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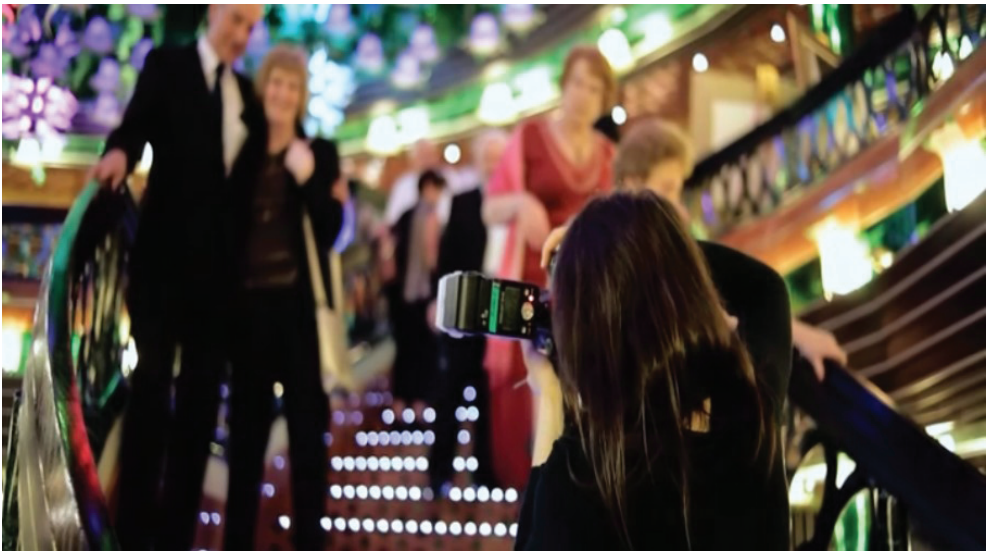
Moving Medialities of Image, Body and Sound



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The Intermediality of Film

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Abstract. Film is from its beginnings an 'intermedia fact.' A film screening about e.g. 1900 consists of a celluloid ribbon with a series of images cranked through a projector situated among the audience, accompanied by a piano player and commented by a film lecturer … At the end of the 1940s a movie like Marcel Carné's *Le silence est d'or*, which tells us about the early film performance, includes all these elements as a cinematographic medium in favour of the all-embracing illusionary effect of an audiovisual moving picture on the screen of a movie theatre. But after television took over the film as part of its programme for its electronic broadcast, the media properties of film changed dramatically. First analogously and then in digital productions and representations of films as pure data streams no pictures and sounds are used any more to represent moving images and sounds on computer monitors. This leads to the conclusion that there is no single answer to the question 'What is film?' (André Bazin) but only a media history of the permanent changing medium will help us understand the 'film as a multi-media form.'

The title of this article is "The Intermediality of Film." Of no special film, but of film in general. Film as an "intermedial fact." It will not be about single films as elements of film history but about media history of film in an intermedial perspective.

The question I shall try to answer is 'what is film' from a special point of view. That means, the answer will go to another direction than that, for example, of André Bazin in his collection of essays, *What is Cinema* (*Qu'est-ce que le cinema?,* 1981). In the middle of the last century Bazin was principally interested in style, narration and meaning of single films, their aesthetic and cultural relations. Not *what* is a 'film as film' was his question, but *how* the film as a realistic art got its way in the Cinema as a department (or section) of the institution of art. Film as a photographic medium for the recording of images and sounds was principally dedicated to realism, in which he agreed with Siegfried Kracauer. Christian Metz, the great theoretician of film as an audiovisual language and as text, stressed the priority of narration towards the medium in which something is told. He and

his contemporaries took the following idea as the indubitable truth, that film is identical with a story told in moving pictures which are to be seen by spectators on the screen of a cinema and can best be enjoyed, remembered and described in this form. Bazin, who died in 1958, also observed that the same films which were originally made for the cinema have also been shown and could be seen in television and that another kind of films have been produced for the television, too. However, from the obvious loss of the "media identity" of the film, which has not been made exclusively for the cinema any more, he could not draw the necessary conclusions for his view and understanding of the cinema. It took a long time until film scholars could accept that film is a multi-media form to be represented by different devices in the cinema as well as in television, by video and computer, analogically and digitally (see e.g. Rodowick 2007).

More than hundred years after the invention of cinematography, film at the beginning of the second millennium became an omnipresent hybrid appearance, which could be fixed to no medium of its production, no particular context of an institution and no particular place of its consumption. Today film includes almost everything that meets us as a moving audio-visual representation at any time and at every place. Film, even today, is still in the centre of the everyday cinema programme, but often we do not know any more whether it is projected cinematographically, which means as a mechanical (optical, photochemical) device or by electronic technical installations, analogously or already digitally. Film today is more than just cinematographically a feature or documentary film. If electronically recorded and transmitted, it is an important component of the television programme. There, it concerns not only features of every kind, but also shorts (e.g. documentary shorts) in television news or magazines. The transition or difference of pre-produced films to the live-broadcast in television as a "real time medium" is blurred. In general, film on television is the name for all sorts of representations, analogous or digital, which are shifted in space and time as opposed to their live transmission. Film is almost everything that is offered as a video, analogously or digitally. Film can be downloaded from the Internet as a feature or short film, for example, with YouTube. Film has become a metaphor for every kind of moving picture. Its history is that of constant "media transformations" of its respective, intermedial constellations.

Film in its conventional understanding is always twofold. On the one hand it is a celluloid ribbon, a carrier material for the recording, treatment and transference, while on the other hand film is identical with the representation of movement on a cinema screen. In this way, film is ideally integrated into the dispositive

structure of the ancient film theatre: as a medium of the representation (a film strip in the film projector behind an audience) and the moving picture shown on the screen. And still today most people insist on the cinema hall for the best experience of the movies. Bazin and with him many others, e.g. Gilles Deleuze, have been interested only in one side of the film, its stylistic construction, its narration and aesthetics and its supposed effects. As the latest since film has left the cinema definitively, we cannot but take into consideration the totality of the different media conditions of cinematic representations, which means the complexity of the media diversity of the film. Nowadays it is impossible to speak of film without saying what is to be understood exactly by it as a media form.

1.

In the beginning of the history of cinematography, film was a photo-chemically treated celluloid strip, which was manufactured by the Georges Eastman Company in Rochester, New York. It had already been used in science before it became the basis of the cinematographic entertainment industry. Since then, the meaning of film has been split into a material process of the production and post-production of moving images in the form of celluloid strips and a projected moving picture which tells us a story with light and shadow. As soon as the film theatre had become the standard place for the representation of films, the concrete material film and its technical showing with a projector disappeared from the view of the audience behind a wall in the back of the cinema hall, and only the film as a screen projection and a story told in action was left behind. Film became the real illusion of a reality, while its material prerequisites have become invisible.

There is a scenario of a representation of the early cinema in a movie by René Clair from the year 1947, *Le Silence est d'or* (*Silence is Golden*). The story of the film plays about 1900 and begins with a married couple that flees before the rain into a fairground 'cinematograph theatre.' There, a burlesque is seen on the screen. The film is projected from an apparatus which is put up in the middle of the auditorium. Beside the screen, a moving picture lecturer describes and comments the action to be seen there and which is accompanied by a piano musician. The spectators are obviously more interested in them than in the action of the movie. They enter and leave the 'cinematograph theatre' without paying attention to the beginning and end of the programme. [Fig. 1.]

The combined elements of which the cinema performance consists a couple of years later, exist here independently, arranged side by side and only loosely linked

to the screen. Both sides of the film projection can be observed by the audience simultaneously, the work of the projectionist turning the crank and the projected film on the screen. Spectators, interested in the technique of the cinematographic apparatus, could directly look at the projector at work and learn how the film strip is pulled through the apparatus. When umbrellas are opened in the auditorium, they get in the projection ray and are seen as shades on the screen which cause disturbance in the moving picture. Dialogues, comments and music are not yet permanent components of the film, but interchangeable elements of the screening of which the film performance currently consists. The film strip with its series of photographs, which perform the moving picture of the film projection, dialogues and comments, musical accompaniment and – last but not least – the audience are loosely arranged in the cinema space as a specific dispositive, which altogether builds up an arrangement of the cinematograph at about 1900.

However, it is a film again, which shows us this early screening. The film spectators who saw this film in the end of the 1940s in the cinema – and still exclusively in the cinema – saw nothing but the projection of a moving picture on the screen including dialogues, noises and music. In more or less perfect darkness and silence, the perception of the environment of the spectator, including the film theatre and its audience and the technical process of the film projection vanish in favour of the pure experience of the film as action and narration. After the threshold of the credits begin, giving the title, the names of the actors and of the director and the production company, Pathé Consortium Cinéma, only the events told on the screen for which the audience has paid, will count in the end.

So what is film after the cinematography is fully established and has nearly reached the height of its technical and aesthetic development at the beginning of the second half of the twentieth century? It is nothing but this special experience of a story told on the screen under ideal technical and dispositive conditions: we go into a movie and nothing should disturb us in our concentration on experiencing it, which is why the film should disappear as a hybrid technology and the cinema as a place and dispositive structure should for the duration of the film projection vanish from its perception. Film as a "medium" remains in the blind spot of our perception. Under these conditions of a then modern cinema, René Clair tells us in his film, that film itself, at that time and still today within the scope of the Institution of Cinema, is always a compilation of different technologies or of several kinds of art like theatre, music, literature and so on. As an arrangement of different forms of their involved and closely linked media, they can at any

time be separated from the rest – and they are taken apart to become independent again. And exactly at the time when this film was first released, this process of disintegration began. First the dispositive structure of the film screening in a film theatre broke apart, the film left the cinema and became a component of the mass media television, after it had changed technically from the mechanical to the electronic medium. It might be interesting, that the exodus of the electronically turned film and the strict separation between cinema and television could have been prevented by a project called 'Cinema Television,' which started in the 1930s with the Swiss invention of the Eidophor (cf. Meyer 2009), an electronic big screen projector, which was definitively ready for operation in 1959. With this electronic device, it was not only possible to project films in approximate cinema quality and in colour, but also television broadcastings as part of the cinema programme. This 'Cinema Television,' which was much more attractive than the small grey television images, was fought and suppressed by the rising television industry, which did not want to tolerate a public alternative to its plans for an exclusive private use of television. Only today new considerations of the inclusion of television into cinema programmes have started.

After Hollywood could not prevent film from leaving the cinema, it immediately started a violent competition with its new rival television, in the film market and for the audience. The most favoured means of getting films and the audience back into the cinema was the reintroduction of the wide screen format in combination with colour film. CinemaScope films in colour seemed to blow the small grey television picture into pieces. No doubt these huge films could only be adequately seen on the wide screen in the cinema. In Frank Tashlin's film from 1957 in CinemaScope and Colour with the title: *Will Success Spoil Rock Hunter?*, where the platinum-blond Jayne Mansfield filled the large screen without difficulty, Tony Randell steps in the middle of the movie in front of a curtain and turns to the (imaginary) film audience. He welcomes the television users among the cinema audience and offers them broken views of the ridiculous small and grey television monitor images and compares them to the fantastic large colour image of the CinemaScope film they are just seeing in the cinema. [Fig. 2–4.]

The attempt of the cinema, at the same time, to dig up the electronic media with the 3D format of its films failed after a few years because of imperfect techniques. Today new electronic 3D efforts of the cinema industry are confronted with new television technologies and bigger and bigger monitors which will create the 3D-feeling also in private rooms. In the future, it will be more important that films can be shown and seen digitally on mobile devices at any place and

any time. This has deepened the separation between the local cinema and the now 'movable moving pictures' even further. The actual discussion is about the merging of cinema, television and internet. In short, the continually changing relations between film as part of the 'Institution of Cinema' and the new electronic media will in the end affect and change all 'media properties' of the film.

In the future, it will be a matter of describing film in its hybrid constellation as an "intermedial fact" in such a way that the "intermediality of film" becomes the object of the observation and analysis of films in general. The basic assumption is, that the medial representation (performance) fundamentally determines the aesthetic perception of a film.

2.

Film has by no means been understood from the outset as a "medium" (whatever this means at the moment). In the history of cinema, at first all efforts were directed towards the acceptance of the film as an individual work of art and its definition on the analogy of literature, by author, genres, etc. Film theatres, which in the middle of the 1920s became veritable palaces, offered a traditional and secure location for classical films. Then television integrated the cinematographic film as an element into its permanent programme, where it is linked to an electronic mass medium. Here, a work of art has lost its right for existence. It becomes more and more difficult to distinguish a single work in the endless flow of different parts of the television programme, which is now the dominant media format. The beginning and end of a separate film would normally be suppressed for its better integration into the permanent flow of the programme. Programme information and advertisement invaded the pictures and the space between the shots. In this situation it made more sense to describe film as a text, which is connected with all other texts of the programme and, in addition, of the culture in total. Intertextual relations also reveal connections of films to literary texts or images – pictures e.g., of art history, which are also estimated as visual texts. The film *Le Silence est d'or*, based on an original shooting script by René Clair, was retold as a Ciné Roman immediately after its release. The action was shortened and compressed, while the dialogues were partly taken over from the film. [Fig. 5.]

The first shot of the film reveals an image which comes close to a famous painting of Gustave Caillebotte, the painter of Paris streets at the end of the 19th century: the title of this painting is *Street in Paris in the rain from the year 1877*. [Fig. 6. and Fig. 7.]

In the framework of a textual description or analysis there is no problem connecting a film as a sign process to its literary extension, pictorial tradition or all other cultural phenomena. In the net of texts and intertextual relations there will be no individual or original work of art any more. Every film is an excerpt from interlinked texts which it repeats in quotes or endless remakes as they presently dominate the production in Hollywood. What gets lost in this manner of lumping together very different cultural phenomena in the realm of the text is the perception of the differences between the media properties of films as well as other cultural phenomena. Film as a medium remains in the blind spot of its observation. But the difference, whether a film is seen during a cinema performance or on a Video Tape Recorder is a difference by medial properties, that again makes a decisive difference for the respective notion of film.

But how is an observation of the film as a medium possible? If we take into consideration the state of film under the condition of its representation by a diversity of new media technologies, it is hard to speak of an identical medium of film. Every film is produced at the same time for its exploitation in the cinema (analogously or digitally), as a video (analogous by VHS or digitally as a DVD or Blue Ray) or as a videostream on the Internet. Transformations by copying from one medium to another between cinema, video, DVD and Internet are suited to definitively blur the idea of a uniform or single media identity of the film. And finally the digital computer has abolished the physical differences between not only the technical but also the artistic media film, literature, painting, music, etc. The computer has eliminated the variety of media identities in favour of the one universal machine. It seems that film today is an empty form, which can be filled with forms of the different media, which in turn leave traces on the moving pictures they perform. These traces may transport references to the properties of the relevant media, which take part in every representation or performance by any medium.

The film *Le silence est d'or* by René Clair has demonstrated that the cinematographic film at that time (1947) was a hybrid media compilation, which conceals its media differences on the first, and exposes them on the second, self-reflexive content-level as forms, indicating the common conditions of film at the beginning of the last century. We look at the involved media as forms, which contribute to the performance of a film, which is formulated by its medial forms. We analyse the underlying conditions of the production and the representation of film in their complex development. Presently, hence, it makes much more sense to observe and to describe film as a compilation of media (instead of a piece of art or text). More than everything else, films are products of their intermedia relations.

Now, what is film as a medium and intermediality?

The semantic field in which the concept "medium" is to be understood includes the meanings of 'connections,' 'spaces between,' the 'transferences' (of film). Media is a means for the purpose of bringing something out to the world and of communication in general. At this level, there are two media concepts, which are different in their consequence. One means simply the institutions, technologies and in the broadest sense all devices of (mass-) communication. The other is more basic and distinguishes media from the forms they produce.[1] This second notion of media means that they can be observed not like the objects of the reality, but only in the effects or forms they produce and in which they appear. Time, for example, as a medium which determines our modern reality like no other, is observable, however, only in the forms in which time is represented. Time by itself does not exist – except as a concept or mere condition for the representation of time on watches, in calendars, as a measure of movements, etc. Everything I perceive are forms of their peculiar media, which they formulate and which they assume as their conditions of appearance. Forms point back to the media and can become media again enabling new forms.

The notion of medium in connection with film (as opposed to film as a piece of art or text) often means its description as a technical, aesthetic or socio-cultural complex within the scope of the institution of cinema. Media then compares film with other phenomena at the same (institutional, cultural etc.) level, however, it says nothing about itself and its (inter-)media conditions. Here the notion of film as a medium is used in a restricted, only technical sense. But if film as a medium means a variable form which changes on account of its respective media conditions, then intermediality as a dynamic interdependence and changing complex of media forms becomes observable. In this general sense the definition of film as a medium must do justice to the complexity and hybrid constellation of film as a combined form. Films, just as works of literature, painting, music, etc. are as media nonentities, but changing complexes of their various media conditions which they formulate in this special form. Certain forms of their media conditions can appear in other media again: in the filmed literature it

1 "Media," Niklas Luhmann says, are observable in the forms they enable, because "on the other side" of the form they are observable as a (double-sided) form again. Media generate forms which are generating forms themselves etc., meaning that media appear as forms and can only be observed in the forms they generate: as a medialised form and as the form of its medium, resulting in their general reflexivity. Media are no objects, but conditions or possibilities of their forming processes and the observation of these. "This leads to the realisation that the distinction between medium and form is itself a form, a form with two sides, one of which – the side of the form – contains itself." That means, the differentiation "reenters itself and reappears within one of its sides." (Luhmann 2000, 104.)

will never be the "book" in its physical condition, which is supposed to become transformed, but a certain form of the narrative, of language, style, etc. arranged and printed in a book, has become transformed into another media. Writing, pictures etc. could be likewise transferred as forms of their media.

Forms allow the observation of differences, for example, of figure and ground. Here the form is the medium of differentiation of what it is not, of system and environment, inside and outside. While forms articulate the properties of their media, they differ from other media in their perception as forms. A picture, for example, as an object differs from the object it represents on its surface (iconic difference [Ikonische Differenz, Boehm 1994, 11–38]) and it also differs from other pictures with other media conditions, as, for example, paintings in relation to photographs which may show the same items, but are different on behalf of their different media properties. Intermediality is the introduction or repetition of a medium – as its form – "in another, media form." This assumes that in the same representation different forms can be observed which formulate, besides, different media properties. The intermedial representation of a painting in a film will not contain the painting as such, but the formulation of its media qualities in the form of its representation in the other medium: film.

Ever since its beginning, film has always been a hybrid intermedial construction on its technical as well as its aesthetic level. As an always-changing arrangement of different media, it is constituted by the cooperation of their different media forms. Film as we have seen is a two-sided form. On one side, the film is photographed with a camera "on film" as a celluloid carrier medium and film ribbon, and on the other side you have the projected moving picture as a bare-light performance. Outgoing from this basic arrangement, one can describe the complicated media forms in their interdependence and interaction. Actually, film, in this context, is just an intermedial construction, which has to be reconstructed in each case historically and systematically from the process of its media forms. Despite all its variability, the film as a two-sided form seems to have remained the same till today: also today every film must be photographed or taped first and be exposed afterwards – this temporal shift identifies 'film.' The spatial and temporal distance between both processes can vary depending on the involved media and their properties, it is rather large in the case of photographic recording and small in the case of digital recording. The distance between recording and representation or projection of a photographic film opens the space for its (montage-) treatment and transference, which can take in case of the cinematography months and years and for digital productions only a few minutes of footage. If there is no spatial

and temporal difference between the recording and its representation any more, the media form of 'film' is abolished in the so called live transmission.

3.

A short description of the opening sequence in René Clair's film *Le Silence est d'or* as an example for a film in its intermedial complexity and procedure will now be given. In this sequence, film is relevant at three levels: 1. As a projection in a fairground screening around 1900. 2. This screening is shown as part of its narration in a sound film from the year 1947. 3. And because there normally would be no (original) celluloid film available for its scientific scrutiny, a digital recording and reproduction of the film on a DVD or digital data carrier (USB-stick) is used for its demonstration. The film from the year 1947 contains the earlier film (i.e. film projection) by the turn of the century of 1900; the DVD serves merely as a carrier of the digital recording and reproduction of the older analogous or photographic film.

While the film of Marcel Carné is hidden as a film and its media form behind its narration or content, it shows (another) film as a complex dispositive of the projection and adoption in its complex media arrangement. Projector, screen and spectator form an ensemble to which the sound is separately added as piano music and as dialogues from a film lecturer. Remarkably, the origin of the sound is shown as accompaniment of the silent film and to be heard only by the invisible sound film. The projector contains (as before the camera) a film ribbon with series of photographs cranked by the hand of the projectionist and projected with the light of an electric arc lamp on the screen. Film as a medium and technical complex is only observable as forms to be shown as content of another film and its own media properties (e.g., sound film). The film of the first order by René Clair repeats as a narration, demonstrating (older) media forms, the film of the second order in a media-reflexive turn. Only at this second reflexive level 'film as a film' is observable.

In 1947 René Clair could assume that the conditions of the screening of his film and the order of the audience in a film theatre were basically similar to that of the film in the fairground cinema shown in his film. The dispositive structure of the representation and adoption of the early cinematograph would recur in the representation and adoption of his own film in the film theatre – with the significant divergences as the effect of the historical development of the cinema generally: i.e. the projector is beyond the auditorium and invisible, hidden behind a wall, picture and sound are dubbed on the same film ribbon etc. And

probably no umbrellas will be opened during the screening, because it will not rain any more into the auditorium as in the fairground cinema. [Fig. 8.]

This structural analogy between the dispositive structures of the screenings on both levels can be abandoned after the film is not recorded any more in its cinematographic mechanical and photographic form, but digitally i.e. on DVD, when no fixed dispositive order of an audience in a film theatre must be obeyed any more for a film screening: the monitor assumes almost no particular position of spectators in front of its pictures and sounds, its consumption is possible at any time at every place with every arrangement. As long as the ancient film theatre was the model for the consumption of films, in 1900 as well as in 1947, René Clair could play in his film with the confrontation (or continuation) of two similar but historically different spaces for the audience, where the one turns back to the other in a media reflexive way. In the digital projection this exists, if at all, only as an allusion or citation.

4.

This finally leads to the question, how the conditions of the "intermediality of film" have changed after film is given exclusively in the digital medium. The presupposition that all represented forms transport properties of the media by which they are caused, meant for the cinematographic (mechanical) film that the projected moving picture on the screen is essentially formulated by the mechanics of camera and projector and their effect on the projected image. Analogous to the mechanical clockwork, which represents a continuous time flow by switching step by step in seconds and minutes, the film projector switches step by step 24 pictures/sec. for the representation of continuous movement. The photographic film gives the appearance of a mimetic representation of pre-cinematic movement in reality by the differences between the 24 pictures/sec., switched from one picture to the next. The suggested ontological status of the photographic image makes every film a documentation of a pre-cinematic reality (what has been in front of the camera during the shooting) and only the intention towards the filmed reality causes a differentiation of document or fiction. Photographically recorded pictures and sounds maintain and transport the properties of their media, which they formulate cinematographically.

The digital process of the recording, storage and processing, as well as representation differs basically from the material conditions of the original media. Pictures and sounds which are taped, stored, processed and represented

in accordance with their algorithmic programming have no analogue (mimetic, ontological) relation to our perception of reality. All we see and hear digitally produced on the monitor or as a beamer projection we owe to the specific programming of the data which give us the suitable pictures and sounds. Everything that has remained of the material qualities of the media programmed and performed digitally are merely forms of the quoted media without any material basis or 'ground' any more. Film is now in its original intermedial complexity a digital construct which is reconstructible concerning all media components in their forms. A very nice proof of this sort of interchange of media forms is the repetition or retake of characteristic cinematographic forms in digitally produced films. (Stalf 2004, 211–221; Flückiger 2004, 407–428) It turned out that high-resolution images made possible by their digital production are too sharp, too proper or too cool and miss certain favoured qualities of the old cinematographic film. Cinematographically, the moving image on the screen is always a little blurred or fuzzy and the projection is somehow trembling. This imperfectness is an effect of the properties of the photographic film and its mechanical projection. The silver-nitrate grain on the surface does not return in every of the 24 projected pictures in the same position. This is why a constant movement or 'noise' on the surface can be perceived. Inevitably, the smallest mechanical divergences in the film projection make the moving image tremble a little. Because these minimal defects and their welcomed effects will not occur in digitally produced images, they are added to them as planned disturbances in order to give these too straight images and their synthetic look the nostalgic atmosphere of ancient cinematographic films. This device might change in the near future in relation to a new generation of 3D films. Cinematographically produced 3D films were not successful, because the same effects of blur and mechanical inaccuracies caused headaches with the spectators of these films. These disturbances can be avoided digitally and only the still inevitable glasses are an obstacle on the way to the perfect pleasure of the complete 3D space experience in the cinema. This experience has, up to now because of technical reasons, only been possible in big picture formats in the traditional dispositive of the cinema, which gives the cinema institution again an advantage over the competing new media with their small (but movable) monitors. But this also will change in the near future.

