curating practices of contemporary art and media, the politics of intermediality, the "messages" of in-betweenness;
- New technologies and experiences of in-betweenness: e.g. 3D, VR cinema, computer games;
- "In-betweenness" in between theories: concepts of liminality articulated and applied through theories of intermediality, media convergence, transmediality, philosophy, media archaeology and ecology, intersections of media and cultural studies, etc.;

Keynote speakers:

Martine Beugnet (Paris Diderot University)

Thomas Elsaesser (University of Amsterdam)

Plenary speakers:

Lars Elleström (Linnaeus University, Sweden)

Lúcia Nagib (University of Reading, UK)

Joachim Paech (University of Konstanz, Germany)

Exclusive Video Lecture:

Raymond Bellour, the renowned French philosopher, theorist of film and inter-art relations, whose concept of “in-betweenness” inspired this conference.

30–31 May 2016

INTERMEDIALITY IN CONTEMPORARY CENTRAL AND EAST EUROPEAN CINEMA

International film and media studies workshop organized by Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania (Cluj-Napoca, Romania)



This two-day workshop organized at Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania will bring together researchers in order to select and discuss papers for an edited volume centred on issues of intermediality in contemporary Central and East European cinema (to be submitted to a publishing house later in 2016, in conclusion of a research project started in 2013). The event will also continue our collaboration with a similar research project at Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest.

Proposed activities:

- A roundtable discussion meant to clarify topics, methodological and theoretical issues related to East European cinema with the participation of experts on East European Cinema, **Ewa Mazierska** (Professor of Contemporary Cinema at the University of Central Lancashire, co-editor of a forthcoming volume

entitled *Cinemas of the Body: Politics, Aesthetics and Eroticism in Eastern European Film*) and **Christina Stojanova** (Associate Professor at the University of Regina, currently co-editing a volume of studies on *New Romanian Cinema*).

- Presentations of individual papers regarding strategies of intermediality, remediation, or media reflexivity discernible in the cinemas of Central and Eastern Europe (including Russia).

23–24 October 2015

THE REAL AND THE INTERMEDIAL

The 16th International Film and Media Studies Conference organized by Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania (Cluj-Napoca, Romania) within the framework of the research project supported by CNCS-UEFISCDI: *Re-Mediated Images as Figurations of Intermediality and Post-Mediality in Central and East European Cinema, 2013–2016*



Following up on the themes introduced in our previous conferences dedicated to “film in the post-media age,” the “cinema of sensations,” “rethinking intermediality in the digital age,” and “figurations of intermediality in film,” we invite you to address one of the most puzzling phenomena of contemporary media and film: the intertwining of the illusion of reality with effects of intermediality, connecting the experience of a palpable, everyday world with artificiality, abstraction, and the awareness of multiple mediations. While on an ontological level the concept of the “real” has been radically challenged by the advent of digital technology in photography and the movies, we find that new, audiovisual media have also effectively reshaped our sense of reality and have expanded the areas of our sensual reach into the world. In our post-postmodern age, the question of the “real” is back with a vengeance regarding all aspects of media. The digital image as a “graphic mode” has not only brought back painting reinstating “the ‘artist’ as the source and origin of the movie” (Thomas Elsaesser), but in cinema, television, and new media, we also have diverse and astonishing examples in which hypermediacy fulfils “the desire for immediacy” (J. D. Bolter), and we see productive intersections between the emphasis on the senses,

on the physical-biological, socio-political “reality” of existence and conspicuous, intermedial stylization. The photo-graphic effect of stillness in the moving image and its fundamental relation to indexicality is exploited to the full in the so-called “slow cinema” canon, as we see in the breathtaking films of Pedro Costa, Abbas Kiarostami, Béla Tarr, Alexander Sokurov, and Lav Diaz, for example. Or we may think of cases in which painterly images of ethereal beauty are created alongside violent, shockingly naturalistic scenes in the films of Carlos Reygadas, Kim-Ki Duk, etc. Jean-Luc Godard’s new movie, *Goodbye to Language*, a bold incursion into the use of 3D, renders scenes of nature and the texture of everyday things in vivid, artificial imagery. (Even the recent teaming up of David Attenborough and Björk for such a new media Gesamtkunstwerk experiment as *Biophilia* emphasizes this duality.) Cultural differences, subjectivity, a sense of history and place are often articulated through techniques of intermediality in avant-garde experiments, documentary practices or fiction films alike. As a rule, the “haptic” image can be seen as the gateway to a myriad of connections between cinema and the other arts. In certain cases, a reflexive foregrounding of mediality and constructedness has become not an instrument of ironic detachment but of a search for authenticity: all of which may also bring into focus the co-experience of “the real” with the “intermedial.”

Suggested topics:

- “Reality effect,” hybridity and media reflexivity in film, television, and new media;
- Intermediality and inter-sensuality in film: e.g. the represented and sensed body as a site of intermedial relations, haptic “textuality” and interartiality;
- Figurations of intermediality as imprints of (and meditations upon) history and time, cultural and personal identity;
- “Analogue” versus “digital” viewed in terms of the “real” versus the “intermedial;”
- Painterly stylization and “reality effect” in slow cinema;
- Inflections of realism and intermediality within the post-communist cinema of Central and Eastern Europe;
- Magical realism in world cinema;
- The merging of the “representation” and the “real” within the rhetoric of intermedial cinema (e.g. the tensions underlying “poetic realism,” techniques of figuration and disfiguration, the various forms of media collage or *the tableau vivant* in cinema);
- Intermediality theorized or analysed from the perspective of phenomenological or post-phenomenological points of view.

Keynote speakers:

Lúcia Nagib (University of Reading)

Jürgen E. Müller (University of Bayreuth)

Laura Mulvey (Birkbeck, University of London)

October 24–25, 2014

FIGURATIONS OF INTERMEDIALITY IN FILM

The 15th International Film and Media Studies Conference organized by Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania (Cluj-Napoca, Romania) within the framework of the research project supported by CNCS-UEFISCDI: *Re-mediated Images as Figurations of Intermediality and Post-mediality in Central and East European Cinema, 2013–2016*



Intermediality has emerged as one of the major theoretical issues of contemporary thinking about film bringing a fresh view upon the ways in which the moving pictures can incorporate forms of all other media and can initiate “dialogues” between the distinct arts. The most important works on cinematic intermediality so far have targeted the notion of intermediality both as a general concept and as a specific rhetoric in the works of individual artists (such as Peter Greenaway or Jean-Luc Godard). Surveying the current cinematic “landscape,” we may encounter some astonishing films that seem to have been designed on the principle of dismissing a conventional, “self-effacing style” (to use Bordwell’s term for classical cinema) in favour of forging an explicitly intermedial visual rhetoric. From the experimental, avant-garde canon to some current examples of mainstream, “hypermediated” digital cinema, from painterly movies bordering on installation art (such as Lech Majewski’s *The Mill and the Cross* or *The Roe’s Room*) to so-called “slow cinema” projects, such films challenge us in finding the adequate theoretical framework for analysis.

By organizing this conference, we would like to initiate a wider discussion among scholars whose research may be connected to the idea of inter-media relations in moving images and are engaged in deeper explorations into the poetics of intermediality in film. In doing so, we wish to bring into the spotlight one of the key aspects of intermediality: the fact that intermediality as such always manifests itself as a kind of “figuration” in film through which medial differences are visibly and self-reflexively “re-inscribed” within the moving image and that in general, philosophical terms, intermediality can even be conceived as belonging to the domain of the “figural” in the sense used by Lyotard and elaborated by D. N. Rodowick in his book *Reading the Figural* (in which he claims the “figural” to be also a kind of interface for media relations in film).

In the past few decades, there have been several important theoretical works that have dealt with the ways in which moving images operate within a network

of interrelated media and with instances in which the boundaries between individual media and arts have been effectively blurred through techniques that enable the features of one medium to resurface within another and which may offer theoretical vantage points for analysing possible figurations of intermediality. We may list here studies re-evaluating cinema's connections to traditional forms of visual arts (e.g. Angela Dalle Vacche's, Susan Felleman's, Belén Vidal's, or Steven Jacobs's works on cinema and painting or theoretical analyses of the figuration of the *tableau vivant* in cinema in seminal books by Brigitte Peucker, Pascal Bonitzer, Joachim Paech, etc.) but also the recent studies referring to the relationship of cinema and photography (e.g. Damian Sutton, Garrett Stewart, Régis Durand, David Company, etc.) and implicitly to the relationship of stillness and motion within cinema, along with analyses of the connections between cinema, video, and installation art (e.g. Raymond Bellour, Yvonne Spielmann, etc.).

In the context of shifting paradigms in film poetics from stylistic patterns of modern or postmodern cinema towards what we may term as "post-media cinema," the figural aspects of intermediality also manifest new forms that may require a search for further theoretical perspectives for identifying and interpreting techniques that figurate intermedial relations. In doing so, perhaps, we should also keep in mind that although intermediality often occurs as a form of aesthetic detachment or as some sort of hypermedia ornamentation, such figurations can also insist on "tangibility," or, as Brigitte Peucker reminds us in her book, *The Material Image. Art and the Real in Film* (2007), on "the merger of representation with reality," both through establishing the viewers' intimacy with the medium and through the performative potential of such figures to produce an increasingly haptic cinema, a cinema of "sensual excess," in which the "body" of the medium and the mediation of bodies and sensations sometimes become intertwined in ways that may suggest a rethinking of the figurations of intermediality from the perspective of phenomenology or visual anthropology, and so on. As such, intermedial figurations may be conceived as open to a wide range of philosophical, aesthetical, ideological, historical, and media theoretical interpretations that we hope papers presented at this conference will explore.

Suggested topics:

- **Intermediality and the figurations of intermediality in film from a theoretical perspective:** a) theories of intermediality and intermedial figurations (film and media theoretical, philosophical approaches, psychoanalysis, visual anthropology, etc.); b) intermediality and the concept of "the figural" and "figuration" as discussed by Lyotard, Deleuze, Rodowick, etc.
- **The rhetoric of intermedial cinema, art theoretical and aesthetical considerations:** figuration and (dis)figuration, *mise-en-abyme* and embedding, intermediality and metalepsis, the *tableau vivant* in cinema, possible trans-medial "adaptations" of traditional rhetorical figures/tropes (e.g. *ekphrasis*, *hypotyposis*, etc.)

- **Intermediality and inter-sensuality in film:** figures that merge “hypermediacy” with “immediacy,” the represented and sensed body as a site of intermedial figurations, etc.
- **Remediated images as figurations of intermediality and post-mediality:** recontextualization as/and remediation, reframing, media collage, remix, etc.
- **Figurations of intermediality as imprints of (and meditations upon) history and time, cultural and personal identity, or intercultural exchange:** a) relating the rhetoric of intermediality to the specific personal, cultural, historical, ideological contexts, ideas, and artistic paradigms in which they occur; b) the poetics and politics of intermediality in the cinema of Eastern and Central Europe.

Keynote speakers:

Brigitte Peucker (Yale University, USA)

Eivind Røssaak (National Library of Norway)

24–26 October 2013

RETHINKING INTERMEDIALITY IN THE DIGITAL AGE

The inaugural conference of ISIS (International Society for Intermedial Studies / former NorSIS), organized by Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania (Cluj-Napoca, Romania). (The conference also launched the new research project on intermediality supported by CNCS–UEFISCDI: *Re-mediated Images as Figurations of Intermediality and Post-mediality in Central and East European Cinema, 2013–2016.*)



In the past decades, “intermediality” has proved to be one of the most productive terms in the domain of humanities. Although the ideas regarding media connections may be traced back to the poetics of the Romantics or even further back in time, it was the accelerated multiplication of media themselves becoming our daily experience in the second half of the twentieth century that propelled the term to a wide attention in a great number of fields (communication and cultural studies, philosophy, theories of literature and music, art history, cinema studies, etc.), where it generated an impressive number of analyses and theoretical discussions. “Intermediality is in” („Intermedialität ist in”), declared

one of its pioneering theorists, Joachim Paech, at the end of the 1990s. However, we may also note that since then other theoretical approaches have introduced even newer perspectives that have not only revitalized the study of media phenomena in general but have specifically targeted the emerging new problematics raised by the new electronic media. Facing the challenge of the daily experiences of the digital age, discussions of media differences or “dialogues” highlighting the “inter,” the “gap,” the “in-between,” and the “incommensurability” between media are currently being replaced by discourses of the “enter” or “immersion,” and the “network logic” of a “convergence culture,” in which we have a “free flow of content over different media platforms” (Henry Jenkins). At the same time, the turn towards the corporeality of perception in all aspects of communication has also shifted the attention from the “interaction of media” towards the “interaction with media,” from the idea of “media borders” towards the analysis of the blurring of perception between media and reality, of humans and machines – media being perceived more and more not as a form of representation but as an environment and as a means to “augment” reality.

Nowadays, media continuously mutate, relocate, and expand, while connections between “old” and “new” media are being established with incredible fluidity. Accordingly, we may ask: what are the new perspectives for intermedial research in the digital age? While media are continuously changing and expanding, how can we relocate the “in-between”? If we consider ‘intermediality’ first and foremost – as suggested by Jürgen E. Müller – as a “research concept” (Suchbegriff), how can this concept be effectively applied to the media we see around us today? And if we believe that the “ecosystem” of contemporary media can be understood not as a unified digital environment that nullifies differences but as a thriving and highly diversified, “multisensory milieu” (Jacques Rancière) that poses new challenges both for the consumer/producer and the theorist, then how can we address these challenges? How do media differences persist and how do these differences still matter despite voices advocating the so-called “post-medium condition?”

As the *Society for Intermedial Studies* launches its own expanded, international format (ISIS), we think it is timely to address once more the major issues for which this society exists and to invite participants to examine new forms of “intermedialities.” In doing so, participants may address a broad range of questions relating to “old media” and “new media,” and their possible interactions, focusing on the wide array of intermedia phenomena and new type of relationships that new media have produced, but also on how pre-digital media relations can be re-evaluated and how historical paradigms of intermediality may already be distinguishable if viewed from the standpoint of the contemporary media landscape.

Suggested topics:

- **Media on the move?** Media relations produced by expansions and relocations of media (e.g. “the virtual life of film,” the expansions of the “photographic” and of the “cinematic” over other media, e-literature, etc.), the emergence of

mobile screens, the fact that media use is more and more related to moving in the literal sense of the word: mobility and navigation.

- **Relocating the “in-between:”** intermediality, inter-sensuality, multimodality, and interactivity, assessing the contribution of cognitive theories (and neuroscience), phenomenology, and post-phenomenology to the study of understanding interactions of media and interactions with multiple media.
- **Performing in (new) intermedial spaces:** intermedial performance in art and society. Being “in touch” with reality – being “in touch with media:” researching new (trans)media practices.
- **Intermediality and new forms of digital storytelling:** new perspectives in transmedial narratology, new media and narratology (e.g. narrativity and e-platforms, games versus “old” media, etc.), the aesthetics of the intermedia flow, of complex, network narratives generated by the experiences of the new media age.
- **Modelling and mapping intermedialities:** historical paradigms of intermedial relations (pre-modern, modern, post-modern intermediality); the aesthetics and “politics” of intermediality before and after the digital age; historical research on intermediality related to media migration, cultural heritage, and changing relationships between production, distribution, and perception.

Keynote speakers:

Marie-Laure Ryan (independent scholar, Colorado, USA)

Henry Jenkins (University of Southern California, USA)

Joachim Paech (University of Konstanz, Germany)

25–27 May 2012

THE CINEMA OF SENSATIONS

The 14th International Film and Media Studies Conference organized by Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania (Cluj-Napoca, Romania)



Ever since its beginnings, cinema has always had a profound experiential quality: images not only move, but they move our senses. Whenever we go to the

movies, we not only “see” the film, and the world of the screen not only “communicates” a message to us: we get to be immersed in a unique environment that engages our senses and our minds on different levels of consciousness and perception. However, in the past decades, we could witness an incredible multiplication of the technologies through which moving images can be produced, distributed, or received. Reflecting on the process, a series of new theories (such as “re-mediation” or “media convergence”) emerged to describe the interconnectivity between different kinds of audio-visual media. Paradoxically, despite having to deal with the diversification of the moving images, in most of these approaches there has been a marked emphasis on the unifying effect of digital media as well as the general blurring of traditional media boundaries and medium specificities in our current post-media condition. Nevertheless, we might argue that new forms entail new experiences, and the sensual encounter with the medium still matters, perhaps more than ever. Some of the latest trends in art cinema have specifically moved towards a “cinema of the senses” and a “cinema of the body,” while a great number of popular new technologies have been devised for the explicit purpose of heightening our sensations while viewing the moving images. Moreover, cinema has not only found new outlets and dazzling ways to capture our attention, but it has also been placed literally into our hands: the domestication of visual media has brought us “in touch” with images as never before and produced new “hands-on” practices and new sensations, new sensibilities regarding moving images. In the light of these, in our upcoming conference we invite presentations that offer a closer examination of the sensual aspects of moving images from a variety of viewpoints, challenging the ideas that might downplay their relevance in the age of media convergence. We propose to concentrate on the experience, on the sensations generated by the diverse forms of moving images and in various styles, genres, and cultural environments throughout the history of cinema and screen media.

Presentations for our conference might draw inspiration from a large array of theoretical sources, among others: Thomas Elsaesser’s and Malte Hagener’s recent handbook, *Film Theory: An Introduction through the Senses* (2009); the vast literature on the phenomenology of moving pictures from Vivian Sobchack (e.g. *Carnal Thoughts: Embodiment and Moving Image Culture*, 2004) to Martine Beugnet (*Cinema and Sensation: French Film and the Art of Transgression*, 2007); Laura U. Marks’s books discussing haptic imagery and its connections to representations of cultural difference (*The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses*, 2000; *Touch: Sensuous Theory and Multisensory Media*, 2002); Gilles Deleuze’s ideas on the “logic of sensation,” Jacques Rancière’s philosophical investigations into the politics of aesthetics and the “distribution of the sensible” (*The Politics of Aesthetics*, 2006; *The Future of the Image*, 2007), or approaches in visual anthropology in the wake of Paul Stoller’s “sensuous scholarship” (e.g. David MacDougall’s *The Corporeal Image: Film, Ethnography, and the Senses*, 2005).

Suggested topics:

- **Sensing visual media – sensing the media within media:** a) examining sensations in moving images and new media practices; b) re-examining questions of intermediality, inter-sensuality, and interactivity in the age of media convergence.
- **Film history through the senses:** paradigms/auteurs of cinema exploring sensations and emotions in film history (e.g. Claire Denis, Wong Kar-Wai, Pedro Almodovar, the Quay Brothers, etc.).
- **Re-booting the “cinema of attractions:”** a) labyrinthine experiences: sensations in (or versus?) popular mind-games narratives in contemporary movies or computer games; b) from haptic images to hyper-cinema: sensual encounters in 3D movies.
- **Changing sensations of the “real:”** a) naturalistic trends in contemporary cinema (the Eastern European boom of micro-realism, the new realism in American independent films [e.g. Ramin Bahrani], etc.); b) from the medical gaze of “the clinic” to the hyper-real naturalism of CGI.
- **Sensing the difference:** identifying “sensual” markers of culture, ethnicity, and gender in films (e.g. “sensible” differences that may define European, Asian, and diaspora cinemas, etc.).

Keynote speakers:

Yvonne Spielmann (University of the West of Scotland)

Laura U. Marks (Simon Fraser University, Vancouver)

22–23 October 2010

FILM IN THE POST-MEDIA AGE

The 13th International Film and Media Studies Conference organized by Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania (Cluj-Napoca, Romania)



Ever since the centenary of cinema, there have been intense discussions in the fields of film studies and film criticism about the imminent demise of the cinematic medium, endless articles championing the spirit of genuine cinephilia have proclaimed the death of classical cinema and mourned the end of an

era, while new currents in media studies introduced such buzzwords into the discussions as “remediation” (Bolter and Grusin), “media convergence” (Jenkins), or “post-media aesthetics” (Manovich). By the turn of the millennium, the whole “ecosystem” of media had been radically altered through processes of hybridization and media convergence. Some theorists claim that now that the term “medium” has triumphed in the discussions around contemporary art and culture, the actual media have already deceased. Digitized imagery absorbs all media, which become mere “phantoms of their former self” (Lutticken).

