

# Table of contents and Abstracts – Winter 2016

## Table of contents and Abstracts – Winter 2016

### Hungarian visual mass culture at the turn of the twentieth century

#### Szilvia Csanádi-Bognár: The Weight of Space, Herder's *Sculpture* and the Ritual Character of the Museum

The subject of this paper is the change of the beholder's relation to the space of the artwork. The author suggests that this turn coincides with the appearance of the space of the museum. The study is based on ritual theories and interprets the simple situation of *walking around the work of art* in the writings of 18th century German travelers, especially in the texts of Johann Gottfried Herder. While art theories of previous centuries considered the possibility to appreciate a sculpture by walking around it as a sign of the artwork's high quality, Herder in his *Sculpture* defines the situation of walking around the work of art as tension in a personal relationship. From this point of view the beholder's movement around the artwork is a form of modern connoisseurship that protects the rules of the Enlightenment's suppression of bodily qualities.

#### Benedek Tóth: Mediatization of everyday life in daily papers of Vienna and Pest in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century

The paper presents a specific discourse of the Feuilleton in the late 19th century Viennese Press. The discourse called "Wochenplauderei" (weekly chat) was a significant device of the mediatization-processes of the early Mass Media in so far as it mediatized the frames and orienting patterns of everyday life. My paper discusses the genealogy of the culture determined by the Mass Media. On the level of historical reconstruction, the paper presents some precedents of implementation/borrowing of the Viennese feuilleton-discourse by the Hungarian Press.

#### Tamás Tokai: The „tourist-eye”. Nature, view and observer in the touristic discourse of the last decade of the 19th century

The paper examines the evolving discourses of the newborn tourist movement in the late 19th century Hungary. Focusing on the articles of the first Hungarian tourist journal called *Turisták Lapja* (*Tourists' Paper*) it presents one of the first definitions of "tourist" and "tourism", and follows up their unfolding career from 1889 until the end of the century. The article shows how the topic

of visuality and the problem of visual perception (“the know-how of seeing” and the discourses of the “eyes”) gain even more ground in the descriptions of the new social activity. It seems that the introduction of tourism as a visual practice, as a result of “the ascendancy of the eye over the ear” (Judith Adler) and as a specific “technique of the observer” (Jonathan Crary) made a solid ground for the new subject of modernity to become a peculiar forerunner of the subsequent mass-tourist.

**Livia Barts: The Törley-brand at the turn of the century – Modern advertising as economic and social meaning-making**

The article examines the function and meaning-making methods of modern advertising through the example of Törley champagne’s early brand-building in late-19<sup>th</sup>-century Hungary. It states that advertising organically developed within late-19<sup>th</sup>-century capitalism as a communicative function that creates personalities through a row of abstractions and simplifications for otherwise impersonal commodities and brands to ease their handling for a growing and unknown public. The meaning-making process is based on social practices and values, and while it serves the basis of product positioning on the market, it also intertwined with the signification of social mobility. Based on this theoretical background, the article seeks to map the main elements of the Törley brand’s image, through its advertising activity and the analysis of contemporary reactions to it.

**Kármén Gáncsos: The spectacle of the bird's-eye view. Cityscape, democratization and the observer at the turn of the century.**

Hundreds of towers, lookouts and observation platforms were built throughout Europe and in other parts of the world, especially in the last third of the nineteenth century, with the sole function of providing views. The “tower building fashion” did not just define the turn of the century, but reflected a timeless human need for ‘overview’ from above (both in literal and metaphorical sense) and satisfied the cravings to experience the expanding horizon. The overwhelming impression of an apparently limitless horizon (which was previously experienced by very few people – alpinist and balloonists mainly) became a dominant mode of seeing at the turn of the century. The bird's-eye view of rapidly developing cities was not just a new visual, sensual and aesthetic experience, but a mass product for teaching people how to see the world from a different angle. The democratization of the expanding horizon, the cheap and fast ‘conquest’ of the air's realm and the ascension (in a physical sense) became a symbol of the social rise, political aspirations and the liberty of modern bourgeois society. The democratization of the bird's eye view meant a comprehensive spatial, visual and technical revolution which was carrying the promise of a radical social (and political) revolution. In my paper I examine the social hopes arising from the bird's-eye view as a mass product in order to point out that the spectacle of the cityscape from above was a social construction and safety-valve: it eased the tensions of modern bourgeois society (and/or the members of the lower class) related to the political system.

**Lilla Erdei: (Multi)media at the turn of the century. The educational presentations of the Urania Science Theater**

In my essay I examine multimediality around the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries through the educational presentations of the Urania Science Theater. Nevertheless, multimediality is rather a kind of multi-practice here because of the technological difference between the past and the present. Urania based its educational pursuits on different kinds of visual attraction from *laterna magica* to moving pictures, not to mention the performance itself, but there was no dominant medium that could have synchronized and recorded these various elements. So the frame medium was not a technical carrier, like film, but rather a practice bound to a particular location, time and social-cultural goal. This goal (the education of the laymen) was a specific phenomenon of the emancipational movements in the late 19th and early 20th century, therefore the decline of educational presentations due to social changes was inevitable – especially in comparison to technologically compact and ideologically not determined film.