So, also in the digital age film is an intermedial phenomenon. All involved media are now present in nothing else than quotations of their qualities in forms, which represent them. New electronically uttered forms appear in performances of new, digital media art. Also, digitally produced films are defined by the different

media forms of their representation, be it in traditional cinemas, on television, by DVD and, above all, on the internet via computers or mobile phones where they are about to grow together. Technical fantasies of new projected (immersive) spaces we can step into and we can live in emerge from the laboratories of New Media Companies. We shall see what happens with the intermediality of film in those new media surroundings where film cannot be distinguished any more from what it is not. Utopian cinema fantasies, which arose after 1945 (i.e. by André Bazin [Bazin 1981, 19–24; Barjavel 1944]) dreamed of a second cinematographically realised reality. But when new synthetic realities occur, it will not be in the framework of the cinema, when new synthetic realities occur. It's the internet, which offers global interactive spaces, 'Second Worlds' and 'Social Networks' for new social experiences. New media with new properties will open new medial forms beyond the film.

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Figure 5. Cover of the Ciné Roman *Schweigen ist Gold (Le silence est d'or)* of the series: Guter Film – fesselnd erzählt

Figure 6. Gustave Caillebotte: *Street in the rain*

Figure 7. Still from the first shot of *Le Silence est d'or*

Figure 8. Still from René Clair: *Le silence est d'or*

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Jean-Luc Godard's Passages from the Photo-Graphic to the Post-Cinematic. Images in between Intermediality and Convergence[1]

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Abstract. The article begins with an attempt to trace the various domains of Godard's widespread influence that reaches beyond contemporary cinema in our post-media culture (installation art, literature, music, graphic design, commercial videos, the current vogue of the "Godardesque" retro look promoted on the scene of fashion world, and finally, photography). The advertising strategies used by the Band of Outsiders fashion label using Polaroid photos that reconstruct or imitate Godard images are analysed in more detail, their connection with a "photo-op" culture and the emergence of the "photo-filmic" image is emphasised. The article then connects all these "Godardesque" features that survive in the post-cinematic world to the intermedial use of photography in Godard's films that may have pre-figured their post-filmic appropriation. Some of the relevant junctures are pointed out between "the cinematic" and the "photographic" revealing how photography in Godard's films seems to offer a centre stage for inter-medial tensions but it can also facilitate the assimilation by other media. His latest film, *Film Socialisme* is analysed in this sense as an allegoric passage of the photographic image from intermediality to media convergence.

"The photographic exists somewhere in-between;
it is a state of 'in-between-ness.'"
Raymond Bellour (2008, 253.)

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1. Jean-Luc Post-Cinema Godard

In the credit sequence of the *Band of Outsiders* (*Bande à part*, 1964), one of the iconic films of the French New Wave, Godard "modestly" listed himself among the creators of the film as "Jean-Luc Cinema Godard." With the playful insertion of the word "cinema" between his first and last names he forged a signature revealing a strong sense of authorship in cinema that could be defined not only by leaving an indelible mark over every aspect of a film, but also by being interested (besides being the director/author of a film in the conventional sense) in experimenting with the totality of what moving images can offer, a kind of authorship that he practised throughout his long and prosperous career and that eventually propelled him to the position of being perhaps the most influential artist of his generation. Today modern (or post-modern) cinema is inconceivable without Godard with influences ranging from Quentin Tarantino, Martin Scorsese to Wong Kar Wai, Takeshi Kitano, Aki Kaurismäki or Hal Hartley, Wes Anderson, Jim Jarmusch, and many others.[2] What is more, his extraordinary sensitivity for addressing within his films key issues of the changes in technology, mediality and context of moving images also makes him a major figure within those cinéastes who exploit the possibilities of cinema's intermedial status to bring into focus the changing cultures of sight and sound within the twentieth century and beyond.

A decade after the turn of the millennium Godard celebrated his eightieth birthday while his films have already moved on to be embedded within and to be reflecting upon the so called "post-medium condition" of cinema. His grandiose *Histoire(s) du cinéma* (*The Histories of Cinema*, 1988–1998) mourned the end of the cinematic era, and his 2001 *In Praise of Love (Éloge de l'amour)* was considered by David N. Rodowick (2007, 90) also as an "elegy for film" itself, a narrative allegory of cinema's passing from the analogue to the digital age. His short film, *The Old Place* (2000) as well as his 2006 exhibition combining film projections and collage works presented at the Centre Georges Pompidou[3] in Paris experimented with moving images introduced into and confronted with the traditions of the museum space. *Notre musique* (*Our Music*, 2004) reflected on the visual constructions of classical cinema facing the challenges raised by the appearance of small handheld cameras. At the same time, Godard is not only an author who has had a notable

2 In the world of cinema Godard's influence reaches even as far as the bizarre universe of Japanese anime director Mamoru Oshii (e.g: *The Red Spectacles*, 1987; *Talking Head*, 1992).

3 See a good description and evaluation of the project in Alex Munt's (2006) article in *Senses of Cinema*.

influence on filmmakers of different genres, but in this age of the ever expanding field of moving images somehow he also succeeds in having an impact within the most diverse artistic areas and sub-cultures that breed post-cinematic imagery emulating decontextualised visual elements from his films.

A brief survey directed at the mapping of the main areas that register Godard's influence beyond cinema (i.e. beyond the obvious impact made upon younger generations of film directors) may lead us to unexpected territories and convergences. The rhizomatic connections that can be unearthed in pursuing Godardian traces also shape another image of Godard beyond the archetype of the modernist author, and even beyond the master in intermedial cinema, revealing "Godard" as a unique brand name at the juncture where the "cinematic" and the "photographic" converge.

Without the ambition to present a comprehensive listing of Godardian associations leading outside cinema (and back) here are some of the fields that have emerged in the last decade feeding on diverse aspects of his art and artistic persona.

Perhaps the most obvious terrain is the avant-garde and experimental scene where Godard's inter-art influence is traceable in several domains. There have understandably been several installation art projects that drew inspiration from Godard in creating their own vision. One of these is the work of the New York-based conceptual artist Adam Pendleton who refashioned elements from Godard's 1968 film, *Sympathy for the Devil*, in his own 2010 video installation, titled *Band*, substituting the experimental rock band named Deerhoof for Godard's original use of the Rolling Stones.[4] A similar musical re-interpretation of Godard was done by the William Parker Double Quartet who composed and performed a suite of experimental jazz music based on one of his films (the *Alphaville Suite, Music Inspired by the Jean Luc Godard Film*, the music was released as a CD album by Rogueart in 2007).

In addition to a general influence of Godard's cinematic style over modern prose writing there are also cases in poetry in which we see more direct appropriations of his techniques or themes. Jan Baetens, a Flemish poet and literary critic writing in French composed a volume of verses "translating" Godard's cinematic vision into poetic imagery and called this a "novelization," a reverse adaptation of film into literature (*Vivre sa vie, une novellisation en vers du film de Jean-Luc Godard*/

4 See a description of the project here: *http://www.ifc.com/news/2010/10/jean-luc-godard-inspired-band.php* (The last date of access for all websites referred to in the article henceforth is 7.09.2011.)

Her Life to Live, a Novelization of the film by Jean-Luc Godard, published by Les Impressions Nouvelles, Collection Traverses, 2005).[5] Brigitte Byrd's 2010 volume of poetry published by Ahsahta, *Song of a Living Room*, is not a novelization of a particular film like Baetens's, but has also been characterised by reviewers as Godard-esque due to the dense inter-art references, disconnected elements of narration and the presence of a characteristic "voice-over" in the poems that is reminiscent of Godard.[6] What is interesting in these examples is that although Godard has sometimes been accused of being more of a writer than a filmmaker, preferring long, rambling dialogues and quotations from literature, these literary texts connect to his films not through his emphatic use of poetry or language but through his powerful cinematic imagery and subversive narrative devices. These works do not simply "extract" some of the literary qualities of the films, but create more complex intermedial passages: an unusual type of ekphrasis in the case of the novelization or the resemblance to a "cinematic" voice (reinforced with movie references) in the case of Byrd's poetry.[7]

On the other hand, apparently Godard, the man of letters (or the "lettrist" author of cinema), has been able to round up fans outside cinema even through such relatively minor elements of his films like the characteristic graphic design of his credit sequences and intertitles. The typeface used by Godard in several of his 1960s films (written in his characteristic style of tricolour letters) has been reproduced by a group of designers in a celebration of the eightieth birthday of the cult director, and can now be obtained via the internet as the "Jean-Luc fonts typeface" that is sent free of charge to fans' e-mail addresses on request. [Fig. 1.] The designers argue that the lettering is a kind of "found object" in Godard's cinema that originates in the "vernacular typography of the street."[8]

5 Jan Baetens who is a Professor at the University of Leuven is also a scholar who has done researches in intermediality, especially the phenomenon of novelization (see: *La novellisation. Du film au roman*, 2008).

6 Robert Olen Butler writes in the online presentation of the book: "the poems of Brigitte Byrd's third book ask the reader to follow a ribbon threaded among music, movies, poetics, and an unlinear sense of time." See: http://ahsahtapress.boisestate.edu/books/byrd2/byrd2.htm.

7 The American poet John Allman, who often resorts to movie references in his works, has also recently published a trans-genre story titled "Godardesque" in the literary journal *Hotel Amerika* according to a short online biography (see: *http://www.futurecycle.org/FutureCyclePoetry/JohnAllmanBio.aspx*)

8 According to information posted on the website of the designers, Jean-Luc typeface "is an uppercase-only display grotesque in two styles: one with normal bold accents and punctuation, and one with hairline accents and punctuation, as seen in the title cards for *2 ou 3 choses*." They confess: "It is so interesting to us because it is such a clear renunciation of the 'pretty,' classical title screens that were common in that time's more conservative films. It has a more vernacular and brutishly low-brow character;

Godard's obsession with the "spectacle" of writing, with coloured letters and words decontextualised from neon advertisements or street signs, is carried on not only in various areas of visual design, but in music videos as well. Outside regular institutional channels, in the "brave new self-publishing world" of *vimeo* there is a video clip created by Chateau Bezerra[9] that has produced much favourable reverberation in the blogosphere. The video accompanies "Melancholy Hill" by The Gorillaz with a "visual cut-up poem" using only the neon signs of New York reminiscent of Godard's similar images from *Pierrot le fou* (1965), *A Woman is a Woman* (*Une femme est une femme*, 1961) *or Alphaville* (1965). [Fig. 2.]

Music videos produced by established labels have not been shy either to convert the Godard legacy to small change. Just to name two examples that used the same film, *Alphaville*, as a "source template" for their imagery: Chris Applebaum's video for Kelly Osborne's single, *One Word*[10] [Figs. 3–4.], and Hype Williams's *All of the Lights* video for Kanye West featuring Rihanna and Kid Cudi,[11] also including the neon light lettering reminiscent of *Une femme est une femme* and refashioning the famous coloured headlights car sequence from *Pierrot le fou* (1965) that was used by Quentin Tarantino too in his pastiche of Godard within Robert Rodriguez's *Sin City* (2005). The case of this latter video can be regarded in this way as highly symptomatic for Godard's rhizomatic influence. Even more so, as the release of the video was accompanied by an argument over copyright issues, Hype Williams was accused of copying Gaspar Noé's stroboscopic credit sequence of his film, *Enter the Void* (2009). Actually what the copyright dispute ignored was the fact that Gaspar Noé designed the intro to his film as a tribute to Godard, so actually both sequences were following in the footsteps of the author of *A Woman is a Woman.* The irony is that Godard – who has often voiced his scepticism regarding intellectual property – even included at the end of his recent work, *Film Socialisme*, a mock FBI warning against "any commercial use or duplication" of his film, at the same time indicating that such a law is not fair and that consequently "justice" should prevail and not the word of the law. Thus he

this lettering comes from the street: We cannot prove this at all, but we think it may be derived from the stencil letters of the *Plaque Découpée Universelle*, a lettering device invented in the 1870s by a certain Joseph A. David, and first seen in France at the 1878 Exposition Universelle, where it found broad appeal and rapid adoption. We think this style of lettering was absorbed into the public domain vernacular of French lettering, and that the *2 ou 3 choses* titles are derived from these quotidien lettering style" (see: *http://www.carvalho-bernau.com/jlg/*).

9 *http://vimeo.com/16772996*

10 The video can be watched on YouTube here: *http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8wPnSI_xtK8*

11 Video available on YouTube: *http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HAfFfqiYLp0*

not only anticipated the DVD format of the movie and the illegal distribution or use of his film within the post-cinematic world but also seems to have commented on the already widespread (mis)appropriations of his own work. Such instances, however, show not only how far the influence of Godard may reach but also how such formalism has actually already "entered the void" compared to Godard's imagery that at the time of *A Woman is a Woman* could still be perceived as an accurate rendition of the mixture between the "poetry" discernible in the colourful city lights and the increasingly futuristic feel of the urban jungle.

Unlike music videos that refashion Godardian stylistic elements acquired indirectly through multiple transfers (where their origin is often lost for the viewers), the contemporary commercial scene has discovered in "Godard" a more directly marketable brand. In 2007 Chanel launched a spot for its Rouge Allure lipstick in tribute to Godard's *The Contempt*/*Le Mépris* (1963)[12] using Georges Delerue's original soundtrack and featuring Julie Ordon as a Brigitte Bardot lookalike in a reconstruction of the film's famous opening bed scene [Figs. 5–6.].

In May 2011 Richard Philips – an artist who is known for his hyper-realistic portraits of Hollywood icons – created a 90 second short experimental video which attempted something of a crossover between the clichés of a commercial and an artistic commentary vis-à-vis the contemporary face of celebrity featuring Lindsay Lohan. In this he portrayed the infamous American starlet in moments designed to be reminiscent of Ingmar Bergman's *Persona* (1966) and Godard's *Le Mépris.*[13] The video attests to the convergence (or at least to an experiment in convergence) of the commercial appeal of both the young American actress (who was making headlines at the time for her drug and alcohol abuse and court ordered house arrest) and of the strong images deriving from Bergman's and Godard's cinema, no matter how unsettling one may find such an equation.

2. Adopting the "Look:" JLG and Post-Photography

This market value of Godard is nowadays being repeatedly tested by the global fashion world, a world that has become increasingly intermingled with show business and cinema, and where there has been a veritable boom of promoting

12 The spot can be seen on several sites, e.g. here: *http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j8Qa2_bHDus*. A photo-reportage documenting the shooting of the video can be accessed here: *http://lucire.com/2007/0531be0.shtml*.

13 The video was shown as part of the *Commercial Break* series of short films presented by the Garage Center for Contemporary Culture at the 2011 Venice Biennale. It is also available on YouTube: *http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=--rs7Ni7nmA*

"Godardesque" as a trendy adjective associated with the recent penchant for vintage looks. Several fashion shows and collections of clothes or accessories within the last years have been designed and advertised as connected to the films of the French New Wave in general and Godard in particular. One of the most prominent shows was that of the Dior cruise collection presented in Shanghai, in May 2011, then there was the collaboration between the Canadian handbag designer Jessica Jensen and the young, New York based designer Alexander Berardi[14] who teamed up to produce a limited-edition handbag collection alongside a selection of Berdardi's spring/summer 2011 women's ready-to-wear line inspired by *Breathless*,[15] as well as the "Cine Collection" of myPetsQuare in 2010 designed for spring 2011. This latter Australian collection was advertised as "a unique brand of quirky clothing to the French New Wave with pieces inspired by cult film director Jean-Luc Godard," and the description went on to lure the customer still deeper into Godard's world: "the clothes are a lesson in '60s cool, embracing off-the-cuff sex appeal and simple, super wearable silhouettes. To get you in the mood, think Jean Seberg in *Breathless* circa 2010, clad in bold stripes, printed tees with cute slogans, and boyish, cropped trousers. Pair this with the nonchalant attitude of the arresting actress of *Vivre sa vie* (and Godard's wife!) Anna Karina and voilà! The stylish existentialist emerges. For men, it's a *Bande à part* affair, with sharp blazers, checked shirts and suspenders marking modernity with Godard's inimitable brand of retro surrealism. So act fast, while it's still a secret... aren't you dying to turn the NYC streets into your very own *Alphaville*?"[16]

Perhaps the deepest connections to Godard's cinema are exploited by the Band of Outsiders designer fashion label that borrowed the English title of Godard's cult film (*Bande à part*) – just like Quentin Tarantino who founded a production company with another version of the same name (A Band Apart) – and like the House of Berardi, it is also growing in popularity. According to the website of New York Fashion, the label was created by Scott Sternberg who launched Band of Outsiders in 2004, "designing recontextualised vintage-inspired looks with

14 Source: *http://fashionights.com/post/1359490344/lg-fashion-week-jessica-jensen-alexander-berardi*

15 Berardi who is a kind of whiz kid in the industry (being only 24 years old and already tremendously successful) excels in combining cinematic imagery and fashion design. According to his official website his earlier, 2010 spring collection was inspired by the entrancing thought of "Marlene Dietrich captaining a luxury yacht" and was based on the "theme of classic Hollywood charisma."
(See: *http://www.houseofberardi.com/main.html*)

16 Source of the quotation: *http://www.refinery29.com/mypetsquare-babel-fair-nyc*

hand-sewn seams and shrunken proportions," the label overview mentions that "the brand's overall look is one of sharply cut dress shirts and slim-fitting, tailored suits and knits with a boyish appeal."[17]

The Band of Outsiders Boy Fall 2009 presentation at the Fashion Week show in Los Angeles was described by Angela Ashman's review in the Village Voice in the following way: "A stylish young man with a red bowtie ushers us upstairs to the second floor, and suddenly it's as though we've gone back in time to the '60s – and, in fact, we have. Inspired by the 1967 Jean-Luc Godard film *La Chinoise*, about young revolutionaries in Paris, designer Scott Sternberg has his models posing at about 10 different sets, playing classic board games, watching black-and-white television, and talking at antique wooden phone booths."[18]

Scott Sternberg's Godardesque main edge comes from the overall vintage sixties look. A similar appearance is also heavily promoted by the currently popular TV show, *Mad Men*, with a fan base hooked on the sixties clothing and hairdos, thus potentially coinciding at least partially with the customers of Band of Outsiders. But unlike the chic imagery of corporate America of the sixties reconstructed by the creators of *Mad Men*, Sternberg's label markets a more youthful, offbeat, sometimes even subversive image that rejects some of the established standards of fashion, with clothes that are "preppy" yet do not project an image of glamour, look affordable yet are in fact rather expensive in a kind of "working class hipster" manner. Sternberg insists on a low-key yet visible connection with the cinematic world and consistently organises his ad campaigns using actors (usually not high-profile stars) instead of runway models in photo shoots relying on mock serious role play and unpretentiously "cool" poses. The actors chosen for his campaign include: Jason Schwartzman (an established "indie" anti-star who came to be known through prominent roles in Wes Anderson's movies and HBO's *Bored to Death*, a deadpan comedy series that is infused with allusions to literature and film), and relative newcomers to Hollywood like the British actor, Andrew Garfield or James Marsden.

Sternberg's themes of cinematic origin may vary (his latest fashion show in Milan for the collection of 2012 Spring/Summer, was based on the 1961 musical *West Side Story*) yet the "Godardesque" elements persist as a continuous undercurrent. First of all this is ensured by a playful use of language (a hallmark of Godard's

17 See: http://nymag.com/fashion/fashionshows/designers/bios/bandofoutsiders/. The description posted on the website also mentions that – although increasingly popular in the States – the label's biggest market is Tokyo.

18 *http://blogs.villagevoice.com/music/2009/02/fashion_week_ka.php*

cinema as well) – a "flair with words and grammar"[19] as a review for the New York Magazine observes – e.g. the men's line is called "Band of Outsiders," the menswear-inspired clothes collection for women is called "Boy." spelled with a dot (later a more feminine line having been designed with the name "girl." – this time spelled with a lowercase "g" and a dot), and Sternberg's line of fitted polo shirts is named "This is not a polo shirt." The label thus perhaps self-reflexively acknowledges the fact that a shirt like this is primarily an appropriation of an image and not a piece of clothing. The campaign for the shirts uses photographs of all kinds of celebrities from the sixties and seventies to authenticate the creations that were designed to imitate them (openly and free handedly borrowing images available in various publications and on the internet). Godard himself is used as a kind of "vintage model" in original photos that show him alongside Anna Karina, Jean-Paul Belmondo and Eric Rohmer. [Figs. 7–10.]

Besides such re-contextualisations of old snapshots of celebrities, the campaign for the Band of Outsiders label relies on the quasi improvised quality of an often over- or underexposed looking series of Polaroid photographs or frames that imitate Polaroid pictures [see Figs. 10–18.] These shots also feature recurring subtle permutations of the typical visual ingredients of Godard films from the Nouvelle Vague period like the bleak yet youthful apartment with magazine decoupages, photos on the wall, piles of vinyl records that look similar to the clutter that spiced up the settings of early Godard films like *Charlotte and Her Boyfriend* (*Charlotte et son Jules*, 1958), *Breathless* (*À bout de souffle*, 1960) or *The Little Soldier* (*Le petit soldat*, 1963) while the newspapers and old photo cameras appear as the typical props that turn up in most of these films [Figs. 11–14.] (and appear, incidentally, also in the emblematic photo of Godard, Belmondo and Karina so often used as an illustration that is reproduced in the polo shirt campaign, see Fig. 9.). Other Polaroids capture the actor in characteristic poses: Jason Schwartzman, for example, seems to be another Michel Poiccard on the run in Chinatown [Fig. 15.], or place him into stylised spaces that are (re)painted in bold colours with suggestive words written in large letters over the walls (reminiscent of *Pierrot le fou*, see: Fig. 16.) or show him gesticulating like the young revolutionaries "*á la Chinoise*" [Figs. 17–18.]. Such mock characters then often end up in absurd combinations of Godardian motifs worthy of the grotesque side of Godard's spirit, e.g. exhibiting man versus space and exploiting the surreal quality of the stylised setting [see Jason Schwartzman in Fig. 19.] or driving the "Godardesque" feel to the extreme by creating a character that assumes the look of

19 *http://nymag.com/daily/fashion/2010/03/scott_sternberg_says_designing.html*

yet another undercover agent slash "rebel without a cause" while casually carrying "Hanoi Jane" Fonda's workout book[20] under his arm as he stops outside the village on the way to the golf course (?) [see Andrew Garfield in Fig. 20.]. The retro, New Wave feel is further enhanced by the collection of photographs also posted on the label's official website with the title, featuring yet another pun, "Band of Outtakes," and in which we see photos that were supposedly "discarded" in the process of assembling the final collection to represent the line. Some of these photographs seem random takes, as if someone kept pushing the shutter-release button of the photo camera, some of them – like the ones in which we see Jason Schwartzman and his wife in their home under a giant poster of Louis Malle's cult movie, *Zazie in the Metro* (*Zazie dans la metro*, 1960) – reveal further connections to the cinema of the Nouvelle Vague. The presence of the outtakes loosely links the label both to the unsophisticated style of a New Wave type cinema and – maybe in an ironic way – to the new vogue of appending outtakes as bonus features to DVD versions of films, outtakes (i.e. images, scenes that were left out in the final editing process, recordings of mistakes, etc.) that in this way aspire to a more revered, collector's item status (and as such serve the purpose of advertising the line just as well as the photos included in the "official" collection).[21]

By using Polaroids, Band of Outsiders advertises an imagery that matches the "cool," unaffected air of the *cinema vérité* quality of Godard's early films. It also manages to project an image that presents itself as being beyond the conventional, institutional channels and sustains the "rebellious" spirit of "outsiderism" by preserving the vintage look of the pictures both in reference (allusions to the films of the Nouvelle Vague) and in their quasi palpable and unique materiality (the sometimes fuzzy quality of the instant image that preserves the moment as it is without the possibility of retouching, the Polaroid's feel as an object that can be taken into one's hand), something that goes against the much debated current tendencies in fashion photography of extreme airbrushing and high-tech manipulation of every aspect of the picture (making it exceedingly artificial and immaterial yet as such compatible with all kinds of digital post processing,

20 During her brief radical period, when she became (in)famous for her protests against the war in Vietnam and was dubbed "Hanoi Jane," the American actress played the leading role in Godard's *Tout va bien* (1972) and consequently one of her press photographs became the subject of Godard and Gorin's *Letter to Jane* (1972). Later, in the eighties, the actress became popular for her aerobic workout programme that she promoted through several books and videos.