Moving images have entered the art galleries, and new forms of inter-art relationships have been forged. They have also moved into the streets and into our everyday life as a domesticated medium at everybody’s reach. Can we say therefore that cinema is gradually becoming an “incredible shrinking medium,” as David N. Rodowick suggests (in *The Virtual Life of Film*, 2007), disappearing into the archives and film museums, or – on the contrary – can it be considered as the ultimate, chameleon-like intermedium that can continually shift its shape, “moving from a sculptural to a painterly medium” (Rodowick) or nowadays, amid the fashionable CGI and motion capture techniques, combining both the “sculptural” and the “painterly” in 3D cinema?

Consequently, should we speak more of an all-pervasive “cinematic experience” instead of a cinematic medium? What really happens to film once its traditional medium has shape-shifted into various digital forms and once its traditional locations, institutions, and usages have been uprooted? What are the most influential thoughts that have surfaced in the discussions of a cinematic post-medium condition? Are film studies headed in the direction of more “piecemeal theory,” as advocated by Bordwell and Carroll in their highly influential *Post-Theory* book, or should we welcome a new turn towards a philosophy of film, as Rodowick contends in his *Elegy for Theory*? What are the major contemporary points of view in approaching motion pictures (from Jacques Rancière’s “future of the image” to Lev Manovich’s “database aesthetics”)?

In the light of the above, we invite you to contemplate over some of the major questions that can be asked about film in a post-media age.

Suggested topics:

- Revisiting the concept of the medium in a post-media age: the concepts of medium specificity, remediation, media convergence, media archaeology, intermediality, hybridity related to the study of moving images.
- Changing contexts, moving frames: recontextualizations of cinema. Cinema in the gallery, in the museum, in cyber space, etc.
- Against the myth of the universal language of cinema: the rise of the “accented”/vernacular forms of cinema in an increasingly globalized media environment (films foregrounding native speech, dialects, local and ethnic specificities).
- Old structures in new clothes, dead media/“undead media” haunting the new forms of the moving images? Or the reverse: the impact of new media over

- classical film genres and the rhetoric of cinema. The rise of post-media genres? (e.g. web series, streamies).
- Digitally recycled cinema? Retakes on remakes: the issue of cinematic heritage in the digital age (e.g. *Man with a Movie Camera: The Global Remake*).
 - The dissemination and domestication of the cinematic medium: institutional and private spheres of moving images.
 - Reflexivity in the post-media age? Films reflecting on changing uses/contexts, and forms of the moving images (the films of Atom Egoyan, Michael Haneke, Abbas Kiarostami, Mohsen Makhmalbaf, etc.).

Keynote speakers:

Jens Schröter (University of Siegen, Germany)

Ruggero Eugeni (Catholic University of Milan, Italy)

23–24 October 2009

NEW WAVES

The 12th International Film and Media Studies Conference organized by Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania (Cluj-Napoca, Romania)



In 2009, we celebrate 50 years since the beginning of the French New Wave, a cinematic phenomenon that became the origin of several greatly influential tendencies in film that introduced new perspectives in the filmic representation of reality and became exemplary through the daring and playful experimentations with the language of film. The year 1959 meant the premiere or the production period of such films as Jean-Luc Godard's *Breathless*, François Truffaut's *Four Hundred Blows*, *Hiroshima mon amour* by Alain Resnais, Robert Bresson's *Pickpocket*, and Claude Chabrol's *The Cousins*. The example of the rebellious new generation protesting against "le cinéma de papa" established a new concept in the cultural history of cinema to be used ever since: anywhere and anytime, when a new generation affirms itself with a similar outstanding success and introduces a new aesthetics, we are speaking about newer and newer "new waves."

At the same time, it is also 20 years since the 1989 Eastern European political events shook the world of communism, and as a consequence a new film-making generation emerged who had an attitude just as critical vis-à-vis “le cinéma de papa” of the communist era as did their French predecessors. The young filmmakers of the French New Wave asserted themselves with a particular self-confidence, relying on an unprecedented symbiosis with film criticism and film theory. The post-1989 young Eastern European filmmakers were not helped by a similar and stable background in film criticism, and in many cases we could witness bitter generational debates between them and older generations of filmmakers. Therefore, it seems even more appropriate to evaluate these films from critical and theoretical vantage points at this time. Finally, in the last decades, we have seen the constant appearance of filmmakers with fresh perspectives, who seem capable of repeatedly redrawing the existing map of world cinema.

In our conference, we wish to explore the conceptual field of the new wave(s) and propose to re-examine the French New Wave in order to discover what proves to be worthy of re-evaluation, what features and films have remained touchstones over the decades. We ask the question: is it justified to widen the concept to cover phenomena of contemporary Eastern European and “World Cinema”? We also encourage participants to investigate what they consider new and defining tendencies in today’s cinema, in contemporary experiments with film language.

Suggested topics:

- The reinterpretation or re-evaluation of the more or lesser known works of the French New Wave from the historical perspective of the five decades that passed since and by way of employing new theoretical approaches.
- Questions of “reality” and “fiction,” the combination of elements of *cinéma vérité* and intellectual abstraction appearing in the aesthetics of French New Wave, and their legacy taken over by newer films. (This can be considered a continuation of our previous, 2008 conference topic.)
- The analysis of the influence of French New Wave films on different national films, on the (independent) American cinema, or on popular culture (e.g. Hal Hartley, Quentin Tarantino).
- Parallel phenomena between developments in post-1989, post-communist Eastern European cinema, and the New Wave. Highlighted topic: “new waves” in contemporary Hungarian and Romanian cinema.
- “New waves,” generational stylistic phenomena in the context of “World Cinema” that may be compared to the French New Wave. (For example, the authors of the new American generation of filmmakers grouped into different formations, who often reference and revere French New Wave filmmakers, such as the so-called American new moralists Todd Solondz and Neil La Bute or the representatives of the so-called “post-pop” cinema, who sometimes collaborate in a manner reminiscent of the New Wave: Richard Linklater, Wes Anderson, Paul Thomas Anderson, Todd Haynes, etc.) Compared to the

analysis of individual works, we favour those presentations that examine the oeuvre/several films of an author or the works of several filmmakers in order to describe a particular tendency that can be considered a “new wave.”

Keynote speakers:

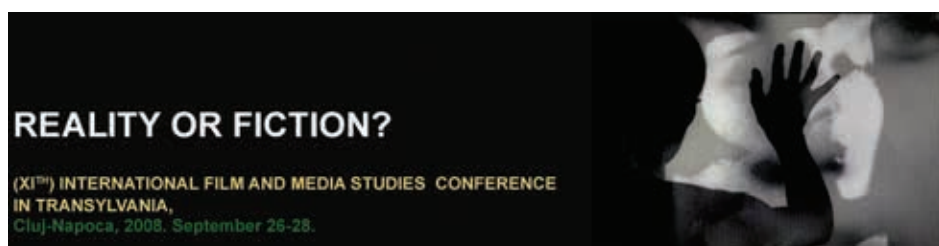
Yvonne Spielmann (University of the West of Scotland)

Doru Pop (Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca)

26–28 September 2008

REALITY OR FICTION?

The 11th International Film and Media Studies Conference organized by Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania and the University of Pécs (Centre for the Study of the Moving Image) in Cluj-Napoca (Romania)



Ever since the appearance of film, certain theorists hailed in the moving image its ability to document reality, while others have been talking about the power of the movies to create a perfect illusion of reality. The history of the moving image itself is said to be rooted in the contrasting poetics of the Lumière brothers' portrayal of everyday life and Méliès's most escapist travels in fantasy. The debate was kept alive, from opposite directions, by the first avant-gardists who undertook to dismantle the filmic illusion and later by the neorealists and their theorist, André Bazin, who asserted the realist ontology of the image as a norm.

Nowadays the question of “reality and fiction” has gained actuality by the ever-multiplying media forms of the moving image. Classical movie theatre experience has been replaced by a cinema based on new digital technologies from Dolby Stereo sound to computer graphics in order to provide an overwhelming audiovisual experience which engulfs its viewers. Television, with its own genres specially linked to reality, has become part of our everyday life; home video or interactive 3D computer games, or even mobile phones, have become media for our daily consumption of moving images.

In the meantime, the theoretical debate about the double-sided effect of the movies was given further twists by new methodologies in ecological and cognitive film theory as well as cultural theories and visual anthropology.

New modes of filmmaking appeared that were dubbed as docu-fiction or fictional documentary, and elements of reality and elements of fiction were brought together either by re-editing “found” footage or by integrating genuinely or seemingly documentary images within a fictional framework. Werner Herzog’s *Grizzly Man* (2005) may exemplify the first and Béla Tarr’s early works as well as his *Sátántangó* (1994) the second tendency.

The conference aims to provide a platform for a basically interdisciplinary approach to the relationship of reality and fiction in moving images. The purpose is to bring together film theorists in various disciplines, historians of film and visual media and visual anthropologists as well as filmmakers who grapple with a similar problem of integrating reality and fiction.

A special panel will be devoted to the art of Béla Tarr. His works are an ideal target to analyse both the engaging character of the moving image and its realistic appeal. We also invite Ph.D. students and young scholars working on old or new forms of visual simulation to participate in a special session on digital media representation.

Suggested topics:

- Historical and/or stylistic variations of reality and fiction in filmic representation. Tendencies in contemporary Eastern European film art.
- Theoretical treatments of the relationship of reality and fiction in film theory and visual anthropology.
- Case studies of the reality of fiction or fictional reality in different media and genres of the moving pictures (genres based on either “pure” fiction or reality, or their hybridization, the questions of TV genres versus reality). A panel dedicated to problems raised by new and hybrid forms of media and digital cinema.
- Special panel: The Art of Béla Tarr. The relationship of reality and fiction in Tarr’s films.

Keynote speaker:

András Bálint Kovács (Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest)

25–26 May 2007

WORDS AND IMAGES

The 10th International Film and Media Studies Conference organized by Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania (Cluj-Napoca, Romania)



Suggested topics:

- Visible and audible language in films.
- Visuality and language, relations between images and texts in films.
- (Verbal) narration and visuality in films.
- Collage of texts in films.
- Poetry and painterly compositions in film.
- Linguistic rhetoric and cinema rhetoric.
- Conceptuality, abstraction, sensuality in linguistic and visual layers of films.
- Relations between literature and film approached from a historical or theoretical perspective.
- Adaptation, intermediality, intertextuality.
- The linguistic history of cinema: historical modalities of using language in cinema (e.g. silent films and verbal language, the style of intertitles, dialogues and narrators of classic narrative films, modernist relations between images and words, post-modern heteroglossia, etc.).
- Style of titles and credit sequences in film.
- Analyses of the relations between commentary and illustration in television genres.
- Colonization of visual culture by linguistic communication and language in general.
- Relations between image and text in non-fiction films and experimental cinema.

Keynote speakers:

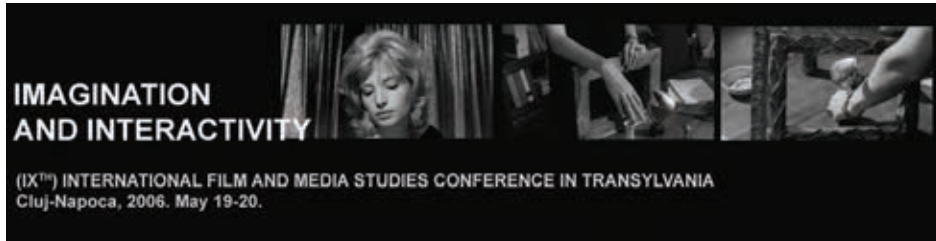
Gábor Gelencsér (Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest)

András Bálint Kovács (Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest)

19–20 May 2006

IMAGINATION AND INTERACTIVITY

The 9th International Film and Media Studies Conference organized by Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania (Cluj-Napoca, Romania)



Suggested topics:

- Images of the invisible: images of the imagination, images representing the indescribable, untouchable.
- Great films and artists of “invisible” cinema.
- Narrative and non-narrative strategies of representing the imaginary in film;
- Imaginary worlds in cinema. The iconography of the fantastic and its changes in the history of cinema.
- The relation between reality and fiction: the reality of the imaginary and the fictionalization of reality.
- The “activity” of the spectator or “interactivity?” The spectator of classical movies, the spectator of cinema, the player of computer games, and the world of moving images. Analyses of new forms of “interactivity,” relations to known models of imagination.

Keynote speaker:

András Bálint Kovács (Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest)

24–25 May 2005

CHANCES OF FILM AS ART

The 8th International Film and Media Studies Conference organized by Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania (Cluj-Napoca, Romania)



Suggested topics:

- The possibilities of delimiting art films from commercial films within the context of recent developments in world cinema and taking into account the newest trends in film theory. The position of art films in contemporary culture from the viewpoint of film production, distribution, and reception.
- The relationship of film and the other arts in the course of the history of cinema. Analyses of concrete cases of the relations between film and the other arts.
- The reflexive art film and the evolution of techniques of reflexivity in the universal history of cinema (differences between avant-garde reflexivity, modernist reflexivity, and post-modern reflexivity). General theoretical (aesthetic, cognitive, philosophical) problems of experimental cinema.
- Concrete cases in which we see contacts between art cinema and popular culture: a) quotations in art films; b) techniques of art films that appear also in midcult movies (concrete film analyses or general typologies); c) relations of midcult movies with the other arts (e.g. “picto-films,” literary adaptations in the form of “quality” TV series).
- Signs of the digital age within art cinema: a) thematization of digital visual culture in art films or in commercial films; b) digital manipulation of images as stylistic figures; c) new forms of digital imagery used as quotations in art films, commercial and midcult movies.

Keynote speakers:

Joseph D. Anderson (University of Central Arkansas, USA)

László Tarnay (University of Pécs, Hungary)

28–29 May 2004

SYNCHRONIC STRUCTURES

The 7th International Film and Media Studies Conference Organized by Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania (Cluj-Napoca, Romania)



Suggested topics:

Film History (The presence of earlier film techniques and styles in classic and contemporary cinema.)

- Principles of early cinema, the techniques of the “cinema of attractions” (Tom Gunning) or the techniques of a “Primitive Mode of Representation” that can be seen later in the history of cinema,
- The heritage of the silent film in the history of cinema (modern and post-modern silent or quasi-silent films),
- Archaism in the cinema,
- “The old in the new:” e.g. classical cinematic techniques used in computer animation,
- Renewed styles or genres in cinema,
- Types of cinematic quotations (classification, functions, history),
- Stereotypes within the history of cinema.

Film Theory (Questions regarding the synchronic structure of the medium.)

- Complex structures of sound, music, text, and image in cinema, TV, or digital media,
- Cases of asynchrony in the use of different media,
- Synaesthetic experience in classic cinema and in the newer forms of moving pictures,
- Theoretical problems of non-linear, non-narrative film sequences.

Keynote speaker:

László Tarnay (University of Pécs, Hungary)

FILM STUDIES SYMPOSIUMS

FILMTUDOMÁNYI KOLLOKVIUMOK

24 May 2003

VI. MOZGÓ KÉP ÉS FILMSZERŰSÉG [MOVING IMAGE AND CINEMATICITY]

Babeş–Bolyai University, Department of Hungarian and General Linguistics

23–24 May 2002

V. KÉP ÉS SZÖVEG: INTERDISZCIPLINÁRIS KONFERENCIA [IMAGE AND TEXT: AN INTERDISCIPLINARY CONFERENCE]

Babeş–Bolyai University, Department of Hungarian and General Linguistics

28 May 2001

IV. FILM A TÜKÖRBEN [FILM IN THE MIRROR]

Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania – Institute of Research Programmes

27 April 2001

III. INTERMEDIALITÁS [INTERMEDIALITY]

Babeş–Bolyai University, Department of Hungarian and General Linguistics

19 May 1999

II. FILM – KÉP – ÍRÁS. FILMELEMZŐ WORKSHOP [FILM – IMAGE – WRITING. FILM ANALYSIS WORKSHOP]

Babeş–Bolyai University, Department of Hungarian and General Linguistics

4 April 1998

I. INTERMEDIALITÁS: MŰVÉSZETEK ÉS KÖZLÉSFORMÁK DIALÓGUSA A FILMBEN [INTERMEDIALITY: A DIALOGUE BETWEEN ARTS AND MEANS OF COMMUNICATION IN FILM]

Babeş–Bolyai University, Department of Hungarian and General Linguistics

ZSIZSMANN ERIKA*

„ÉPÍTŐMUNKA VOLT, AMELYET IGYEKEZTEM ELVÉGEZNI A LEGJOBB TUDÁSOM SZERINT.” INTERJÚ PETHŐ ÁGNESSEL, A SAPIENTIA EMTE FILM SZAKÁNAK PROFESSZORÁVAL¹

Pethő Ágnes professzor 2020 őszén, 17 év után leköszönt a Sapientia Erdélyi Magyar Tudományegyetem Média Tanszékének éléről. A volt tanszékvezető, a filmművészet, fotóművészet, média szak curriculumának kidolgozója, a kolozsvári „intermedialitás-iskola” kiépítője interjúnkban a képzés alakulása mellett arról is mesél, hogyan lehetett filmes műveltséget szerezni az 1980-as évek Romániájában, hogy miért tartja fontosnak a filmtörténetet, filmelméletet azok esetében is, akik nem elméleti szakemberek lesznek, hogy miért korszerű ma is Godard, és hogy kiket tart hiteles, érdekes alkotóknak a fiatalabb kortársak közül.

Arról, hogy miként fordult az érdeklődése a filmtudomány felé, 2003-ban már beszélt a Filmtettnek. Akkor elmondta, hogy ebben szerepet játszott egy filmrajongó nagymama, Varró Ilona író, szerkesztő biztatása, majd az egyetemen Szabó Zoltán professzor, aki kutatási témaként támogatta az irodalom és a társművészetek kapcsolatát. Ezzel együtt bátor döntésnek tűnik az 1980-as évek elején Romániában filmtudománnyal foglalkozni, hiszen a korábbi évekhez képest ekkor kezdett beszűkülni az elérhető filmes felhozatal, szakirodalom. Hogy lehetett akkor és a következő években filmes műveltséget szerezni Kolozsváron vagy Csíkszeredában?

Én azt hiszem, egyrészt nem bátorság kellett elsősorban ahhoz, hogy filmtudománnyal foglalkozzak az 1980-as években, hanem egyszerűen csak egy intellektuális kíváncsiság, ami logikus következménye volt annak a számomra valóban revelációszámba menő felfedezésnek, hogy a film művészet is lehet,

* Alumna, Sapientia Erdélyi Magyar Tudományegyetem, újságíró (Kolozsvár, Románia)

1 Az interjú eredetileg a *Filmtett – erdélyi filmes portál* számára készült 2021-ben. A kötetben a szerző és a kiadvány engedélyével tesszük közzé. Eredeti megjelenés helye: <https://filmtett.ro/cikk/epitomunka-volt-amelyet-igyekeztem-elvegezni-a-legjobb-tudasom-szerint-petho-agnes-interju>. Utolsó megtekintés: 2021. 12. 11.

nem csak szórakozás, tehát éppolyan legitim kutatási téma, mint az irodalom vagy a képzőművészet, amelyek korábban szintén nagyon érdekeltek (sőt, leginkább ezeknek a kapcsolathálózata érdekelt már kezdettől fogva). Másrészt nem volt ez olyan nehéz dolog, mint ahogy ma gondolnánk. Mert maga a kultúra egésze másképp működött akkoriban. Ezért egy kicsit most nagyobb kört rajzolva válaszolnék erre a kérdésre. Nem volt internet, hanem könyvkultúra volt, s ezt a kultúrát értékelték és „fogyasztották” az emberek. Az például természetes volt, hogy egy erdélyi magyar értelmiségi megvásárolt szinte minden magyar nyelvű szépirodalmi és kultúrtörténeti tárgyú kiadványt, ami megjelent, Sütő Andrástól a Horizont sorozatban kiadott világirodalmi kötetekig, sőt a kopott blokkklakások falain egy-egy értelmiségi családban gyakran ott voltak a helyi festők munkái is. De az sem volt ritka, hogy az egyszerű munkás- és parasztcsaládokban megvoltak a legfontosabb könyvek a polcokon.