**Izabella Füzi: Babits and the early (Hungarian) cinema**

The paper aims at re-reading a highly complex Hungarian modern poem by Mihály Babits entitled “Moving Pictures”, in the context of early Hungarian cinema. The reception history of Babits concludes that the poem is an ironical distantiation of the cinematic experience, following

from preconceptions of a hierarchical relation between sensation, perception and cognition or the contrast between the pure mimetic cinematic representation on the one hand, and the mediated experience of poetry on the other. Besides researching historical resources of Hungarian cinema to find the film described by the poem, the analysis ventures to reconstruct a reading of the poem in the context of early cinema and chase films combining the motives of elopement and car chase. Conclusions from the point of view of film history and lyric poetry are drawn based on the discourse on the restructuration of the senses at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century which differentiate between a sensational mode of viewing (represented by popular media and forms of entertainment) and a more distancing reception integrating sense perception (in works of modernist art).

The argument of the paper is structured through 5 subchapters. Following the exposition, the second chapter traces the function of the sensorial dimension in Babits' early poems, especially the cycle named "city pictures" which contextualize the "Moving Pictures" in Babits' first volume (1909). The third chapter unfolds the premises laying behind the interpretation of the poem (its symbolism) and the erroneous assumptions of interpreters on the nature of early cinema. Chapter 4 deals with contextualizations of early cinema regarding the cinematic representation of time and space, narrative, and cultural and social valuation of the cinema in terms of the social composition of the audience. Chapter 5 investigates the transitional function of the chase film between early and classical cinema, focusing on a close analysis of two chase films combining the motifs of elopement and car chase (*Runaway Match*, 1903 and *The Elopement*, 1907). The final chapter returns to Babits' poem to re-read it as a historical negotiation of early cinema's two interpretations undermining each other: as a (classical) narrative based on suspense and connecting and disconnecting the sensorial experience of viewers and characters and as a reaction of wonder and enjoyment at the technical achievements of cinema. The poem's historical reading of cinema should make us aware that the gap between early and classical cinema is not an absolute divide and it is dependent on historical appropriations and interpretations of the cinematic medium, not only a question of coding and representation. From the perspective of lyric poetry, representing cinematic sensation and perception can relate to the fragmentation and multiplication of subjectivity by adopting the corporeal, visceral viewing positions and the optics of cinema.

#### Péter Gerencsér: Elite Movie Theater – unmoving elite? The cultural integration of cinema in Rábaköz's small towns in the 1910s

This study examines how permanent cinemas established in two small towns of Rábaköz region in Hungary, Csorna and Kapuvár in the 1910s were integrated into the existing cultural system of the region, and how the system, in turn, was modified by them. According to my thesis the way the role of cinema was rated can be grasped as the rearguard action of the elites to maintain the traditional concept of culture intertwined with political domination. Furthermore, these elites

used the cinema as an extension of “high class” society. The paper, taking into consideration aspects of institutional history, social history and media history, examines first the “cultural materialism” of cinema and the topographic segregation and social spaces of projection rooms, then the social structure of the moviegoer audience and the economics of media system, while finally asks how narrative film changed the prestige of cinema as a cultural form.

Zsófia Zsigmond: The Hungarian cabaret at the beginning of the 20th century – Entertainment on the border of mass culture and high culture

The industrial revolution and the modernization brought many important changes on the turn of the 19th and 20th century. Budapest became a multicultural metropolis, new social stratification was born and also mass culture was created. This is the time of coffee houses, music halls and fun-fairs. With the emerging new social stratification and a growing number of entertainment options, we can observe the disruption of high culture and mass culture products. This differentiation builds invisible borders between social classes. The Hungarian cabaret is born in this dynamically changing and politically active atmosphere as a mixed product which uses both classes’ codes. In my study I examine the ambience in which the cabaret is born and the way in which the new genre finds its place and final form within other forms of entertainment in Hungary.

Erika Kiss *Son of Saul*: The art of filmmaking in the digital age

This article respectfully calls László Nemes’s bluff on his statement that the soul of cinema is celluloid. I argue that when an auteur-director steps back from available technological possibilities such as digital recording, it is usually a gesture against Hollywood: a show of resistance to the domineering industrial aspect relentlessly pursuing technical control over mimesis as well as technical-financial control over production that turns the filmmakers into hired hands and the audience into consumers. In fact, it can be argued that *Son of Saul* itself – while also being many other things – is an attempt to deal with the question of how individuals can preserve agency in the face of overwhelming technological power. This indicates that the art of directing is closer to an autonomy-centered ethics than art in general. Nemes champions the ethical art of directing in spite of the grand technology of film production.

© Apertúra, 2016. tél | [www.apertura.hu](http://www.apertura.hu)

webcím: <https://www.apertura.hu/2016/tel/table-of-contents-and-abstracts-winter-2016/>