21 The Polaroid of Bret Easton Ellis showing him in his West Hollywood apartment mock-seriously pointing a gun at a small toy deer on the table in front of him has indeed good chances of becoming such an item sometime.

allowing for varying formats of distribution to converge: websites, print magazines, billboards, television, etc.). The Polaroid is a form of "vernacular" photography that has always been going somewhat against mainstream (it also lacks the possibility of analogue reproduction), and has remained mainly within the sphere of private usage as well as – in a lesser degree – within the practice of the avant-garde that exploited the Polaroid's uniqueness and its closeness to hand-crafted fine art). The set of Polaroids in question constitute at the same time a good example of how in our culture saturated with images a certain kind of clever artifice may become the symptom of a desire for authenticity.[22] What is paradoxical is that this is a highly "self-conscious" image in its own right that displays not so much an unaltered imprint of reality (the poses captured in the fashion label's campaign are clearly staged) but an imprint of an earlier, more visible (and in this sense "honest") technology,[23] a technology that somehow seems to be able to reflexively foreground both the haptic[24] and the ontological aspects characteristic of analogue photography in general, similarly to the effect of the photogram which Rosalind Krauss claims "only forces, or makes explicit, what is the case of *all* photography" (1986, 203).

The trick is, of course, similar to Godard's old tricks of self-reflexivity in which he shows the camera filming the movie on screen (e.g. Raoul Coutard filming the introductory scene to *Le Mépris*) and makes the artifice of filmmaking (and the cinematic apparatus that is usually hidden) visible, yet the presence of the camera that actually films these images of the on screen camera still remains concealed. In this way the rhetoric of self-reflexivity harbours in fact the same technique as used in classical cinematic storytelling, just like the "image-conscious" use

22 At the same time the preference of Polaroids also connects the fashion campaign to contemporary trends in avant-garde photography that – in a revolt against digital photography – go back to using a wide array of photography's analogue, manual forms (e.g. daguerreotypes, collodion prints, photogram tintypes, carbon dichromates, etc.) (More about this in: Rexer 2002.)

23 This is in a way something that exemplifies – with several notable twists around artifice and self-reflexivity – what Kiku Adatto speaks of in connection with the current fascination with pictures. "If one side of us appreciates, even celebrates, the image as an image, another side yearns for something more authentic. We still want the camera to fulfill its documentary promise, to provide us with insight, and to be a record of our lives and the world around us. But because we are so alive to the pose, we wrestle with the reality and artifice of the image in a more self-conscious way than our forebears." (Adatto 2008, 8.)

24 Besides Roland Barthes's well-known book on photography (*Camera Lucida*, 1980), it was Régis Durand (1996) who most emphatically dwelt on the tactile aspects of "seeing photographically" and seeing photographs as objects (for a more recent elaboration of possibilities in thinking of photography beyond the visual and acknowledge its haptic and embodied aspects see Edwards, 2009).

of the Polaroid form and "texture" within the digital environment ultimately complies with the current unifying frameworks of photographic representation. The Polaroids in the Band of Outsiders campaign may be real (or some may even be imitations), nevertheless, when we access these images on the web they have already undergone the same digitisation process as all the other pictures that surround them and they have been neatly fitted into an ensemble of a minimalist, yet typical web "bricolage."

These images (or fragments of images) re-framed by the fashion label's campaign have not only undergone a transference from cinema to photography, and a process of trading a mythical cinematic past for a digital photographic presence,[25] but the performative value of the "Godardesque image" has been effectively appropriated and exploited beyond the fashion world (i.e. beyond what Barthes called the "image-garment,"[26] the merchandising of an "image" that everyone can purchase through the clothes) by the homogenising processes of convergence in the so called "photo-op culture" itself. This is a world that not only conducts its life driven by images and thrives on visual commodities but validates its existence through various photo opportunities,[27] a culture that conceives everything in its potential for becoming a (marketable and public) photographic image and blurs the boundaries of private and public spheres through promoting the "snapshot," the imprint of the moment – something that is professionally best done by paparazzi hunting down politicians and celebrities, but is actually practiced everywhere, something that brings photography into the focus more than ever before beyond the general idea of a "society of spectacle," glorifying the act of "capturing" the photographic instance and pose (be it spontaneous or staged to look as spontaneous). In this age of convergence the iconic value of an image of Godard himself in a vintage photograph is no different than a photographic still from his movies, or a photo remixing elements from his movies, they all get to be distributed as single images that project the same idea of the "coolness" of the moment branded by his name. Although the preference for the Polaroid format may reveal a general yearning for more authenticity in the images, and the understanding of the subtle references included in the Polaroid photo campaign

25 I have borrowed the expression from the title of Michelle Henning's article (1995).

26 Cf. Barthes's description and analysis of the components of the "fashion system" and the "three garments" with their own set of structures: the photographic image, the verbal description and the "real" clothing itself (Barthes 1983).

27 See more about the idea of this "picture-driven" culture and its ramifications over all aspects of contemporary life from the everyday use of domestic photography and home video to political campaigns, television newscasting, Hollywood gossip, social or commercial networking over the internet – in Adatto (2008).

may require an understanding of Godard's cinema (or the ironic twists involved in marrying staged imagery paraphrasing Godard with the instant technology of the Polaroid and its self-reflexive potential), consequently the advertising value of the images may benefit from such a knowledge, the context that incorporates these cinematic references considerably weakens its actual ties with Godard's cinema or with any reality other than that of the photo shoot itself (i.e. the fictional "photo-op" event of playing "Godardesque"). It even makes it replaceable with imagery from other films or from similar promotion of "vintage" politicians, film stars or artists.[28] We can cite the title of Jonathan Rosenbaum's volume (2010) that describes recent changes within film culture saying "goodbye cinema, hello, cinephilia," and state that there is a complex revival of practices of cinephilia extending over the realm of cinema itself. This post-cinematic cinephilia shares the attention given to details with traditional cinephilia,[29] only it incorporates these details into a post-photographic endorsement of almost anything, shifting between disparate registers of visual culture with amazing ease.[30]

These last examples attest to Godard's post-cinéphile survival in the fashion industry via photography, or more precisely via appropriation of single decontextualised images and visual elements translating the New Wave idiosyncrasies into photographic poses that actually drift away from Godardian cinema itself.[31] However, there seems to be an inherent photographic quality, a deep rooted possibility of intermedial dialogue between photography and moving images in Godard's films that continues to seduce the imagination of photographers working in all kinds of areas. We have to note that it may not be a coincidence that the commercial for the Rouge Allure campaign was devised by a famed photographer (Bettina Rheims), and the Lindsay Lohan video was based

28 The website that features the photo of Godard promoting a vintage looking polo shirt also features, among others, photos of John F. Kennedy, Clint Eastwood and Richard Avedon. "Photo-op" can be seen in this way as one of the main channels for different areas to converge and as something that levels cultural and media differences on the digital image market.

29 This is defined by Mary Anne Doane as: "a love that is attached to the detail, the moment, the trace, the gesture," and "the moment when the contingent takes on meaning" (2002, 226, 227).

30 In a recent re-evaluation of cinephilia in the digital age Thomas Elsaesser also noted (even if his examples did not go beyond new forms of cinema itself) that cinephilia can be seen not simply as a love of the cinema: "It is always already caught in several kinds of deferral: a detour in place and space, a shift in register and a delay in time." (Elsaesser 2005, 30.)

31 For an author like Godard, who himself was not a stranger to the Situationist technique of "détournement" (i.e. subversive appropriations and re-contextualisations), this is ironically within the reach of what he himself often parodied.

on iconic cinematic frames as the first incursion of a painter known for his photo-realistic style into the art of moving images.

Furthermore, several contemporary photographers who have singled out Godard films as a source of inspiration or imitation seem to have also recognised this inherent connection between Godard and photography. Some of these photographic projects tap directly into the cinematic world of Godard and recreate or paraphrase individual images from his films. Just to name a few of such examples: there is a whole gallery of photos reconstructing memorable images from *Breathless* by Martin Crespo[32] that can be accessed on his website [Fig. 21.]; Mike Kobal[33] did a photo-reconstruction as well as a video based on the photo shoot inspired by the same *Breathless*. Anna Karina and *Vivre sa vie* proved to be similarly "photogenic:" as we can see in the photo gallery posted online in 2011 by the Italian photographer, Bizarremind [Figs. 22–23.].[34] The Georgian photographer Tina Shaburishvili who works for the magazine AMARTA has also recently shot a series of photographs inspired by Jean Luc Godard's *Breathless* and *Pierrot le fou*.[35] Perhaps the most outstanding of the photographic projects linked to Godard's cinema is Nancy Davenport's *Weekend Campus* (2004), a crossover between photography, installation art and cinema that has already been the subject of substantial theoretical discussions about "the expanded field of photography" (see Baker 2005). *Weekend Campus*[36] consists of a continuous loop of hundreds of single photographs stitched together in a simple computer animation so that they show a slow horizontal pan along the entrance to a fictitious campus revealing a long traffic jam with crashed and overturned cars and bored onlookers, inspired by the famous continuous tracking shot from Godard's *Weekend* (1967).[37] [Figs. 24–25.]

Pictures like these are not only single, isolated incidents that re-mediate cinema, but through examples like these we can understand how contemporary post-photography designates cinema as one of its possible major resources. As Geoffrey

32 See: *http://www.pbase.com/crespoide/a_bout_de_souffle*
33 See: *http://www.mikekobal.com/blog/?p=20*
34 See: *http://www.bizarremind.com/archives/646*
35 See: *http://www.dazeddigital.com/photography/article/9576/1/rise-tina-shaburishvili.* Besides these examples just a random search over the internet reveals countless uses and "adaptations" of Godard imagery displayed over photo and video sharing sites like Flickr, YouTube or DailyMotion.
36 Stills are available on the artist's website: *http://www.nancydavenport.com/weekendcampus1.html*
37 Another possible source is Andy Warhol's *Disaster* series (a series of paintings inspired by newspaper photos of car crashes, accidents and violent scenes of death from 1963), something that may have inspired Godard as well.

Batchen (2000, 109) observed: "Where once art photography was measured according to the conventions and aesthetic values of the painted image, today the situation is decidedly more complicated. Over the past two decades, the boundary between photography and other media like painting, sculpture, or performance has become increasingly porous." We could, of course, add cinema to the list of other media mentioned by Batchen and acknowledge that this is a process in which the "cinematic" is assimilated by the "photographic" in the broadest possible sense, while the "photographic" itself nowadays appears to be undergoing a wide array of dissemination, as – to quote Batchen (2000, 109) – "it would seem that each medium has absorbed the other, leaving the photographic residing everywhere, but nowhere in particular." (In this case the Godardian reproductions take the form of digital photography, video, photographic single print or web collage, all of them accessible and marketable over the internet. See Figs. 11–25.)

Post-photography in this way "returns the favour" to the seventh art by re-appropriating the photographic quality of modernist cinema and the iconic value of one of its emblematic authors. As mentioned before, the recent vogue of the post-Godardian convergence between the "photographic" and the "cinematic" has been undoubtedly facilitated by the intermedial quality residing in Godard's work itself: his modernist films used to incorporate the aesthetics of still photography in the process of forging a self-reflexive pictorial language.[38] Even so, post-photography re-frames the "photogeneity" of modern film (or, in certain cases, of the players on the scene of modern film) not only from an aesthetic point of view, but most often from the perspective of the performative world of the "photo-op, and displays it in a context of (commercial) digital image convergence. Thus the interplay between processes of convergence and intermediality observable in the phenomena of "post-cinema Godard" is one of the most multilayered possible, exemplifying how media differences and interactions (i.e. inter-mediality) can be not only meaningful but also exploited (e.g. in the Polaroid commercials), and also how these differences can be eventually weakened or obliterated by processes of post-media convergence.

In an editorial to a recent issue of the journal *History of Photography,* Ingrid Hölzl acknowledges that there is "a need for a paradigm shift in the study of photographic images," stating that: "most of the literature does not call into question the opposition still/moving, but investigates instead the relation of still

38 This seems to be relevant even though we can say that a "photo-op" culture is omnivorous and such processes of convergence between the world of cinema, digital photography, fashion or commercial videos are quite common irrespective of the qualities of the cinematic author.

and moving images." (Hölzl 2011, 2.) Streitberger and Van Gelder argue that "the photo-filmic" should in fact be regarded as a phenomenon of contemporary visual culture as a whole and not "as a mere conjuncture of two existing, principally distinguishable mediums" (i.e. photography and film), furthermore, they consider that "photo-filmic images not only entail a profound shift in our contemporary visual culture but, more specifically, are at the very heart of these changes in terms of the production, the use, and the perception of images" (2010, 51–52). The findings of this present article support this very idea.

Furthermore, what emerges most strongly from all these previously mentioned examples is the value of single, decontextualised cinematic images in a world of convergence,[39] and the rhizomatic interlacings between cinema, the art scene as well as the most diverse terrains of image consumption. A photo may be worth a thousand films as Jan Baetens (2009) suggests analysing the narrative potential of a Cartier Bresson photograph. By the same token, the photographic quality of Godard seems to be worth a thousand post-cinematic ramifications. All in all, as the "cinematic turn" of contemporary photography[40] can be considered a reversal of modern cinema's manifold "photographic" affinities, these "affinities" are also worth a closer look. So let us make a digression into investigating the role of the "photographic" images and photographs in Godard's films themselves that may (or may not) have foreshadowed their "photo-filmic" appropriation.

3. Back to the Future of Photography in Godard's Films

In Godard's vast oeuvre there are several junctures where "the cinematic" and the "photographic" coexist and merge. The implications of the subject are far too vast for even the slightest possibility of exhausting the subject here, so I would merely like to sketch some of the relevant meeting points and emphasise their typology. What I would like to highlight is that in each case photography seems to offer a vantage point that is both "inside" (as an integral part of the "medium:" film being constituted by the individual frames/photograms, or being part of the diegetic world of the film as photographs appearing on screen) and "outside"

39 Even in the case of music and literature, the impact of Godard's single images seems to be important, not to mention the huge impact of the graphic design of his title sequences that also provide single, well defined qualities in the image that can be easily subjected to extreme variations which nevertheless still remind us of the original.

40 The term is borrowed from Baker's essay mapping some of the tendencies that link photography to cinema (see: 2005, 122).

of the seamless flow of moving images (as a perspective that reveals its basic characteristics from an aesthetic distance or that offers a commentary upon the world revealed in the film). Photography offers a centre stage both for cinematic self-reflection and for formulating ideological messages; it can activate intermedial tensions but it can also facilitate assimilation by other media.

a) The modern film image and its relation to photography and "becoming" photographic

There are several books that amply discuss modernity's complex and fundamental relationship to photography in the cinema both from the point of view of the ideology of modernism and the point of view of the aesthetics of the single image. Leaving aside treatises that debate various forms of thematisations of the indexical nature of photographical representation, or the implications of the poetics of the long take that moves the experience of the moving pictures closer to the contemplation of still frames, there are two other theoretical avenues that connect more closely to the interlacing of cinema and photography especially in Godard's early films. One of these approaches is exemplified by Garrett Stewart's (1999) detailed analysis of modern film which presents modern film as a kind of "photo-synthesis" and dwells on the "flicker effect" of individual images fragmenting the fluidity of classical cinematic aesthetics of visual and narrative transparency. Through these techniques – as Stewart contends (1999, 265) – "film fulfils the genealogy not of mimesis but of text," film becomes conceivable as a sequence of "photo-graphemes," of "writing with images," images appear to be put together as building blocks in a puzzle. In early Godard due to extreme de-framings and a hectic montage enhanced by jump cuts, even without the use of the split screen (as employed in *Numéro Deux*, 1975) images look sometimes, to quote Robert Stam's words, as if they "are 'hung' on the screen like paintings in a gallery" (1992, 227). The extreme photographic de-framings of the images also enable chiastic combinations that underscore the idea of the film's mosaic-like structure (e.g. *A Married Woman. Fragments of a Film Made in 1964*/*Une Femme Mariée. Suite de fragments d'un film tourné en 1964*, see: Figs. 26–31), and suggest that the film is released in an "unfinished" form, suspended in the phase of a kind of photo-graphic writing. This may also remind us of Raymond Bellour's concept regarding the intermediary position of the single image. He states: "The 'photographic' as I imagine it, is not reducible to photography even while borrowing part of its soul and the fate of which we believed photography to be the guardian. The photographic exists somewhere in-between; it is a state

of 'in-between-ness:' in movement it is that which interrupts, that paralyzes; in immobility it perhaps bespeaks its relative impossibility" (Bellour 2008, 253).

Regarding the essential link between the art of photography and modern cinema, Damian Sutton – relying on Deleuze and Guattari's concepts – even sustains that there is actually a continuum between photography and film, not an essential opposition that theorists keep insisting upon. He writes the following: "The substance of photography is continuous, though stretched and formed by culture into the shapes of cinema and the photograph. Cinema and photography […] are ideas used to create objects from a monadic, folding continuum of the photographic." (Sutton 2009, xii.) Later summarising this "folding," "becoming"[41] relationship between the two mediums like this: "Cinema relies on the photography that comes to life, of which the still and projected image are both constituents. However, the monadic, folding substance is the photographic itself, the coming-into-being of the image that is an essential part of both. […] The strip of photograms that make up cinema are not broken moments reconstituted into movement but instead are folds in the monadic continuum of photography; the still image itself is the fold between two images of time – the rational order of the movement image and the glimpsed duration of the time-image." (Sutton 2009, 123–124.) The original subtitle of Godard's *A Married Woman* ("a suite of fragments from a film shot in 1964") eloquently supports this idea in its self-reflexive way of conceiving cinema as a series of photographic frames shot and assembled, disassembled, edited together in the visible process of making a cinematic statement. While a lot has been said about the permutations seen in the film regarding the relationship of the wife, lover and husband and also of the representation of genders (and the cut up representation of bodies), this relationship between the "photographic" continuously folding into the "cinematic" and the "cinematic" unfolding into the "photographic" is perhaps the film's most relevant feature from a medial perspective. As such this technique proved to be essentially modernist, and did not only facilitate the more recent "photo-filmic" fusion of Godardesque frames within post-media contexts, but it also enabled the film to be easily "translated" into a photo-novel, as just another "fold" of the same "strip." *A Married Woman* was indeed published in this form, together with almost all of Godard's New Wave

41 "Becoming" is one of the key terms introduced by Deleuze and Guattari in their seminal work, *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987) that is clearly separated from ideas of mere formal imitation and in which (e.g. in their words: "Becoming is always double, that which one becomes no less than the one that becomes—block is formed, essentially mobile, never in equilibrium. […] Becoming is never imitating." 2005, 305) and always involves the actualisation, the emerging of something "minoritarian" and virtual.

films.[42] While most great modern films featured arrested moments that staged the emergence (the "becoming") of the photographic image within the medium of cinema (see Bergman's iconic image from the prologue of *Persona* – incidentally, the image that has been most often copied[43] or re-contextualised from his art – or Antonioni's final image from *L'Avventura*), some other New Wave filmmakers also experimented intensely with the deconstruction of the moving pictures into still images and called attention to the moments of the birth of the photographic within the cinematic, and vice versa (see Agnès Varda's *L'opéra mouffe*, 1958, *Salut les cubains*, 1963, Chris Marker's[44] *La Jetée*, 1962).

b) Harnessing the performative value of on-screen photographs and the photographic act

Godard's use of photographs within his films is not only wide ranging but again extremely multilayered in possible meanings. Whenever photographs are used as props within a setting or used as key elements in a diegesis they always perform multiple functions of reflexivity. Photos (together with other pictures, like paintings or magazine decoupages) can primarily be "reminders" of the photographic nature of the filmic representation,[45] and as such count on a primary level as the self-reflection of the medium. Occasional inclusions of the negative photographic images [see: Figs. 32–33.] also serve the same purpose of "folding" the image inside-out:

42 A fact that is perhaps lesser known to the contemporary viewers: many modernist authors preferred to publish their works also in the form of photo-romans as an attempt to reach a broader audience and to experiment with the fusion of photography, film and literature. As David Campany (2008, 86–87) explains: "The photonovel began to die away in the 1960s with the rise of television, eventually becoming obsolete when domestic video made films 'possessable' and DVD supplied the supplements and commentaries beloved of fans and scholars. But as it waned the page did become the site for new forms of cinematic analysis. European filmmakers, particularly from the French New Wave, took up the book as a means of re-presenting and expanding their films. Alain Robbe-Grillet reworked his scripts written or films directed by Alain Resnais (including *L'Année dernière à Marienbad*, 1961) into ciné-romans or 'cine-novels.'[…] Godard published print versions of nearly all his films of the 1960s. Some were straightforward illustrated scripts, others more experimental. The book based on *Une femme mariée* (1964) recreates the episodic first-person structure of the film as word/image scrapbook. Where the film shows the lead woman confronted with representations of commodified femininity on billboards, magazines and movie posters, the book appropriates various layout styles from popular culture."

43 This is the image paraphrased also by Richard Philips in his Lindsay Lohan video portrait.

44 Godard recognised the novelty of Marker's photo-filmic impact early on by including one of Marker's photographs as the image that is scanned by the camera in the credit sequence of *Alphaville*.

45 Garrett Stewart (1999, 9) notes: "The photogrammatic undertext of screen narrative may be (more or less implicitly) alluded to on-screen by 'quoted' photos."

self-reflexively directing the attention towards the photographic "undertext" of the image in making the image transparent towards its own technology and distantiating it both from its conventional aesthetics and its representational "reading." On a secondary level the abundance of photographs in the films are used diegetically to identify and multiply the characters as well as to pin down the visual models on which their lives are moulded (photos of films stars in early films always denote such ideals that the female characters aspire to, e.g. *Charlotte and Her Boyfriend*, *Vivre sa vie*), photographic identification is also used as clichés of detective novels (*Alphaville*, *The Little Soldier*) or to denote more complex affinities (e.g. Bogart's photo in *Breathless* as opposed to the reproductions of paintings that the female character is seen in analogy with),[46] or self-reflexively refer to Godard's previous films. [Figs. 34–37.] In all of these cases the photographs included in the films serve a similar purpose to the function of alter-ego characters and mirrors: in the spirit of the typical modernist theme of the traumatic experience of serialisation, they become performers of the multiplication and dissolution of identity, transforming the actual characters into mere images and amalgams of refracted images that can be further reflected ad infinitum (photographs in this case being only one of the media that participate in these permutations besides drawings, paintings, other film images).

Photographic representation is also one of the main ideological targets of Godard's early films. In *Weekend* we have a suggestive intertitle in this respect in which he spells "photographie" as "faux-tographie" ("faux" = false) alluding perhaps to the paradoxes of visual representation. Thus photography becomes for Godard a platform to exhibit and denounce among others: the objectification of women, the class representational value of group photos (see the ironic group poses in *Weekend*, 1967; and *Tout va Bien*, 1972; Figs. 38–39.), the commodification of images in general in "a society of the spectacle" (see the young men from *The Carabineers*, 1963, discovering/consuming the world through tons of photographic images), the contrast between glossy pictures of advertisements and gruesome photographs of war (e.g. *2 or 3 Things I Know about Her*, the pictures on the wall of the room in *The Little Soldier*, *La Chinoise*). Writing (or speaking) over an encyclopedic collage of photographic representations (see: *La Chinoise*, *Le Gai Savoir*/*The Joy of Learning,* 1969) can also provide the possibility of a further subversive use of commercial images[47] and of creating a montage/palimpsest of

46 See more about this in Pethő (2011, 231–265).

47 It is ironic to observe how Godard's collages often use the same fashion photography for the purposes of denouncing visual consumerism [see Fig. 40.] that nowadays is attributed to the "Godardesque" trend of the sixties retro fashion world (see the descriptions of the characteristics of the Band of Outsiders clothing line).

ideas. [Figs. 40–41.] All in all Godard's films prove to be accurate renditions of the intrusion of photography into all layers of modern life, clear intuitions of its future, and incisive comments upon its multifarious commodification.

