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Spring 2018 – Frames of Film History

Edited by Izabella Füzi and Ervin Török

N. Rodowick: Chapters from *The Virtual Life of Film* (2007)

The translation presents the first part of the final chapter of D. N. Rodowick's influential book, *The Virtual Life of Film* (2007), in which the author maps out the way in which the ontology of film changes through the transition from analogue to digital technology. An important context of this problem – as opposed to earlier transitions or changes (sound film, wide screen film etc.) that were used to attract audiences to cinemas with new features of spectatorship – is the fact that the shift to digital projection has happened almost inconspicuously. Almost as if distributors would want to maintain the illusion of the stability and survival of the photography-based film. Rodowick gives an in-depth explanation of this shift through the paradoxes of 'perceptual realism': digital recording and synthesis stress the representational aspect of traditional photography, and attempt to surpass its 'photographic authenticity', while relying on a fundamentally different logic and a different recording technology. The study discusses the way in which digital recording, processing and projection are different from analogue technology, and points to the consequences of these changes to the ontology of the moving image.

Anikó Imre: Quality and TV

The article discusses the disruptions that the appearance of "quality TV," itself inseparable from the expansion of internet-based television and streaming platforms, has caused within film and media studies in Hungary and, more broadly, the post-socialist region. The author tracks the phenomenon of quality television to the American HBO model and its critical, academic and industrial reception, in comparison with the quality model that developed with the Western European public service broadcasting tradition. She compares these to television's status in the (post)socialist region, where the medium has been regarded primarily as a vehicle of education, persuasion and entertainment, carrying little artistic or cultural value in comparison with the cinema, theater and literature. The appearance of globally and digitally accessible quality TV, which is best exemplified in Europe by HBO Europe's original drama series, has fundamentally altered television's identity and value. In the East European region, however, there is a distinct risk

that, instead of helping finally to legitimate television's institutions, products, professionals and viewers, quality TV will dissolve into cinema and thereby help confirm the death of television. This would further entrench the outdated but politically consequential value hierarchy between high and popular media forms and their practitioners, which the interdisciplinary apparatus of television studies had successfully labored to erode elsewhere in the past decades.

Rosalind Galt – Karl Schoonover: Introduction: The impurity of cinema

For over fifty years, art cinema has provided a flexible model for imagining cinema outside Hollywood. An elastically hybrid category, art cinema has nonetheless sustained an astonishing discursive currency in contemporary film culture. The authors use art cinema's mongrel identity to explore central questions for current film scholarship, while exposing otherwise unseen geopolitical fault lines of world cinema. Focusing on unexpected encounters, the authors delineate the terrain of art cinema as a dynamic and often contested field where film histories intersect with the larger theoretical questions of the image, forging a relationship between the aesthetic and the geopolitical or, in other words, between cinema and world.

Bálint Kovács András: Genres in Hungarian film history

This paper presents a preliminary statistical analysis of the frequency of genres in Hungarian film history. We provide an explanation of the way in which we differentiate genre categories and offer various statistical measures of the occurrence of these genres over 80 years of Hungarian film history. The analysis shows the dominance of comedies, author films and melodramas. We provide a time course analysis of this result and show that melodrama remains an important factor in author films.

Miriam Bratu Hansen: The Mass Production of the Senses: Classical Cinema as Vernacular Modernism

The article proposes a new metahistorical frame in order to reinterpret the relation between modernity and modernism on the one hand and cinema on the other. It broadens the concept of modernism by defining it as a set of cultural responses to the challenges of modernity, encompassing both high modernist artistic movements and mass cultural products and production modes. Hansen carries out a well-founded critique on the concept of "classical Hollywood cinema" arguing that the concept of classicism imported from art history and drawing on the neoclassicist stylistic norms of harmony, balance, and proportion functions as a transhistorical category which is unable to account for the description of cinema as a historical and modern form of experience. In contrast with an ahistorical account of classical Hollywood cinema, the article explains its worldwide hegemony by its power to create a sensorium able to

reflect on the contradictions and ambivalences of modernity and to mediate between different experiences related to it.

Izabella Füzi: Historical forms of cinematic spectatorship

The overall aim of the article is to contextualize the different social uses related to mainstream moving images in historical terms. Taking the two genealogies of moving images as a point of departure, according to which, on the one hand, they are images invested with time and on the other, they are actualized through different social uses, three modalities of spectatorship are distinguished. These three modalities “translate” the unfixed temporality of moving images as the here-and-now of the act of viewing in the case of performative spectatorship, the here-and-now of the story in the case of fictional absorption and the here-and-now of the immediate feedback through interaction in the case of simulation.

Bence Kránicz: Problems of researching early Hungarian film criticism

The paper attempts to outline a possible methodology of academic research of film criticism by analysing the film reviews of *Színházi Élet* magazine written in the 1910s. The research aims to analyse the heterogeneous texts of early Hungarian film criticism by looking for the stylistic expressions of influencing and educating the audience in them, while aiming to discover economical, aesthetical or political motivations behind the critics’ intentions. Following the summary of the definition and interpretation of criticism used during the research, the paper analyses early film reviews of *Színházi Élet*, including the articles of Alexander Korda, the first notable Hungarian film critic among them, arguing that critics presented cinema as a distinctly middle-class form of entertainment by using specific expressions and journalistic tools.

Student’s Workshop

Patrik Mravik: Productive repression. Censorship as the liberated object of film history

This essay traces current approaches to censorship in film studies and examines the techniques of films that were shaping, inspecting and interpreting censorship in the early Kádár era of the 1960s. The traditional approach to censorship suggests that it is a form of repression: it restricts and prohibits free art and free thinking. This essay broadens the discourse of censorship in film studies by emphasizing the heterogeneity, complexity, and the constitutive viewpoint of censorship in film studies from 1980s.

Book Review

Miklós Sághy: State Socialism in Television, Television in State Socialism
(Anikó Imre: TV Socialism. Duke University Press, Durham and London, 2016.)

The essay analyzes Anikó Imre's monograph on *TV Socialism*, published in 2016. The book provides a cultural history of television in Eastern Europe during and after the era of state socialism. The main and novel hypotheses of the book are highlighted, namely, the operation of European televisions as a refutation of the cold war logic (that is the strong divisions between East and West, Socialism and liberal capitalism) as well as the understanding of the culture of television as distinct from the elite discourse on art, films and literature.

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