

Török Kata

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Winter 2020 – The Question of the Scenario through the Relation of Writing and Film

Gábor Gelencsér: Treasures of the silver age. The canonical image of Hungarian film from the seventies

Looking at the canonized body of Hungarian film history from the seventies, we face a unique paradox: the “golden” age of the sixties is followed by the silver age of decline, which, at the same time, is rich in treasures, i.e. works of undiminishing value. Where does this contradiction come from, and more generally, is the commonplace, canonical image of Hungarian film from the seventies reliable at all? What do contemporary factors influencing canon formation teach us? What are the similarities and differences between these two problems? The article is searching for answers to these questions.

Balázs Kormos: Passages. Visual and audial figures of transcendence in the films of Bence Fliegauf

Bence Fliegauf's films are considered to be significant pieces of contemporary Hungarian cinema. Several critics appreciate his works for their universal vision, metaphysical content and openness towards transcendence. This essay analyses formal aspects of Fliegauf's films, focusing on their visual and audial features as reflective means of transcendence. The study demonstrates some in-between phenomena which arise from thematic components relating strictly to formal qualities, the unconventional use of basic cinematic techniques, and the extension of the nature of the filmic medium, especially through fusion with other forms of art. These in-between phenomena can mostly be described by complementary terms like life and death, visibility and non-visibility, utterance and silence, film and visual arts, or the screen and the audience.

The Question of the Scenario through the Relation of Writing and Film

Marco Bellardi: The Cinematic Mode in Fiction

This article focuses on the imitation of film form in cinematic novels and short stories on the level of narrative discourse, and introduces the concept of ‘para-cinematic narrator’. The author compares the temporality expressed by verbal tenses in literature and the temporality expressed through film semiosis. The connection between film and literary fiction is explored in terms of foreground and background narrative style. It is argued that the articulation of narrative foreground and background – i.e. “narrative relief” (Weinrich 1971) – in film form tends to favour the foreground style, and that such narrative relief is ‘flattened’ due to the “monstrative” quality (Gaudreault 2009) of the medium. This flattening is remediated in strongly cinematised fiction and conveyed through the use of verbal tenses. The imitation of montage and specific cinematic techniques is conceived, consequently, as a separate feature that can integrate into this remediated, para-cinematic temporality. Finally, the author recalls the concept of “mode” in genre theory (Fowler 2002), which describes a “distillation” of traits from one genre to another. With the category of cinematic mode the remediation of basic traits from film to literary fiction can be framed in terms of genre-related discourses.

Izabella Füzi: Media archeological reconstruction of kinema-sketches through film writing practices

Kinema-sketches were introduced in Hungarian cinema theaters around 1912 as a new practice of projecting moving images alternating with theatrical scenes on the stage. Internationally renowned Hungarian playwrights (Ferenc Molnár, Frigyes Karinthy, Miksa Bródy) embarked on the project of writings scripts for the sketches and some of the movie theatres (Apolló) were transformed into sketch theaters. Just a few of the scripts survive and the film scenes through which Hungarian directors (like Mihály Kertész, aka Michael Curtiz) learned mastering cinematic storytelling are even less accessible today. From the different types of sources (journal accounts, the fervent debate about the aesthetic character of the kinema-sketch, photos, posters) it is possible to reconstruct – in a media archeological way – a genre which embodies forgotten and transient uses, alternative trajectories of moving images.

In the first part I sketch a film historical context in which kinema-sketches can be examined as the first surviving Hungarian film scripts. In the second part I investigate the way kinema-sketches design and realize the labor division between moving images and theater *in writing*. Inhabiting the space between writing (page), screen, and stage, the sketches inscribe and indicate the borders of these media and their trespassing. Furthermore, they propose new dramaturgical solutions to the challenges of contemporary theater and enhance the uses of fictional moving images by introducing the social and the subjective gaze.

Eszter Polónyi: Writing in Light: Béla Balázs on the emergence of the film scenario

Film was fast becoming the dominant form of narrative discourse by the time of the establishment of the great European film studios in the 1940s. While many writers regarded film as undercutting other systems of narrative delivery, namely print, others discerned potential in the new industry for a form of authorship that possessed attributes of the prior, literary regime of writing. This piece considers the case made for literary authorship in and through film by the Hungarian film theorist and film scenarist, Bela Balazs. Balazs's bases his claim regarding the return of literature on the scenario. While the scenario is habitually defined as the verbal projection of a film, Balazs also locates its effects at the level of the photographic image, so that film is read as symptomatic of the language of the scenario. Tying developments in the conventions of film editing to the writing techniques of the scenarist, Balazs describes the authorship of the scenarist as both palpable and yet non-visible, which this piece argues explains the obscurity into which historic „film authors” have fallen, including Balazs himself. Although Balazs makes every effort to recognize the scenario, when it comes to acknowledging the scenarist, there is a distinct inability and unwillingness to designate them as the scenario's author.

Miklós Mészöly's Film Scenario for János Tóth

Gábor Gelencsér: Miklós Mészöly's Film Scenario for János Tóth

Barnabás Szöllősi: *From Idea to Film* – Tibor Cseres, András Kovács: *Cold Days*, 1967.

The first piece of a book series entitled *From Idea to Film* of the Hungarian publishing house *Magvető* was on *Cold Days* (1966), a film by Tibor Cseres (writer) and András Kovács (director). The film deals with the 1942 Novi Sad massacre, while the book, in the cultural-political spirit of the Kádár-regime era, stresses the film's referential, historical qualities through the use of historical documents, questionnaires and the authors' comments. The critical inquiry of this book is a great opportunity to reflect on and rethink the canonical position of *Cold Days* in Hungarian film history.

Gergő Nagy V. – Barnabás Szöllősi: “I have never been sent out from anywhere in my life”.

Interview with Éva Schulze

Éva Schulze is a Hungarian screenwriter, dramaturge and film producer. She started her carrier as a film editor in the 1970s at the Hungarian Television. After ten years of editing, she became a dramaturge: she contributed to the making of nearly a hundred films, she worked at the Objektív Film Studio, she was a member of the Hungarian MMKA film funding foundation, and she revived the screenwriting education at the University of Theater and Film Arts (Budapest) after the change of the regime. In this interview she talks about the specific and common factors of

different eras and funding systems of the Hungarian film, and about the challenges of teaching film-making in higher education – all from the perspective of screenwriting and film dramaturgy.