Presenting the photographic act itself is always a reinforcement of the performative value of the photographs in all these aspects. Godard's characters are incessantly seen in the company of photographers. Michel Poiccard in *Breathless* finds a temporary haven in the photo studio of a paparazzo, Lemmy Caution brings his small camera to *Alphaville*, Bruno in *The Little Soldier* is trying to seduce Veronica through a photo session and is tempted to engage in an impromptu philosophy of the photograph [Fig. 42.], Nana in *Vivre sa vie* aspires to become a film star but does not get further than getting her pictures taken, in *Le Vent d'Est* (*Wind from the East*, 1970) we see a group of young revolutionaries meeting in a wood and taking pictures as they debate their ideas, one of them is meticulously taking the photo of a rifle thrust into the ground (as another montage of ideas adding up "photography" and "gun" and "shooting"), and so on. [Fig. 43.] All these acts of taking photos, the repeated gestures of making pictures, even hanging pictures on the wall, commenting on pictures or just placing characters in spaces populated by pictures in these films emphasise the reflexive process of "becoming" an (photographic) image (also in the Deleuzian sense used by Sutton).

c) The photographic versus the cinematic in radical and late Godard: the still image as inter-media platform

Modernism is the real age of intermediality, it is the paradigm in which media differences are still relevant and meaningful, in which media borders are worth challenging, whilst in the paradigm of post-media convergence the boundaries have already been effectively blurred by the ubiquitous digital environment and we have "the flow of content across multiple media platforms" (Jenkins 2006, 2). In this sense, Godard's post-New Wave oeuvre showcases intermediality in its most tensional forms, and traces cinema's passage into the age of convergence;[48] furthermore, in this latter aspect photography once again is assigned a major role.

Yvonne Spielmann (2008) sees the medium of video (and its close ties with television) as a key stepping stone in understanding the emergence of post-

48 If in early Godard works inter-media tensions were all about cinema's relations to the other arts, and mainly its Oedipal relationship to literature and text as the authority that had to be effectively challenged and emulated at the same time (see more about this in Pethő 2011, 231–317), Godard's video and late cinematic work evolves around the perspective of new media for cinema.

media phenomena.[49] In Godard's so called radical period after 1968 as well as his "late" works we see an intense preoccupation with the technology of video that nevertheless brings to the surface – perhaps even more acutely than before – questions related to the aesthetics and philosophy of the "single image" and its relation with the medium of moving images. As Yvonne Spielmann writes in her book on "video the reflexive medium:" "whereas for photography and also for film the single image or a sequence of framed single images is what matters, video distinguishes itself by the fact that the transition between the images are central." (2008, 4). Against the "fluid pictoriality" and the "frame unbound image" of video Godard accentuates the potential of arresting the image (slowing it down, showing it at different speeds, freezing it as a *tableau vivant*) and explores the way in which film images seem to be positioned between stasis and motion, between painting and photography – as we see it in his feature films *Sauve qui peut (la vie)*(*Every man for Himself*/*Slow Motion,* 1980), *Passion* (1982). Or he experiments with a series of short films and documentaries explicitly built on the contrast of video/television and still imagery, the most remarkable of these being his *Letter to Jane: An Investigation About a Still* (1972), a film constructed entirely on the verbal commentary added to, and the image associations conjured up by, a single photograph.[50]

Ici et ailleurs (*Here and Elsewhere*, 1976) is also remarkable in this sense – as Deleuze already noticed[51] – because it mixes the fluid here and now of the TV viewer experience (declaring the consumer of TV and newspaper images as a "millionaire in images") with the "arrested" self-reflection of the still frame. In one of the sequences we have people moving in front of the camera, each with a photo in their hands while Godard elaborates on the contrast between the ideas

49 She writes: "video already produces, both inter- and intramedially, the dialogue between an image type, which originates, on the one hand, in the fixed inscription into a surface, and on the other, in a processual image type, which lets the passage from analog to digital emerge in electronic transformativity. This difference from other analog media also explains the basis on which its media-specific features of processuality and transformativity, effectively predestined to play a decisive role in the intermedial context of computers' development – and of the more complex hypermedia." (Spielmann 2008, 6.)

50 I have pointed out elsewhere the ekphrastic qualities of this film (cf. Pethő 2011, 306–307). Similar experiments with films based on commentaries of single photographs can also be seen in later works of Godard's contemporary directors (Jean Eustache: *Les photos d'Alix*, 1980, Agnes Varda: *Ulysse*, 1986; Chris Marker: *Le souvenir d'un avenir*, 2003).

51 In his famous second book on cinema Deleuze extracted the "and" of the title and built an entire interpretation of Godard's language around the notion of "interstice" marked by it (cf. Deleuze 1989, 179–181).

that can be embodied by the single images (as symbols, emblems) and the way motion pictures push the individual images out of the frame one after the other in a flow. [Figs. 44–47.] Similar gestures of setting cinema and photography in opposition return in *Notre Musique* (*Our Music*, 2004) where again Godard uses photographic stills (of one of Howard Hawks's films) to speak about the way meaning is constructed or differences fail to be perceived in cinematic shot–countershot techniques that put two identical frames face to face.

King Lear (1987) heralds in a new type of intermedial cinema that relies heavily on the inclusion and/or superimposition of still imagery within the moving pictures and the voice over commentary of Godard himself, a formula that will be exploited to the fullest in his *Histoire(s) du cinema*, as well as his latest shorts. In *King Lear* Godard again explicitly stresses the communicative value of the single image. He explains (paraphrasing one of Bresson's notes on cinema): "If an image looked at separately expresses something clearly, if it involves an interpretation, it will not transform itself in contact with other images. The other images will have no power over it, and it will have no power over the other images." Late Godard is full of elegiac and philosophic meditations about the image within cinema (and the missed opportunities of cinema to fulfil the "promise" of the photographic image in the twentieth century). The Godard of the *Histoire(s)* is primarily a passionate collector of images and a photo-monteur who forged for this audio-visual essay a unique composite of "archaic" photographic and cinematic techniques of juxtaposition of images[52] that also pre-figure something of what may come after traditional cinema in an age of personalised post-mediality. As such, *Histoire(s)* pre-figures the convergence of an infinite number of images over the platform of a single hybrid medium, but this medium is one of his own making, not only in the sense of its unique hybridity, but in the literal sense that it is Godard's "handicraft" (sealed with the authenticating signature of his own voice and self-portrait).[53] It is the achievement of a single author created in the intimate surrounding of his personal film studio, far from the practices of classical (and institutional) film making and very close to the practices of the image remixes that nowadays anybody can perform with a few clicks on the keyboard.

52 I have published a detailed analysis of the medial aspects of Godard's *Histoire(s)* in a chapter entitled *Post-Cinema as Pre-Cinema and Media Archaeology in Jean-Luc Godard's Histoire(s) du cinema* in my book *Cinema and Intermediality. The Passion for the In-Between* (2011, 317–340).

53 See also another approach to this in: my article *(Re)Mediating the Real. Paradoxes of an Intermedial Cinema of Immediacy* (Pethő 2009).

4. The Common Good of Images: *Film Socialisme* and Godard's Passage into the Post-Media Age

Histoire(s) may have only foreshadowed practices of image-handling that have become our everyday experience, however, much of Godard's latest full length feature film, *Film Socialisme* (*Film Socialism*, 2010) was actually shot using various kinds of digital technology available both in cinema and outside cinema, attesting to the amazing fact that in our post-media age he successfully continues to make use of the emerging new technologies of the moving images**.** Godard also seems to record in this film – appropriately staging the whole film on board of a ship – the final moments of the Odyssey of the photographic image and the passages of the viewer's experience from being a "millionaire of images" (who possesses a plethora of pictures as a "common good,"[54] and from being the active stroller down the lanes of the "museum of memory"[55]) into becoming a "millionaire of photographic media" that produce and project photographic images, photo-filmic experiences of all resolutions, formats and contexts. Thus the whole film can be interpreted as an allegoric passage of the photographic image from intermediality (i.e. the dialogue of photography and film, image and text) to media convergence and confluence of media. *Film Socialisme* is replete with images of people taking photos. [Figs. 48–57.] Photographers are seen everywhere, snapshots are taken, shutters are clicking incessantly, flashes flare and the world is revealed as a hyper- and multi-mediated voyage through seeing "photographically." The theme of ubiquitous photography, of hands holding photo cameras of all types and sizes runs through the whole film as a leit motif. Godard manages once more a *tour de force*: he uses cinema (and the format of a feature film) not primarily as an "intermedial battlefield" as he used to,[56] but as the site of media convergence (something that stresses hybridity and dissemination: given that different visions offered by different devices seen or unseen in the film alternate and modulate within a musical structure without their differences being really brought into play) and as the site to reflect on media convergence (turning the pitfalls of convergence against itself, managing to transfer a synthesis

54 The title in this way could be interpreted less with a political connotation and more in the direction of a universality and democratisation of imagery and means of handling imagery.

55 See especially the second half of the film rehashing Godard's main ideas in this sense and resembling the structure of the *Histoire(s)*.

56 See the chapter: *"Tensional Differences:" The Anxiety of Re-Mediation in Jean-Luc Godard's Films* (Pethő 2011, 231–265).

of his earlier ideas and the "music" of the images over yet another platform). He successfully appropriates once more (just as he did with earlier image forms: i.e. photography, video, television and digital cinema) a new media mixture of words and images that delight the eye and feast the senses with rich textures and colours, folding it into a configuration that is still identifiable as "cinema." The ultimate irony is of course the trailer of the film that "enfolds" the speeding up of the entire film that becomes in this way an absurd, literal pre-view, or an impossible view due to the speed of the images adjusted so that the whole film could fit the conventional time frame of the web "teaser."

Film Socialisme has produced an unprecedented buzz all over the blogosphere, just to keep track of all the internet reviews, YouTube entries, protests or comments is a task that one cannot easily undertake. And I have to confess, that I myself might be included in the mass of typical post-media consumers of Godard's art: while I am writing this article, I am alternately (sometimes simultaneously) watching parts of Godard's films on my computer, every now and then pausing the images as I am not being able to resist capturing relevant snapshots by the dozen. I keep wondering: am I in this way the "pensive spectator" that Raymond Bellour (1987) predicted and Laura Mulvey (2006) described, or am I somehow beyond that? Maybe such an activity is less "pensive," but it is certainly more "tactile," as it brings me closer to the creative process of virtually "handling" the images, arranging them, observing them as individual frames, deciding which captured instance to keep and which to discard in the recycling bin. My computer has increasingly acquired the status of a cinéphile notebook, and of a personal editing machine: I find myself taking "visual notes" all the time. In doing so Godard's recurrent self image comes to my mind sitting in his own video "workshop" with the small monitors in front of him. And I increasingly identify with him in that posture, I feel the excitement of "making the images happen," I become something in-between a projectionist and a photo-monteur, a craftsman of singular pictures. As the frames are "carved out" by my own actions on the keyboard the shots become my personal collection of photo-filmic images.[57] The images on the computer screen are all at the "tip of my fingers," yet paradoxically they remain more distant than ever, as I have never seen their content in "reality" (which makes them different from my other snapshots that I take with my own photo-camera and that I also store digitally), and in most cases I have never seen the film in a cinema either. The individual shots remain utterly

57 The screenshots printed here as Figs. 26–57 may also be considered as a small sample from this collection.

virtual, yet "manageable" for me. I look at these "quasi photographs" on a unique level of "virtual immediacy" and savour the unexpected fine details discovered in them that I would have missed in a cinema, in a viewing involving both a more pronounced "aesthetic distance" and a totally different feel of immersion in bodily space.[58]

Beside the blogosphere where entries discussing Godard's films are mushrooming day by day, Godard's real post-cinematic life can be traced also to such private contexts and activities like mine, to the electronic collection of a post-cinematic cinéphile, someone who has appropriated Godard's cinematic images in gigabytes worth of screenshots alongside one's private photographs/films and the Godard films themselves amassed in different formats. As his wide-ranging extra-cinematic influence as well as *Film Socialisme* demonstrates (together with my personal and somewhat erratic collection): Godard, the "father figure" of modernist intermediality has also successfully passed the tests of the age of convergence. Amid the profusion of photo-filmic images, Godard, the thinker in strong individual frames still sails large: both as a source of imagery convertible as "Godardesque" and as a role model for appropriating new media as effective forms of reflection and – last but not least – also for taking images into our own (virtual) hands.

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58 Jonathan Crary (1992, 1) describes how new technologies are "relocating vision to a plane severed from a human observer." He argues that the idea of a "real, optically perceived world" has been undermined, and considers that "if these images can be said to refer to anything, it is to millions of bits of electronic mathematical data." However, this is only partially true, in the tactile everyday "immediacy" of these captured images on my computer, the vision is no longer "severed" from my personal observation, quite the contrary; I re-personalise them on a unique and hybrid level of my own individual "screen" or "archive," and in the context of my private space.

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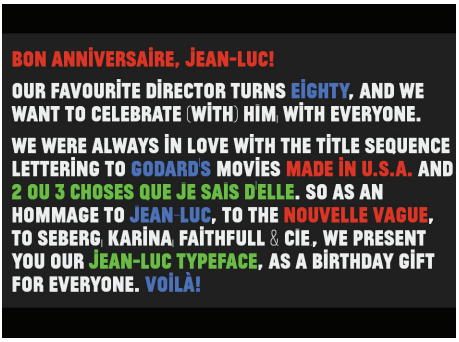

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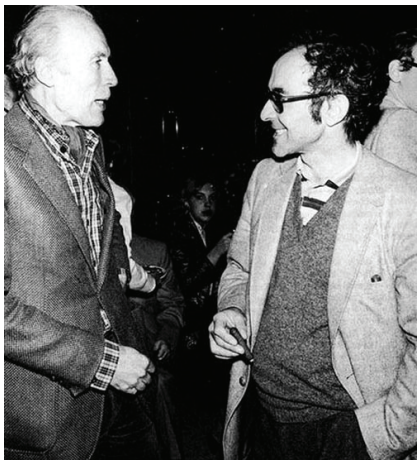

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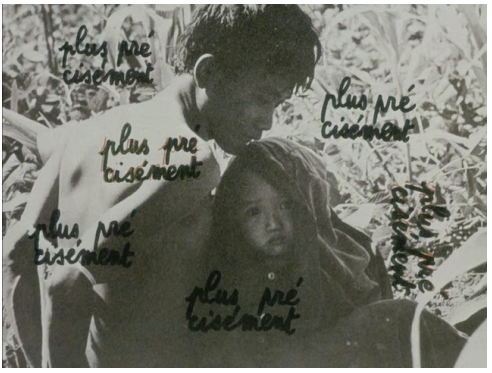

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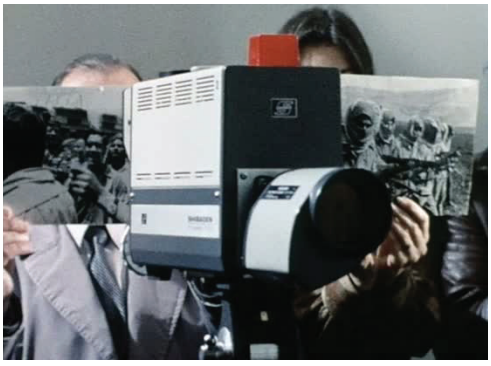

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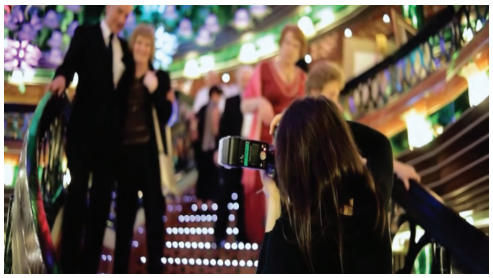






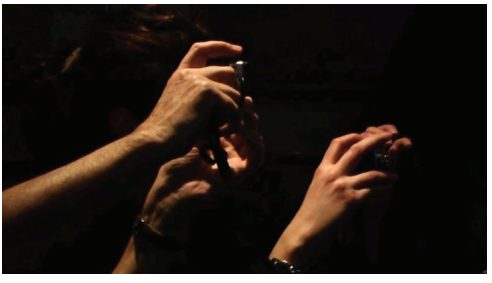

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Cinema, DVD, and Video Installation. The Medial Forms of Benedek Fliegauf's *Milky Way*

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Abstract. The article deals with Benedek Fliegauf's *Milky Way* (*Tejút*, 2007), trying to establish the kinds of narrative structures and levels of this visual material, how far they determine its medial form, and what kinds of perceptive-receptive mechanisms its cinema and installation medial form offer, namely, how it can function as a movie and as an installation. While the article focuses on the movie medial form, it does not want to undervalue the installation medial form; however, it remains an open question, what kind of aesthetic experience it brings.

Owing to the media theory-oriented views livening up in the eighties and the nineties, the concept of intermediality got naturalised quite a decade ago in the diverse contexts of cultural, literary, film and theatrical theory, as it is stated in the opening phrase – since then having become a near adage – of a 1998 Paech study: "Intermedialität ist 'in'" (Paech 1998, 14). The convergence, intertwining, and interaction of individual media or fields of art have not only existed – i.e. it's not a novel phenomenon we are facing! –, academic interest has not neglected it completely, either. Literary theory has always discussed the musicality and pictorial nature of literature, and in turn, art history has not disregarded the narratologic aspects of works of art. Therefore, Rajewsky distinguishes two approaches of research that seem to be drawing near one another. One is the field of *interart studies* or *comparative art studies* aiming at shedding some light on the interactive influence of traditional arts, dating well back to ancient times. The second is developing from the reflections prompted by the media of photography and film since the forties. This latter treated only the relationship between film and literature for quite a time and started to discover the wider universe of audiovisual media only from the seventies and the eighties. The views

of Rajewsky are fundamentally rooted in the second approach since in the age of electronic and digital media and new media the research area of intermediality cannot halt at the limits of traditional art, on the other hand, she states that the outcome of comparative studies cannot be neglected (Rajewsky 2002, 6–11). Paech refers to the change of views in the traditional disciplines and to their necessity: the history of literature has since long acknowledged that its texts are issued not only as books but as CD-ROMs and audio books, and they even get adapted for screen. Though much later, art history considered re-constituting its reference area bearing in sight screens, monitors, and the virtual net (Paech 1998, 14).

Despite being naturalised, intermediality has quite an immense confusion around it, which is rightly manifested in the study volume edited by Jörg Helbig (Helbig 1998). The authors of the book elicit diverse aspects and concepts of intermediality. Rajewsky's work from 2002 compiled with a systematising intent lends extremely useful help in the differentiated view of the heterogeneous and rich world of intermedial phenomena. Her taxonomy has since become a basis for several researches while the diverse views of intermediality still exist to some extent. Rajewsky herself alludes to the fact that her own view is in lots of ways different from that of scholars like Paech for whom intermediality is most of all a process of transformation. He conceives it figuratively, sharply distinguishing it from phenomenal content and from the aesthetic programmes of the authors. Nonetheless, in the discussion of intermediality these diverse concepts should not be disregarded (Rajewsky 2002, 24–25).

In what follows, examining Benedek Fliegauf's *Milky Way* (*Tejút*, 2007) I am primarily intrigued to find out how the reception through manifold medial forms gets varied and what aesthetic experiences they offer. Conceiving of *Milky Way* as an intermedial phenomenon, it is especially interesting because it has not only been screened as a feature film but also as an installation, i.e. we are facing a visual material that has diverse medial forms. Following the screening at Locarno in 2007 and on the Hungarian Film Week in 2008, it was presented as a video installation in the Ludwig Museum[1] – the individual scenes were projected on nine screens in three halls. Fliegauf's work seems to be trespassing the Rajewsky limits of intermedial phenomena.

Rajewsky distinguishes between intermedial and intramedial phenomena where the latter do not trespass media boundaries. She also differentiates intermedial from transmedial phenomena which encompasses non-media specific

1 Ludwig Museum *All's cinema!* [*Minden mozi!*, 8 February – 30 March, 2008] exhibition of film and video collection.

phenomena that cannot be assigned fundamentally and primarily to any special media since they can be manifested through several different media where none of them are privileged. Here one finds myths, tales, and biblical stories that literature, art, music, film etc. have treated, therefore we do not relate them to any one specific medium. Though Fliegauf's *Milky Way* can be regarded as a transmedial phenomenon, it is different because it has only two medial forms – disregarding differences of reception through cinema, television, video or notebook – i.e. it is anchored in the media of a film screened in a museum or in a cinema. On the basis of Rajewsky's distinction, three further categories can be discerned within intermedial phenomena. First is media combination, the combination and co-existence of different media, such as the opera and film itself. Second, media change, stands for transforming from one medium to another, such as the various cases of adaptation. Finally, it distinguishes intermedial references where one medium refers to another – either by presenting its characteristics or even quoting a work from another medial form.[2] Fliegauf's work can most of all be categorised as media combination, while it is near to media change as well. It is yet distinct from other examples of media change inasmuch as taking *Milky Way* it is not clear if the medial form of feature film is to be considered as original since it was almost simultaneously screened as a feature film and an installation. However, in the case of media change there has to be an original medial form starting from which transformation takes place.

It is worth diverting to the phenomenon well-known as moving the film from the cinema to the exhibition room. From this angle *Milky Way* is not a unique piece at all. Andrea Tóth in her study *And-effect, or cinema at exhibition rooms* (Tóth 2009b) discusses in detail how certain French theorists argue that films have recently much rather moved to exhibition rooms and how others refute this view. Considering the references of the study, there are several differences compared to *Milky Way*. A group of the installations referred to in the study are adaptations of films originally screened in cinema – in a different space, rhythm and pace and in completely different circumstances.[3] They are evidently cases of media change, unless there is a doubt that the link between film and installation loosened so much that we are rather talking about intermedial reference. In the rest of the examples referred to, the visual material was already designed for an exhibition room, nothing prompted cinema screening, and

2 Ginette Verstraete (2010, 7–14) follows this taxonomy, her terms of multimediality, transmediality and intermediality identify with Rajewsky's media combination, media change and intermedial references.

3 Cf. Douglas Gordon's *24 Hours Psycho.*

furthermore, it might even be inconceivable. Based on the above, one cannot draw a parallel between films swarming in exhibition rooms and the recently rumoured death of the cinema. Moreover, it is becoming evident that Fliegauf's piece is a peculiar phenomenon.

Henceforth, I would like to examine what narrative forms of experience the different medial forms of *Milky Way* might carry. From this angle, *Milky Way* is much more appropriate for a presentation through the media of installation. The ten scenes do not actually add up to one single story; they rather seem to be a bunch of ten loosely connecting exhibition "objects." Without having the cinema and the exhibition systematically distinguished from each other, and simultaneously pointing at the accessibility between the two in the manner of a "deconstructive logic," one might risk stating that the cinema as an institution is expected to present a story a lot more than an exhibition or an installation.[4] Let us connect to the argument of Earl Miner in order to see why one does not (or does only with doubt) consider the scenes of *Milky Way* as a story in the cinema, either.

Miner rightly points out in his *Comparative Poetics: An Intercultural Essay on Theories of Literature* (discussed by Szili 1997, 102–114) that the Western approach to the epic genre has tightly been connected to dramatic art since Aristotle. Following the footsteps of Aristotle, the Western concept of criticism has been based on dramatic art – in contrast to Eastern thought, which is connected to the poetic genre – thus epic genres are closed in the Western approach (i.e. they are constructed around a single unified and complete plot) with a certain number of episodes, a central character and an intrigue. As Aristotle prescribes the typicalities of dramatic composition to the heroic poem, so will these typicalities apply to epic genres and storytelling in Western thought. The far-reaching consequences of Aristotelian conception can still be sensed in the fundamentals of approaches of narratology: "A *fabula* is a series of logically and chronologically related events that are caused or experienced by actors" (Bal 1997, 6). Whereas Miner points out that the actual organising principle is the radical sequentiality or – as Szili puts it – cataloguing principle. Having the dramatic components removed from the narrative, one is left with the mere chronological succession of episodes. Annals and chronicles manifest this pure sequentiality, Szili holds that even such tremendous works as the Bible, of encyclopaedic nature and with

4 This view does not preclude a film without a story, or that there might be an exhibition reciting a story. Naturally, there are several examples for both issues. The statement is only to manifest the tendency of expectations affecting these two institutions.

values of cultural history, present sequentiality where story and catalogue, and drama and commentary are inseparable. Szili reckons this cataloguing principle reaches beyond the epic genre: it is equally present in the dramatic, poetic and discursive genres since it is deeply connected to the linear sequentiality of verbal display. It might be the overall reason why Western culture does not conceive of sequential forms as inner forms. The problematics of conceiving a story is not by long solved, though, several narrative forms of 20th century literature do not allow the construction of a closed story where events ensue in a chronological or causal order. And from the nineties episodic films have spectacularly come to the front (Lommel 2005). Several of them have the above characteristics.