Miközben egy torz és hazug politikai világban éltünk, elzárva az utazás, az igazi, élő kulturális kapcsolatok lehetőségétől, érdekes módon a magaskultúra mindenki számára elérhető és megfizethető volt. Nem lehetett Párizsba, Londonba, Rómába utazni (a ritka kivételezettektől eltekintve), de bárki elolvashatta a világirodalom remekműveit (eredetiben is, hisz idegen nyelvű könyveket is lehetett kapni), és megnézhetette híres festők festményeinek reprodukcióit – igaz, nem túl jó minőségben, de – elemző szövegek kíséretében, művészettörténeti kiadványokban, s megvásárolhatta híres koncertzenészek klasszikus zenei albumait. És ha már megvette, el is olvasta, meg is nézte, meg is hallgatta ezeket az ember. Manapság az interneten bármi egy klikkel elérhető, begyűjthető, de a figyelmünk is sokkal szétszórtabb. Könnyen halmozhatók az elektronikus szövegek, képek, filmek, de csak egy töredékére számunkra kellő időt. Hajszoljuk az aktuális eseményekről szóló információkat, és a kultúra is inkább csak hírként jelenik meg a látóterünkben, gyakran futólag két másik klikk között. A kommunista korszakban a napi hírek senkit sem érdekeltek igazán, hisz mindenki tudta, hogy nagy része hazugság, és még a csapból is elsősorban az folyt, hogy „mit csinált aznap Ceaușescu elvtárs” (a híradó majdnem kivétel nélkül így kezdődött, hogy „astăzi, tovarășul Nicolae Ceaușescu...”). Az „igazi” hírek szájról szájra terjedtek, vagy külföldi rádióadásokból lehetett hozzájuk jutni, nagy titokban. A könyvkultúra menedék volt az általános agymosás elől: hihetetlen, de igaz, az egyetemes művészeti értékek gazdag világa a könyveken keresztül elérhető volt mindvégig. A tévében – kivéve a legutolsó éveket, amikor már nagyon összezsugorodott az adásidő – a varietéműsorok, kulturális magazinok, ismeretterjesztők mellett a filmeket várta mindenki (mármint akinek tévéje volt), s általában mindenki megnézett mindent (a művészfilmeket beleértve).

A filmélmény szintén a hivatalos ideológiának az alapvetően kultúraellenes, toxikus légköréből való menekülés egyik lehetősége volt, illetve – és ez nagyon fontos – egy egyetemesebb könyvkultúrából táplálkozott és abba beágyazódva jelent meg. És itt nemcsak arra gondolok, hogy még a gyerekkorunkban népszerű indiános-cowboyos filmeket is úgy néztük, mint Karl May, James Fenimore Cooper regényeinek „meghosszabbításait”, még akkor is, ha nem voltak



2017. Párizs, Musée d'Orsay

adaptációk. (Ma ez a viszony általában fordított: a népszerű film nyomán keresik meg a könyvváltozatot, a hasonló könyvtípust, vagy gyakran egyenesen annak nyomán írják meg a könyvet.) Egy mai fiatal javarészt csak tévésorozatokot néz a számítógépén, vagy képregényhősökről gyártott sikerfilmeket a moziban (azokat, amikről Martin Scorsese pár éve nagy botrányt keltően azt nyilatkozta, hogy inkább egy vidámpark attrakcióihoz hasonlítanak, mint ahhoz, amit igazi mozifilmnek lehetne tekinteni). A digitális kultúra körülményei között valójában sokkal kevesebb esélye van arra, hogy találkozzon azzal, ami a „klasszikus” moziélményt jelenti, és ami a filmet művészetté teszi. Hacsak nincs filmklub az iskolában vagy nem lakik egy olyan városban, mint Kolozsvár, ahol a TIFF-en válogatást láthat értékes filmekből, a moziban, tévében vagy az interneten nem „jön szembe” vele a filmtörténet. Noha bőven van információ róla az interneten, vannak erre szakosodott videóletöltő szolgáltatások is, egy átlagos mai fiatalnak nincs honnan megtudnia, hogy mit kellene keresnie, különösen nem, hogy milyen régebbi filmet kellene keresnie. A látótérbe az újdonságok kerülnek, például ha egy új film díjat nyer egy reklámozott nemzetközi filmfesztiválon, vagy ismert sztár játszik benne, akkor hír lesz belőle, ami további kereséseket, klikkeket vonz. De ez a hír azonnal elkeveredik a többi között, illetve hamar felváltják az újabb hírek. A filmekre való reflexiónak a népszerű formái (a különféle kommentárok, blogok és YouTube-kritikák) az aktuális hírekre és filmekre reagálnak, gyorsan és szubjektíven, hullámozó minőségben és egy olyan „folyékony” térben, ahol pillanatok alatt átrendeződik minden. Ezekkel szemben a hagyományos íráskultúra, a nyomtatott szöveg sokkal szilárdabb fogódzót nyújtott az eligazodáshoz és értelmezéshez (feltéve, ha valakit ilyesmi érdekelt). Ez természetesen ma is így van, hisz a nyomtatás nem tűnt el, de a digitális korszak előtt a filmkultúrának ez volt a fő terjesztő csatornája, ami a róla folyó szóbeli kommunikációt is meghatározta.

Milyen kiadványokhoz fordulhatott filmek iránt érdeklődő erdélyi fiatalként?

A napokban hívta föl valaki a figyelmemet egy videóra az interneten, amelyen Umberto Eco hatalmas, labirintusszerű magánkönyvtára látható. Eco maga köztudottan a könyvekből szerezhető tudás nagy apostola volt, aki számára viszont legalább annyira fontosak voltak azok a könyvek, amelyeket nem olvasott el, mint amelyeket igen. Amint azt Nassim Nicholas Taleb esszéíró leírta, Ecónak a könyvekhez való viszonyát jellemezve, Eco könyvtára igazából „ellenkönyvtár” volt, nem „trófeagyűjtemény”, az elolvasott könyvek kiállítása, hanem a kutatás eszköze, sok-sok el nem olvasott könyv lelőhelye. Mert minél többet tud valaki, annál tágabb a rálátása a még felderítésre váró területre, annál több elolvasatlan könyve van a polcán. Ennek kapcsán jutott eszembe, hogy valahogy így voltam én is a filmmel akkoriban. Tulajdonképpen ebben a korszakban sokkal több filmről lehetett tudni, mint amennyit ténylegesen meg is lehetett nézni. Ez a még nem látott filmek képzeletbeli gyűjteménye, virtuális „ellenkönyvtára” nagyon fontos volt, mondhatni ez volt az alap, és ezt volt lehetőség gazdagítani.

Én 1981-ben kezdtem az egyetemet Kolozsváron, és közvetlenül előtte még elő lehetett fizetni a postán a magyarországi filmes szaklapokra (a *Filmvilágra* és a *Filmkultúrára*, mindkettő járt is nekem – amikor a filmes szak elindult, a kilencvenes évekbeli VHS filmjeimmel együtt a kar könyvtárának ajándékoztam, tulajdonképpen ezzel indult a szakgyűjtemény). Később, amikor már nem lehetett előfizetni itt a folyóiratokra, a magyarországi barátok rendszeresen behozták, átcsempészték a határon ezeket ajándékba. Egyetemi éveim alatt felfedeztem, hogy a kolozsvári Egyetemi Könyvtárban is sok filmes tárgyú könyv van (érdemes megnézni, ma is biztosan megvannak ezek a könyvek, az újak mellett). Román nyelven is sok könyvet kiadtak hazai szerzőktől (főleg kritikusok cikkgyűjteményeit meg filmtörténeti ismeretterjesztő munkákat) és fordításokat is. A Főtér sarkán, az Egyetemi Könyvesboltban több filmtörténeti, filmesztétikai könyvet vásároltam. Tudor Caranfil könyveit például (akinek akkoriban a televízióban is rendszeresen adták a filmkultúrát népszerűsítő műsorát), vagy Romulus Rusannak (aki a költőnő, Ana Blandiana férje volt) az *Arta fără muză* (*Műzsa nélküli művészet*) című esszékötetét, amely az itteni, kolozsvári Dacia Kiadónál jelent meg 1980-ban. Ebben többek között olyan filmekre reflektált, mint a *Tavaly Marienbadban*, a *Bolond Pierrot*, *A szép Serge*, *Iván gyermekkor* vagy *A sanghaji asszony*. Már a tartalomjegyzék végigböngészése is tanulságos volt, mert nagyon széles spektrumot fogott át a filmtörténetből (Joseph von Sternbergtől John Fordon, Alfred Hitchcockon át Jiří Menzelig). A magyar szakirodalomból elemzőbb, elméletibb szövegeket lehetett olvasni, a románul elérhető könyvek viszont rövid, élményszerű írásokkal táplálták a cinefiliát, rámutattak a fontos szerzőkre és művekre, fölkellették a kíváncsiságot. Meg lehetett tudni, mi az, amit meg kellene nézni.

Melyek a legemlékezetesebb mozi-, tévé-, filmklub- vagy VHS-élményei ebből az időszakból?

A 80-as években a kolozsvári Béke téri Diákházban rendszeresen tartottak vetítéssorozatot a Román Filmarchívumból hozott régi filmekből (volt itt Hitchcock, Fellini, Antonioni, Bergman, amerikai, francia, olasz, orosz klasszikusok). Mircea Dumitrescu filmesztéta jött a filmekkel, kiállt a színpadra, és elmondta, miért érdekes az éppen vetített film (amúgy a filmtörténeti filmekhez a televízió szerda esti, a könyvkultúrát idéző, beszédes című Cinemateca adásában is mindig volt egy minielőadás). Annak ellenére, hogy igazából ezeket a felvezetőket mindenki unta, és alig várta, hogy kezdődjön a filmvetítés, mégis csak el lehetett kapni egy-két érdekes gondolatot belőle. A jelenség egészében szimptomatikus volt: jól jelezte, hogy a filmművészetnek presztízse volt, illetve a filmeket úgy kezelték, hogy arról tudni is kell valamit, nem csak leülni és nézni. Ma már talán hihetetlennek tűnik, de óriási tolongás volt a Béke téren, hogy bejuthassunk ezekre a Diákház-beli filmtörténeti vetítésekre. Az egyetemisták körében a jegyek pillanatok alatt elkelték. De mivel a jegyeket alkalmasszerűen nyomtatták, rövid szöveggel, helyszámozás nélkül és ugyanolyan kék kartonra, mint amilyen kék karton hátlapja volt az olcsó iskolai füzeteknek, hamar rájöttünk, hogy könnyen lehet hamisítani. Kivágtuk a füzetek hátlapjából a megfelelő méretet, és aki biztos kézzel tudott rajzolni, tussal rá tudta írni a szöveget úgy, hogy a betóduló tömegben a jegyszedők ne vegyék észre, hogy nem nyomtatás. (Művészeti iskolás múltamnak, rajzkészségemnek nagy hasznát vettem ebben.) Így gyakorlatilag minden vetítésre be lehetett jutni, és általában tömve volt a nézőtér, a földön, a sorok között, a lépcsőkön is ültek. Nemcsak a humán érdeklődésűek jártak oda, a műszakiak is, gyakorlatilag mindenki számára eseményszámba ment. Ma, amikor a francia új hullám szellemi kontextusáról mesélek a hallgatóimnak, és az ötvenes évekből párizsi filmmúzeum legendás filmvetítéseit megemlítem, ahol az akkori egyetemisták mellett Jean-Luc Godard, François Truffaut vagy Eric Rohmer magába szívta a filmes műveltséget, mindig eszembe jutnak ezek a Béke téri vetítések, amelyeknek itt, egészen más körülmények között, de szintén nagyon fontos kulturális szerepe, és ismét hangsúlyozom, tömegeket vonzó ereje volt. Ez a népszerűség pedig nem azért volt, mert nem lett volna ezen kívül más lehetőség filmet nézni, hanem mert értelmiségi körökben a film nemcsak mint szórakoztatás, hanem mint művészet is népszerű volt.

A városban a nyolcvanas évek elején még sok mozi működött (a Főtéren ott volt a Új idők/Timpuri Noi, a mai/régi Zokogó Majom mögött a Munkás/Muncitoresc, a Széchenyi/Mihai Viteazul téren a Köztársaság/Republica, illetve becenevén a „Repcsi,” a Bocskai/Avram Iancu tér sarkán a ma is működő Győzelem/Victoria mozi, a Horea úton az Uránia palotában is volt egy kis mozi, a Párizs utca egyik sarkán működött a Vörös Csillag/Steaua Roșie, becenevén a „Bolhás mozi” – ez már inkább külvárosinak számított, ezek mellett a Mărăști negyedben és a Monostoron is voltak mozik). Ráadásul a Művész/Arta moziban az Egyetem utcában valóban művészi értékű filmeket vetítettek, ott is



2014. Kolozsvár, filmtudományi konferencia

tanúsítja, hogy a film elemzését beillesztettem az államvizsga-dolgozatomba. Sőt, később ezt ismét elővettem, továbbírtam, s bekerült az intermedialitásról szóló kötetbe is, éppen azért, mert úgy éreztem, jól példázza a kor kelet-európai filmművészetének a legjavát azzal, ahogyan az igaz művészet iránti vágyakozás mint explicit téma (s a filmnek a többi művészettel való rokonítása) együtt jelent meg benne annak a világnak a gyomorforogató iszonyatával, amiben élünk. Számomra ez a többször átcsiszolt szöveg olyan most már, mint egy borostyánkő, amelyben a sorok mögött, mint egy zárvány, benne van a film eredeti élményével együtt annak a kornak az egész hangulata. Ugyanakkor annak is bizonyítéka, ahogyan ezekben az igazán nehéz időkben, a propaganda elhatalmasodása közepette is volt filmművészet, s hogy a nagy hiátusok mellett ezek a ritka, gondolatébresztő filmek végül is olyan alapokat raktak le, amire lehetett építeni a későbbiekben.

Egészében a 80-as évekről elmondható, hogy lehet, kevesebb művészi filmhez volt hozzáférésünk, mint ma (amikor az internetről iszonyú mennyiségű filmet lehet letölteni), de sokkal intenzívebb élményekben volt részünk, mert a mozizás önmagában eseményszámba ment, s a művészet, a művészet általi bármilyen áttételes reflexió a valóságra a szabadság megélhetőségét jelentette számunkra. Számomra meghatározó volt ez az évtized, különösen annak az első fele, amikor olvasmányaim és pár fontos film, amit láthattam, elmélyítették a filmművészet iránti érdeklődésemet. 1984 márciusában a Béke téri filmarchívumi vetítésen láttam például először Antonioni-filmeket, a *Napfogyatkozást* és a *Nagyítást*. A *Nagyítás*ról sok elemzést olvastam, ezért már felkészülten ültem be a vetítésre, a *Napfogyatkozás*ról semmit sem tudtam, és tel-

gyakran sorozatban. 1983 februárjában például (akkoriban rendszeresen feljegyeztem, milyen filmeket néztem meg, onnan tudom), miközben a Repcsiben meg lehetett nézni a *Csillagok háborújának* a folytatását, *A birodalom visszavágót*, a Művész moziban Andrej Tarkovszkij *Sztalker* című filmjét vetítették (amit egymás után háromszor néztem meg). (Az előbbi élménye nyomán írtam a *Korunk* 1983/6-os számába egy kis cikket a régi és új Hollywoodról, a *Sztalkerről* írt elemzésem pedig a későbbi államvizsgám része lett.) Ugyancsak itt láttam a következő évben Mircea Daneliuc *Glissando* című filmjét, ami valóságos szenzációszámba ment, nagy vitákat kavart. Szürrealisztikus képi nyelvét nem mindenki értette, de mindenki érezte, hogy rólunk szól. A *Glissando* rám tett hatását

jesen lenyűgözött. Mindkét filmet megnéztem azonnal egymás utáni napokon kétszer is, jegyzetfüzettel a kezemben, amibe a sötétben sebtében lerajzoltam a legfontosabb jelenetek képkompozícióit, hogy fel tudjam idézni később, amikor elemzést írok róla. Ez a rajzolás sokat segített abban, hogy megértsem ennek a vizuális nyelvnek a lényegét, amelyben minden kép olyan, mint egy önálló műalkotás, egyszerre elvont és érzéki. Azóta is ez a mérce számomra, hogy mi a film. A *Napfogyatkozásról* írtam egy egyetemi TDK-dolgozatot, amely eljutott az akkori országos szintre, Bukarestbe (még nem létezett magyar nyelvű ETDK vagy nem lehetett továbbmenni az OTDK-ra), románra fordítva kellett ott előadnom. Elég kakukktojás lehetett, nem is tudom, milyen szekcióba osztották be, valószínűleg nem is aratott nagy sikert, inkább a hozzá kötődő bukaresti utazásnak és egy nagyszerű színházi előadásnak, Peter Shaffer *Amadeus* című darabjának emlékképei (amelyben Radu Beligan játszotta Salierit) maradtak csak meg bennem. (A *Napfogyatkozásról* írt elemzés magyar verzióját, amely a filmnyelvről értekezett ennek a filmnek kapcsán, a *Korunk* közölte.) 1984 nyarán pedig sikerült kiutaznom Budapestre, kimondottan azzal a céllal, hogy az államvizsgám előtt feltöltekezzem filmekkel és szakirodalommal. Egy hónap alatt több mint harminc filmet láttam, feltérképeztem szinte minden kis mozit, s pótoltam a filmtörténeti hiányok egy részét (Bergman, Bertolucci, Fassbinder, Truffaut, Tarkovszkij, Pasolini, Fellini több filmje is szerepelt a listán olyan ingyencségekkel együtt, mint Alain Robbe-Grillet *A szép fogolynő* című filmje, vagy Francis Ford Coppola *Apokalipszis, most* című filmeposza). Könyveket vásároltam, elmentem a Filmintézetbe, olvastam a könyvtárban. Egy ismerősöm beajánlott Nemeskürty Istvánhoz, aki a Filmintézet akkori igazgatója volt. Nagyon kedvesen fogadott, elbeszélgetett velem, megajándékozott további pár könyvvel.

1985-ben aztán kezdődtek itthon az igazán ínséges idők. Noha korábban két évente lehetett útlevelet kérni, 1986–87-ben már egyáltalán nem lehetett külföldre menni. (Kérésünket indoklás nélkül utasították vissza. Csak ennyit írtak írógéppel az elutasítást hírül adó nyílt levelezőlapra: „Nu se aprobă.”) Ez a tanulmányút tehát nem ismétlődhetett meg. Jött viszont a VHS-korszak, volt olyan, hogy az emberek összegyűltek egy-egy klubszerű helyen, és VHS-ről tévén néztek filmeket, sőt még mozi is volt, amely áttért erre a formára. Ezekből a VHS-nézésekből nem nagyon vettem ki a részem, mert a kazetták, amik közkezen forogtak, inkább kommersz filmek voltak, sőt, sokszor azokból is többnyire a B-szériások, amiket Irina Margareta Nistor „szinkronizált” (egy idegesítő, monoton fejhangon az eredeti szövegre rámondva a román fordítást), s ezek nem igazán érdekeltek. Néhány magyar filmre emlékszem (például a *Redl ezredesre*), amit ismerősöknél láttam, házivetítésen, szűkebb baráti körben, illetve még Kolozsváron, mielőtt végeztem, a Főtéren egy „underground” vetítésen láttam a *Száll a kakukk fészkére* című filmet felirat és szinkron nélkül. 1985 nyarán államvizsgáztam az egyetemen, és mivel nem mentem el Moldvába a nekem kiosztott két falu között ingázva angolt tanítani, hazamentem Csíkba, magánórákat adtam. Csíkszeredában az akkori Pártkabinet épületében szintén szerveztek a kolozsvári Diákház-beliékhez hasonló filmtörténeti vetítéseket, itt láttam például Eisensteinnek a *Jégmezők lovagját* és Tarkovszkijnak az



2021. Kotormány (Csíkszentgyörgy község)

Andrej Rubljovját. (A két erőteljesen festői film azóta rejtett rokonságban áll az én képzeletemben. Mindkettőnek igen mély hatása volt, de különösen a *Rubljov* emlékezetes marad, mert megmutatta a nagy történelmi távlatokat a szűk látókörű hétköznappal szemben, s végső soron azt, ahogyan a művészet felül tud emelkedni az embertelenségen: ahogyan a történelmi méretű pusztítás mellé mindig odaállítható a művészet szellemi építő ereje is.) A korszak már-már abszurdba hajló kulturális légkörét talán jól érzékelteti az, hogy amikor Tarkovszkij 1986 végén meghalt Párizsban, és az *Iffjúmunkás* című lap számára, Mirk László felkérésére, 1987-ben írtam róla egy megemlékező szöveget, nem lehetett leírni, hogy tulajdonképpen halála okán írok róla, mert a „fényes jövő” kapujában minden morbiditás, így a nekrológ műfaja is tiltott volt. Kétségtelen, hogy a Ceaușescu-kor legvégére a hivatalos filmkínálat nagyon beszűkült, noha a mozikban, amelyek még működtek, vetítettek néha jó magyar, lengyel, orosz filmeket (Nyikita Mihalkovra vagy Andrzej Wajdára emlékszem például). Szerencsére ami akkor kilátástalan helyzetnek tűnt, igazából csak pár év lett, amely véget ért a kilencvenes évekre.