Returning to the narrative structure of *Milky Way*, Miner's and Szili's critique seems to be supportable. Viewers not only lack weaving the scenes ensuing one another into a story; they do not even bother to inquire about their connections since no poetic necessity can be sensed. Thus, considering its narrative structure, *Milky Way* seems to be just as much – if not more – adapted for the exhibition room as for the cinema. What is more, the audience has the privilege to decide in what order they prefer to watch the scenes.[5]

Yet, the scenes seemingly hardly connected are bound to one another with several threads; they subtly follow one another's finest vibrations: they repeat and reflect one another or even stand in contrast – as if innumerable invisible bonds would bind them together on the levels of composition and appearance. For example, the spaciousness of scenes 3 and 4 [Figs. 5, 6 and 3.] are contrasted with the closed depth of scenes 7 and 8 [Figs. 1 and 2.], while the perfect symmetry of the cyclists resting in scene 4 is reflected in the touching line of father, child and snowman in scene 9 [Figs. 3 and 4.] Also on the level of events: the mysteriousness of scene 4 is followed by the subtle humour of scene 5, which in turn is in contrast with the dramatic nature of scenes 7 and 8 followed by the melancholy of scene 9. In contrast to scene 4 arousing several questions and incorporating uncertainty, the events of scene 5 are more evident where the events have happened, the starting image returns (as if nothing had happened). It is in contrast to scene 8 where we might have witnessed irreversible events. And finally, beyond several motifs of content and form linking the scenes one might dimly draft a poetic principle stretching over the whole film. Inasmuch as we take the actions taking place between the dawn of the first scene and the

5 One cannot disregard the fact that beholders do not have absolute freedom in the exhibition room, either, since the space, the arrangement of the scenes does designate, orient and influence to a certain extent the direction of wandering. Still, compared to a cinema, some freedom is present in the exhibition room.

last scene reaching into the night as events of a single day happening at different locations, the film can possess relative closedness.[6]

So far I have only treated the connections of the scenes. On the other hand, experiencing the individual scenes is just as much problematic from the aspect of aesthetic experience. And so it seems that the individual scenes themselves arouse the same questions as the film as a whole does. As the bond between the scenes is problematic from the angle of *Milky Way* as a whole, within one scene one wonders how its events and actions are connected. However, while the whole of *Milky Way* is sequentially divided into sections (i.e. it is built of separate scenes), the individual scenes themselves are constructed of one single setting, one single indivisible unit. Therefore – and owing to the unity of the location – they more easily evoke the sense of continuity and of the relation between actions. Thus it follows that while the apparent lack of relation between the scenes is less problematic for the viewer on the level of the film as a whole, the quest for the context of events and actions within a single scene becomes a central problem of interpretation.[7]

In this respect individual scenes possess an especially exciting game. Fundamentally, they do not delineate a single story, i.e. the link between events and actions is not obvious, still, they do not defy the construction of a story. What is more, they explicitly tempt the viewer to construct! And while from the aspect of cognitive approach, story construction is a coincident of the reception process of each film; it goes without saying that in this particular case the circumstances and the stake of story construction are completely different. Compared to a classical film, the causal connection of events and the relationship between them is essentially more enigmatic in Fliegauf's scenes, and at certain points one even wonders what is happening at all.

In scene 3 a pier can be seen in the water where a young girl arrives with a pink pram. She soon exits leaving the pram behind in the middle of the pier. Then a boat hits land with a man going ashore, he steps over to the pram and takes it. Shortly, it is the young girl who pushes it across the scene. Who is the girl? Why does she leave the pram? Is she the mother? And who is the man? Why does he take the pram? How does it get back to the young girl? What on earth has happened?

6 It is relative, should the film still keep its cataloguing nature despite the two extreme points of beginning and end. Since the number of the scenes could be enlarged without having to fit the new ones tightly to the preceding and ensuing scenes.

7 It is clearly obvious from discussions of audience meetings how much more significant it is for the audience to connect the events of a scene than to find a bond between scenes.

In setting 7, containers fill up the whole of the screen and some dim bangs can be heard from them. Soon, a man comes and walks up and down until a harbour worker arrives and opens one of the containers. He pulls a box from the back of the container and a shattered and physically totally run down girl is retrieved from it. The man hands over an envelope to the worker and leaves with the girl. The worker locks the container and leaves. There is still banging on the empty scene. Is it kidnap? Is it an escape? Returning home? Is it a political case or felony? Father and daughter? Lovers? How many and who are left in the container?

Story construction is not at all independent of the imagery of the film. The individual settings do not simply portray the locations of the events, they are pictorial compositions that might in themselves carry potential events and actions – in the above mentioned scene 3, for example, via the balance of the picture.

The long pier reaching into the water and cutting through the horizontal picture balances the events along the scene with the precision of pharmacy scales. The imbalanced state of the opening scene [Fig. 5.] – along classical expectations – suggests some shortly coming events on the right side of the picture. And so it happens: in a few seconds the young girl arrives with the pram from the right and stops exactly at the spot through which the picture is perfectly balanced [Fig. 6.] Shortly, the young girl leaves the picture on the left; the pram still guarantees the balance of the picture, at least for a while. Soon it turns out that the balance supported by the pink pram left behind is very fragile. While the balance of the picture turns over, the order of things – as it seems – is recovered: finally, at the end of the scene the young girl leaves with the pram. Horizontal movements from left to right and from right to left are similarly balanced – almost including the birds flying across. Is it composition then that designates upcoming events? Was the pink pram left behind lonely and exposed to danger simply for the sake of pictorial balance?

The composition of scene 8 manifests peculiar tension. The windows of the block of flats closing the horizon are, as numerous eyes or observation posts, staring at the playground [Fig. 2.] Extending in mind the limits of the picture upwards, the number of potential gazes tuned for focusing on the foreground is rising. The horizon is perfectly closed, the apartment building is completely impenetrable for the gaze of the person sitting on the bench, while at the same time he is exposed to an endless number of observers. There is already somebody standing in one of the windows – observing, spying, inspecting. And how many more are above it? The distressful atmosphere not only alludes to the dramatic events, it also suggests that the tension of these events is about to unfold from the play between foreground and background. An old lady enters the scene tired and hard to move. She takes

some rest for a while on the bench to pull her strength together for getting on with her journey; but she cannot make it, she faints. Does anybody see her from any of the windows? Can she expect help from above? Soon a door opens and a man hurries to the old lady. He looks around and thinks for a moment. His hesitation lasts only as long as to allow the viewer to have the suspicion that he might not have arrived with a helping hand. Then he gently lifts the lady and takes her into the house. How the story ends, if it is not the end, is up to the viewer.

Thus, composition and visuality have a decisive role; it is already alluded to by the opening picture: in the scene slowly brightening light plays the lead role, the element without which sight, and what is more, the birth of photography and cinema would be inconceivable. Further scenes of the film play with various elements and dimensions of picture composition: colours, lights and shades, picture depth, picture division, picture symmetry or cut. The second scene might evoke the illusory spectacle of the Ames room (as the girl coming from a tent walks to the right side she turns twice as tall as she was on the left side) [Figs. 7 and 8.] While scene 6 surprises us through having a deserted, empty and bare landscape filled with a colourful inflatable rubber castle.

From the elements of picture composition, frame is worth examining! Unless the construction of the story is restricted to the events within the frame, one can get further variations of story. Bearing this in mind, if one returns to scene 3, it is by no means certain that the pram is thrown about lonely on the pier. The girl might be near, only outside the frame and the man getting out from the boat is less likely to be a stranger wanting to snatch the pram. He is rather about to push it to the girl. A simple everyday story is formed from a dramatic narrative full of tensions and questions. It might affect the interpretation of further scenes, since after a dramatic scene we would have the tendency to move the events to the dramatic in the next scene.

Thus *Milky Way* recalls the memory of bygone visual puzzles and riddles where there is a picture and its secret can be unveiled only if one examines it seriously and thoroughly; but it also holds some reminiscences of the worlds of video and computer games. Fliegauf himself mentions it in several interviews that he was – from several aspects – inspired by the online game *Samorost*. Actually, the game of the Czech Amanita Design[8] does need thorough observation in order to have its hero reach the goal through several trials. However, it does not mean that *Milky Way* should work as a video or PC game even if it does contain such potentials in its operational mechanism, as events do unfold from visuality, but the viewer

8 http://amanita-design.net/ The game mentioned can be found at the site.

has no part in it. Though the story can be diversely constructed, the viewer under no circumstances has any power to initiate the events happening, unfolding or ensuing. The active part the film allows to its audience is in no way the same as the interactivity one experiences with video and PC games. Finally, the game offered by *Milky Way* leads to no end, there is nowhere to get through *Milky Way* – if not only to ourselves.

The constructive activity of the audience does not manifest in the search for an exclusive meaning. Arranging and piecing together the events does not aim at unveiling the only true story, the audience does not investigate truth. Neither is it about decrypting enigmatic metaphors or symbols – as opposed to other works, the secret of *Milky Way* does not lie in interpretation or in seeking meaning.

The scenes of *Milky Way* much rather wait for working: the events and the composition induce the audience to construct stories. Yet, the imagination of the audience is inevitable in the process of gap filling between events. Story construction can only be carried out through the various associations of the viewer while he constantly has presumptions and constructs potential stories, keeping in mind even several variations in parallel and at the same time. On having novel events take place, the viewer from time to time reconsiders, adjusts, deconstructs and reconstructs his presumptions. He ties and unties, weaves and undoes; but whatever story he creates it will always be his own.

While all criticisms on *Milky Way* almost unanimously agree that the reception of the film requires a passive, contemplative viewer's attitude, where the audience gives itself up to the beauty of the world displayed in front of the camera (Tóth 2009a), I have intended to argue for the contrary. In this way, the reception of *Milky Way* equals an analysis. The given visual or picture surface proves to be a projection surface. Through the displayed events, the picture surface inspires story reconstruction and at the same time it is apt for holding the stories and projections constructed by the viewer. The film expands along the screen as a mute, speechless therapist. It does not correct, does not rectify, does not verify and nor does it refute: it allows the viewer to let his associations free and to get closer to himself.

This reception of *Milky Way* – as it seems – is only possible in the medial form of film. Even if the visitor of the exhibition prompted by the medial form of video installation can partly disregard simultaneous reception – where simultaneity is either the result of the events running at the same time or of audio montage[9]

9 It is to be noted here that on the audible level – which can significantly influence story construction (especially in scene 6 or even 5) should one watch the film in a cinema – the video installation had an audio montage assembling in one the sounds of individual scenes.

– and not only passes in front of the scenes; but watches them patiently, he has very little chance to have the scenes start when he enters the room. However, it is likely to be inevitable to see the scenes from the beginning to the end in a linear way in order to have the experience described above. Though, in the case of certain scenes, entering an exhibition room and plunging in the scene already at its middle there might occur an almost similarly exciting game to find out how the scene might have started, what actions might have taken place. However, in most cases – exactly because of the story unfolding from visuality – it is more important to have a previous view of the visual composition, which is fundamentally possible in the beginning of the scene. It does not intend to say that the beginning of the story is insignificant from the angle of the events at the end of the scene because as the openness of the events does not outline one single potential story, with every rerunning a new story can be constructed. Reception from the beginning to the end of a scene, i.e. the previous examination of visual composition is more significant for elaborating our associations and running our associative thinking temporally.

Beside the two above treated medial forms a third one has to be mentioned: reception through DVD. Watching a DVD makes the two processes possible at the same time: the viewer can watch the scenes in an order at will, i.e. he can decide over the sequence of scenes just like in the form of a video installation, or he can watch each scene from the beginning, which allows the narrative experience described above to be attainable within the scenes.

I had no intention to argue that the "real" or "more valuable" medial form of *Milky Way* is the cinema or DVD screening; I have simply drafted the possible mechanism of reception of these medial forms. It is still problematic what forms of aesthetic experience the medial form of installation *Milky Way* offers.

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"I Hear with my Whole Body"[10] Hajnal Németh's Dislocated Sonorous Bodies[11]

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Abstract. Hajnal Németh is preoccupied with the visual, corporeal, and aural chasm opened up by the frequently invisible, dislocated or muted object proper of her works. Music, sounds, noises pour into the exhibition spaces constituting, as Don Ihde terms it, the shape-aspect of things and bodies; flashing images exhibit themselves on a stage-like construction as a dismembered narrative; movement caught in stagy frozenness highlights the falsity of performative gestures. The abyss automatically calls for surrogate narratives, identities, and artefacts to defy our ontological insecurity. Németh creates the conditions for this pluralism through a Merleau-Pontian synergy of the tangible and the visible, on the one hand, and by exploiting the conventionally unnoticed sonorous quality of shapes, surfaces, and interiors, evoking Ihde's aural phenomenology, on the other hand. The aural vacuum turns palpable the way the human body transfigures into a musical instrument, the faceless musicians can be identified by their body prints (moles or skin imprints) or occasionally by one's voice as a sonic "fingerprint." Németh allures us by the promise of a recreated subjectivity that infiltrates our social and cultural fabric at the concurrence of the musical, the corporeal, and the filmic spheres.

10 The line comes from Don Ihde's *Listening and Voice*. The synaesthetic quality of Ihde's idea characterises the entirety of Hajnal Németh's artistic concept, as well as my own analytic framework both occupying the intersection of different sensory experiences embedded in and performed through the body (2007, 44).

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Encountering the works of Hajnal Németh,[12] one is confronted with the conspicuous absence of the expected subject matters, themes or the thing itself, the object proper of the exhibited piece. The expectations are momentarily justified by, for instance, the titles of the works like in *Bar 24* (2003), the *Gogo* series (2004) or *Butterfly* (2008). Németh also incorporates various genres, artistic or socio-cultural activities that she apparently intends to reflect on like in the *Recording Room* trilogy (2006), *Guitarsolo* (2007) or in *Crystal Clear Propaganda –The Transparent Method* (2009). Her works, however, prevalently address issues indirectly: primarily creating the milieu of high culture or the comfort of an easily identifiable cultural framework only to end up with some common or familiar yet conventionally overlooked human interaction or perspective. She recurrently adopts the means of defamiliarisation by transforming the temporarily invisible or inaudible percepts into a corporeal, visual or sonorous experience. Németh recontextualises her figures and/or objects by which she undermines their original role or meaning. This automatically affects the viewer's conventionally established relationship with the artefact and, eventually, his or her own identity. Németh's art fills up the crack opened up by the perceptual and conceptual distance of the presumed object and/or theme and what is actually presented.

12 Hajnal Németh is a video artist born in Hungary, based in Berlin, Germany since 2002. She graduated at the Hungarian Academy of Fine Arts, Intermedia Department in 2000. "Many of Nemeth's works are complex installations comprised of several different kinds of components, and by juxtaposing objects, texts and sounds, they receive meaning in the context […] of a given space. […] Sound as a formal medium has had a significant role in her works over the past years, but in many cases it develops into a theme: music; noise as music; music industry as illusion factory; the cited lyrics as a statement of general force. Generally her photos and videos – related in content to the installations – are documents of performative events played by invited participants and taking place in functionally significant spaces: sound studio, stage, atelier, etc." (Németh 2011) As she herself reflects on her recent thematic concern in an interview, her music or sound related works were inspired by the theory of John Cage. Accordingly, her interest turned towards "music in its wider sense, as well as towards noise, to be precise, the lack of it, that is, silence, the way these two are inseparably fused in a unity" (Beöthy 2010; [my translation]). As some of the recent professional acknowledgments, she was nominated along with five other artists for the Aviva Art Award whose mission is to promote Hungarian contemporary art and to enable young artists (the age limit is 40) to gain publicity and recognition, which was also supported by a group exhibition for the nominees. In the same year, Németh was also nominated with seven artists for the Nam June Paik Award. This year, however, brought another significant opportunity to show her talent. Hajnal Németh's installation *Crash – Passive Interview* will be on show in the Hungarian Pavilion at the 54th International Art Exhibition of the Venice Biennale in 4th June – 27th November, 2011. She was selected from altogether 12 nominees to represent Hungary. The beginning of 2011 earned another prestigious recognition for her: she was awarded with the Munkácsy Prize this March.

This evokes Mieke Bal's particularly illustrative trope for the object proper of visual culture as the basis of its much debated status within the academia, which she explores in her seminal article on the (inter)disciplinary classification of visual culture. She cites Louise Bourgeois's installation entitled *Spider* (1997) as an aid to express the very essence of the object concerned. As a part of the installation, Bourgeois recycled fragments of an 18th century tapestry. One of the fragments contains the image of a "castrated putto [which] is a scar of a multilayered past," mutilated so by the "early 20th-century French bourgeois culture [that cuts] out what disturbs the period's sensibilities" (Bal 2003, 15-6). Bal voices the silenced narrative arching from antiquity through the 18th century – the latter paying a tribute to the aesthetics of the former – to two distinct phases of the 20th century, both of them being critical to their immediate predecessor. The narrative continuously transformed and expanded during the centuries, functioning as an illustration of cultural history. Bal puts emphasis on the, by definition, invisible and muted components when she concludes that "this absence, the hole itself, *qua* non-object or has-been-object is a prime object of visual culture analysis. […] This hole is both material and void; it is visible and visually engaging, yet there is nothing at all to be seen. Every act of looking fills in the hole" (2003, 16). I would consciously extend Bal's scope with the absent or dismembered narrative component and, as its corollary, its voice, the missing expressive sonority since these delineate Németh's artistic intentions.

Her preoccupation with what Bal termed as the hole is most tangibly presented through her *End of the Seasons / Version A /* (2008), the title inspired by Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons* (1723). "The basic work is a fictive LP cover, endowing a nonexistent musical piece with nonexistent content on a nonexistent audio record. […] The installation bearing the same title is made up of 80 such LP covers, and the holes on the covers constitute a tunnel towards a single yellow light source" (Németh 2011). [Figs. 1–2.] *End of the Seasons* exemplifies her characteristic employment of the gesture of denial or erasure hinted at by the title (cf. *Not Me* [2008], *Air Out* [2008], *Except Me* [2009]). Németh implicates the end, the termination of the unquestionably masterful, yet, by now, totally popularised and diluted Vivaldi piece. The act of mass (re)production, which occasionally hits high culture artefacts as well, is manifested in the faceless LPs that are forced to function differently. Their reception necessitates a literally different viewpoint.

Németh's installations, videos, and photos are attempts at the paradoxical materialisation of the non-object, the absence. She consciously and also consequentially creates what Angela Dimitrakaki calls a "critical space" (269)

within which she proposes issues of subjectivity (*Desney and Destiny* [2007], *Air Out, Bar 24*), social identification (*Recording Room* trilogy, *Guitarsolo*), ideology (*Crystal Clear Propaganda – The Transparent Method*), or the (non-)sequential logic of story telling (*Butterfly*, *Crash – Passive Interview* [2010]) just to mention a few of her works and respective themes she addresses. She formulates her critical commentary on socio-political and cultural themes by shaking the fundaments of our perceptive experience of the art works. The museum goer is exposed to sounds and/or noises instead of a tune or a song, to bodies substituting musical instruments, to a disturbing mass of props of music production instead of the sterility and perfection simulating recorded music, and to fragmented (visual and aural) narratives disrupting the desire for linearity and completeness. As Judy Lochhead expresses it in her *Visualising the Musical Object*,[13] "the project of visualizing music recognizes that sight plays an important role in defining sonic meaning. […] To 'visualize' implies more than simply seeing, it implies 'making' something that can be seen – a bringing to visibility. As such it implies a certain kind of comprehension through conceptualization and it affords a kind of 'sharability'" (2006, 68, 69). Lochhead, indirectly, touches upon the human perceptive mode as innately synaesthetic and pure, whose basis is the human body that conditions what she, in accordance with Don Ihde's concept, calls a "sensual intercommunication" (2006, 67).

Németh, however, realises the artistic object through a further cross-sensory gesture. She does not simply fuse categories of the visual and the aural – incorporating the body–mind, high culture–popular culture synthesis as well – but, along with their intertwinings, she simultaneously eliminates, erases the very object of the respective work of art. Owing to this, her viewer-listeners are left with the sense of a disturbing lack. The receiver's expectation can hardly gain fulfilment in the actually (un)presented subject matter. Instead s/he gets emptied out spaces, unidentifiable bodies or discredited musical pieces, discredited since they reach us as distorted, hence unrecognisable sounds, noises, fragments of well-known or canonised songs or opuses. Németh defines the things through their negative shapes (shape here denoting not exclusively the visual but the aural quality as well) delineated by their immediate context. While Dimitrakaki claims that Németh "make[s] use of video-clip aesthetic" (2005, 274) Monika Perenyei terms the episodes of Németh's *Recording Room* trilogy equally righteously as

13 Lochhead follows Don Ihde's phenomenological inquiry of sounds, voices, and listening, when she examines alternative systems of notation, which also serve the encoding of additional functions and meanings besides the primary objectives of preserving the sound such as the "composer's intentions" (2006, 69).

"anti-videoclips" (2007, 14).[14] As the latter formulates it in her introduction, "the underlying concept of *Recording Room* (2006) and *Guitarsolo* (2006) is to document the backstage production process of the product-oriented pop music industry […] eventually addressing the confrontation of the real and the illusory" (2007, 12). Even if Perenyei's critical perspective is indebted to a number of formal and genre-related concerns of film theory, hence focusing on issues such as documentarism, the presence of the camera-eye, camera movement or cinematic dramaturgy, she also highlights Németh's subversive overtone concerning the phenomenological redefinition of socio-cultural dichotomies. Németh achieves this through fusing different genres or through the recurrent intertwining of the visual and the aural, (or as Perenyei formulates it citing Merleau-Pontian categories) the active sentient and the passive sensible roles, as well as through "the entanglement of sensuous matter and intellectual form" (Perenyei 2007, 14).

Merleau-Ponty puts emphasis on the synergy of the tactile and the visual by claiming "that every visible is cut out in the tangible, every tactile being in some manner promised to visibility, and that there is encroachment, infringement […] also between the tangible and the visible […]" (1968, 134). This adherence to tactile-visuality is justified by his aesthetic concern with the Post-Impressionist, most precisely, Cézannesque tenets of formalism and plasticity. Ihde, on the other hand, as Vivian Sobchack formulates it, invites us to follow him "into micro- and macroperceptual adventures" (2006, 13) most particularly to the realm of voices, sounds, music, to the sonority of bodies and things. He, straightforwardly, claims that "we have not learned to listen to shapes" (Ihde 2007, 64), subsequently, we lost our sensitivity to a primordially given synthesis of the senses, which we would otherwise experience "as a flux and flow" (Ihde 2007, 64). By directing our attention to either the unexpected and absent thing as the object of vision or the metamorphosed sound as the object of hearing, Németh enhances the discernibility of what Ihde calls the "shape-aspect" of sounds (2007, 61), which, eventually, assists a comprehensive understanding of one's immediate surrounding and also his or her own place in the world among other bodies and things. Ihde claims that although "at first such an observation seems outrageous we hear shapes" (2007, 61). He doubly reformulates the traditional relationship of sight/the visual and sound/the aural: firstly, sound and music that conventionally are considered to be "'weak' spatially" (Ihde 2007, 58) gain the spatial extension. The aural field becomes enriched with its conventionally muted spatial dimension, which, eventually, results in the refinery of our sensory experience, hence our

14 Quotations of Perenyei's text appear in my translation.

ontological status as well. Secondly, the privileged position of vision is implicitly undermined by the interrelation of the temporal flux of sounds and the spatial simultaneity of things, which affects our aural perception of not only shapes but surfaces and also interiors.

The multidimensional hearing of spaces resembles the blind man who "[is] given sight" (Ihde 2007, 64). Ihde introduces the case of a blind student of phenomenology who reported on her newly gained visual experience as "a gradual displacement of a previously more omnidirectional orientation and spatial awareness to a much more focused forward orientation" (2007, 65). One would naturally claim that in everyday life the focused visual orientation serves a more efficient existential condition. Németh's works, however, are meant to challenge our singularly focused perceptual modes by offering the loss of both visual and aural forwardness. This also evokes Merleau-Ponty's call for the necessity of primordial perception that, along with Cézanne, he considered to be the very basis of the painterly "[expression] of the world […] [as the] indivisible whole […] the imperious unity, the presence, the insurpassable plenitude" (1964, 15). "The lived object is not rediscovered or constructed on the basis of the contribution of the senses; rather, it presents itself to us from the start as the centre from which these contributions radiate. We see the depth, the smoothness, the softness, the hardness of objects; Cézanne even claimed that we see their odor" (Merleau-Ponty 1964, 15).

The fusion of different sensory fields endows the individual with a predominantly synaesthetic mode of being as well as liberates one from the cultural confinement of "the purity-assuming cut between what is visual and what is not" (Bal 2003, 6). Both Bal and Perenyei highlight the necessity for the intertwining of different sensory experiences. Bal claims that "vision is itself inherently synaesthetic" (2003, 9) and also draws attention to how contemporary art reflects on such a paradigm shift in critical thinking citing James Coleman[15] as an example (2003, 10). Perenyei explores the synaesthetic potentials of Németh's *Recording Room* trilogy, which the artist achieves in different sensory fields. In *Try Me*, Németh combines the cinematic choreography of rhythm, pace, and movement with the aural one by her "rhythm-attuned camera moves" (Perenyei 2007, 14). [Fig. 3.] In the second part of the trilogy (*Break Free*), as Perenyei formulates it, Németh establishes a complementary relationship of the visually domineering anthropomorphic shape of a lamp in the foreground of the scene and the voice

15 James Coleman is an Irish installation and video artist associated with slide-tape works: sequences of still images fading one into the other with synchronised sound.

of the singer, the two becoming the members of a duet. [Fig. 4.] As a final fusion of otherwise mutually exclusive categories, she eliminates "the masculine, hence objectifying and pointing to one singular outcome […] and the feminine rather aimless and dissolving" modes of image creation partially through mismatching image and voice – the viewer faces the male singer yet occasionally the woman dubs his voice in *Turn Your Lights* (Perenyei 2007, 16). [Fig. 5.]

Németh fills up the cracks of conventionally accepted discrepancies between vision, touch, or hearing. By bestowing voice to the otherwise silenced entities or offering plasticity to apparently absent bodies she forces us to realise the presence of visually and aurally subdued subject. The two most prominent realisations of this are *Air Out* and *Bar 24*. The upbeat of the former piece welcomes us with a well-known Bach tune and, at the same time, the hardly recognisable body part, that is, the back from an extreme close-up of the organ player. [Fig. 6.] Due to the characteristic location of the organ in a traditional setting, the human agent of the musical performance remains invisible for the audience, additionally, his/her subjectivity is swallowed by the sound and also by the enormity of the instrument. We simply have no access to the accompanying sounds and noises of his/her body while s/he interacts with the instrument. As opposed to this, a violin performance, for instance, especially in the case of a recorded version enables us to distinguish the breathing of the musician from the bow's rustling on the strings, consequently, his/her bodily presence is not totally annihilated by the sound of music. *Air Out*, however, terminates Bach's *Air* (1717–23) right at the beginning, first, leaving behind some residual off-key notes and a few seconds later we are left with an aural void owing to the gradually emptied out pipes of the organ. A different "music" commences, with a regained unison of the notes, this time performed by, what Ihde terms, "'the duet' of things" (2007, 67), in this case, the musician's body and the organ. Accompanying the tune, we are also presented with her domineering bodily presence. The screen is almost entirely filled up with the sight of bare skin covered with dozens of moles, while she goes on with the alternatively sounded performance of Bach. Such proximity with the body yet again disjoints our desired immersion in the elevated tunes of Bach's organ piece. The overwhelming corporeal intimacy, paradoxically, enhances the sense of discomfort and heightens the viewer's unease concerning the immediate identification of the respective body part. Zooming out, Németh slowly transforms the body into a constituent of the organ, its instrumentality, its thingness is emphasised by its being voiced through the organ itself. Mara Traumane, art critic and curator, attributes this to the fact that the "musicians have turned their back to the camera" (Traumane

2011),[16] also highlighting the technical quality of the instruments as opposed to the organic body. Traumane continues her argument with citing Marshall McLuhan "who saw media and technology as a prosthesis that allows us to 'extend' our senses and capacities, but which, at the same time, amputates some natural abilities. Like, for example, aspiration for the sonic perfection deprives us of liveliness of movement or breath. Németh revives these 'side-effects' in the field of music" (Traumane 2011). Németh's restoring the apparently negligible collateral sound effects of the bodily presence is expanded by voicing the whole human body through its shape-aspect. The sonorous quality replaces the visual one as an immediate effect of the "duet" of the body and instrument, which we normally disregard or subconsciously mute even in the case of a record of a live performance, most probably because we are culturally trained to appreciate sonic sterility. Németh teaches us "the existential possibility of listening" (Ihde 2007, 67) not solely concentrating on the voicing of two bodies/things but also embedding the aural experience within the visual medium, hence realising the chiasmus of the visual and the aural.

In her *Bar 24*[17] we face basically the same model of voicing bodies: a significant difference is that here the sound-aspect is performed through self-imposed instrumentality. [Fig. 7.] By rhythmically slapping himself, the voicing and voiced body belongs to the same performer. The sonorous body is circumscribed by the rapid flaps of touching hands. Besides the obtained shape-aspect and its obvious visual embeddedness, *Bar 24* highlights the significance of touch, as well. As Merleau-Ponty observes the mutuality of vision and touch: "We must habituate ourselves to think that every visible is cut out in the tangible, every tactile being in some manner promised to visibility, and that there is encroachment, infringement, not only between the touched and the touching, but also between the tangible and the visible […]" (1968, 134). Németh grasps the very moment of the "encroachment," the chiasmus of the visual, the touching, and, as a further twist, the aural qualities. Merleau-Ponty's tactile visuality turns alive not solely through the obvious presence, and subsequent movement of the camera-eye but literally under the touching hands

16 Traumane also mentioned Németh's *Desney and Destiny* as an example for this bodily attitude. In this video, however, the back of the singer is shown from a distance that allows the viewer to establish a clearly distinguishable position in relation to her. The singer appears in a less alienated corporeality than the organ player of *Air Out*. Moreover Desney's name is indicated in the title of the video, her face obscured enough, yet occasionally occurs in the glass wall of the recording studio, and, eventually, her voice also functions as an identifying means, something that supports her uniqueness, her individuality. As opposed to this, in *Air Out*, even if the musician's body gains a sonorous presence, her identity undergoes a diversity of dissolutions.

17 "The title of the work, *Bar 24*, references the 24 bit video cuts that are used to create the rhythmic sampling" (Yap 2010, 114).

of the performer, since his body is covered by tattoos, that is, visual narratives, which are "voiced" also through the man's indirect pointing to each of the images. "The micro-narratives of each tattoo image assemble into a larger narrative of the figure" (Yap 2010, 114) which images and stories also become alive by the moves of the body itself, similarly to the "dancing" moles on the back of the musician in *Air Out*.

Németh creates a transitory space within the framework of the moving images of her video art and the stillness of photography. The constellation of sound, touch, vision, and language upsurges in this in-between space of filmic temporality/linearity and the spatial simultaneity of images, which enables categories – formerly thought to be stable and pure – to fluctuate freely, taking upon themselves each others' characteristics. Németh's artistic space is evocative of Merleau-Ponty's concept of the flesh, an intriguing phenomenological category that eludes a clear-cut definition. Merleau-Ponty himself makes several attempts at clarifying the term in his *The Intertwining – The Chiasm*, often ending up with what the flesh is not rather than with what it is: "The flesh is no matter, is not mind, is not substance. […] [I]t is a *general thing*, midway between the spatio-temporal individual and the idea […]. The flesh is in this sense an 'element' of Being" (1968, 139). The flesh makes us realise our synergy with the texture of the world, our coexistence with other bodies – animate and inanimate alike – of the world. We define ourselves through and within the intricacies of recurrent "intertwinings," "infringements," "encroachments" (all Merleau-Pontian terms) intra- and intercorporeally. Thus, flesh appears to be our ontological condition, "the concrete emblem of a general manner of being" (Merleau-Ponty 1968, 147).

Németh's installation, *Crash – Passive Interview* – which, compared to the original 2009 version, recently underwent some transformations – combines the tactile, the visual, and the aural constituents realising this intra- and intercorporeal texture of confluence.[18] [Figs. 8–9.] Whereas the exhibition space is visually dominated by the totalled BMW as an eyesore, the other components of the crash-narrative

18 The installation so far has appeared in three different spaces and with slight alterations and complements, out of which I myself had the chance to visit two. This gains importance only when the exhibitions are compared with each other, as a result of which, it turned out that the last two appearances of the works were so entirely different as if two separate installations were exhibited. The one I explored above is based on the latest exhibition (9th October–7th November, 2010 in Műcsarnok, Budapest) which was organised for the presentation of the nominees of the Aviva Awards. I consider it significant to mention here that the first space of the installation for which it, originally, was designed was the Church interior of the Kiscell Museum. The sacral milieu heightened both the metaphysical and the sonorous aspects of the artefact, Ihde's instrumental echo in the manifestation of distance and surface appeared as a natural condition within that space (2007, 69).

are missing. No reports of the witnesses, no screams and other auxiliary noises of the actual accident, and definitely no body are present. The lack of the narrative continuity is tangibly infiltrating the space outside and inside the demolished car that serves as a metonymy for the supposedly injured human body. What we have instead, are a 24 minutes long audio installation presented in the manner of a contemporary opera – here, once again, Németh inserts a representative piece of high culture – vibrant coloured spotlights, creating an infernal atmosphere around the wreck, the script of the "passive interviews" on three music strands, and the airy voices of the opera singers. The librettos are the reformulations of actual interviews with the survivors of accidents, following the screenplay of an interrogation, here, however, in the form of yes-no questions that imply much more than a supposed interrogator might, normally, have had access to. This puts emphasis on, what art historian and curator Kathrin Becker terms as "the fatefulness of life" (Németh 2011) addressing a metaphysical reading of the installation as well.

The missing body, as well as the absent story, hence become substituted by the singing voices. As Ihde explored the potential of voices and sounds, we are able to perceive not only the shape-aspects of things but also surfaces, distances, and interiors; in one term, an "auditory space" is constituted (2007, 68, 69). By penetrating the cavity of the car and the causal cracks of the fragmented history of the vehicle, its passenger, and the accident itself, the arias constitute "the gross presence of things" (Ihde 2007, 69). The exhibition space becomes an alternative stage of life within which the visitor freely moves, himself/herself becoming one of the things and bodies to be voiced through the echoing music, some of the questions aiming at issues transcending the actual frame of events: "Are we joined, are we one with the human face? […] Are you on earth and in outer space? […] Are you being born and are you dying?" (Sasvári). The theatricality of the installation[19] and the

19 The illusion of a stage performance as a motif comes up in other works as well. In *Butterfly* the visitor becomes the member of the audience at a concert the moment s/he faces the installation. Not surprisingly, one is devoid of either music or any other forms of performance except some disturbing, apparition-like flashes of David Bowie images on the back screen of the stage. As one of my students reflected on the installation, although what Németh provides us with is neither a narrative nor a visual continuity, she could project her own story into the punctuated series of images and did enjoy the work. She could metaphorically step on the stage and experience her own mode of performativity. The other work that I have in mind is *Crystal Clear Propaganda – The Transparent Method* that deals with the idea of the pre-ordained choreography of politics and the mechanism of propaganda. [Fig. 10.] As a visitor, I had the impression that I automatically became the target audience of the orators, presented through photographs surrounding the walls of the exhibition space. The one who happens to occupy the focal point of that space – which is unavoidable since for the sake of listening to the audio-installation related to the work one is

already suggested prescribed series of events undermine our expectations towards the conventional linearity and chronology induced narrativity and also our viewing position as our being the occupants of a singular and controlling locus in relationship with the dramatic situation. Our subjectivity gains a new ground by recognising the encroachment of the tactile upon the visual, while the sonorous invaginates both.

By subverting categories of narrative sequence, visually-grounded bodies, and aural flux of sounds and music, Németh redefines these qualities and also engages us in sharpening our more blatant senses that due to the cultural and socio-historical practices we tend to neglect or discredit. The careful and attentive perception of her works enables us to reflect on issues of reality, illusion, truth, subjectivity, and ideology from a renewed and recharged locus from which we are ready to listen to one's bodyprints and view one's voiceprints as alternative means of identity creation.

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tied to the headphones hanging from the middle of the ceiling – has no other choice but to "listen" to the occasionally violent slogans inscribed on the photographs ("Everybody! Wash your cocks tonight!," "I love you executed!," "I am pure gold!," "Meeeeee…") and view the enthusiastic bodily gestures of the speakers. The roles suddenly become exchanged, as a lonesome visitor, I am suddenly transformed into a crowd, in which my individuality melt away, whereas the host of self-appointed agitators unite their force against me with verbal and gestural violence.

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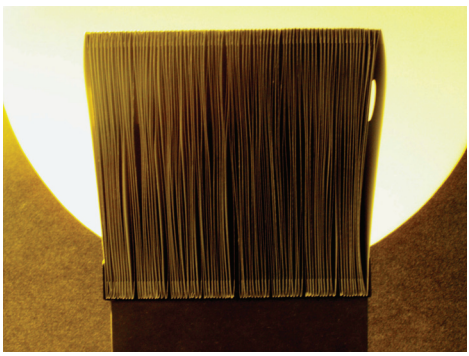
Figures 1–2. *End of the Seasons* (2008, installation, 80 LP covers, spotlight, black carpet on the wall); the installation appeared in the present form in 2010 in MODEM, Centre for Modern and Contemporary Arts, Debrecen (Hungary). Photo by Tamás Gerő. *End of the Seasons* /Version A/ (2008, installation, 80 LP covers in plastic stand, MDF pedestal, spotlight)



Figures 3–4. *Recording Room Trilogy: Try Me* (2006, video on DVD, part of a 12' long trilogy). *Recording Room Trilogy: Break Free* (2006, video on DVD, part of a 12' long trilogy).

Figure 5. *Recording Room Trilogy: Turn Your Lights* (2006, video on DVD, part of a 12' long trilogy).

Figures 6–7. *Air Out* (2008, video on DVD, 5'). *Bar 24* (2003, video on DVD, 4').

Figures 8–9. *Crash – Passive Int*erview (2010, installation: black BMW E39 Sedan totalled, red spotlight, 6 channel audio installation, 24'). The installation in its form below appeared in the framework of the Aviva Award Exhibition, in Kunsthalle/Műcsarnok, Budapest, 9th October–7th November, 2010). Photos by Balázs Glódi.

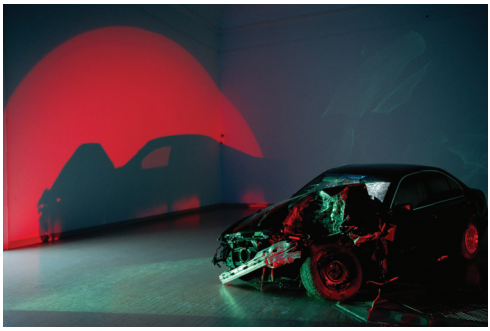


Figure 10. *Crystal Clear Propaganda – The Transparent Method; Propaganda – Choir* (2009, installation: poster series, C-print A2, 11 protection helmet, red spotlight, stereo sound installation).

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Notes on Artistic Research in Urban Spaces: Film, Video and Sound Strategies

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Abstract. Over the last years, debates about who owns the public space have received much attention. "Urban space" carries certain images and, with increasing privatisation and commercialisation, becomes a consumable experience, from which, however, many are being excluded. The requirement to consume and the deployment of private security services limit free access to public spaces and, therefore, to the public sphere. Marginalised groups are being relegated to places at distance from the highly frequented areas of the city centres. Next to large squares, busy roads and shopping complexes, the empty spaces between buildings, so-called "terrains vagues (cf. Di Sola Morales 2003)," form places of transit of an open and diverse nature. Different groups test the hidden qualities of these "in-between spaces" and decide whether to use them or not. In this article we explore two different approaches to using and understanding those "in-between spaces," i.e. the urban space, through the medium of audio-visual strategies. In particular, we are concerned with the audio-visual use and exploration of public space. The contrasting strategies will be analysed by referring to concrete examples. Chapter two looks at Public Screening, current "guerrilla-acts" in which "non-cinema places" are temporarily being used by a group of "passers-by" (people who are actually part of the screening team). In chapter three, we outline a transdisciplinary approach for the analysis of public space and spaces of consumption, the latter being used by the public but private by law. Patterns of the daily use of these spaces, including time, are made visible through audio-visual means. This article reflects the plurality of artistic and scientific methods in use by the members of the interdisciplinary research team, who collaborated in writing this text.

Public Screening – Cinema in "Non-Cinematic-Places"

With the changing material conditions of film, such as digitisation or seemingly permanent availability of films and their media, it is even more apparent that film also represents a spatial tool: not only the setting of the film, but also the location the film is projected at or screened in, will become increasingly relevant to the film's critical reception and its future. This is made evident by the fact that a film seen in a black box in complete suppression of the space surrounding the viewer is subject to different rules than the reception of film in a night-time urban outdoors environment.

With the idea of using film as a method, instrument and product of artistic research in urban studies, we draw on different current cinematographic strategies in urban spaces. The link between film and site of projection becomes stronger, the more the site of projection directly influences the film, or, on the contrary, the more the film influences the site. Interactivity occurs not only between the film and the viewer, but also between the film and its surrounding space. Space and spatialisation of film allow us to use the site of projection as the point of departure for an analysis of urban paths and social relationships through scientific and artistic means.

A Wall Is A Screen

A landscape of moving images projected in a public space: *A Wall is a Screen* is a Hamburg-based initiative conceived as a cinematic night-walk. It aims at creating in the viewer/user a notion of "in-betweenness" in their reception of the projected films on the one hand and of the city on the other hand. Referring to the *Situationalists*, who claimed a different use of the city, the initiative organises a kind of *dérive*. Spaces of consumption as well as the city's hidden corners are chosen as temporary *lieux* of cinema. Through the Internet, the starting point of the cinematic-night-walk is revealed. After each short projection, the team of *A Wall is a Screen* wanders to the next setting, taking with them their intentional participants as well as the joining passers-by. Once arrived, the projector and the mobile speakers are quickly installed. Each film is allocated its own place of projection, either by trying to respect and react to the "claims" of the city or to overcome these. By walking through and "reading" the city prior to the projections, the team identifies the characteristics of the appropriated spaces of projection, which could be a façade, the base of a monument, a subterranean

passage, a metro station, the hull of a ship in the harbour, etc. The walls are separated by no more than two to three minutes of walking distance. In total, the night walk is no longer than 1.2 km. The alternation between known and unknown spaces gives the walk its own dramaturgy. The viewers draw their own map of "their" city during this cinematographic event. The separation between the film's fiction and the real space of projection often disappears, as passing police cars and light signals of the city turn into actors of the performance (cf. Fig. 1 and 2.). The walks between the walls are a major component of the project: people and thoughts wander through the urban space, inspired by the films and the venues. The perception of these spaces usually changes irreversibly through a temporary cinematographic situation.

Hit and Run Cinema

The *Hit and Run Cinema* is another urban cinematic trend in Berlin. This initiative of temporary pop-up cinemas has explicitly taken on the task of going to forgotten places to show unknown movies. A team of cineastes leads a group of spectators to hidden places in the urban space. They are instructed by secret newsletters via the Internet. The viewers are ready to engage with a "night out at the cinema," the venue being unknown at the beginning of the tour. Usually, the viewer discovers unknown places in his/her city, like buildings or subterranean bunkers, the ownership of which is unclear or that lie fallow. Often, closed spaces are used, opened up and occupied by the cineastes for the duration of one evening. A canvas screen is built up, a generator for the projector installed, and the temporary cinema is ready.

The secret place as a refuge from "everything is known," the re-appropriation of the city – both are underlying aspects of the same question: who owns the city? The collective walk to the "cinema" is like a weekend hike and integral part of the cinematographic concept. The relatively unknown films (no rental, no copies, not economically viable, etc.) get their own site of projection. The places are chosen in such a way that the diegetic space of the film converges with the space of the projection as to their look and architecture. The real space of projection is loaded with new content through the film. The viewers-participants experience a new, individual city through the projection of the film in the outer and inner space of the city.

Cinema Strategies: Appropriation and Exploration of Space Through Sound and Film

The film's effect does not remain autonomous during a cinematic night walk, as it starts to communicate with its environment (cf. Fig. 1. and Fig. 2.). During the project *A Wall Is A Screen*, the communication between the film and its environment produces new perspectives on the city. Although most of the films were not shot there, they give the viewer information on certain corners of the city. They pose questions from different times or cultural regions of the world whose importance and timeliness is reflected by the local mise-en-scène of the film's projection.

The temporary cinematographic appropriation of the city also raises the question of "who owns the city?" Moreover, peripheral and for various reasons inaccessible parts of the city are made experienceable for the pedestrian for the duration of the cinematic night walk and after. In this way, film contributes to their re-appropriation by the pedestrian. During *Hit And Run Cinema*, cinematic space and projection space strongly converge. The cinematic space is expanded into the auditorium. This occurs not only in the mind of the viewer, but also in the built environment of the temporary cinema. This active viewing refers to an existing school of viewing, which wants to create participants rather than mere spectators. The audience itself becomes part of the film. For its duration, the film becomes part of reality by the way the viewer is absorbed by it, although he does not intervene in the plot or narration.

The movie does not begin with the first light of the projection beam, but already on the way to the cinema site. The movie ends somewhere on the way while the spectator is leaving the cinema site. What remains as a lasting experience for mind and soul, is often the site rather than the film itself. Film manages to alter a place for the duration of the temporary cinema event, to make real locations more visible and to activate the viewer as a user of the city and make him aware of his own user's rights.

Temporary mobile cinema, not in the traditional sense but to the effect that, literally, "going to the movies" plays a crucial role: strolling between projections or collectively walking to the screen as an appropriation of public space. The theme of the *flaneur*, based on Walter Benjamin, and the renewed adherence to Guy Debord's concept of *Dérive* in current forms of district inspections and urban anthropology, finds new possibilities of application in the encounter of the urban user with both permanent and temporary urban screens.

To space, time, and sound in the original diegetic sense as *constructed* space (i.e. time and sound within the film) the *real* space, time and sound surrounding the film's projection is added. In the process the contrasts between cinematic space and projection space are turned visible. This effect has the potential to strengthen or weaken the message of a film in a certain environment of projection. The point of reference is the real urban space. This apparently so visible and real urban space, however, holds inherent aspects of hegemonies of power. Political decisions and the sometimes rapid sell-out of public and open space imply that residents themselves can hardly recognise the different layers stacked upon the built up city as visible and invisible history.

To further explore the relationship between the reception of the film and the district inspection or cinematic nightly walk, we propose to ask the following question:

What does the City Hear and See?

Recently, the urban sociologist Saskia Sassen asked: "What does the city see, when it looks at itself?"[1] Paul Virilio as well already changed the point of view on the city-site as he picked up Paul Klee's quotation "now the objects perceive me" in his last chapter of *The Vision Machine* (1994, 59). We perceive the city every day and produce it: city-slang, urban fashion à la "Urban Outfitters," big city music and architecture associated with our specific city. We react to the city in all of our forms of expression and thereby attach an image to it. This takes place at the macro- and the micro level. The typical Berlin-T-shirt shows the silhouette of the television tower or the iconic "Ampelmännchen" traffic lights. At the micro level, it is the group of youths at a bus stop in the so called "problem suburbs" with their own codes who imprint their presence on the city.

What, however, does the city see if it looks at itself? This implies the question: what does the city see when it sees us; assuming that we are part of the city and constitute "city" as a construct and network of social relationships as much as the buildings do.

Which aspects of maladministration, neglect, forgotten things, or the passage of time does the city see? How does it express itself? Its presence might be detected in decayed houses (delegation back to nature) or open space, which is never free of interests and history, or environmental "problem locations" that are just a reaction to urban life.

1 NECS conference "Urban mediation" in Istanbul, June, 2010.

This doubling of a site (what do I see, what does the city see) is also part of various cinema strategies in the public space.

In *The Vision Machine* by Virilio, which particularly focuses on surveillance technology, the delegation of seeing within this doubling is discussed. These cinema strategies fight to regain the right to view and experience city by oneself, which may be inferred from the general development of technical capabilities. Photography and film made visible as material made time visible. The material of clothes changes, as time leaves its traces. And although we think of Benjamin's *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* and the loss of aura, new auras created themselves in the visible traces of time.

In today's virtual age these contemporary witnesses seem passé. A new positioning of the image replaces the "depth of time" (Virilio 1994, 61), using a moving image to call attention to a concrete site again. For Paul Virilio, public space yields to public image. This is meant to change with the new cinematic strategies.

Audiovisual Exploration of Urban Space

Before we enter into detail on the transdisciplinary analysis of urban space, we briefly introduce the research design of our project.

The project aims at analysing spaces of urban expansion through the perspective of the pedestrian. We are particularly interested in asking how the function of urban open spaces and marginal spaces can be reinterpreted in such a way as to serve their inhabitants.

The border between the core of the city and its periphery is fluid. However, the peripheral zones are characterised by certain typical elements that form what we call the "constellation-space." What we refer to with this term, is that peri-urban spaces are defined and characterised by elements like residential areas, especially large-scale housing estates, the establishment of industrial, commercial and logistical centres, shopping malls, access roads, allotment associations and enclaves of settlements. On Figure 1 you can see the *Constellation Space* we are focusing on in a first step. It lies in the 2nd district of Vienna and is called Großjedlersdorf. This *Constellation Space* is characterised by very particular sounds and soundscapes, a particular imagery, tonality and ambience.