1994-ben kezdett tanítani a BBTE bölcsészkarán stilsztikát és filmpoétikát, az újságíró szakosoknak filmológiát és filmszemiotikát. A doktori címe megszerzése után nem sokkal kezdett körvonalazódni az az új képzés a Sapientia EMTE keretében, amely ma a filmművészet, fotóművészet, média szak néven működik az egyetem kolozsvári karán. Hogy vált a film a fő irányvonallá a kezdetben kommunikáció szakként emlegetett képzésen, és Ön hogyan csatlakozott a kezdeményezőkhöz?

A Sapientia Erdélyi Magyar Tudományegyetem kezdettől fogva azt tűzte ki célul, hogy olyan szakokat indít, amelyek hiányoznak a magyar nyelvű felsőoktatás palettájáról. Kolozsváron már nagyon korán kezdett körvonalazódni az

igény, hogy valami ilyen képzés induljon. Elsősorban nem az egykori filmgyártásáról híres város hagyománya diktálta ezt az igényt, hanem a kor szelleme, hiszen világos volt, hogy a mozgóképi kultúra gyorsan fejlődő, sokféle leágazó területén szakemberekre van szükség, és hogy számos fiatal szívesen kipróbálná magát ebben, ha lenne rá lehetőség. Az egyetem vezetősége megpróbálta feltérképezni a helyzetet, és megkereste azokat az embereket, akiknek lehet elképzelésük az új szakról, s ezekkel szervezett egy előzetes tanácskozást a Sapientia akkori, Egyetem utcai székhelyén. Sok más szakértővel, például a kolozsvári művészeti egyetemről meghívott tanárokkal, a román televízió magyar adásában dolgozó szakemberekkel együtt így kerültem én is a képbe, elméleti emberként, már a legelején, mint olyan valaki, aki írogatott filmről, filmesztétikát és -elméletet tanított a Babeş–Bolyai Tudományegyetemen. Amikor a kuratórium ténylegesen a szak indítása mellett döntött, nekem eszem ágában nem volt vezető szerepet vállalni. Jó ötletnek tartottam és támogattam, hogy ilyen szak induljon, de eleve csak abban gondolkodtam, hogy tanárként vegyek részt benne. Ennek ellenére a helyzet mégis úgy hozta, hogy nem volt, aki végül is összeállítsa az ún. akkreditációs dossziét. Elég nehéz döntés volt, hogy belevágjak, hisz tudtam, hogy ezzel elindulnak a rosszindulatú kommentárok, hisz a férjem akkoriban a Sapientia vezetői között volt. A döntésben nagy szerepe volt dr. Szilágyi Pál professzornak, aki az egyetem egyfajta szürke eminenciása volt, még mielőtt dr. Tonk Sándor professzor korai halála után átvette volna a rektori feladatokat. Határozott, praktikus szempontokat előtérbe helyező ember volt, aki biztatott, ne törődjek a pletykákkal, vállaljam el, valakinek meg kell ezt csinálni, ha azt akarjuk, hogy legyen meg ez a szak. Nem volt könnyű feladat összeállítani egy ilyen vaskos iratcsomót, felépíteni előbb képzeletben az egészet, majd amikor a minisztériumi nyomásra összedőlt, többszörösen újra összerakni. Az akkreditációs folyamatban aztán fontos volt az is, hogy valaki olyan álljon a szak élére, akinek már van egyetemi státusza, illetve a szakterülethez kapcsolódó doktorátusa (a doktori dolgozatom könyvváltozata épp akkor jelent meg, és nyomott a latban, hogy le tudtuk tenni az asztalra), hisz a kákán is keresték a csomót.

Nemcsak azért volt nehéz, mert lényegében úttörő kezdeményezés volt, hanem azért is, mert elég komoly ellenállásba ütköztünk. Az első akkreditációs kérelmünket elutasították. Valószínűleg volt szakmai féltés is abban, hogy semmiképp nem tudták elképzelni, hogy Bukaresten kívül, itt, Kolozsváron is létrejöhessen egy gyakorlati filmképzést megcélzó szak. (Ezt bizonyítja, hogy amikor a Sapientia után egy évvel a Babeş–Bolyai Tudományegyetem is benyújtotta egy hasonló szak alapításának az elképzelését, az első körben az ő kérelmüket szintén elutasították.) De az is kétségtelen, hogy induláskor még nem rendelkezett a Sapientia EMTE sem a megfelelő technikai eszközökkel, sem a megfelelő oktatói állománnyal ahhoz, hogy egy hangsúlyosan gyakorlati oktatást elindíthasson. Másodszori próbálkozásunkra az akkreditációs bizottság elnöke valamelyes rugalmassággal reagált, azt mondta, itt a bukaresti UNATC egyetem szakjai közül az audiovizuális kommunikációnak megfeleltethető képzésre lát lehetőséget, ha a programot átalakítjuk, hogy annak jobban megfeleljen, akkor



2020. Kolozsvár, a Sapientia EMTE Kolozsvári Karának parkolója

zöld utat kapunk. Ez így is történt (éjszaka újraírtam a curriculumot, másnap még egyszer, míg elnyerte a tetszésüket), és mi örültünk, hogy elindulhattunk. Nem sokkal az ideiglenes akkreditáció megszerzése után aztán szerencsénkre jött egy minisztériumi rendelkezés, hogy az egységesen fotóművészet, filmművészet, média szaknak nevezett képzésen belül az egyetemek nevezzék meg, milyen szakirányokat kívánnak indítani. Ez nagyon jó lehetőség volt, hisz ezzel rögtön új lapokat osztottak, s így mi is három szakirányra tudtuk bontani a képzést, kialakítva azt a szerkezetet, ami mindmáig megvan: a rendezői, operatőri és az audiovizuális kommunikáció szakirányokkal. Tény viszont az is, hogy az UNATC a szak végleges akkreditációjáig nem „ismerte el” ezt. A törvény szerint az akkreditáció megszerzése előtt a Sapientia nem szervezhetett saját államvizsgát, a hallgatóinknak más akkreditált intézményben, tehát a bukaresti egyetemeken kellett államvizsgáznuk, az UNATC tőlünk csak a kommunikáció szakirányból fogadott vizsgázókat, rendezőinknek és operatőreinknek ezért egy másik egyetemen, a Hyperion magánegyetemen kellett államvizsgáznunk.

Mi volt a legnagyobb kihívás az elindításban? A szak általános koncepcióját tartalmazó akkreditációs dosszié összeállítása, az oktatók verbuválása vagy a szakkönyvtár és filmtár összeállítása?

Induláskor minden nehéz volt, mert mindent a nulláról kellett kezdeni. Ez azt jelentette, hogy előtte semmilyen filmmel kapcsolatos magyar nyelvű képzés nem volt (a BBTE, mint említettem, utánunk indult, és először ott is csak románul), ezért az alapvető, legnagyobb kihívás az volt, hogy egy olyan szakot hozzunk létre, ami többféle lehetőséget is magába foglal. A koncepciót igyekeztünk ezért a lehetőségekhez képest a legátfogóbban megfogalmazni, hogy a képzés nyújtson általános műveltséget és gyakorlati alapokat, ugyanakkor

megfeleljen a minisztériumi követelményeknek. Az ideiglenes működési engedély megszerzése, illetve az akkreditáció után a felszerelések beszerzése, a stúdiógyakorlat számára alkalmas termék kialakítása, bérlése, majd építése, a főállású oktatók csapatának létrehozása, a fiatal oktatóknak a doktori címek megszerzése hosszas folyamat, mind megannyi kihívás volt, de előre látható. Az első lépésekben sok volt az improvizáció. Induláskor például a Bocskai-ház pincéjében is tanítottunk, és az Óváry terem melletti kis szobában volt két szekrény, abban voltak VHS-en a filmtörténet nagy alkotásai, amiket órán használtunk, s videolejátszóról tévén néztük. Ebben a „hőskorszakban” a könyvtár és a videotár baráti adományokból kezdett gyarapodni (például nagy segítségünkre volt Geréb Anna, aki akkor a Magyar Filmintézetnél dolgozott és maga is lelkes filmgyűjtő volt, rendszeresen jött némafilmes kurzusokat tartani, és minden alkalommal hozott egy-egy óriási bőröndöt tele videokazettákkal, majd DVD-kkel, amiket nekünk ajándékozott). Ma már évente van rendes költségvetés a könyvtár és filmállomány gazdagítására, és büszkén mondhatom, hogy a kolozsvári kar könyvtárában tekintélyes méretű, korszerű filmtudományi gyűjtemény található.

Az évek során igazi kihívásokat az előre nem látható és sokszor egyáltalán nem racionális szabályozásbeli változások jelentették. Ilyen volt például a szak nevének a megváltoztatása fotóművészet, filmművészet, médiáról filmművészet, fotóművészet, médiára, a két szó felcserélése önmagában elég sok gondot okozott az adminisztrációban. Az évről évre változó, apróbb részleteket érintő szabályozások mellett, amelyek miatt gyakorlatilag alig volt két egyforma tanévünk vagy tantervünk a szak története során, a legnagyobb kihívást viszont, aminek, úgy érzem, mind a mai napig nehezen tudtunk igazán megfelelni, az a négyévesről a hároméves képzésre való áttérés jelentette, az ún. bolognai szerkezet ráerőltetése erre a felsőoktatási szakterületre. Kezdetben ráadásul az erre való áttérés szabályozása is rendkívül kaotikus volt, olyan évfolyamunk is volt, amelyik menet közben még nem tudta, hány évet fog járni egyetemre, előbb három év után készült diplomázni, majd végül mégis négy év után végzett. A bolognai szerkezet által megszabott hároméves alapképzés egyrészt önmagában nagyon rossz, mert nincs lehetőség a művészi képzések területén eljutni a készségek kialakításáig, valóban csak a minimális alapismereteket lehet ennyi idő alatt megszerezni. Másrészt a mi esetünkben azért is különösen nehéz helyzetet teremtett, mert a bolognai három szint (alapképzés, mesteri, doktori) nem indulhatott egyszerre, mint ahogy más, régebbi egyetemeken ez eleve adott szerkezet volt. Sőt, nálunk a harmadik képzési ciklus mind a mai napig hiányzik. A BA- és az MA-szinteknek viszonylagos önállósága (vagyis az, hogy alapképzés után egy sor MA-képzésből lehet válogatni a felsőoktatási kínálatból) pedig tulajdonképpen mindenhol, nem csak nálunk, nagyon megnehezíti, hogy egy folyamatosan egymásra épülő, elmélyülő képzést lehessen megvalósítani. Minden szinten igazából csak betekintést tudnak nyerni a hallgatók ebbe is, abba is, ráadásul sokszor az MA-n az alapok hiánya miatt mindent szinte előlről kell kezdeni, nehéz a hallgatók közötti különböző felkészültségi szintekhez hatékonyan igazodni. A BA- és MA-tantervek, -tantárgyak koncep-



2005. Kiállítás a diákok munkáiból a Bocskai-ház pincéjében

cióinak kialakítása, a lehetőségek szerinti összehangolása ezért a legfontosabb és folyamatos kihívásunk.

Az indulás után 17 évvel hogy látja, mik az előnyei vagy a hátrányai annak, hogy a diákoknak elméleti és gyakorlati tárgyakat egyformán kell teljesíteniük? Mennyire egyedülálló nemzetközi szinten ezzel a filmes képzési formával a Sapientia EMTE?

Én soha nem láttam ennek hátrányait, csak előnyeit. Az, amit összefoglaló néven most „elméleti” tárgyaknak nevezett, tulajdonképpen soha nem volt a „gyakorlati” tárgyaktól független. Egyrészt vannak, nem túl nagy óraszámban és a képzés elején, olyan általános műveltségi tárgyak, amelyek a világ minden táján hasonló képzéseken kötelező alapoknak számítanak, s amelyeket a romániai törvénykezések is előírnak (esztétika, kommunikációelmélet, művészettörténet, kultúrtörténet). Másrészt vannak kimondottan a filmes képzéshez kapcsolódó tárgyak, amik a filmes műveltség megszerzését, illetve egy tudatosabb alkotói magatartás kialakítását célozzák. Ilyen elsősorban a filmtörténet, amelynek keretében mindig is nagy hangsúlyt fektettünk arra, hogy diákjaink megismerjék a legfontosabb filmeket, alkotókat, stílusokat. A filmelmélet és filmelemzés tantárgy pedig tulajdonképpen az elméleti fogalmakat az elemzésnek rendeli alá, és arra törekszik, hogy megtanítsa a hallgatókat arra, hogy gondolkodjanak el azon, amit látnak. Elvont filmelméletet, ami nem kötődik a filmek elemzéséhez, vagy filmelmélet-történetet soha nem tanítottunk. S noha a diákok részéről mindig volt olyan, aki zúgolódt azért, hogy miért kell neki az „unalmas”, régi filmekkel az időt tölteni, elemzéseket olvasni, sőt írni, amikor ő „csak” filmet akar készíteni, mi mindig ragaszkodtunk ahhoz, hogy átfogó műveltséget nyújtó, tehát az eredeti értelmében vett egyetemi képzést valósítsunk meg, ne gyors-talpaló technikai tanfolyamot. Több-kevesebb arányban minden más egyetemi

képzés tartalmazza ezeket a filmműveltségi tárgyakat. Nálunk talán nem is az arány a feltűnő, hanem a rendszeresség, hogy például a filmtörténeti tárgyak végig jelen vannak a három év alatt, és hogy időrendben haladva ismerhetik meg a hallgatók a hetedik művészet csúcsteljesítményeit. A tantárgy keretében pedig valóban nagy hangsúlyt fektetünk arra, hogy meg is nézzék, szemináriumokon elemezzék a filmeket. Florin Mihăilescu, a híres román filmoperatőr, aki kezdettől fogva vendégtanárunk volt, például az egyik leglelkesebb támogatója volt mindig ennek a koncepciónak, amelyben a gyakorlat filmműveltségi alapokra van helyezve (ő maga a lehető leghitelesebben képviselte ezt, hiszen egy operatőri gyakorlati tárgy, a világítástechnika mellett román filmtörténetet is tanított, amelyben az operatőri megoldások szerepére hívta föl a figyelmet). Sajnos sok esetben a hallgatóink csak utólag látják ennek a hasznát, az egyetem alatt még nem. Mi úgy gondoljuk, egy műveltebb és gondolkodásra képes végzős valószínűleg kreatívabban, rugalmasabban tud helytállni a filmes szakmákban, és ami elengedhetetlenül fontos, folyamatosan tovább tudja képezni magát, és esélye van arra, hogy szélesebb körben találjon állást, hisz nem mindenki lehet filmrendező vagy operatőr. A szűkebb szakmába egyrészt nagyon nehéz bekerülni és abból megélni, másrészt viszont az audiovizuális kultúra területén mégiscsak van a lehetséges munkaköröknek egy nagyon széles spektruma. A műveltség igénye így nemcsak elvont ideál a részünkről, hanem nagyon gyakorlatias célt is szolgál. Örömmel látom, hogy tulajdonképpen az idő minket igazolt, volt végzőseink között több olyan van, aki a gyakorlati szakmákban már elindult egy szép karrier útján, már több kisfilmet, sőt egész estés filmet rendezett, operatőr lett, televízióban dolgozik, saját jól menő filmes vagy animációs céget alapított, gyártásvezető lett, filmek utómunkálatát végzi elismert szinten, és így tovább. Ugyanakkor volt hallgatóink közül sokan tovább tanultak, doktori iskolákban is megállták a helyüket, sőt többen egyetemi oktatókká váltak. Volt diákjaink írásai vagy televíziós szereplései nyomán már beszélhetünk erdélyi magyar filmkritikusokról (többes számban), jelen vannak a magyar rádiózásban, televíziózásban szerkesztőként, műsorvezetőként, és el tudtak helyezkedni különböző állásokban a kulturális élet számos területén.

Milyennek látja a Sapientia EMTE hallgatóinak filmjeit? Volt-e változás ebben az elmúlt 17 évben?

Azok a filmek, amiket a hallgatók egyetemi éveik alatt készítenek, tulajdonképpen ujjgyakorlatok, szárnypróbálgatások. Sajnos a három év alapképzés alatt ennél többre nemigen van lehetőség. Az államvizsgafilm a nagyobb nekifutás. Van, ami jobban sikerül, ami eljut fesztiválokra, díjat nyer, de ez mindenképp csak a kezdet. Az igazi tehetség próbája mindig az egyetem után jön, amikor kiderül, hogy mit ért az itt töltött három vagy öt év, használható alapokat kapott-e, elindították-e egy művészi vagy szakmai alkotópálya felé. Sok olyan volt diákunk van, aki tovább tanult, és az egyetem után készített nagyon jó, díjnyertes filmet. Az igazi sikertörténetek azután jönnek, hogy tőlünk elmennek. És ezekből, szerencsére, folyamatosan elég sok van.

A változást, ha van ilyen, én leginkább abban látom, hogy azzal, hogy az egyetem technikai, anyagi lehetőségei fejlődtek, sokkal nagyobb lendülettel folyik a gyakorlati képzés, és ez meglátszik az egyetem alatti filmkészítői kedven, és végső soron bizonyos mértékben az itt készült filmekben is. Valahogy úgy, mint ahogy a saját gyermeke növekedését nem veszi észre az ember, mert minden nap látja, a mi fejlődésünket is talán a külső szemlélők jobban látják, mint mi. Minden évben meghívunk az államvizsga-bizottságunkba más egyetemekről oktatókat, Bukarestből, Budapestről, akik például a nyilvános kiértékelőkön az utóbbi időben többször is megfogalmazták, hogy érezhetően javul a filmek minősége, kevesebb a rossz film. 2019 decemberében részt vettem Bukarestben a filmes egyetemek diákfilmszemléjén, s ott többen is megjegyezték, hogy ők úgy látják, évről évre megnézve a filmjeinket, hogy a sapientias filmekben van egyfajta komolyság, a más iskolákból jövő vicces poénokra, csattanóra kihegyezett tipikus diákfilmekkel szemben, van igyekezet arra, hogy életszerűbb filmeket készítsenek, és súlyosabb kérdéseket is felvessenek. Ez jó, hogy kívülről így látszik, mert sokszor belülről csak a konkrét megoldásokra figyelünk, arra, hogy mi az, ami még nem sikerült igazán, mit kellene másképp csinálni, tehát mindig a fejlesztés oldaláról közelítünk a filmekhez.

Ehhez kapcsolódik az, hogy nemcsak a technikai lehetőségek lettek jobbak az évek során, hanem a filmkészítést ösztönző tevékenységek is megszorodtak. Gondolom, jótékonyan hatnak az olyan izgalmas projektek, mint például a Lakatos Róbert immár jó ideje futó workshopja, amelyben a cél a hagyományos analóg technika újrafelfedezése mellett kifejezetten a művészi kísérletezés és játék (a hallgatók egy állítólagosan elveszett erdélyi Drakula-film „remake”-jét próbálják elkészíteni celluloidszalagra filmezve). Reményeim szerint bátorítólag hat a 2017-ben elindított *First Cut* című, évente ismétlődő nyilvános rendezvény, amelyen közönség előtt levetítjük a legjobban sikerült filmeket, kiállítjuk a legjobb fotókat, audiovizuális installációkat. Több éve próbálkozunk azzal, hogy legyenek stimuláló, belső pitchingek, ahol a hallgatók előadhatják terveiket és egyetemi finanszírozásra pályázhatnak. Az utóbbi években a TDK-n is indult művészi alkotásokat fogadó szekció, rangos külföldi szakmabeli bírálók bevonásával. Ezek mind megannyi alkalmat jelentenek arra, hogy a hallgatók visszajelzéseket kapjanak, és nagyon hasznosak, azt hiszem. A gyakorlati tanároktól folyton azt hallom, hogy minden évfolyamon vannak igen lelkes csapatok, akik dolgozni akarnak, plusz konzultációkat igényelnek a saját terveikhez, s hogy komoly energiákat követel ezeknek a koordinációja. A vendégtanárok jelenléte érezhetően inspirálja őket, hisz ahány tanár, annyi egyéniség, és hozzá magukkal a más egyetemeken, illetve a filmszakmából a felbecsülhetetlen tapasztalatokat. Buglya Sándor volt az első, aki nemcsak a gyakorlati képzés alapjait rakta le nálunk, hanem ezt a sort is elindította, magával hozta a budapesti és németországi egyetemi oktatói tapasztalatait, és akinek irányításával a helyiek, mint például Lakatos Róbert majd Felméri Cecília (aki első évfolyamunk végzőse volt) a szakkal együtt nőttek bele a tanári feladatkörbe. Buglya mellett Balogh Zsolt volt az, aki óriási teherbírással éveken keresztül a filmes alkotómunka és a filmes szakmába való integrálódás hajtómotorja volt, az órá-



2012. Lisszabon, Szent Jeromos-kolostor

kon túlmenően különféle szakmai táborok megszervezésével. Mára ez a „vendég” csapat kiegészült Fekete Ibolyával, Gózon Franciscóval és Pálos Györgygyel, és erősödött a bukaresti tanárok jelenléte, korábban a már említett Florin Mihăilescu képviselte nálunk ezt az iskolát (s a román operatőri művészet legjavát), újabban Radu Igazság és Doru Nițescu is tanít nálunk. Ennek a megerősödött tanári csapatnak a „felhajtóereje” az, ami talán a legszembeötlőbb, s ami biztosan meglátszik a filmekben.