Through different methods and instruments we conduct a mapping and anthropological exploration of this constellation space. The exploration comprises the self-perception of the inhabitants, discovering places of identification from an inside and an outside point of view, an "experience-based" map of Großjedlersdorf

based on a subjective, pedestrian focused perception of this place and media-based self-portrayal of the constellation space as well as its mediatic representations.

Aside from already well established tools of scientific analysis like social area analysis or discourse analysis, we especially rely on art-based ways of knowledge production, because we consider it a good means to make visible the invisible, the subjective, the experience of space and sound and the appropriation of space by its different users and inhabitants, despite only focusing on its mediated objectivations. Furthermore – after subjecting the so detected observations to scientific scrutiny – the artistic product is a good medium to disseminate the results of our investigation.

From the different disciplinary backgrounds of the members of our research team,[2] a mix of methods emerges: case studies, analysis of existing socio-demographic data, interviews with experts, media analysis and the transdisciplinary approach through the implementation of artistic works (video- and audio-based mapping of the *Constellation Space* drawing on artistic means).

In what follows, we briefly outline the strategies and methods to research and map the *Constellation Space*. The name of the artistic branch of our research group is Couscous[3]. It was founded in 2006 as band and video-sound-installation project. Currently it is purposively developing its focus on the urban periphery and public space.

Urban space carries a certain image. In case of the cities' peripheries, it is strongly connected to the concept of consumption. An exemplary audiovisual work called *Scannertrip*[4] (Couscous, 2010) was shot in the *Constellation Space* of the city outskirts of Vienna, a place dominated mainly by the dimension of motorised traffic and big scale housing estates. Here the pedestrian has to cope with large distances and barriers and is exposed to an undefined, fragmented open space. Since consumption is an important part of the daily routine, covering many social aspects as well, the mall is the centre of our attention. But this semi-public space is under the control of private property with its own rules and interests. This part of the project aims to analyse the paths and rhythms surrounding the shopping experience and is divided into different parts:

– the conditions of open space for different social groups, especially marginal groups like old age or homeless people,

2 Architecture, Social Sciences, Film and Media Studies, and Cultural Studies.

3 For further information see the following websites: http://www.myspace.com/couscousband and http://www.couscous.cc.

4 To watch the video *Scannertrip* see: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TdbudyItCWM.

– the approach to the mall in the perspective of different users like the pedestrian and the motorist,

– the culmination of these paths in the centre of attraction, the mall out of the perspective of the pedestrian and the motorist, eyeing to the left and to the right of a shopping cart (the main symbol of the shopping experience).

The Concept of Space: the Interaction between the Visually Represented Space, the Musical-Space and the Sound-Space

In the case of *Scannertrip* the attempt was to isolate the sound of the till from the place of its origin and to transfer it into the larger space within and outside of the supermarket (cf. Fig. 3.). This newly structured space is converted into the object of experience. In general, the sound is always bound to its surrounding space so it describes spatial contexts, synchronicity and rhythms. These characteristics can be influenced alternately by rhythmic/musical/artistic intervention.

The randomness and interferences of the scanning process itself (wares being pulled steadily over the scanner, the pause during the payment process) produces a permanent stream of new rhythms. The isolated scanner sound is fragmented, reassembled and looped, the process of randomness being transformed musically. The resulting long, bumpy rhythm pattern, now difficult to recognise due to its misplacement, forms the new basic grid for the perceptive experience. It is a sequential placement of goods and its connected ideas and feelings, just like in a mini-click TV. The rhythm of the till becomes the pulse generator for both the picture and the experience of space. The voluntarily introduced rhythm is finally reduced to its own, principal characteristics – appropriation, fragmentation, composition and finally the restoration of the primordial status.

Translation and Deconstruction of City Soundscapes

In some cases, the object of investigation is defined by a typical sound, so this sound is used as the leitmotif, like for example the sound of a rickshaw, the sound of railways, the shouts and slogans of tea-vendors. Referring to *Scannertrip*, the o-tone of the scanning process is the leitmotif, the keynote sound (see: Schafer 1994). In other cases, like multi-split-screens or video-mapping, the sound is integrated via superimpositions/interferences, omission, alienation etc.

Conclusion

Art refers to science and vice versa. Artistic creation and the object of art itself allow for a fusion of aesthetic and epistemic practices (cf. Mersch 2007; Schenker 2007). Thereby, sound-art is an instrument that represents specific experiences and produces certain reflections and actions. The work itself is not to be viewed as the final goal, rather, the focus lies on the process of producing a piece of art. Hence, the "invisible" can be made visible and then subjected to scientific scrutiny. With the help of the artistic end product, results can be disseminated. A transdisciplinary approach can be the key to generate knowledge on urban space. In this case, social area analysis is of particular importance within the mix of methods as it represents the connecting link between the artistic and scientific methods.

The public screening strategies in urban space show different aspects on the same field of interest. Analysing the experiences and situations, which result from the entry of the image into the city and from the city turning into a lieu of production and projection, we argued for the actuality of Guy Debord and the *Situationalist International* with regard to film. The analysis is inspired by the idea to regain public spaces and the public areas of the pedestrian for the moment of film production and projection.

The described strategies of audiovisual use and research on space documented how urban space and spaces of consumption can be used audio-visually and thereby turned into objects of analysis. On the one hand, guerrilla-acts like the *Hit and Run Kino* open up questions about the legitimate ownership of public space, at the same time outlining strategies for the appropriation of space. On the other hand, artistic-scientific tools of analysis are able to describe complex processes of fragmentation and appropriation and yield interesting insights into the use and production of urban space.

The video/sound-space installation *Scannertrip* is an attempt to approach the complex structure of lived reality by experimenting with sound-image-remontage and sequentiation.

Both audiovisual strategies question the image of public space: the first by returning agency to individual actors, the second by using the subjective view of its users to be able to simulate the relative space of the rhythm of their activities.

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Figures

Figure 1: A Wall is a Screen Supermarket, Hamburg (Picture: Uschi Feldges)

Figure 2: A Wall is a Screen Mosque, Hamburg (Picture: Uschi Feldges)

Figure 3: Outline of the *Constellation Space*, 21st district of Vienna (Picture: Couscous).

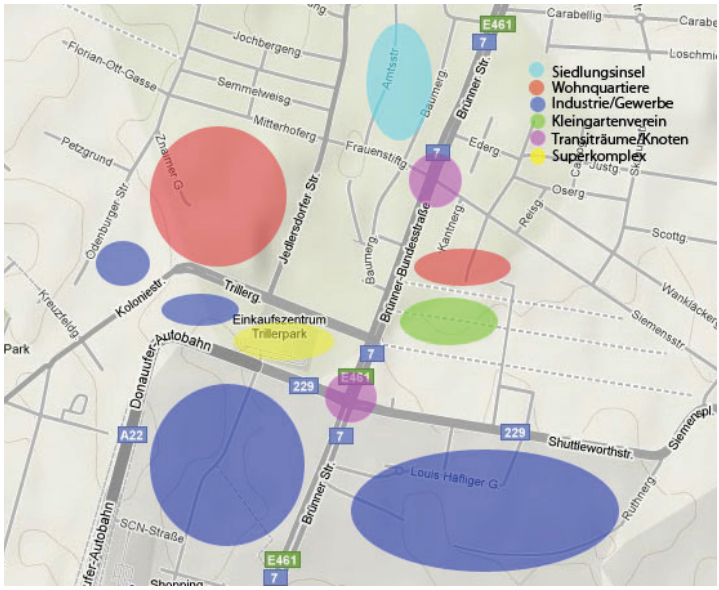

Figure 4: View over the *Constellation Space* (Picture: Couscous).

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The Damnation of the Sight. The Point of View in Three Movies by Béla Tarr

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Abstract. The paper focuses on *Satantango* (*Sátántangó*, 1994), *Werckmeister Harmonies* (*Werckmeister Harmóniák*, 2000) and *The Man From London* (*A londoni férfi*, 2007), particularly on the manner in which the key notion at the core of Tarr's universe finds a development within those films: the relation between the narrative and its ("entropic," so to speak) excess. Notably, the Point Of View proves to be the ultimate device through which something like a spatial form structuring the aforementioned relation can be shaped.

Introduction

One of the earliest chapters of *Satantango* (*Sátántangó,* 1994), after some 1 hour and 20 minutes, starts with a sequence which probably best sums up the poetics of Béla Tarr from the 90s on. This sequence (showing Futaki trying to enter Schmidt's house, both spied by the doctor from inside his house, who also writes down what he has been seeing) is virtually dividable into two segments. In the first, we have the visual deployment of a spatial situation both the doctor and the camera are staring at, in a sort of a semi-subjective shot. This situation is of course narrative as well, in the simple sense that something happens and is temporally articulated as such: the doctor (along with the camera, sharing more or less his point of view) looks at Futaki spying Schmidt in order to enter his house unseen. [Fig. 1.] In the second, immediately thereafter (which in Tarr's case means of course that no cuts divide the two segments), the camera stays on the yard after Futaki has entered Schmidt's (i.e. after the action has been consumed) from inside the doctor's house, while the doctor, sitting nearby, writes down what he has been seeing. [Fig. 2.] We then have the fixing of the narrative in the form of a

trace (which means the doctor writing down what he has seen, and also repeating it vocally) facing another kind of very passive, automatic and ultra-naturalistic registration (in this case: the everyday life on the yard beyond the window, with the pig and the rain and so on, captiously caught by the camera eye). So, we don't merely have "visual vs. narrative," rather we have conflicting ways of intertwining the visual and the narrative.[1] Two different kinds of narrative registrations, so to speak, one more spatial, the other entangled in the vicious circle between writing (i.e. trace) and its excess. In the first case, narration (i.e. simply what the camera shows) and narrative kind of go together, in the second a split occurs somehow. Tarr's long takes can be the spatial deployment of a complex action, for instance Valuska in *Werckmeister Harmonies* (*Werckmeister Harmóniák,* 1999) preparing and having supper, or rather they can be an excessive remnant of narrative, as in digressions such as the long tracking shot towards the night owl on the window, in *Satantango*, while a difficult discussion is being held somewhere else, or when in the same movie another tracking shot slowly focuses on Mrs Schmidt, in the pub, while the core of action is in the opposite side of the room. So what we really have is different ways of coming to terms between narrative and its excess in, so to speak, "reality," which can be "integrated" in a spatial and visual shape (rejoining thus narration) or rather left as such (leaving a sort of split opened), as a remnant diverting from the action. This is the decisive polarity in Tarr's universe. And what is even more important in this revealing scene is that the key of that relation between the narrative and its excess is the point of view. In this case: the doctor keeping his eyes in front of him consonantly with the camera eye, or rather keeping them on his paper, discordantly from the camera eye.

Essentially, an "excess" is an unbalance. And in his impressive study on point of view, Edward Branigan (1979) builds up a solid and sharp theoretical system on the basis of a radical, structural unbalance. That is, the scission from which any subjectivity is formed (be it merely textual or psychoanalytical or whatever). "A fundamental assumption of psychoanalysis is that the human being is irretrievably split and not an autonomous whole. The split is that of self/other of various inflections, such as conscious/unconscious, I/ego, ego/id, etc. As psychoanalysis draws closer to language that split is also seen mirrored in the irretrievable split (distance) between the subject of the enunciation and the subject of the enounced. […] The author/viewer then is only a version of the split

1 It is worth noticing that the viewer is made able to see quite comfortably that the notebook, which the doctor is using to write his report, has got some pencil-drawn sketches of the yard on it. Again (and in yet another way): the visual is inextricable from the writing.

subject which exists in every utterance and in the human subject as self/other." (Branigan 1979, 25).

The point of view in cinema is just another form for the split originating the subject as such. The point of view is just the actual core of that "excess" coming from this structural unbalance. That is why Branigan himself makes some very simple, "Descartes-like" examples that are quite near from our doctor scene – such as forming a memory image of seeing a film: while imaging/remembering himself viewing, the subject *also views*, being somehow inside and outside of himself at the same time. And the way our aforementioned *Satantango* scene is shot indicates a perceptual continuity between the moment we see what the doctor sees (narration tends to coincide with the narrative, and so do I/spectator with my other, i.e. the doctor) and the moment the doctor is busy writing, leaving us staring at the rainy yard (narration – the doctor's voice over repeating what he has seen – and narrative split apart, and so do I and the doctor, now becoming more a teller than a viewer). Such an example "illustrates that the subject is not a fixed entity like a person but is a role or position in a discourse which is constantly changing so that one can easily frame oneself as an object. It is a question of the movement of discourse, not of opposing subject in the sense of a person, mind or delusion to object in the sense of an external, concrete reality which cannot be false because it can only 'exist'" (Branigan 1979, 43). We do not have simply the doctor behind the window, and the yard outside of it – because the moment the doctor takes his eyes off the scene and starts to write, we are separated from him (not watching anymore with us) by way more than a window. It is even possible to say that we feel closer to the scene unraveling outside the window (and that we are still looking at) than to the doctor who was sharing our eyes right some moments before, and whom we now hear mumbling next to us while writing. It is a matter of *gradualness*. "Narration/narrative as well as the resulting distinction subject/object are methodological distinctions. Each term implicates its opposite in a mutual simultaneity of telling/told, seeing/seen, etc., and is positionally relative; that is, the subject of one narration may become the object of another higher narration whose subject, in turn, may become the object of a third, still higher level of narration." (Branigan 1979, 43–44). Although we are not going to follow the careful and elaborated system and taxonomy made up by Branigan in his book, this paper shares these very premises, and tries to analyse the point of view (in Béla Tarr's films) as the key precisely to this complex relationship of continuity/discontinuity informing the inveterate schizophrenia of the subject. In other words, this paper is an attempt to trace back via the shifting point of

view in those films the "movement of discourse" Branigan was talking about: the paradoxical continuity (given in our cases quite ostensibly by flowing *time*, and therefore movement) organising the discontinuities of an intricate interlacement of scissions (subject, narrative and so on).

Satantango (1994)

The core of *Satantango* lies all in the parable of Estike, committing suicide after having tormented and killed her once beloved cat for nothing in particular, and after having wandered lengthily without getting any attention from anyone. So she experiences the coincidence between the victim (in this case: the cat) and the torturer (herself), since, as she herself thinks while dying, everything and everyone is connected to each other. Not by chance, Irimias exploits her death to build up his messianic parable, trying to connect everyone to each other in a collective utopia towards a bright future, towards then a linearisation of time. During his funeral speech, he actually repeats several times that "we have to reconstruct things as they happened:" his effort concerns shaping the time into a teleology, imposing his illuminated and Christ-like gaze on things. But Irimias's teleology is sternly contrasted by the form of film itself, carefully intertwining three basic elements. Element one: point of view. Many times in *Satantango*, the one who is watching is eventually being watched. These reversions concern for instance Futaki, whose initial spying on Schmidt is [Fig. 3.] later in the movie revealed as spied itself by the Doctor. The first ball sequence is seen behind Estike's shoulders, in a sort of a semi-subjective shot [Fig. 4.], whereas during the second ball sequence we see Estike from inside the pub. [Fig. 5.] The bartender from the point of view of which we saw the first farewell sequence [Fig. 6.], is eventually seen far in the bottom of the frame in the second sequence showing that same moment. [Fig. 7.] The observer reverses systematically into the observed (as Estike has learnt at her own expenses), so there can be no such thing as imposing one's view, as Irimias tried to do. For the same reason, there can be no such thing as a teleology, which leads us to element two: repetition. No linear time, as Irimias would have liked, or pretended to like, to impose: instead, we have the repetitions of the same moments, AND a cyclical time. In the last chapter, itself called "the circle closes," the film ends with words on black screen, just like it began, and the doctor writes about the very first event of the movie: Futaki's hide-and-seek. Time does not progress: we have instead the repetition of always the same moment. And please notice: also, and above all, the reversion of points of view, observer/observed, is obtained through repetition. So

the two elements are inextricably linked – as clearly proved by the fact that the arrival in the utopian mansion is marked by a very long subjective shot: the illusion of a singular and monadic point of view is connected with the illusion of messianic salvation. Third element: registration. Since there is no linear time but a sort of an eternal present (hence also the long takes), any attempt of making time into a linear teleology are doomed to fail, to have no real consequence for the better, to be at last nothing more than simple information to be impersonally registered and filed, as the long almost-final sequence in which the bureaucrats write down Irimias's summary, which is all that is left of the villagers. Which is why the Doctor, in the last shot, registers his village chronicles without even needing to see anything anymore. Having undergone throughout the movie the radical dismissal of the single point of view on the events, he can rightly obscure his own window, his own singular point of view – and let us not forget that he's been described as a voyeur from the very beginning: the first shot concerning him is a subjective shot from his point of view staring with a binocular. [Fig. 8.] All in all, there is nothing to be really seen, since time does not really progress but only repeats itself, so there is no "news" at all to be experienced – obviously, the Turks, so anxiously announced by the mysterious old man ringing the bells, are never to be coming. So that's why Irimias's teleology is denied by *Satantango*'s form, by the close interaction between point of view, repetition, registration. In other words, the point of view is the essential core around which revolves the whole *Satantango's* stylistic machine, illustrating Estike's thought that "everything and everyone is connected to each other" in a totally different way from Irimias's attempt to connect everyone to each other by organising a temporal teleology. Namely, *Satantango*'s long takes (also thanks to repetition but not limited to it) are a careful registration of how the multiple points of view inside the filmic reality interact with each other from within the spatial texture – hence the tendentious absence of cuts. We have no eye gazing safely from an external distance (which is why the doctor renounces to be a voyeur), but the fluid connection of points within the same virtual cobweb, lengthily explored by the camera in all its continuity. The camera eye reproduces the passive flow of the slipping of the various viewpoints on each other, a slipping which is intrinsic in the plies of real space in all its roughness, in the deployment of the most ordinary and everyday micro-actions, following their own biologic rhythm. The camera eye sort of "melts" with reality, with all its tiny vibrations, sensed from the inside, according to the rhythm of the spatial concrete elements themselves, rather than to the rhythm of dramaturgic and narrative needs. "Registration" much more than "direction." This of course goes for all the films in question, but it is in *Satantango*

that we can find a sharper definition – also because Irimias himself, while waiting in the corridor for the captain the first time we see him, gives us a precise account on it all. He says: "The two clocks show different times. Both wrong of course. This one here is too slow. Instead of telling the time, the other one seems to point at our hopeless condition." The one too slow is of course the camera work we have tried to describe. The other one, "pointing at our hopeless condition," is simply the narrative. The two are disconnected, as I previously said. And the key point of this disjunction is, as we saw, the point of view.

Werckmeister Harmonies (2000)

If then all these polarities (self/other, narration/narrative and so on) are structurally unbalanced and thus lead to a structural excess, no wonder that in Tarr's latest movies such an importance is given to the concept of entropy. In fact, we can see as a possible definition for entropy "the form itself of what exceeds the form," left free to unravel catastrophically beyond any form. In both *Satantango* and *Werckmeister Harmonies* we have a messianic attempt (namely Irimias's and the Prince's, and also Mrs Eszter's), which means an attempt to make the time into a teleology, to fit it into a path going towards a messianic accomplishment – finding ironically only the total Diaspora of the villagers in *Satantango* or the total destruction in the following movie. This narrative form, based both on a messianic linear perspective AND on its denial in the form of uncontrollable entropy, belongs evidently to the category of Modernity. Whereas in *The Man From London* (*A londoni férfi*, 2007), although the modern elements are by no means secondary, from its novelistic origin to the importance of money to the making of time as an independent force (as basically anybody, from Roland Barthes to Fredric Jameson (2002) to Jacques Rancière (2000) recognise it is a crucial element of modernity), we have a strong torsion of this modern element towards the classic, i.e. towards none other than Greek tragedy. In fact, as in classical tragedy's perspective, Maloin's guilt proceeds precisely from his innocence, from his good and loving intentions of "saving" his daughter from misery. As the standard tragic hero, he acts from a decisive lack of knowledge (for instance about the money he takes), he cannot escape destiny, i.e. the consequence of taking the suitcase, and is a reluctant murderer, killing Brown for self-defense. And first of all, like in the standard classical tragedy, we are not permitted to see with our eyes the tragic violent climax, happening inside the cabin on the beach, while all we can see is just the closed door of it.

But, for the moment, let us stick to entropy. *Werckmeister Harmonies* begins with Valuska as a metteur-en-scène of none other than the Cosmos. His solid point of view on it all is going to be dismantled throughout the rest of the movie. Whereas he represented in the incipit the systematical alternation between the order and the exception, the movie shows this same dichotomy falling apart; the perversely similar illusions to dominate from above, and through rigid and scientific schemes, social harmony (Mrs Eszter) and music harmony (Mr Eszter) are destined to fade into pure entropy. Chaos and order are intrinsically linked, so the chaos can bear the well-tempered harpsichord while the social intransigence easily brings upon total chaos. As Walter Benjamin famously said, any document of civilisation is also a document of barbarity: for instance here the two versions of Radetzky's March we hear one after another, the "correct" one and the "roughed" one. So, we stick to Valuska's point of view while he assists impotently to the gradual triumph of the Prince's fatal elegy of destruction as creation *per se*, or better: destruction as the only form of creation left, the triumph of ultimate chaos destroying the illusion, so wonderfully illustrated in the first scene, of an ordered interaction between the order, the cosmic order, and its own temporary suspension. The symbol of this unstoppable destruction is of course the gigantic dead whale, sort of a static and purely symbolic form of destruction. In the whale, destruction is somehow suspended as its purely aesthetic manifestation. Valuska repeatedly contemplates this sort of harmless monument to cosmic infinite destruction of earthly beings. Valuska is too busy minding and contemplating the animal to be really grasping what is going on around him meanwhile; up to when his detached point of view on it all is caught within that infernal destructive vortex all around. Valuska himself, the seer, the one through which we see during the movie, is caught in the end by someone who can see him wherever he goes, and without being seen: the helicopter – not to mention that we do not see the Prince either, apart from his shadow. We start with a solid point of view disposing spatially the elements for a nice cosmic show, and, as in *Satantango*, as the film goes further this point of view gets stuck into what he believed to be only contemplated from the outside: the suspension of the cosmic order, suspension which during the film has become the rule itself, and not only the simple mystery of solar eclipse. At one point in the movie, there is a little, very revealing passage. Valuska walks down the street, right after dawning. The early sun shines timidly in the higher part of the frame. While walking, Valuska's head covers for some seconds the sun, only to unveiling it again after some instants. [Figs. 10–11.] As this witty visual trick underlines, Valuska is not anymore the metteur-en-scène of

the solar eclipse like in the beginning, *he himself* temporarily obscures the sun. In other words, he's passed *into* the scheme he was earlier just illustrating from the outside. But the static compendium of entropy as the only rule regulating the universe, i.e. the dead whale, is in the end seen by Mr. Eszter. Which means: the chaotic struggle for order, only producing destruction and chaos, may forever rule the universe, but still we have the paradoxical hope of suspending that chaos through the static, monumental, aesthetic representation of it all. We cannot fall like Valuska into the illusion of merely contemplating it from the outside, since we are anyhow inevitably to fall under the almighty forces of chaos – but that static, monumental image circulates, as a big, enigmatic hope, from eye to eye, from Valuska's to Mr. Eszter's. That whale is probably the daughter of the whale at the end of Fellini's *La Dolce Vita* (1960), also signalling some sort of enigmatic hope within despair, like the old naked man in the hospital, sudden, symbolic and condensed visualisation of all the destructive mess going on around him – but again this static representation of entropy is Tarr's style itself. Its choreography, miraculously immanent to the physical elements in front of the camera and following their own rhythm in a splendid symbiosis, rather than imposing on them, manages to find the order "inside" the chaotic physical world, instead of imposing a rigid scheme from above like the Eszters. The order lies inside entropy, inside the liquid and dispersive deployment of time, instead of simply being opposed to it: that's Béla Tarr's style. Like the whale from Valuska to Eszter, Tarr's style is the static image of time, i.e. the destructive force par excellence, shown and cinematically frozen at the microscopic level of its everyday action, circulating from point of view to point of view – missing no occasion to underline how any singular point of view, in this case Valuska's, is partial, lacking, and also compromised within what he sees – as in the great hospital scene, in which only in the end we come to know that the internal point of view we were sharing was Valuska's, among the irrupting crowd – not to mention that, even unwillingly, he himself helped Mrs. Eszter starting all the mess. Again, we have the initial bifurcation: we have Tarr's camera following scrupulously the visual micro-dimension of Valuska's everyday routine, and we have a plot concerning social order and disorder, confusedly left on the background and mixed up with its own entropic and chaotic excess. And again, the two levels are conflicting thanks to the limits of the very partial, yet accomplice, point of view of Valuska's. The limits of point of view are again the core of it all.