A Sapientia EMTE és a budapesti ELTE közös filmtudomány mesterije 2014-ben kapta meg az akkreditációt. Ez a képzés inkább a filmkészítés irányába mutat, noha elméleti projekt megvalósítására is lehetőség van. Milyen megfontolásból alakult ez így, és miért pont az ELTE-vel együttműködésben? Jelentkeznek diákok Magyarországról is?

A kollaborációt a szükség szülte, 2014-ben még nem voltak meg a lehetőségek arra, hogy önálló mesterit indítsunk, ezért választottuk ezt az ún. nemzetközi verziót, amire a szabályozások lehetőséget adtak. Hogy miért éppen az ELTE és miért nem például az SZFE? Mert tulajdonképpen évekig az SZFE is azon az állásponton volt, mint a bukaresti UNATC, vagyis nem volt túl nagy bizalommal a gyerekcipőben járó Sapientia iránt (gondolom, azóta talán változott a megítélésünk annak nyomán, hogy számos tehetséges volt hallgatónk ott folytatta a tanulmányait). Az ELTE volt az, amelyik felvállalta ezt a fajta együttműködést. Természetesen a két egyetem és kar legfelső szintjein született meg a megegyezés, de az is hozzátartozik az előtörténethez, hogy nekünk már korábban is szoros kapcsolatunk volt az ELTE Filmtudomány Tanszékével. Kovács András Bálint tanszékvezető többször is vendégtanárunk volt, Gelencsér Gábor kezdettől fogva a magyar filmtörténet oktatója nálunk, és az évek során az ELTE szinte minden filmes oktatója tartott előadásokat Kolozsváron, még mielőtt be-

kapcsolódtak volna a mesteri képzésbe. Elképzelésünk szerint a mesteri, noha viszonylag önálló, azért mégis az alapképzéshez kapcsolódik, s mivel MA csak egy van, BA-szinten meg három szakirány, itt megint az átjárhatóságra és a rugalmasságra kellett tenni a hangsúlyt. Ami az egészet egybefogja, az a nyitás a kortárs film, a jelenkori mozgóképi művészet, illetve a digitális kor audiovizuális kultúrájának legújabb jelenségei felé. Így például nemcsak fikciós kisfilmben vagy dokumentumfilmben lehet gondolkodni, hanem lehet kísérletezni a dokumentumfilm és a játékfilm módszerek ötvözésével, sőt meg lehet próbálkozni audiovizuális installációval, esszéfilmmel, olyan konceptuális műalkotással, amelyben az elmélet és a gyakorlat szorosan összekapcsolódik. Ami a diákokat illeti, nagyobb a mozgás Magyarország felé továbbtanulásra, mint onnan Erdélybe. Az viszont biztató, hogy kis számban ugyan, de folyamatosan jelentkeznek diákok Magyarországról, jelenleg BA- és MA-szinten minden évfolyamon van egy vagy több magyarországi hallgatónk.

Van esély rá, hogy a jövőben filmes PhD- vagy DLA-képzést indítson az egyetem?

Egyelőre még nem tudunk eleget tenni a doktori iskola alapítási feltételeinek, például nincs az egyetemen három olyan filmtudomány területén habilitált docens vagy egyetemi tanár, aki doktorátus vezetését vállalhatná. De már nagyon közel állunk hozzá. A válasz tehát az, hogy igen, van esély erre a jövőben, sőt ez egy olyan cél, amit ki kell tűznünk és meg kell valósítanunk.

A tanszéknek 2009 óta van nemzetközileg jegyzett szakfolyóirata, az Acta Universitatis Sapientiae, Film and Media Studies, és az indulás óta szervez filmtudományi konferenciákat, amelyek egy idő után külföldi előadókkal bővültek, majd angol nyelvévé váltak. A filmtudomány alapemberei adtak elő Kolozsváron, többek között Joachim Paech, Laura Marks, Laura Mulvey, Thomas Elsaesser. Mi kellett ahhoz, hogy ezek a szakemberek érdemesnek lássák eljönni egy erdélyi városba?

A folyóirat a Sapientia EMTE tudományos kiadványsorozatának a része, innen is ered ez az egyáltalán nem szerencsés, kissé régimódi, hosszú elnevezés. A Sapientia kiadványai közül ez az egyik legsikeresebb, legolvasottabb, bekerült fontos tudományos adatbázisokba. Blos-Jáni Melindával együtt szerkesztjük, és rangos nemzetközi szakemberek az ún. *editorial board* tagjai. Amikor erre a listára nézek, ami a folyóirat belső borítóján egyből szembeötlik az olvasónak, ha kézbe veszi a kiadványt, mindig az jut eszembe, hogy ez a mérce, olyan folyóiratot kell kihozni, ami az ő asztalukon is megállja a helyét. Évente egy-két szám jön ki, és igazán nemzetközi, nem csak azért, mert angolul jelenik meg, hanem mert sok külföldi szerzőnk van. Noha kétségkívül bizonyos mértékben hullámzó a színvonal, mindenikben van olyan írás, amire büszkéek vagyunk, hogy nálunk jelent meg. S annak ellenére, hogy elég tág témakört fogadunk be, igyekeztünk a folyóiratnak egyféle orientációt adni azzal, hogy nem kizárólag, de azért érzékelhetően kapcsolódjon a tanszéki filmelméleti kutatásokhoz, amelyeknek másik fő nyilvános fórumává váltak a rendszeresen megszerve-

zett nemzetközi konferenciák. Ezek a konferenciák éppen azzal képviseltek sajátos színfoltot itt, Kelet-Európában, hogy mindig egy elég jól körülhatárolt, rövid, szakirodalmi érveléssel felvezetett elméleti kérdés köré szerveztük őket (ellentétben azokkal a rendezvényekkel, amelyekből sokkal több van, ahol a tematika egy interdiszciplinárisan értelmezhető, tág fogalom). Bizonyos értelemben ez pótolta nálunk a hiányzó doktori iskolát. Célunk az volt, hogy ha mi még nem is tudunk saját doktoranduszokat kinevelni, akkor idevonzunk doktoranduszokat a világ minden részéből, s meghívunk számukra olyan előadókat, akiktől és egymástól egy bizonyos kérdésről sokat tanulhatnak. Ha a fiatal kutatók eljöttek ezekre a világ minden részéből, számíthattak arra, hogy a legjobb írásokból – esetleg a peer review folyamat révén kapott építő kritika után átdolgozva – megjelenik a folyóiratunkban egy válogatás, a pályakezdő kutatók együtt közölhetnek a meghívott, nagy tekintélyű előadókkal. Az előadások nagy részét videón is rögzítettük, és a YouTube-csatornánkon hozzáférhetővé tettük. Ezáltal tulajdonképpen a folyóirat és a konferenciák, a YouTube-jelenlét egymást folyamatosan erősítették és – divatos szóval élve – láthatóbbá tették. Ez természetesen olyan modell, ami mindenhol így működik: kell, hogy legyen körforgása a gondolatoknak, eszmecseréknek, amelynek van élő előadás, közvetlen megbeszélés része, majd szövegben kiérlelt, rögzített formája is.

Ami a konferenciákat illeti, a résztvevőket a kutatásaik bemutatásának és a termékeny vitáknak a lehetősége mellett elsősorban a nagy nevek vonzották, azért jöttek, hogy találkozhassanak, beszélhessenek, kapcsolatot teremthesse velük. A nagy nevek közül volt olyan, aki rendkívül nyitottnak bizonyult, mint például Laura Mulvey, aki kétszer is volt nálunk, és bevallása szerint mindenhová szívesen ment, ha meghívták. (A sors úgy hozta, hogy életkoránál fogva amúgy is visszavonulni készült, de ez a rettenetes víruskorszak immár megpecsételte számára a további utazások lehetőségét, s valószínűleg Kolozsvár lesz külföldi konferenciáinak utolsó állomása.) Mások viszont azért jöttek, mert már ismertek, illetve jókat hallottak a konferenciánkról. Laura Marksszal együtt egy korábbi konferencia plenáris előadója voltam és így hívtam el, Lúcia Nagibot, Marie-Laure Ryant vagy Thomas Elsaessert csak könyveiből ismertem, de amikor kapcsolatba léptem velük, kiderült, ők is ismerik az írásaimat (a felkérő levélre írt válaszában Elsaesser rögtön megjegyezte, hogy Hitchcockról és a *tableau vivant*-ról szóló tanulmányaimat rendszeresen olvastatja a diákjaival).

Külön ambícióm volt az, hogy a szűkebb szakterületünk legfontosabb képviselőit idehozzuk. Az intermedialitás és a hozzá kapcsolható művészetközi, transzmédia-jelenségek vagy a médiakonvergencia kutatásának szinte nincs olyan nemzetközi rangú képviselője az előbb említettek mellett, aki ne fordult volna meg Kolozsváron (Joachim Paech, Jens Schröter, Jürgen E. Müller, Lars Elleström, Martine Beugnet, Brigitte Peucker, Steven Jacobs, Henry Jenkins, Chiel Kattenbelt, Ivo Blom, Susan Felleman, Yvonne Spielmann, Ruggero Eugeni, Eivind Røssaak stb.). Legtöbbjüknek írását is közöltük a folyóiratban, s ezek ma már referenciaszövegeknek számítanak.

Hogy sikerült Kolozsvárra hívni 2013-ban az ISIS (International Society for Intermedial Studies) konferenciáját, amely így a tanszék első kizárólag angol nyelvű szakmai találkozója lett?

Miközben az eredetileg csak a skandináv országok kutatóit egyesítő szervezet (NORSIS/Nordic Society for Intermedial Studies) éppen nyitni készült a nemzetközi szakmai élet felé, felfigyeltek arra, hogy itt van kutatás, van folyóirat, van egy lelkes csapat, akik megfordultak az ő konferenciáikon, s akik már összehoztak korábban három sikeres rendezvényt, amelynek nyomán a Cambridge Scholars kiadónál három válogatott kötet is megjelent.

Nem mindenre illik a manapság divatos *hálózat* metafora, de erre kétségkívül igen: benne kell lenni egy ilyen nagyobb, nemzetközi szakmai hálózatban ahhoz, hogy igazán tartalmas tanácskozást össze lehessen hívni. Nekünk sikerült az írásainkkal, a folyóirattal és a konferenciákkal kialakítani egy olyan csomópontot itt, Kolozsváron, amely többszörösen tud kapcsolódni ehhez a szélesebb kört átfogó hálózathoz. Ugyanakkor kiemelném, hogy ehhez nagyon fontos a helyi, kisebb hálózat megléte is. Annak ellenére, hogy a konferenciák előtt és után is rengeteget dolgoztam azon, hogy ez a komplex csomópont kialakuljon, a konferenciákat soha nem én szerveztem egyedül, hanem a volt tanítványokból verbuválódott egy olyan csoport (Blos-Jáni Melinda, Király Hajnal, Pieldner Judit, Sándor Katalin, Virginás Andrea), akik szintén rendszeresen publikálnak nemzetközi szinten, és akikkel együtt (sőt, legutóbb még két fiatalabb csoporttag, Bakk Ágnes és Lakatos Mihály is csatlakozott hozzájuk), illetve nem utolsósorban az egyetem, a kolozsvári kar vezetőségének és adminisztrációjának a hathatós és kitartó támogatásával, kollégáink, önkéntes diákjaink közreműködésével ezeket sorozatban meg lehetett szervezni.

Több mint két évtizede foglalkozik az intermedialitás kérdéskörével, amihez a megszervezett konferenciák is kapcsolódtak. Nemrég jelent meg a Cinema and Intermediality. The Passion for the In-Between című angol nyelvű könyvének bővített kiadása, illetve az első, 2011-es kiadás néhány tanulmányának portugál fordítása egy gyűjteményes kötetben. Mi igazolta ennek a filmelméleti megközelítésnek a létjogosultságát, korszerűségét az utóbbi évtizedben?

Az intermedialitás, amint a nevéből is sejthető, alapvetően nem filmelméleti megközelítés, hanem médiumelméleti. Médiumok viszonyát, kapcsolatát írja le. A filmelmélet tulajdonképpen nem igazán vett róla tudomást, sőt, művelői közül mind a mai napig van, aki elvitatja a létjogosultságát, vagy azért, mert úgy gondolja, a film specifikuma nem a mozgókép és a többi médium összekapcsolódása (illetve ezzel összefüggésben a film és a többi művészet viszonya), hanem valami más, csak a filmre jellemző dolog. Vagy ellenkezőleg: azért, mert úgy gondolja, hogy ezek az összefonódások annyira jelen vannak a film minden aspektusában, hogy éppen ezért nem érdemes velük külön foglalkozni. Van itt tehát egyfajta vakfolt, egy jelenség, amely ott van a filmben, de nem vesszük mindig észre, illetve egy vakfolt magának a filmtudománynak a látóterében, amelyre



2007. Konferenciaút Vaxjöben, a Wanås kastély parkja

igazából sokan rávilágítottak már a korai elméletíróktól kezdve (Szergej Eisenstein, André Bazin is írt róla), de ezt még nem nevezték intermedialitásnak.

Hogy miként jött mégis előtérbe ez a fogalom, illetve hogyan lehet megragadni ennek a relevanciáját manapság, ahhoz talán látnunk kell azt is, hogy mi hívta elő. Tulajdonképpen három tényező eredője az, hogy bekerült a tudományos köztudatba az intermedialitás. Az első maga a felgyorsult technikai fejlődés, amely révén a vizuális kultúra területén is számos új technológia jelent meg, és ezzel párhuzamosan a médiumokról való gondolkodás még a digitális korszak előtt nézőpontváltást hozott azzal, hogy a kultúrát nem az autonóm művészetek, hanem a kommunikáció oldaláról közelítette meg. A második a művészet önreflexív válasza volt minderre a robbanásszerű változásra, egész pontosan az ún. fluxus művészet volt az (különösen Dick Higgins elméleti munkássága révén), amely a klasszikus művészetek, médiumok, illetve az élet és a művészet határainak az átjárhatóságát hirdette, és erre a szabadon kísérletező, hibrid művészetre (mint például a vizuális költészet, performansz, videóművészet) az intermédia és multimédia megjelölést bevezette. Mindezekhez hozzáadódott aztán a digitális technológia megjelenése, amely nemcsak megsokszorozta, hanem látványosan „bekebelezte” a korábbiakat, általa immár maguk a technológiák is átjárhatóvá váltak (például ugyanazon a készüléken tudunk álló- és mozgóképeket rögzíteni és lejátszani, zenét hallgatni vagy éppen rajzolni). Ezeket az átjárásokat újabb elméleti megközelítések próbálták értelmezni, amelyek a konvergens médiakultúra átfogó jelenségeit vagy az ún. transzmédia-univerzum jelenségeit vizsgálják (amelyek révén egy fiktív világ egyszerre több médiumban létezik, lásd például a képregény – mozifilm – számítógépes játék – fanfiction komplex hálózatait). Továbbá a digitális (posztmédiának is nevezett) korban például a „fotografikus”, a „filmszerű” vagy a „festői” gyakran nem a különálló művészetek attribútumaiként jelennek meg, nem kapcsolód-



2017. Reading, a Readingi Egyetem campusa

nak konkrét anyagi hordozókhoz, hanem a technikai képek bármelyikében érzékelhető élménnyé, érzéki benyomássá válnak, amelyeket nemcsak művészi formában, hanem a minket körülvevő urbánus környezetünkben is megfigyelhetünk. Több elméletíró rámutatott arra, hogy a technikai képeknek ez a szabadon formálhatósága (a fotográfia, film, festészet vagy a háromdimenziós képek esetében a szobrászat, építészet eszközeivel) bizonyos értelemben visszatérést jelent a képeket létrehozó kézműves művészethez. Úgy gondolom, hogy ezeknek a jelenségeknek az értelmezése jelenleg az intermedialitás elméletének az egyik legizgalmasabb kihívása. A konvergencia elméletével szemben, amely a különbségek kiegyenlítődéssére és a multimediális tartalmak szabad áramlására figyel a digitális környezetben, az intermedialitás, amint a név előtagja jelzi, a köztességekre, viszonyokra, a médiumok összekapcsolódásában az érzékelhető másságra helyezi a hangsúlyt, ezt veszi célba, ennek a jelentéseit és jelentőségét próbálja megérteni.

Az intermedialitásról a filmelméletben az 1990-es évektől kezdődően kezdtek írni, és ez a megközelítés ma is produktív. Pár példát mondanék erre, hogy miként. Általa árnyaltabban lehet értelmezni nemcsak azokat a sajátos esztétikai formákat, amelyeket egy-egy ilyen „kézműves” gonddal megformált digitális képben látunk, hanem a film és a többi művészet kapcsolatainak történeti poétikai vetületeit is (leírva például a fotografikus filmszerűség, a teatralitás, a festőiség, a szoborszerű plaszticitás megnyilvánulásait vagy a filmképen megjelenő műalkotások, médiumok jelentéseit a filmben a klasszikus, analóg mozitól napjainkig). Egész életművek elemzésének lehet hatékony eszköze az intermedialitás jelenségeinek vizsgálata: legutóbb ilyen volt például Christopher Rowe-nak Michael Haneke-ről (Michael Haneke: *The Intermedial Void*, 2017) vagy Cecília Mellónak Jia Zhangke filmjeiről (*The Cinema of Jia Zhangke*, 2019) írt könyve (és előkészületben van a Bloomsbury kiadónál Király Hajnalnak a



2014. Newark, Newark Liberty nemzetközi repülőtér

Manoel de Oliveira intermediális mozijáról szóló monográfiája, amire máris büszke vagyok, hogy a mi körünkből kerül ki). Az intermedialitásnak nemcsak esztétikai vonatkozása fontos, hanem az is, ahogyan kötődik a kor aktuális problémáihoz. (Ezt példázza az első kérdésnél említett Mircea Daneliuc-film is, amely a bonyolult intermediális önreflexiójával a Ceaușescu-korszak érzelmi lenyomata volt.) A *Caught In-Between. Intermediality in Contemporary Eastern European and Russian Cinema* címmel tavaly megjelent gyűjteményes kötetünkben például, amint a cím is sugallja, olyan elemzések vannak, amelyek azt fejtik föl, ahogyan Kelet-Európában a vasfüggöny leomlása után készült filmekben az intermediális eljárások azok, amelyek révén a Kelet és Nyugat kultúrája között vergődő, átmeneti világban élő, sőt abban megrekedt, korábbi életformájukból, gyakran otthonukból kimozdított emberek életérzése, traumáinak feldolgozása, szorongása, kulturális nosztalgiája, identitáskeresése, melankóliája (gyakran allegorikus formában) megmutathatónak bizonyult. Az állóképszerű kompozíciók, festményeket idéző beállítások (köztük a döbbenetesen sűrűn felbukkanó parafrázisa például Mantegna és Holbein halott Krisztust ábrázoló képeinek), a testiség érzéki-naturalista ábrázolása és az erőteljes képi stilizáció paradox összekapcsolása (mint például Pálfi György *Taxidermiájában*, Hajdu Szabolcs *Bibliothèque Pascaljában*, Radu Jude *Sebhelyes szívek* című filmjében) nem öncélú eljárások, hanem mind-mind gazdag konnotációjú reflexiók ennek a kornak a komplex élményvilágára. Amikor tehát az intermedialitást elemezzük ezekben a filmekben, tulajdonképpen azt is nézzük, hogy ez mit árul el a kor emberéről, illetve magáról a korról. Lúcia Nagib és kutatócsoportja a brazil film történetének átfogó vizsgálatával mutatott rá arra, ahogyan a többi művészet szorosabbra fűzi a fikciónak a valósághoz való kötődését (erről 2019-ben *Passages* címmel forgattak egy nagyon érdekes dokumentumfilmet is, Nagibbal készítettem egy hosszabb interjút erről). Lúcia Nagib legújabb könyvében



2018. Párizs

(Realist Cinema as World Cinema. Non-cinema, Intermedial Passages, Total Cinema, 2020) pedig azt elemzi, ahogyan a művészet és az élet, az intermedialitás és a filmes realizmus összekapcsolódik a kortárs moziban. Az utóbbi néhány évben az előbb említettek mellett több más fontos kötet is megjelent, amely a filmes intermedialitást elemzi (az Edinburgh University Pressnél külön sorozat indult erre). Az a tény is, hogy volt igény, vagyis úgy tűnik, volt piac a könyvem újrakiadására (amit nem én, hanem a kiadó kezdeményezett), szintén azt jelzi, hogy az intermedialitás még mindig az érdeklődés középpontjában van (vagyis még mindig érvényes az, amit Joachim Paech úgy fogalmazott meg röviden és frappánsan ezelőtt húsz évvel, hogy „intermediality is in”), sőt talán most kezd kikerülni a vakfolt-státuszból igazán.

Jean-Luc Godard-ral kiemelten foglalkozik a kutatásaiban. Mint a könyv előszavában írja, a francia filmkészítő több mint fél évszázadot átívelő munkássága tulajdonképpen hozzájárult ahhoz, hogy az intermedialitás témaként felmerüljön a művészetelméletben. A könyve bővített kiadásába többek között Godard posztmédiá korban érzékelhető kulturális hatásáról került be új fejezet. Hogyan foglalható össze ez a hatás, miben előlegezte meg Godard azt, ami a filmmel történt az utóbbi időben?

A *megvetés (Le mépris, 1963)* című film forgatásának idején Godard leült beszélgetni Fritz Langgal, aki a filmben saját magát, a legendás, Hollywoodba emigrált európai filmrendezőt alakította. Az ebből készült filmnek azt a címet adta, hogy *A dinoszaurusz és a bébi*, utalva ezzel arra, hogy személyükben tulajdonképpen két generáció, a letűnt klasszikus mozi és a még fiatal, új hullámos film képviselője mondja el, mit gondol a moziról. 2020 tavaszán, az első karanténkorszakban megkeresték fiatal filmesek és interjút készítettek Godard-ral svájci otthonában, aki készségesen és derűsen válaszolt a kérdésekre. Akkor

az jutott eszembe, elnézve a kilencvenes Godard-t, hogy ennek az interjúnak is lehetne ugyanez a címe: csak ma már Godard az, aki egyfajta dinoszaurusz. Mert egyrészt a mai fiatalok közül nagyon kevesen ismerik, bizonyos értelemben túlélte önmagát, ő már filmtörténet. Azok a filmek, amelyeket kötelezően nézünk az egyetemen tőle, egy mai egyetemista időszámítása szerint nagyon rég, az 1960-as években készültek (az ún. kései Godard nagyon ritkán kerül be a curriculumba). Csakhogy Godard szó szerint élő dinoszaurusz, nem egy foszszília. Ha az új hullámos Godard utóéletét, hatását nézzük, egyrészt azt látjuk, hogy a kortárs kultúra széles területén inspirált követőket. Quentin Tarantino és Aki Kaurismäki produkciós cégüket nevezték el egy-egy Godard-filmről, irodalmi művek, zeneművek készültek filmjei nyomán, videoklipek idézik és utánozzák képi stílusát, címfeliratainak jellegzetes betűivel divatot teremtett a grafikai dizájn területén. Godard a kétezres évek hiphop divatjának is egyik fő ihletője, filmjeit idéző reklámkampányával és ruháival a New York-i Band of Outsiders divatmárka fergeteges sikerkarriert futott be. Installációművészek reciklálják és parafrázálják filmjeinek jeleneteit, köztük például a hongkongi Kwan Sheung Chi 2017-ben készült *Blue is the New Black* multimédia-installációja a *Bolond Pierrot (Pierrot le fou, 1965)* végén az arcát kékre festő Belmondo gesztusára utal a hongkongi politikai tiltakozásokra is reflektáló, Godard ikonográfiája mellett a szellemiségét is megidéző művével.

Másrészt viszont Godard igazi hagyományát, szellemi örökségét tulajdonképpen maga Godard vitte tovább. Godard a francia új hullám legradikálisabb újtója volt, aki szétszedte a klasszikus filmes „építőköveket” és tiszta költészetet rakott össze belőle, egy olyan intermedialis poézist, amely intellektuális-érzelmi szinten maximálisan rezonálni tudott a kor szellemével. Miközben kortársai közül nagyon sokan és nagyon hamar visszatértek a műfajfilmek piacorientált világába, az 1960-as évek végétől kezdődően több hullámban vett újabb radikális, úttörő fordulatot Godard művészete. A mozifilm feladva előbb a videotechnikával, a politikai dokumentum-esszéfilmmel kísérletezett, aztán visszatért az egész estés filmek forgatásához, de ezek teljesen mások voltak, mint a korai filmjei. A hetvenes években magához idomította a televíziósorozatban vetíthető mozgókép formátumát. Majd tíz éven át készült gigantikus esszéfilmfolyamával, *A film történeteivel [(Histoire(s) du cinéma, 1988–1998)]*, amelyet az egész filmtörténetből kollázsolt össze saját (analóg) vágóasztalán, kommentálva, feliratozva, magát is befilmezve, átrajzolva a képeket, ezzel megelőzve a digitális korszak vagy például Peter Greenaway „élőmozis” VJ-produkcióit. Amikor megjelent, a digitális technológiát is azonnal felkarolta. 2004-es *A mi zenénk (Notre musique)* című filmjében arról medítált, hogy vajon a kisméretű digitális kamerák átalakítják-e a filmművészetet, 2010-es *Film szocializmus (Film socialisme)* című művében már a világot elárasztó fotografikus képek megsokszorozódását jeleníti meg. 2014-ben, a *Búcsú a nyelvtől (Adieu au langage)* című műve az újra divatba jött 3D technológiát teszi magáévá, jellegzetesen godard-i gesztussal a gigantikus büdzséjű hollywoodi szuperprodukciók és akciófilmek által használt háromdimenziós térhatást a független, alacsony költségvetésű film eszközévé teszi, s a két, házilag összetákoltt mobiltelefonnal filmezett film-

jével egyszerre rombolja le a 3D mítoszt és teszteli annak művészi lehetőségeit. Gyakorlatilag tehát most is ott van a kísérletezés élcsapatában. Godard-t lényegében mindig a totális mozi érdekelte. A *Bolond Pierrot*-ban expliciten ki mondja, hogy ez a hatvanas években a modern irodalom hasonló ambíciójának a filmes megfelelője kívánt lenni. Marcel Proust, James Joyce ezt megpróbálta, de talán lehetséges „jobban csinálni, sokkal jobban”, mondja Pierrot/Ferdinand a filmben. Proust és Joyce számára a kihívás a nyelv volt, műveikben a nyelvi kifejezőképesség végtelenségét próbálták megragadni. Godard a kép és a nyelv összjátékával kísérletezett, arról gondolkodott egész életében, és a mozgókép mindenféle lehetőségét, új médiumát kipróbálta, ahogy azok megjelentek az idők folyamán. Mivel most már öreg, forgatások helyett otthon, a lakásában, számítógépen vágja össze és manipulálja a filmtörténetből kiollózott képeket. Legutóbbi, 2018-ban bemutatott filmje ilyen kamera nélkül készült film, a *Le livre d'image*. Nem is moziba szánta ezt a már az esszéfilm kereteit is szétfeszítő, erőteljesen festői alkotást, hanem eleve számítógépes képernyőre tervezte, arra, amely manapság a mozgóképek fő hordozója. 2019-ben így állította ki Milánóban, a Fondazione Prada kiállításán. Egy szobában reprodukálták dolgozószobáját, amelyhez saját személyes tárgyai közül is kölcsönadott néhányat, s a látogatók így együtt láthatták a „filmet” az íróasztalával, rajta a számítógéppel, képernyőkkel, könyvekkel, festményreprodukciókkal, amelyek körülvevették Godard-t, amikor dolgozott. A réginek és az újnak, a kézzel foghatónak és a virtuálisnak, a személyességnek és, ahogy Godard a filmben mondja, a „kézzel gondolkodó” alkotásnak, illetve a mindent elárasztó, bárki által reciklálható digitális képeknek ezzel egy olyan kifejező egyvelegét alkotta meg, amely összekapcsolja a mozit az installációművészettel. És ezáltal korszerűbb, mint valaha. Szóval ő nem megelőlegezte, hanem tulajdonképpen aktívan végigkövette mindazt, ami a mozival és a mozgóképpel történt a 20. század közepe óta, és ebben egyedülálló.

A The Passion for the In-Between alcím akár személyes vonatkozásban is értelmezhető. Mi tartotta életben ezt a „szenvedélyt” több mint húsz éven át, miközben filmelméleti kérdésekkel foglalkozni sok türelmet, gyakran magányos munkát, kevés visszajelzést jelent?

A magányos munka nekem tökéletesen megfelel. Egyébként azt hiszem, tulajdonképpen minden alkotómunkához kell az elmélyülés, és ezt igazából csak magányban lehet megvalósítani. Ami a „szenvedély” részét illeti, bizonyos mértékben mindenkinek benne van az egyénisége abban, ami érdekli, amit kutat, és ahogyan ír. Van, amikor viszont érezhetően áthatja még az írást egyfajta, belső indíttatású lendület is. Számomra e nélkül a szenvedély nélkül nem hiteles a kutatás (már ha egyáltalán kutatásról lehet beszélni a humán tudományok területén), meg lehet érezni, ha valaki csak „fogalmaz”, írja a mondatokat, és ha valaki valóban „odaáll” a mondatai mögé a „tudományos” szövegekben is. Ez a szenvedély tehát tulajdonképpen egyfajta személyesség, hogy keresek valamit, meglátok valamit, és azt el akarom mondani másnak is, hajlandó vagyok

2019. London,
Tate Modern, Olafur
Eliasson installációja
(fotó: Lakatos Mihály)



erre éjt és nappalt feláldozni. Sok idő eltelik magával a kereséssel, az ember elindul egy gondolat mentén, megpróbálja felgöngyöltetni, elolvas hozzá jó pár tanulmányt, könyvet, megnéz pár filmet, aztán beír egy jelzöt annak nyomán a szövegébe, vagy esetleg ír egy lábjegyzetet, másnap pedig lehet, kitöröli, mert rájön, igazából nem illik oda. De ha sikerül megtalálni egy nézőpontot, sikerül megtalálni a megfelelő szavakat, akkor egy adott ponton a szöveg elkezd mintegy írni önmagát: előhívja az újabb kérdéseket, gondolatokat, mondatokat, és ez fantasztikus érzés. Nem írok könnyen és gyorsan, sokat gondolkodom azon, amit leírok, és sokat húzok, javítok írás közben.

A család, tanítás és adminisztratív munka mellett soha nem volt lehetőségem annyit írni, amennyit szerettem volna, de ennek ellenére nem tudtam rávenni magam, hogy gyorsítsak a tempón, lemondjak a keresésnek erről a „szenvedélyéről”, ami gyötrelmesen lassúvá teszi az írást. A visszajelzés lehet, hogy kevés, hisz nem sokan olvasnak filmelméleti tanulmányokat. Nem népszerű műfaj ez, nem versenyezhet a filmkritikával, az internetes kommentárokkal. Ilyen írásokat eleve csak egy szűkebb, nemzetközi szakma olvas és tart számon, ha egyáltalán számontart. Mivel angolul írok, ezáltal még kevesebb az esély, hogy például itthon szélesebb körben ismerjék az írásaimat. Éppen ezért annál szívemengetőbb, ha van visszajelzés, mármint személyes visszajelzés, nem az internetes algoritmusok által kiszámolt mutatók, amelyek manapság oly divatosak és „fontosak”. Kapok leveleket szerte a világból, igaz, nem túl gyakran, de néha-néha befutnak e-mailek Amerikából, Brazíliából, Portugáliából, Svájcban, Ausztráliából, ismeretlen egyetemi emberektől, akik az írják, hogy inspirálja őket az, amit írtam, illetve hogy használják szemináriumokon, doktori iskolákban a szövegeket. A hetekben egyeztettem arról, hogy lefordítják a könyvem két fejezetét oroszra egy szentpétervári folyóiratnál, megkerestek Törökországból, hogy lefordítanak a könyvet. Az nekem bőven elég, hogy látom, van egy pár em-

ber a világon, akit ez érdekel, és aki számára gondolatébresztő tudott lenni egy-egy írásom, és ez motivál arra, hogy ne hagyjam abba.

Miért döntött úgy, hogy nem indul a tanszékvezetői funkcióért a 2020-ban kezdődő új négyéves ciklusra? Mik a tervei az egyetemen, a kutatások terén?

A tanszékvezetés soha nem funkció volt számomra, hanem feladat. A főnökösködést és a funkcióval való nyilvános szereplést soha nem szerettem, a tanszékvezetést eredetileg is csak azért vállaltam, mert úgy gondoltam, szükség van rám. Amikor a szakot akkreditálták, létfontosságú volt az a döntés, hogy már ne csak átтанítsak, hanem átjőjsek főállásban a Sapientiára, mert kellett a saját oktatók (köztük kötelezően docens vagy professzor is). Rajtam kívül a tanszék minden tagjának a Sapientián volt az első egyetemi állása, ami így mindenkinek előrelépés volt az életében. Számomra viszont ez akkoriban még egyáltalán nem volt biztos, hogy előrelépés lesz, hisz én a BBTE-n docensi állást hagytam ott, és vállaltam fel ezt a munkát egy induló, még nem akkreditált egyetemen. Ez egy építőmunka volt, amelyet a legjobb tudásom szerint igyekeztem elvégezni. Az én legjobb tudásom pedig az egyetemi oktatásból és a kutatómunkából jött, egyéb ambícióim nem voltak, azt akartam megoldani, hogy ezeknek legyen egy stabil intézménye a tanszék. Ez talán sikerült is. A tanszék és szak megtervezése, felépítése mellett – nemrégiben olvastam a kifejezést egy angol tanulmányban – a tanszékvezetés tulajdonképpen nagyjából ún. „akadémiai házi munka” („academic housework”) volt. Kétségtelen, hogy ezt folyamatosan kell csinálni, ennek soha nincs vége, mindig újabb és újabb kihívások, feladatok jönnek, de hála istennek a bizonytalan kezdeteken már rég túl vagyunk. Ma már az egyetem egészében sokkal szilárdabb alapokon áll. A kolozsvári karnak saját épülete van, működő, jól felszerelt stúdiója, immár vannak tapasztalatok arról, mit és hogyan lehet megvalósítani. Tulajdonképpen már az előző ciklusban is komolyan fontolóra vettem, hogy abbahagyom, mert már nem kell ezt az „akadémiai házi munkát” vagy akár az „épület” további javításait föltétlenül nekem csinálni. Azt hiszem, ha a helyzet úgy hozza, kell tudni igent mondani egy ilyen kemény feladatra, de egy adott időn túl kell tudni nemet is mondani. A kezdő, fiatal tanárok, akik közül sokan tanítványaim voltak, immár tapasztalt kollégák lettek, volt, aki átvegye a stafétát, s aki készült arra, hogy átvegye a stafétát. A továbbiakban pedig természetesen folytatok minden egyebet, ami eddigi munkám volt: a tanítást (és ez folyamatosan nagy kihívás), a folyóirat-szerkesztést, a tanszéki kutatóintézeti munkát, ennek keretében pedig, ha lehetőségünk lesz, folytatjuk a konferenciákat is. Távlati célnak ott a doktori képzés, ezt még át kellene gondolni és megvalósítani. Személyesen ezen kívül még van néhány megírásra váró téma bennem, van egy kötetterv is, amelyet régóta dédelgetek, remélem, sikerül tető alá hozni a következő években.

Milyen trendeket figyelt meg a kortárs filmművészetben, és kik azok a kortárs alkotók, akik felkeltették az érdeklődését?

Az én ízlésemet alapvetően meghatározták a modern film nagy alkotói, akik számára a film nem szórakoztató mesemondás, hanem önvizsgálat, filozófia, kísérletezés, a mozgásban levő kép művészete. A kortárs filmben az efféle, kompromisszum nélküli alkotók és művészi jelenségek vonzanak, vagyis a legkevésbé az, amit mainstreamnek nevezhetnénk. Persze itt azért érdemes megjegyezni, hogy talán épp az jellemző manapság, hogy egymás mellett több „stream” is van. Nemcsak technikailag lehet többféle formában és képméretben filmélményhez jutni (moziban, háziprojektorral, tévében, számítógépen, telefonon, sőt akár okosórán), hanem az ízlésrétegeknek megfelelően is lehet válogatni a kínálatból. Az amerikai kommerszfilmmodell mellett erőteljesen jelen vannak a más kultúrában gyökerező filmek, így immár többféle erőteljes „sodrás” van. Az ún. független, „indie” mozi is létrehozott széles körben ismert trendeket. A periféria is befolyik bizonyos értelemben a fősodorba a „fesztiválfilmek” külön csatornáin révén (gondoljunk csak a román új hullám diadalútjára a kétezres évek elején), vagy egész konkrétan a nemzetközi kollaborációk, ún. transznacionális projektek révén. Ugyanakkor mindaz, ami régen elszigetelt, helyhez kötött kísérletezés volt, az ma mindenki előtt, azonnal láthatóvá tehető az interneten. A határok átjárhatóságát látjuk mindenütt (műfajokban, formátumokban, médiumokban, esztétikailag, kulturálisan stb.), és a hibridizációk aranykorát éljük. Akit eleve a köztességek, illetve az intermedialis kapcsolatok érdekelnek, annak bőven van mire felfigyelni.

Ami engem már jó ideje érdekel az intermedialitás szerteágazó jelenségein belül, az ahhoz kapcsolódik, amit Raymond Bellour a kilencvenes években a „másik mozi”-nak nevezett: a mozgóképi művészetnek a mozi mellett kialakult új területére utalva ezzel, a művészeti galériákban kiállított filmekre, amelyekben a klasszikus művészetek és a mozi, az állókép és a mozgókép fúziója, dialógusa a meghatározó. Noha ez a jelenség önmagában is nagyon izgalmas, engem az érdekel, ahogyan az installációk „kiállított” mozgóképben való gondolkodása hatott a filmművészetre. Továbbá az, ahogyan ez a festményszerűen vagy fotószerűen önálló képekben megjelenő, bizonyos értelemben absztrakt esztétizáltság összekapcsolódik a legelevenebb valósággal. A portugál Pedro Costa filmjei például éppen azért felkavaróak, mert a *cinéma vérité* hagyományát (a valóság megrendezetlen, kommentár nélküli, ám önreflexív filmrevitélét) egyesíti egyféle irodalmi tudatfolyam-szerűséggel és egy olyan gazdagon kimunkált képi nyelvvel, amelynek párját a 17. századi holland festőknél látjuk. A lisszaboni Fontainhas szegénynegyedben forgatott, majd annak lebontása után pár szereplőt újból „képbe helyező”, gyönyörű, víziószerű filmjeivel olyan digitális filmes realizmust teremtett meg, amely egyszerre mélyen személyes (mert a kis digitális kamerájával az alkotó közvetlen emberközelben, nem hagyományos filmstábbal, valós terekben filmez) és szenttelen (mert semmilyen ismert módon nem segíti a néző azonosulását az ábrázolt világgal). Ellentmondásosságában folytonosan provokálja a nézőt, és összetettebb mindannál, amit

valaha is láttunk. Ennek pedig lényeges eleme az, hogy a kép és a képszerűség belső feszültségein keresztül valósul meg, ami által kiállíthatóvá válnak a filmek részletei installáció formájában is (amint ez meg is történt több esetben, Costa alkotásaival). Vagy ott van az angol Joanna Hogg, aki egy teljesen más kontextusban és stílusban, hasonlóan komplex ötvözetét valósítja meg az átészvétizált képnek és a szenzuális mikrorealizmusnak. A szociális helyzeteket kíméletlenül feltáró jellegzetes angol realista filmes hagyománnyal ellentétben az ő szereplői a kényelmes életmódot élő felső középosztálybeliek, vagyis azok, akikről a másik végleten számos romantikus vígjátékot szoktunk látni. S miközben filmjeinek számos jelenetében (így például a 2007-es *Unrelated* gyerektelen nőalakjának a szembesülésében az őt vendégül látó barátok nagycsaládi életével, generációs konfliktusaival, vagy a 2010-ben készült *Archipelago* családi mikrokozmoszának belső dinamikájában) a társadalmi-kulturális különbségek ellenére magunkra ismerhetünk, ezek a filmek is végső soron arra kényszerítnek, hogy folyamatosan a képekből „olvassunk” és a képekről gondolkodjunk. Legutóbbi filmje (*The Souvenir*, 2019) nyolcféle (analóg és digitális) képformát kever, egyszerre nyílt önvallomás és közvetett meditáció a mozgóképi nyelvről. A fikciós filmekén túl James Benning művei (például a *Ruhr*, 2009; *Small Roads*, 2011) azok, amelyekben a képre való reflexió talán a legtisztább és legminimalistább formában megmutatja a digitális filmnek a valósághoz és a fotografikus-festői kép élményéhez való egyaránt erős kötődéseit, azt, ahogyan a digitális kamera, amellyel szinte végtelen felvétel készíthető, a kifinomult utómunka-lehetőségekkel együtt tulajdonképpen vissza tud vinni a hosszú expozícióval készült korai fototechnika, a dagerrotípa érzéki-esztétikai gazdagságához. Ezek az installációszerű (vagy installációként is bemutatható) filmek lényegében az esztétikai távolságtartás és a képben elkeretezett világban való elmerülés kombinációjának paradoxális élményét nyújtják.

Mi az, ami az említett alkotói hozzáállásból, képi gondolkodásmódból bekerül az egyetemi tananyagba is?

A mesterképzős diákjaimmal nemcsak ilyen típusú alkotásokat elemzünk, hanem megpróbálunk ilyeneket készíteni is. 2017-ben az első First Cut rendezvény keretében mutattuk be például a kolozsvári Monostor negyedről készített, négy vetítőtázas, multimédia doku-installációnkat, amelyben filmképszerű fotókkal és fotószerűen filmezett hosszú beállításokkal kereteztünk el részleteket ebből a világból azzal a céllal, hogy megmutassuk: ez nem csak egy ronda, szürke, posztkommunista betonrengeteg, hanem tulajdonképpen egy változatos és színes élettér, amelyben mindenféle fura szimbiózisok vannak. 2020 tavaszán a vírusveszély miatt beszorultunk a lakásokba, és csak online tudtunk órát tartani, de ez tulajdonképpen elősegítette, hogy a diákok még jobban megértsék ennek a képi gondolkodásnak a lényegét. Az ablakukban vagy az udvaron leállított statikus kamerával filmezve rákaptak a fotografikus filmezés ízére, arra, hogy egyszerre lehet figyelni arra, ahogyan a kép megkomponálható, és arra, ahogyan benne vagyunk minden érzékünkkel ebben a világban. Ezt



2019. London, White Cube, Jeff Wall kiállítás (fotó: Lakatos Mihály)

talán a legfrappánsabban Apichatpong Weerasethakul thaiföldi filmrendező fogalmazta meg. Egy, a karanténkorszakban írott nyílt levelében, amelyben arról beszélt, hogy a mozi általában egy utazásra hívja a nézőket, magával sodró drámai eseményeket mutat, s minden eszközével azon van, hogy elfeledkezzünk az időről. De ebben a helyzetben épp az ellenkezője történik: a karanténkorszak visszavezetett a pillanat filmjéhez, amelyben különösen tudatában vagyunk az időnek. Amikor a jövő kiszámíthatatlan, írja, a jelen felértékelődik, a „most” kitágul. Megtanulunk nézelődni, hosszan, kitartóan figyelni a körülöttünk levő világra. Nos, velünk is valami hasonló történt. Mondhatni terapeutikus, felszabadító hatása volt a diákokra annak, hogy nem kell forgatókönyvben gondolkodni, semmit elmesélni, „csak” képből kell szemlélni és megragadni a világot, nem kell kitalálni, hozzáadni, csak meglátni, kiemelni, ráhangolódni. Noha a kurzus 2020 nyarán véget ért, mind a mai napig folytatjuk néhány hallgatóval ezt az immár személyessé vált projektet, az elkészült filmek egy részét hamarosan hozzáférhetővé tesszük az interneten, és nagyon reménykedem abban, hogy esetleg az idén nyáron ezekből egy installációegyüttest is ki tudunk majd megint állítani az egyetemi stúdióteremben.

A CAREER IN PICTURES
KARRIERTÖRTÉNET KÉPEKBEN



1981–1985. As a university student / Egyetemistaként



The spring of 1987 / 1987 tavasza



1996. The 4th International Congress of Hungarian Studies. In the Port of Naples with Vilmos Tánczos / IV. Nemzetközi Hungarológiai Kongresszus. A nápolyi kikötőben Tánczos Vilmostal



1996. Rome, Musei Capitolini / Róma, a Capitoliumi Múzeum udvara
(Katalin Bara, Csilla Gábor, Judit Csutak, and Ágnes Pethő with the statue of Marforio)



2006. Christmas Festivity at the Media Department / Médiakarácsony
(Blos-Jáni Melinda, Gregus Zoltán, Pethő Ágnes, Virginás Andrea)



2007. *Words and Images* – International Film and Media Studies Conference / *Szavak és képek* – Nemzetközi Film- és Médiatudományi Konferencia
(Tonk Márton, Pethő Ágnes)



2008. Graduation ceremony / Ballagás



2009. Graduation ceremony / Ballagás



2010. *Film in the Post-Media Age* – The 13th International Film and Media Studies Conference in Transylvania / *Film a poszt-média korban* – 13. Film- és Médiatudományi Konferencia Erdélyben (Dánél Mónika, Pethő Ágnes)



2009. *New Waves* – The 12th International Film and Media Studies Conference in Transylvania / *Új hullámok* – 12. Film- és Médiatudományi Konferencia Erdélyben (Pethő Ágnes, Király Hajnal)



Pethő Ágnes, Szilágyi Pál, Fazakas Áron, Rácz Levente



2010. Laying the foundation stone of the new faculty building in Cluj-Napoca / A Sapientia EMTE új kolozsvári épületének alapköletétele
(Lupescu Radu, Pethő Ágnes, Szenkovics Dezső)



2011. Graduation ceremony / Ballagás



2012. After the final exam / Államvizsga után
(photo/fotó: Radu Igazság)



2012. Lisboa, NECS Conference / Lisszabon, NECS konferencia
(Király Hajnal, Pethő Ágnes)



2012. *The Cinema of Sensations* – The 14th International Film and Media Studies Conference in Transylvania / *Az érzékek mozija* – 14. Film- és Médiatudományi Konferencia Erdélyben (Pethő Ágnes, Laura U. Marks, Yvonne Spielmann)



2012. A remake of Rembrandt van Rijn's *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr Nicolaes Tulp* for Ágnes Pethő's 50th birthday. A gift from his colleagues. / Rembrandt van Rijn *Dr. Tulp anatómiája* c. festményének újragondolása Pethő Ágnes 50. születésnapja alkalmából. Ajándék a munkatársaitól



2013. Graduation / Ballagás



2013. *Rethinking Intermediality in the Digital Age* – The inaugural conference of ISIS (International Society for Intermedial Studies) / Az ISIS (Nemzetközi Intermedialitás Tanulmányok Társasága) debüt konferenciája



2014. Graduation / Ballagás



2014. *Figurations of Intermediality in Film* – The 15th International Film and Media Studies Conference in Transylvania / 15. Film- és Médiatudományi Konferencia Erdélyben (Eivind Røssaak, Pethó Ágnes, Brigitte Peucker)



2015. Graduation ceremony / Ballagás



2015. *The Real and the Intermedial* – The 16th International Film and Media Studies Conference in Transylvania / 16. Film- és Médiatudományi Konferencia Erdélyben (Jürgen E. Müller, Pethó Ágnes, Laura Mulvey, Lúcia Nagib)



2016. Graduation ceremony / Ballagás



2016. After the final exam
/ Államvizsga után



Lakatos Róbert,
Pethő Ágnes



Pethő Ágnes,
Blos-Jáni Melinda
(photos/fotók:
Radu Igazság)



2016. London
(Király Hajnal, Pieldner Judit, Pethő Ágnes, Sándor Katalin, Blos-Jáni Melinda)



2016. Cambridge. With the occasion of the workshop entitled Film, a Plastic Art,
organized by the Corpus Christi College.
(Pethő Ágnes, Pieldner Judit, Sándor Katalin, Király Hajnal, Blos-Jáni Melinda)



2016. Grantchester, Cambridge
(Pethő Ágnes, Tánczos Vilmos. Photos/fotók: Blos-Jáni Melinda)



2017. Paris, Luxembourg Garden / Párizs, Luxembourg-kert (a *Bolond Pierrot* egyik helyszíne)



2017. Paris, Montmartre / Párizs, Montmartre
(Pethő Ágnes, Sándor Katalin
(Photos/fotók: Táncczos Vilmos))



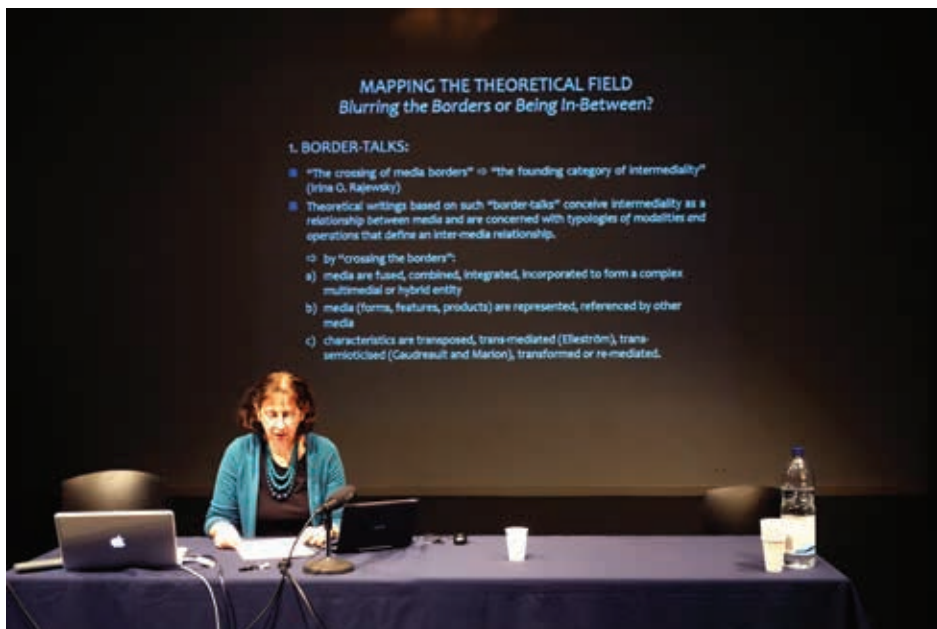
2017. Graduation ceremony / Ballagás



2017. During the break of the final exam / Az államvizsga szünetében
(Dana Duma, Pethő Ágnes. Photo/fotó: Radu Igazság)



2017. Filmtettfeszt – the festivity of receiving the Yellow Foal Prize / A Sárga Csikó Díj átvétele
(photo/fotó: Radu Norbert)



2017. Reading, Reading University, II InterMedia Conference: *The Moving Form of Film: Exploring Intermediality as a Historiographic Method*



2017. London, Barbican Centre
 (Lakatos Mihály, Blos-Jáni Melinda, Pethő Ágnes, Fieldner Judit)



2017. London, Store Studios, 180 The Strand: *At the Edge of the World II* by Anish Kapoor
(photo/fotó: Blos-Jáni Melinda)



2017. Cluj-Napoca, meeting Béla Tarr / Kolozsvár, találkozás Tarr Bélával
(Páll Adél, Kovács Nóra, Tóth Helga, Csurka László, Lakatos Mihály, Incze Kata, Tarr Béla,
Gödri Attila, Pethő Ágnes)



2018. Amsterdam, NECS Conference / Amszterdam, NECS konferencia
(Bakk Ágnes Karolina, Pieldner Judit, Király Hajnal, Pethő Ágnes, Blos-Jáni Melinda,
Virginás Andrea)



2018. Graduation ceremony / Ballagás



2018. Paris / Párizs
(Raymond Bellour, és Pethő Ágnes)



2018. *Intermediality Now: Remapping In-Betweenness* – International film and media studies conference / Nemzetközi film- és médiatudományi konferencia
(Pethő Ágnes, Joachim Paech)



2018. *Intermediality Now: Remapping In-Betweenness* – International film and media studies conference / Nemzetközi film- és médiatudományi konferencia (Pethő Ágnes, Martine Beugnet)



2018. *Intermediality Now: Remapping In-Betweenness* – International film and media studies conference / Nemzetközi film- és médiatudományi konferencia (Joachim Paech, Lúcia Nagib, Thomas Elsaesser, Pethő Ágnes, Kim Knowles, Gabriele Jutz)



2019. Madrid, Complutense University
(Pethő Ágnes, Asun López-Varela)



2019. After the final exam / Államvizsga után
(Radu Igazság, Lakatos Mihály, Lakatos Róbert, Gelencsér Gábor, Doru Nițescu, Virginás Andrea,
Blos-Jáni Melinda, Pethő Ágnes, Fazakas Áron, Felméri Cecília, Sorin Botoșeanu.
Photo/fotó: Radu Igazság)



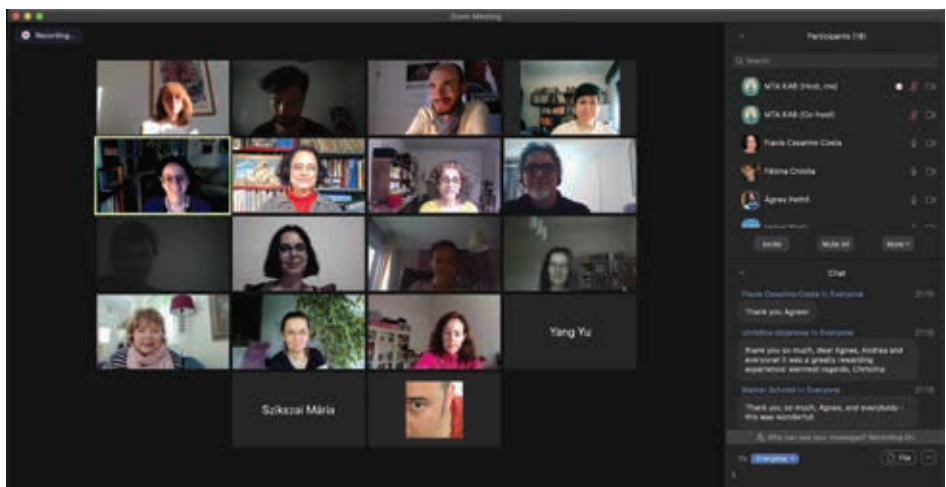
2019. *The Picturesque* – International film and media studies conference / Nemzetközi film- és médiatudományi konferencia
(Blos-Jáni Melinda, Pieldner Judit, Király Hajnal, Pethő Ágnes, Virginás Andrea, Lakatos Mihály, Bakk Ágnes Karolina)



2019. *The Picturesque* – International film and media studies conference / Nemzetközi film- és médiatudományi konferencia
(Laura Mulvey, Pethő Ágnes. Photo/fotó: Mira Marincas)



2019. *The Picturesque* – International film and media studies conference / Nemzetközi film- és médiatudományi konferencia
(Pethő Ágnes, Lakatos Mihály. Photo/fotó: Dózsa Endre)



2021. *Intermediality and World Cinema* – International online workshop / Nemzetközi online workshop



2021. The Giláu Mountains / Gyalui-havasok
(Photo/fotó: Tánczos Vilmos)



2021. Graduation ceremony / Ballagás



2022. Bucharest, NECS Conference / Bukarest, NECS konferencia
(Sándor Katalin, Pieldner Judit, Pethő Ágnes, Blos-Jáni Melinda, Ármeán Otília, Varga Balázs,
Gyenge Zsolt, Margitházi Beja, Dánél Mónika, Lakatos Mihály, Farkas Boglárka, Vincze Teréz)



2022. Kazan gorge and the Danube / A Kazán-szoros és a Duna
(Photo/fotó: Tánczos Vilmos)

ABSTRACTS
KIVONATOK

Abstract

Intermedial Encounters is a collective volume written by film scholars honouring the uniquely homogenous academic work centred on Ágnes Pethő's concept of intermediality. The chapters of the book have been written by scholars, artists, colleagues, and disciples who share Ágnes's passion for intermediality and for cinema in general. They have been invited to contribute either a personal account of their own relationship with the academic field of intermediality or a film analysis of their choice (not necessarily related to the phenomenon of intermediality). Therefore, the volume creates a cluster for new research developments by those who founded or joined the academic discourse around this specific concept. The book is divided into sections representing different specific areas within this discourse and also corresponding to different stages in Ágnes Pethő's research. Embracing the idea of hybridity and of in-betweenness, there are photo essays included between the sections, and articles are richly illustrated with film stills and other types of images, creating the intermedial bond between intellectual reflection and affection. In this way, the book attempts to offer a multisensory experience in itself.

After an introductory part presenting Ágnes Pethő's career path, the section *Personal Encounters* consists of subjective accounts of her inspiring presence written by a former student, a visiting professor, and a scholar of intermediality (Nándor Jakab-Benke, Anna Geréb, and Jens Schröter). The section title *An Archaeology of Intermediality* is inspired by Ruggero Eugeni's article on the origins of intermediality, while it also alludes to intermediality preceding cinema in pre-historical art described by Jürgen E. Müller, to Michael Haneke's metacinema (Mircea Deaca), or to Derrida's term *cinécriture* contributing to the discourse of intermediality, as Jolán Orbán suggests. The section *Cinema In-between Media* points to the first chapter from Pethő's book *Cinema and Intermediality. The Passion for the In-Between* (2011, republished in an enlarged edition in 2020), in which intermediality is placed in a philosophical and phenomenological perspective. From this perspective, this section is preoccupied with different inscriptions of one medium into another: the electronic vocabulary of video (Yvonne Spielmann), still photographs, and asynchronous voice-over in Hollis Frampton's structural film (Susan Felleman), early Italian cinema's return to the pictorial (Ivo Blom), and even the presence of silent cinema in Hungarian *ekphrastic* poetry (Orsolya Milián). The section *Intermediality and Authorial Reflexivity* opens with an abstract, theoretical perspective on the specular affinities of cinema in relation to self-reflexivity and intermediality (Fátima Chinita) and continues with analyses of various films sustaining this approach, focusing on authorial presence and the relationship between film and literature (films by Hong Sang-soo, Feng Xiaogang, Piotr Subbotko, Federico Fellini, and

New Hollywood films are discussed by Teréz Vincze, Ying Zhu, Ewa Mazierska, and Zsófia Ferencz).

The section *The Allure of Painting in Cinema* evokes Pethő's seminal article written on Hitchcock as a "visual artist working on the media border of painting and cinema" and contains articles addressing the intermediality of painting and cinema as different ways to achieve immersion: by way of transgressing a picture's frames into the cinematic world (Joachim Paech) or as a way to get immersed in a painting through cinema (Brigitte Peucker), intermedial transgressions between painting and cinema are also discussed in film analyses by Judit Pieldner and Katalin Turnacker.

The sections *Screens of Memory in Post-1989 Romanian Cinema* and *The Poetics and Politics of Intermediality in Hungarian Cinema* recall the recent collection edited by Pethő: *Caught In-Between. Intermediality in Contemporary Eastern European and Russian Cinema* (2020) and contain discussions of two national film cultures in geographical vicinity but advocating different film aesthetics. The authors of these studies are film scholars (Andrea Virginás, Christina Stojanova, Katalin Sándor, Mónika Dánél, Gábor Gelencsér, Miklós Sággy, Balázs Varga) who contributed greatly to the interpretation of Eastern European cinema, and now they demonstrate how an intermedial approach can open new directions in understanding local cinema culture in broader theoretical and global contexts.

Embodied Visions points to the conference and collective volume *The Cinema of Sensations* (2015), just as *Scenes of the L'entre-images* evokes the edited volume *Film in the Post-Media Age* (2012), while the section *The Real and the Intermedial* echoes the title of the 2015 Cluj-Napoca conference. Recent currents of film phenomenology and film philosophy have had an impact on Pethő's understanding of intermediality, and by channelling key notions such as embodied vision and haptic visuality, *l'entre image*, post-media age eventually led to a re-definition of the term and to the expansion of the research field. These sections show the methodological potential and the versatility of the aforementioned concepts not only in films but in expanded cinema, arts in general, and also in VR and new media experiments.

The book closes with Ágnes Pethő's curriculum vitae, a list of publications, and the conferences that she has organized.

Kivonat

Az *Intermediális találkozások* tanulmánykötet tisztelgés Pethő Ágnes szakmai pályája előtt, amely sajátosan egységes módon szerveződik a filmes intermedialitás kutatása és oktatása köré. A könyv fejezeteit olyan kutatók, művészek, kollégák és egykori tanítványok írták, akik osztoznak Ágnes intermedialitás és általában a filmművészet iránti szenvedélyében. Arra kértük őket, hogy járuljanak hozzá egy írással, amely az intermedialitás kutatási területéhez kapcsolódik, vagy egy általuk választott (nem feltétlenül az intermedialitás jelenségéhez kapcsolódó) film elemzésével. A kötet így egyfajta gyűjtőhelyévé vált az új kutatási eredményeknek és azoknak a szerzőknek, akik megalapozták az intermedialitás fogalma körüli tudományos diskurzust, vagy csatlakoztak ahhoz.

A könyv tagolása jelzi az intermedialitáshoz kapcsolódó különböző kutatási irányokat, és egyben nyomon követi Pethő Ágnes kutatópályájának különböző szakaszait is. A hibriditás és a köztesség jegyében a fejezeteket fotóesszék választják el egymástól, a tanulmányokat pedig filmkockák és más képtípusok gazdagon illusztrálják, összefüggést teremtve az intellektuális reflexió és az affektív intermediális között. Ily módon a könyv önmagában is multimédiális, szenzoriális élményt igyekszik nyújtani.

A Pethő Ágnes életútját bemutató bevezető rész után a *Személyes találkozások* alfejezetben egy volt tanítvány, egy vendégtanár és egy intermedialitással foglalkozó kutató (Jakab-Benke Nándor, Geréb Anna és Jens Schröter) szubjektív beszámolóit tanúskodnak az ünnepelt inspiráló jelenlétéről. Az *Intermedialitás archeológiája* alfejezet címét Ruggero Eugeninek az intermedialitás eredetéről szóló cikke ihlette, ugyanakkor utal Jürgen E. Müller írására a mozi prehisztórikus intermedialitásáról, Michael Haneke metamozijára (Mircea Deaca) vagy Derrida *cinécriture* kifejezésére, amely sajátos módon alakította az intermedialitás diskurzusát, ahogyan azt Orbán Jolán tanulmányából megtudjuk. A *film a médiumok köztességében* című rész Pethő Ágnes *Cinema and Intermediality. The Passion for the In-Between* (2011-es, 2020-ban bővített kiadásban újra megjelent) című könyvének első fejezetét idézi meg, amelyben a (film)filozófia és a fenomenológia felől gondolja újra az intermedialitás kulcsfogalmát. Ennek megfelelően ez az alfejezet a médiumok egymásba való változatos beíródásaival foglalkozik: a videó elektronikus szókincsével (Yvonne Spielmann), az állóképekkel és az aszinkron hangalámondással Hollis Frampton strukturális filmjében (Susan Felleman), a korai olasz mozi festőiségével (Ivo Blom), sőt a némafilm jelenlétével is a magyar ekphrasztikus költészetben (Milián Orsolya). Az *Intermedialitás és a szerzői reflexivitás* című szekciót a filmes önreflexivitás intermedialitásig vezető tükröződéseinek elméleti áttekintése nyitja (Fátima Chinita). Ezt követően esettanulmányok sorakoznak a filmes önreflexivitás eseteiről: Vincze Teréz, Ying Zhu, Ewa Mazierska és Ferencz Zsófia írása a szerzői jelen-

létre, valamint a film és az irodalom kapcsolatára összpontosít Hong Sang-soo, Feng Xiaogang, Piotr Subbotko, Federico Fellini és az új Hollywood filmjeiben.

A festészet csábítása a moziban alfejezet címe Pethő Ágnesnek a Hitchcockról mint „a festészet és a film médiumának határán dolgozó vizuális művésztől” írt tanulmányát idézi, és a festészet és a film intermedialitásáról szóló írásokat tartalmaz. Joachim Paech azt vizsgálja, hogy a festmény kereteinek átlépése hogyan lehetséges a film világába való átlépés révén, Brigitte Peucker pedig olyan példákat elemez, amelyekben a festmény világába történik belépés a film médiumának köszönhetően. Pioldner Judit és Turnacker Katalin filmelemzéseikben festészet és film közötti intermedialis határátlépéseket mutatnak be (*Erőszakok*, 2008, *Shirley*, 2014).

Az emlékezet kivételései az 1989 utáni román filmben és Az intermedialitás poétikája és politikája a magyar filmben című fejezetek a Pethő Ágnes által szerkesztett *Caught In-Between. Intermediality in Contemporary Eastern European and Russian Cinema* (2020) című kötetet idézik, és két földrajzilag közeli, de eltérő filmsztétikát képviselő nemzeti filmkultúra filmjeinek elemzéseit tartalmazzák. A tanulmányok szerzői olyan kutatók (Virginás Andrea, Christina Stojanova, Sándor Katalin, Dánél Mónika, Gelencsér Gábor, Sággy Miklós, Varga Balázs), akik nagyban hozzájárultak a kelet-európai film értelmezéséhez, és most azt demonstrálják, hogy az intermedialitás szemlélete milyen új perspektívákat nyithat a helyi filmkultúra tágabb elméleti és globális összefüggéseinek megértésében.

A Megtestesült víziók fejezetcím a *The Cinema of Sensations* (2015) című konferenciára és gyűjteményes kötetre, *A köztes képek terei* pedig a *Film in the Post-Media Age* (2012) című szerkesztett kötetre utal, míg *A valós és az intermedialis* című alfejezet a 2015-ös kolozsvári konferencia címét idézi. A filmfenomenológia és a filmfilozófia legújabb irányzatai hatással voltak Pethő Ágnes intermedialitás-fogalmára, és az olyan kulcsfogalmak alkalmazása, mint a megtestesült látás és a haptikus vizualitás, a *l'entre-image* vagy a posztmédia kor végül a fogalom újraértelmezéséhez és a kutatási terület tágulásához vezetett. Ezek az alfejezetek megmutatják a fent említett fogalmak módszertani potenciálját és sokoldalúságát nemcsak a filmekben, hanem a kiterjesztett moziban, a művészetekben általában, valamint a VR- és újmédia-kísérletekben is.

A kötetet Pethő Ágnes szakmai életrajza, publikációinak és az általa szervezett konferenciáknak a felsorolása zárja.

Rezumat

Întâlniri intermediale este un volum colectiv realizat de cercetători pasionați de film și arte vizuale pentru a onora munca academică a lui Ágnes Pethő, axată în mod unic pe conceptul de intermedialitate. Capitolele cărții au fost scrise de cercetători, artiști, colegi și discipoli care împărtășesc pasiunea lui Ágnes pentru intermedialitate și pentru film în general. Aceștia au fost invitați să contribuie fie cu o relatare personală despre propria experiență în domeniul intermedialității, fie cu o analiză de film (nu neapărat legată de fenomenul intermedialității). Prin urmare, volumul creează un cluster pentru direcții noi de cercetare din partea celor care au fondat sau i s-au alăturat discursului academic legat de acest concept specific. Cartea este împărțită în secțiuni care reprezintă domenii specifice în cadrul acestui discurs și corespund, de asemenea, diferitelor direcții de cercetare ale lui Ágnes Pethő.

Pornind de la conceptele hibridității, între secțiuni sunt incluse foto-eseuri, iar articolele sunt bogat ilustrate cu cadre de film și alte tipuri de imagini, creând legături intermediale între reflecția intelectuală și percepția senzorială. În acest fel, cartea încearcă să ofere o experiență multisenzorială în sine.

După o parte introductivă care prezintă itinerarul profesional al lui Ágnes Pethő, secțiunea *Întâlniri personale* constă în relatări subiective ale prezenței sale inspiratoare, scrise de un fost student, un profesor invitat și un cercetător al intermedialității (Nándor Jakab-Benke, Anna Geréb și Jens Schröter). Titlul secțiunii *O arheologie a intermedialității* este inspirat de articolul lui Ruggero Eugeni despre originile intermedialității, în timp ce face aluzie și la intermedialitatea artei preistorice, anterioară cinematografului, descrisă de Jürgen E. Müller, la metacinemaul lui Michael Haneke (Mircea Deaca) sau la termenul *cinécriture* al lui Derrida care s-a infiltrat în discursul intermedialității, așa cum sugerează Jolán Orbán. Secțiunea *Cinemaul în spațiul intermedia* trimite la primul capitol din cartea lui Pethő, *Cinema and Intermediality. The Passion for the In-Between* (2011, republicată într-o ediție extinsă în 2020), în care intermedialitatea este plasată într-o perspectivă filosofică și fenomenologică. Din această perspectivă, secțiunea tratează diferitele inscripții ale unui mediu într-altul: vocabularul electronic al videoului (Yvonne Spielmann), fotografiile statice și voice-overul asincron în filmul structural al lui Hollis Frampton (Susan Felleman), întoarcerea cinematografului italiene timpurii la pictural (Ivo Blom) și chiar prezența cinematografului mute în poezia ekphrastică maghiară (Orsolya Milián). Secțiunea *Intermedialitate și reflexivitate auctorială* se deschide cu o perspectivă abstractă, teoretică, asupra afinităților speculare ale cinematografului în raport cu autoreflexivitate și intermedialitate (Fátima Chinita) și continuă cu analize ale diferitelor filme care susțin această abordare, cu accent pe prezența autorului și pe relația dintre film și literatură (filmele lui Hong Sang-soo, Feng Xiaogang,

Piotr Subbotko, Federico Fellini și filmele de la New Hollywood sunt discutate de Teréz Vincze, Ying Zhu, Ewa Mazierska și Zsófia Ferencz).

Secțiunea *Seducția picturii în cinema* evocă articolul de referință al lui Pethő despre Hitchcock ca „artist vizual care lucrează la limita dintre pictură și cinema” și conține articole care abordează intermedialitatea dintre pictură și cinema ca modalități diferite de a realiza imersiunea: prin transgresiunea cadrelor unui tablou în lumea cinematografică (Joachim Paech) sau ca modalitate de a ne cufunda într-o pictură prin intermediul cinematografului (Brigitte Peucker). Transgresiunile intermediale dintre pictură și cinematografie sunt, de asemenea, discutate în analizele de film de Judit Pieldner și Katalin Turnacker.

Secțiunile *Proiecții ale memoriei în cinema românesc de după 1989 și Poetica și politica intermedialității în cinema maghiar* evocă recenta colecție editată de Pethő: *Caught In-Between. Intermediality in Contemporary Eastern European and Russian Cinema* (2020) și conțin discuții despre două culturi cinematografice naționale aflate în vecinătate geografică, dar care prezintă abordări estetice diferite. Autorii acestor studii sunt cercetători în domeniul cinematografului (Andrea Virginás, Christina Stojanova, Katalin Sándor, Mónika Dánél, Gábor Gelencsér, Miklós Sághy, Balázs Varga) care au contribuit în mare măsură la interpretarea filmului est-european, iar acum demonstrează modul în care o abordare intermedială poate deschide noi direcții în înțelegerea culturii cinematografice locale în contexte teoretice și globale.

Viziuni întruchipate face trimitere la volumul colectiv *The Cinema of Sensations* (2015), la fel cum *Scenele imaginilor intermediale* evocă volumul editat *Film in the Post-Media Age* (2012), în timp ce secțiunea *Realul și intermedialul* se referă la titlul conferinței organizate la Cluj-Napoca în 2015. Curente recente ale fenomenologiei și ale filosofiei filmului au avut un impact asupra lui Pethő în regândirea intermedialității, iar prin introducerea unor noțiuni-cheie precum viziunea întruchipată și vizualitatea haptică, *l'entre image* sau era post-media a condus în cele din urmă la o redefinire a termenului și la extinderea domeniului de cercetare. Aceste secțiuni arată potențialul metodologic și versatilitatea conceptelor menționate mai sus nu numai în filme, ci și în cinema extins (expanded cinema), în arte în general și, de asemenea, în experimentele VR și new media.

Cartea se încheie cu CV-ul lui Ágnes Pethő, o listă de publicații și conferințe pe care le-a organizat.

CUPRINS

- 11 **TABULA GRATULATORIA**
15 **PREFAȚĂ (în lb. engleză)**
21 **PREFAȚĂ (în lb. maghiară)**

ÎNTÂLNIRI PERSONALE

- 29 **Anna GERÉB**
 Experiențe din Cluj-Napoca
33 **Nándor JAKAB-BENKE**
 Ca cineva al cărui ochi a fost tăiat încet
37 **Jens SCHRÖTER**
 Intermedialitate–personalitate–devenire

41 **Dorel GĂINĂ**
 Imago Mundi

O ARHEOLOGIE A INTERMEDIALITĂȚII

- 57 **Ruggero EUGENI**
 Discursuri, urme, experiență. O arheologie a intermedialității
65 **Jürgen E. MÜLLER**
 O regândire a spațiului (de joc) intermedial al unor concepte
 preistorice cinematografice
77 **Mircea Valeriu DEACA**
 Correspondențe intermediale în *Al șaptelea continent* de
 Michael Haneke, 1989
95 **Jolán ORBÁN**
 Retorica *Cinécriture*-ii – metoda de *Tourner les mots* a lui Derrida

CINEMAUL ÎN SPAȚIUL INTERMEDIAL

- 109 Yvonne SPIELMANN**
Vocabular electronic în media audiovizuală a videoului
- 117 Susan FELLEMAN**
O poveste parantetică despre artă: între rândurile filmului (*nostalgia*) al lui Hollis Frampton
- 125 Ivo BLOM**
The pictorial turn: intervizualitate și reciclare în *Fabiola* (Enrico Guazzoni, 1918)
- 137 Orsolya MILIÁN**
„Un centimetru de poezie adevărată și o mie de metri de nebunii” – filmul mut și poezia ekfrastică maghiară

INTERMEDIALITATE ȘI REFLEXIVITATE AUCTORIALĂ

- 149 Fátima CHINITA**
Afinități speculare: de la (auto-)reflexivitate la intermedialitate via *mise en abyme*
- 157 Teréz VINCZE**
Între text scris și film – intermedialitatea lui Hong Sang-soo
- 165 Ying ZHU**
Reglementarea moralității în filmul chinez: de la *A Sigh* (2000) la *Cell Phone* (2003)
- 171 Ewa MAZIERSKA**
A Hole in the Head: între teatru și cinema
- 177 Zsófia FERENCZ**
Vitelloni furioși. Ecurile unui film clasic de Fellini în filme americane cu tema *coming-of-age* masculin din anii '70–80
- 187 Orsolya LÁNG**
Pethő Ágnes 60

SEDUCȚIA PICTURII ÎN CINEMA

- 194 Joachim PAECH**
Sari odată, băietel!
- 202 Brigitte PEUCKER**
În imagine: imersia ca strategie intermedială
- 211 Judit PIELDNER**
Senzații intermediare, transgresii intermediare în filmul *Aventuri în Bruges* de Martin McDonagh
- 221 Katalin TURNACKER**
Episoade din viața unei actrițe, un exemplu de picto-film: *Shirley – Visions of Reality*

PROIEȚII ALE MEMORIEI ÎN CINEMAUL ROMÂNESC DE DUPĂ 1989

- 237 **Andrea VIRGINÁS**
Polaroizi din trecutul nostru: *Balanța* (1992) lui Lucian Pintilie
- 243 **Christina STOJANOVA**
Pasiunile intermediale ale „noului” cinema românesc nou
- 249 **Katalin SÁNDOR**
„Excavații.” O abordare intermedială a filmului *Comoara* (2015) de Corneliu Porumboiu
- 259 **Mónika DÁNÉL**
Trecut continuu. Strategii de rememorare și reconstituire în filmele „*Îmi este indiferent dacă în istorie vom intra ca barbari*” (2018) și *Țara moartă* (2017) de Radu Jude

POETICA ȘI POLITICA INTERMEDIALITĂȚII ÎN CINEMAUL MAGHIAR

- 273 **Gábor GELENCSE**
Cer îndepărtat. Melodramele lumii rurale și filmul *Csempészek* [Contrabandiști]
- 281 **Miklós SÁGHY**
Urmările holocaustului într-un mic sat maghiar. Întâlnirea intermedială a filmului *1945* de Ferenc Török și a nuvelei *Hazatérés* [Întoarcerea acasă] de Gábor Szántó T.
- 289 **Balázs VARGA**
Fără mișcare. Despre filmul *Koccanás* [Ciocnirea] de Ferenc Török
- 297 **Mira MARINCAȘ**
Călătorii atemporale

VIZIUNI ÎNTRUCHIPATE

- 309 **László TARNAY**
O critică a intermedialității: despre cinemaul polonez contemporan
- 319 **Laura U. MARKS**
O senzație de grață: intermedialitate în *Neighboring Sounds*
- 325 **Hajnal KIRÁLY**
Peisaje vinovate și peisajele vinovăției în cinemaul contemporan
- 335 **Beja MARGITHÁZI**
Trauma din culise. Auctorialitatea și agenția feminină creată prin repetiții în *Euforia existenței* (2019)
- 343 **György KALMÁR**
Corpul invizibil al filmului
- 351 **Zsófia FERENCZ și Előd TÖRÖK**
5x5 Dedicated to Ágnes Pethő

REALUL ȘI INTERMEDIALUL

- 359 Lúcia NAGIB**
Realitatea artei: o analiză intermedială a filmului *Obsesie*
- 373 Cecília MELLO**
Jia Zhangke și Liu Xiaodong: o întâlnire intermedială cu realitatea
- 381 Anne GJELSVIK & Jørgen BRUHN**
Medierea cinematografică a Antropocenului. Strategiile intermediale ale lui Zhao Liang în *Behemoth* (2015)
- 393 Melinda BLOS-JÁNI**
Creând legătura. Recadrajul realității în corespondența filmică dintre Jonas Mekas și José Luis Guerín (2011)
- 407 Mihály LAKATOS**
Rola memoriei: o istorie (a filmului) personală godardiană pe ecranul unui iPhone
- 415 Mihály LAKATOS**
Faire Bande à Part. Alergând prin axa istorică (și încă două-trei lucruri)

SCENELE IMAGINILOR INTERMEDIALE

- 425 Laura MULVEY**
Instalația video *Rear Projection: Molly Parker* (Canada, 2004) a lui Mark Lewis. Reflecții despre intermediaritate și picturalitatea intermedială
- 435 Otilia ÁRMEÁN**
Un mosaic proiectat al imaginilor cinematografice
- 447 Zsolt GYENGE**
Între ecrane: corpuri, cadre și spectatori în instalații de imagini filmice
- 457 Asun LÓPEZ-VARELA**
Formele și platformele poësis-ului intermedial. De la Holodeck la *V/Rjerses*-ul lui Mez Breeze
- 465 Ágnes Karolina BAKK**
Simulații teatrale: experimente noi cu mecanisme de gamificare folosind comunicație intraludică cu scopul de a atrage un public nou

CURRICULUM VITAE

- 477 LISTA PUBLICAȚIILOR ȘI ACTIVITĂȚILOR ȘTIINȚIFICE**
- 489 CONFERINȚE**
- 517 Erika ZSIZSMANN**
„A fost o muncă creativă pe care am încercat s-o fac cât mai bine” –
Interviu cu Ágnes Pethő, profesor de studii de film la Universitatea Sapientia
- 647 CARIERA ÎN IMAGINI**
- 581 REZUMATE**