The Man from London (2007)

We have already seen how *The Man From London* recuperates the Greek tragedy's limit to the spectator's point of view on the violent climax. The limits of the gaze are introduced from the very first scene, in which the camera eye, moving a lot, oscillates without any cut, in a single long take, between a hypothetic coincidence with Maloin's curious sight on the outside [Fig. 11.], and other moments in which Maloin regularly appears within the frame, so that he can't be coinciding with the camera eye [Fig. 12.] This astonishing "melting" two different configurations into the same long take, sounds almost as a condemnation, for the gaze of the subject, to be somehow inevitably re-introduced into the concrete spatial filmic texture it presumed to stay away from. It is a crucial impossibility for the gaze. It is clear from the beginning that in *The Man From London* the gaze has a lot to do with desire, and above all with its limit.[2] The spectator wants to see the tragic climax, but he is not allowed to, because that is beyond his "human" limit. Similarly, the spectator is also denied the moment Maloin seems to fulfil his desire, i.e. when he finds and gets the suitcase from the sea. Desire is inherently impeded: when Maloin's desire is fulfilled, the spectator's desire is frustrated. This is the starting point of all the narrative of the movie, which will later be solved when, in the cabin, the highest deception of Maloin corresponds to the spectator's frustration in viewing the murder, accomplishing this way the tragic parable of the impasse of desire. Maloin's desire itself is born from the gaze, from spying all the mess around the harbour. So all the movie is about the structural impasse of desire, as the tragedy path prescribes, following a similar impasse of the point of view. The illusive transparency of the gaze of the momentarily happy and rich father and daughter looking at themselves in front of the mirror of the furs' shop [Fig. 13.], is to be followed up, of course without any cuts, by the usual reversion: the two are watched from the shop's window [Fig. 14.], and no more watching their own gaze (their own desire), by an anonymous gaze, namely the camera eye, once they have left the shop and are walking away on the street. A similar reversion takes place all the time when Maloin, clearly structuring the film space through his trajectories and movements, is watched insistently and even stalked by Mr. Brown. [Fig. 15.] The observer, the man who used to watch the trains as Simenon originally put it, becomes the observed. When Maloin hears someone talking about the suitcase-affair, the camera eye builds up a filmic space in continuity (obviously without any cuts) in which Maloin's gaze does

2 On the link between gaze and desire the way it is posited here, a look on Žižek 1992.

not coincide with the camera, yet it is inscribed into the filmic texture. While the camera moves and frames without cutting, we incidentally see him (mostly in the bottom of the frame) watching the people speaking indirectly about him. [Fig. 16.] Because, as we said before, the gaze is shown as part of the filmic texture, incapable to escape from it as Maloin is incapable to escape his own destiny. His destiny, i.e. the guilt he has indirectly committed, rises up on the surface of the filmic texture – and as we have seen, the key point of all these symptomatic resurgences is the gaze. If the tragic as such is based on an ineludible necessity, here it is the necessity of the inscription of the gaze into the filmic space, again sustained as usual by the long takes. Once again, we have on one side a rigid concatenation of events, as rigid as never in Tarr's movies, bearing its own excess, which are those "forbidden" points the spectator cannot reach, and on the other one an ambiguous spatial deployment in which the point of view finds itself entangled.

All this shows us that Tarr's cinema, which is arguably a modernist one, can easily digress towards classical tragedy (*The Man From London*). And this is possible because in his cinema, narrative is not the most important level, being it rather the relation itself between the narrative and its constitutive visual excess. So the type of the narration can consistently vary, keeping as fixed this core, this relation between narrative and its excess. A relation whose crucial element, as I tried to demonstrate, is the point of view.

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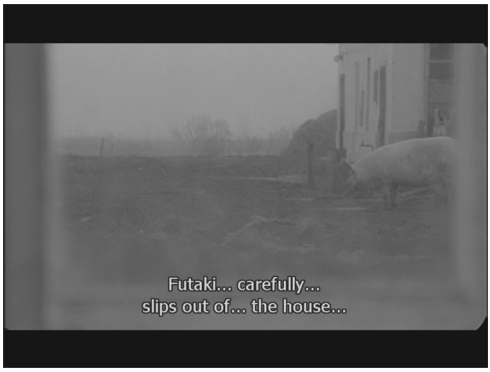

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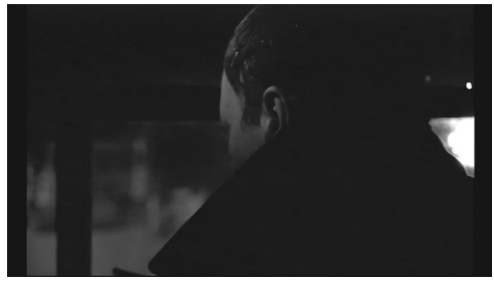

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Probing the Body – Political and Medical (Empty) Authority in the New Romanian Cinema

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Abstract: Criticism (especially international criticism) has been quick in labelling the recent success and international recognition of several Romanian films directed by a young generation of filmmakers (Mungiu, Puiu, Porumboiu) as the Romanian "New Wave."

I am interested not in questioning the appropriateness of the syntagm but in analysing several of these films as they circle around and about "authority." I will apply the syntagm "Romanian New Wave" as a tool of analysis, as an umbrella term underlying that which is common to the different directors as opposed to the numerous differences that (naturally) are there as well.

My intention is not to uncover a common theoretical platform of these directors (criticism agrees that there is no such thing) but a certain 'Romanian worldview' as it emerges from the preoccupations of a generation of filmmakers, a view broken into small pieces (as against monolithic representations) easier to analyse but which always affect and reflect back at the viewer. The originality and the international appeal of these films rest on their capacity of revealing the mechanisms at work in giving and taking authority/power with a sensitivity and a realism ripened and finely tuned by the experience and the legacy of a totalitarian political and social system.

Towards an understanding of the "Romanian New Wave"

Criticism (especially international criticism) has been quick in labelling the recent success and international recognition of several Romanian films directed by a young generation of filmmakers (Mungiu, Puiu, Porumboiu to name just a few) as the Romanian "New Wave." The category is generally disliked by Romanian critics and filmmakers alike who consider that these directors and their films

can be viewed as a group for mainly two reasons: they received (international) recognition at around the same time and are about the same age. Several issues are at stake here: first (against the idea of "new wave"), there is the need to recognise the individual talent of each auteur/director, and second (in support of the view that there is a "new wave"), to take note of contemporary filmmakers' stated intention of distancing themselves from what has previously been considered a certain tradition of Romanian filmmaking. Nevertheless, the syntagm Romanian "New Wave" functions well as a tool of analysis, as an umbrella term underlying that which is common to the different directors as opposed to the numerous differences that (naturally) are there as well.

As one of the Romanian film critics put it, when referring to today's Romanian cinema we speak about a "new generation," rather than a "new wave" since "the directors do not belong to a distinct group and they do not cultivate the same aesthetics" (Laurențiu Brătan in an article published in the Romanian magazine *22*, special issue 5th October 2007[1]). In the same issue of the magazine one of the well-known Romanian film critics, Alex. Leo Şerban, insists we should not talk about waves but of individuals; according to Cristi Puiu, a contemporary filmmaker, this so-called "new wave" does not exist; the term is a fiction and a label. The Romanian critics' discontent with the terminology is echoed in a recent article published in Sight & Sound in February 2010 entitled *The politics of national cinema* written by Shane Danielsen. The focus of the article is "a decade of revolutionary cinema" roughly from the 1990s to the present. According to Danielsen, *any* "new wave" can be understood as "the emergence of a small group of recognised 'global' directors who quickly transcend their national origins to become international stars" (Danielsen 2010, 40), a definition which supports from the outside the position of the Romanian critics and filmmakers.

What we definitely seem to know when talking about "new waves" is that newer and newer waves will emerge without being able to predict where, how and why the next new wave will ensue because, as Danielsen rightly puts it, there is no one set of circumstances, no identifiable cause and effect pattern for their emergence even if we only look at a short period of time; and, finally, that in most cases we are talking about art cinema productions accessible to a reduced number of viewers.

1 In a special issue of the magazine *22* under the title *"Cinema – the New Generation"* critics and filmmakers reflect upon the common characteristics of the New Romanian Cinema, the elements of discontinuity and/or continuity between the younger and the older generation of filmmakers, the success of the contemporary filmmakers abroad and the financing system of CNC (National Cinema Centre). http://www.revista22.ro/cinema-noua-generatie-4053.html

This paper is a result of the increased international recognition of "all things Romanian" (unmatched at the domestic level) and a fascination with communism and its effects on contemporary Romania as it emerges from the work of two of the most celebrated film-makers, Cristi Puiu and Cristian Mungiu.

I have chosen for discussion Cristi Puiu's *The Death of Mr Lăzărescu (Moartea Domnului Lăzărescu*, 2005*)* and Cristian Mungiu's *4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days (4 Luni, 3 Săptămâni şi 2 Zile*, 2007*)* because the first is considered the film that set the style of the new Romanian cinema (i.e. its minimalist realist aesthetic) and the second gained recognition as quality (i.e. arthouse) cinema being awarded the Palm d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival in 2007. Indisputably, both led to the international rise of Romanian cinema. Or as one of the Romanian critics jokingly put it in a footnote: "Romanian film can be divided into two periods, namely, B.C.P. (*before* Cristi Puiu) and A.M (*after* Mungiu)." (Şerban 2009, 347.)

I am interested in discussing how these films force us to re-evaluate[2] state-socialism understood as the power of the state over the everyday/private (powerless) individual while addressing the question of why is this re-evaluation of state-socialism in Romanian film possible now? Or to repeat a question that Danielsen[3] asks: "why […] did the Romanians take so long to process the end of communism?" (Danielsen 2010, 42.) I am interested in analysing the ways in which authority (or the lack of it) is represented in these two films in order to show how received ideas about socialism are successfully interrogated and reformulated. What is achieved by downplaying "the Romanian state" as an authoritative presence in these films?

The impetuses behind this paper are the seemingly unrelated opinions of two critics (one domestic and one international) that focused and helped articulate my position towards these films. First is the article written by A. O. Scott for the New York Times entitled *New Wave on the Black Sea* in which he pointed to the fact that "[t]he emptiness of authority – whether generational, political or conferred by elevated social status – is an unmistakable theme in the work of nearly all the younger Romanian filmmakers" (Scott 2008, 4) and second is Oana

2 Besides marking the effort to recuperate marginalised aspects of history, the return to the everyday was also an act of revaluation. […] Social relationships, in particular, had to be reinvestigated, and such a reassessment had to start not from above, the site of moral judgment, but from below, from the materiality of the objects this disappearing culture left behind (Constantin Pârvulescu 2009).

3 In his article *The politics of national cinema* the question arises in the context of seeing "unusual auspicious historical opportunities" (Danielsen 2010, 42) with reference to the French New Wave as a symptom and not a cause in itself and only visible in hindsight.

Uricaru's article published in the Film Quarterly entitled *4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days: the Corruption of Intimacy* in which she points to the fact that in almost all the films of the New Romanian Cinema events of the recent historical past are represented without vehemence or nostalgia. (Uricaru 2008.)

A lot of criticism applied to socialism (e.g. Gail Kligman and Susan Gal) works on the assumption that the personal, intimate relationships were subversive and provided a point of resistance to the authority of the state. Such an approach tends to absolve citizens from complicity with the system and offers a safe position and moral distance from "the evils perpetrated by the system on its citizens"[4]. It is worth mentioning that A. O. Scott in his article reminds us that, in Romania, communism was not only a foreign imposition, but also "an indigenous outgrowth." (Scott 2008, 6.)

In what follows, I argue that a number of discourses and registers, characteristic of dialogues in the two films that I have chosen as the focus of this paper, are suggestive of a reading which questions the obviousness of these assumptions or references. In these films, that which seems to be invested with formal authority is devoid of authority and that which seems powerless is in fact pregnant with a power-laden agency/capacity to control. The gaze of the viewer then is bi-directional; it is both directed towards certain characters as formal embodiments of power and (more importantly/subversively for us) redirected towards the powerless/other character as a potential source of power.

The approach that I argue for may also explain the lack of domestic recognition of the contemporary Romanian films. What if the negative reactions to these films are rooted in a reading according to which these films are judged against Romanian films made in the 1990s by film-makers of the "old wave" such as Lucian Pintilie and Mircea Daneliuc who started their career under the censorship of communism but are active to this day? Romanian films made in the 90s already address and process "the end of communism" through "tragic satires, intense verbal and visual violence, and political allegories" (Pârvulescu 2009).

4 Contemporary discourse on communism, that I would like to call *demonising discourse on communism* is saturated by common place expressions and phrases that have been rendered meaningless because of overuse, therefore I feel the need to put everything in quotation marks. And here I have in mind expressions such as "the legacy of communism" and the "evils of the system" which seem to mean less and less as time goes by. See for example a book bearing the title *The Social Legacy of Communism* and edited by James R. Millar and Sharon L. Wolchik published by Cambridge: Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Cambridge University Press in 1994, or T. Anthony Jones's talk at the Milken Institute Forum in 1999 entitled *The Legacy of Communism and Its Implications for the New Century*.

As a result of the allegorical, indirect mode of representation the films made in the early 90s (and during communism as well) felt completely unbelievable. As opposed to this earlier trend the cinematic productions after the year 2000 (the "year zero" of Romanian film, in which no film was produced) feature depictions of everyday life. It has been noted that the films tell simple stories; they focus on a single action which is usually concluded in a single day. The stories told have at their dramatic centre the life of everyday people and thus keep the plot of these films at the individual, interpersonal level.

Common Characteristics of the New Romanian Cinema

Whether we talk about a "Romanian New Wave" or about a "new generation" of Romanian film-makers, certain common characteristics emerge when looking at the cinematic production of these last couple of years. Thus, the common characteristics for most of the New Romanian Cinema have been described as realism and minimalism both in terms of mise en scène and performance. The tone of these films is often referred to as "fatalist deadpan" with a narration pervaded by a sarcastic, black sense of humour. In theme these are dominated by a preoccupation with the Ceauşescu era and its legacy (see Shane Danielsen, A.O. Scott, Alex. Leo Şerban, Ioana Uricaru). As a result, in the view of international criticism (for example A.O. Scott and Shane Danielsen) the New Romanian Cinema emerges as *homogeneous* – especially when compared to the South Korean or the Hungarian contemporary cinematic production which are best described as varied both in theme and style – and in Danielsen's understanding as a "movement" characterised by "a number of like-minded practitioners, mostly working together in various combinations and sharing an aesthetic that has, in this case, been shaped by their impoverished circumstances" (Danielsen 2010, 41). For example, the cinematographer Oleg Mutu worked together with both Puiu and Mungiu and the actress Luminița Gheorghiu was cast in both films – not in equally important roles though. The aesthetic referred to here has been described as minimalist, neo-realist. Opinions concur in considering that the term *minimalism* should not be taken lightly in reference to these films. Apart from being a mode of expression that can be seen as a result of "impoverished circumstances" it should be understood as *"the possibility of achieving with minimal artistic means a maximum aesthetic effect"* (my emphasis) (Şerban 2009, 134) or as Uricaru puts it: the often-mentioned minimalism is "achieved through painstaking attention to detail, carefully choreographed movements,

and an elaborate shooting strategy" (Uricaru 2008, 14-15). Mungiu in his *Notes (Însemnări)* on the making of the movie attests to this: "Behind each frame there are so many details I like to recall." The director is careful to point out that even though many spectators assume that he allowed the actors to improvise, the reality is that "they are well-trained actors and there's not one word in the film that hadn't been written in the script" (Uricaru 2008, 16). This statement has to be seen in direct correlation with the dissatisfaction that many felt in relation to the unnatural dialogues in Romanian films made in the 1990s. It has been noted by many commentators that one of the strengths of contemporary Romanian films is the natural flow of dialogue and acting that allows the script to function as everyday live speech.

In order to show how these films convey/construct a particular viewpoint that goes against generally accepted assumptions about power relations, I will focus on dialogue and what it spells out for the viewer. There is a difference between the narratives in the two films: the dialogues in the *Death of Mr Lăzărescu* are detailed and lengthy (special attention needs to be given to the registers applied) while in *4 Months 3Weeks and 2 Days* the dialogue is careful not to say too much.

(Failed) Communication Makes Visible Unequal Power Relations

According to the words of the director of the *Death of Mister Lăzărescu,* Cristi Puiu, "the film speaks about communication, we[5] show relationships between three characters as often as possible: Two people talk, the third person mediates. But I also find that this triangular relationship doesn't work at all." (Production notes – Interview with Cristi Puiu on the site of Balkan Black Box festival.)

The *Death of Mister Lăzărescu* is a film set in the present, that is, Romania of the year 2005, but it speaks about the past. The film is framed by a song played at the beginning and at the end interpreted by Margareta Pâslaru, a husky voiced singer prominent on the Romanian musical stage of the 80s. The singer and the song might escape the international audience but it could not escape a certain generation of viewers and more significantly the main character itself. Since the film offers very few details about Mr Lăzărescu's earlier life the song that we can hear from the off space can also function as a reminder of a *life* that the character had when he was still a feeling and able human being. From the moment the film starts he is dead as a human being. Who Mr Lăzărescu is and what he does is

5 i.e. Cristi Puiu and Răzvan Rădulescu, co-screenwriter.

informed by the past. His presence is strongly and sometimes annoyingly physical as his bodily malfunctions form a central focus of the film. He is dying, and the viewers witness his journey towards the end without any clue about what might go on in his head, about the last image of this world that he will have.[6]

What has been many times stated is that Mr Lăzărescu represents Everyman in his lonely journey towards death (which seems liberating compared to the life he led) but Paul Arthur convincingly argues that the opposite is true. In his article *Habeas Corpus. A Meditation on The Death of Mr Lăzărescu and Corporeal Cinema*, Arthur shows not only that Mr Lăzărescu has been too carefully chosen and brilliantly played to be Everyman, but that his slowly failing body can be the symbolical embodiment of a society undergoing transition from communism to capitalism "that inevitably foster[s] some of the worst features of each." (Arthur 2006, 46.)

I have chosen to analyse a scene that comes towards the end of the film. It is a representative scene both from the point of view of communication between the characters but also for conveying the specific slowness that is [Puiu finds] so characteristic of Romania and its people.

Up to this point the tension has been already built up to almost unbearable limits. The viewer has been exposed to a range of feelings (from irony to pity through anger, frustration and powerlessness). It is not only the length of the film that allows us to go through all these emotions, but also the sense of time that pervades the film achieved by filming in almost real time. We arrive at yet another hospital with a renewed sense of urgency. Finally, it seems at least there is some sort of diagnosis and the operation is about to happen.

The doctor starts by introducing himself and explaining the medical problem to the patient. His description of the patient's symptoms is lengthy and it is medical jargon that we hear. He is interrupted by Mr Lăzărescu who reiterates his complaints (he has a headache because of his ulcer). Mr Lăzărescu is agitated, tries to show where the pain is located but is stopped by the doctor who congratulates him on his good stance but asks him to stay calm and not to talk because at this point it is already difficult to make out what he says. The doctor's tone is a comforting one, as if trying to ease the patient's concerns.

There are two significant moments when the focus shifts from the doctor to the patient and then to the nurse. The three party communication allows this shift and it reveals the power positions at stake. The perceived centre of authority,

6 This question, what is a dying person's last image, is one that preoccupied Cristi Puiu while making this film as he disclosed in an interview.

i.e. the doctors are deemed impotent and therefore invested in the powerless, i.e. the patient and the nurse.

First, it is a piece of black humour: the doctor asks: "Do you have any relatives?" to which Mr Lăzărescu answers: "No, I have an ulcer." Laughter starts forming in our throat (not the liberating kind of laughter, but one that represents a break from the all pervasive tension), as we realise that these two lines sum up the last years of Mr Lăzărescu's existence (his loneliness, his lack of relatives, the only thing that he can still possess besides his cats is his ulcer).

The second interruption comes from the nurse. She jumps in briefing the doctor not only on the personal details of the patient's life but also on his medical condition. She is concerned, a little impatient; she tries to overtake the doctor's slow explanatory rhythm. The doctor looks at the nurse in disbelief, hands in pockets, head slightly tilted to the side. When expressing his disbelief at her intervention, the doctor looks at the female doctor also present at the patient's head. We have the desired composition: three characters in a conversation. But nobody is mediating; on the contrary, they work against each other, excluding from the conversation the socially inferior nurse.

"Unbelievable, isn't it?" says the male doctor. His scorn and contempt is directed to the nurse, while totally ignoring her; he looks at his female colleague as if to his only equal partner in this conversation. Then, switching to the nurse he continues: "I thought the doctor was exaggerating but you really don't show us any respect."

In her turn, the female doctor doesn't spare words to assert her position. She lectures the nurse: "First of all, you should start learning your place and letting us do our job." She is condescending, looking down on the nurse, irritated at her interrupting *their* professionalism. They are all medically trained people, or as the doctor clearly put it: "we are medical staff of different qualifications, nurse" – turning to her, hands still in his pockets – "You don't go teaching me, a doctor, the procedures. Doing that is called insolence. And from this very moment, if you want to stay I will ask you to keep your mouth shut. Or else, you can wait in the hallway."

As if it weren't clear enough, the Doctor spells out their different hierarchical positions where only *some* can teach and lecture others.

When the nurse expresses her wish to take the patient away he is irritated by her impertinence, daring to take a decision that hierarchically speaking is not hers to take. "I'll have to repeat myself" – says the doctor with the tone of: oh, these annoying children who won't understand the rules when they are first told – and he again explains how this kind of decision is only his to take.

The scene goes on in pretty much the same manner and again nothing happens for the patient or everything happens to take him to his inexorable end.

We also find out the doctor is not only preoccupied with observing a procedure, but firmly believes in the patient's right to be fully informed of his/her situation, a patient who no longer realises what is happening to him; his movements are more and more limited, his speech gets slurred and he looks around totally disoriented.

Both doctors are young and showing off their self-importance disregarding completely the possible *experience* of the nurse and, in this very particular case, her actual knowledge of the situation.

It is obvious that the only thing the two doctors care about is to establish their own authoritative position with respect to less educated medical staff. Hierarchical power relations have to be kept in place even if only seemingly so. "My characters are weak – we can recognise ourselves in them and find hope there. Sometimes they make bad choices as if they were caught up in some external mechanism" confesses Cristi Puiu in an interview.

Mioara, the nurse, oversteps her boundaries as a nurse opposing the doctor situated in a hierarchically higher position and she is lectured on it. An obvious transgression occurred and it has been successfully sanctioned. On the other hand, the doctor's authority is deemed impotent. Up to the last moment, all the doctors present in the film are empty white coats seemingly in possession of self-assigned authority but whose actual interventions are meaningless. They are represented at all times as more concerned with how they appear to the others' gaze without performing the authority that they should be practically invested with.

It is easy to perceive the power game at stake in *The Death…* because of its being set within the framework of an institution, that of a hospital, which functions well as a closed system that not only has the ability to deny access to some people while allowing others to enter, but also as a territory marked by clear boundaries within which individuals who belong there are visually marked by the hospital uniform – differently coloured white for doctors (top of the hierarchy), and orange for paramedics. It is an organised system.

There is another aspect of communication in the film, one that records conversations between doctors and all others around Mr Lăzărescu about things that do not concern the patient. Such instances can have two effects: since it is filmed in (almost) real time it adds to the slow pace of the film and it adds humour, a sarcastic, black humour that frames the story.

In my reading of the film, failed communication reveals lack of authority not only in cases exposing hierarchical power relations in between medical staff of

different qualifications but also when we look at the ways in which the personal conversations constantly interfere with the professional medical discourse. The personal conversations between medical staff construct and add meaning to the characters in the film.

At the beginning of the scene described earlier, the viewer sees the same doctor going in and out of the examination room trying to call his wife and earlier we witnessed a conversation between him and the woman doctor when he borrows her phone because his battery ran out. The personal lives of the doctors keep interfering with professional duty, which results in slowness and induces feelings of frustration, even anger to the viewer. As a result, the doctors seem only invested in having their authority position recognised without acting on it, hence the term "emptiness of authority." The doctors are most active when trying to resolve personal problems; otherwise they are depicted as slow and intent on following the procedure as opposed to being professionally active.

The hospital becomes the place where the private and the public spheres of social interaction overlap. There are no clear distinctions between the two, they constantly interfere. The dialogue is carefully written, different registers apply (the familiar and the professional) simultaneously contained in the same space marked visually as an institution. I will refer to another example. This overlap between the private life of the patient and the medical history of the patient influences the doctors when putting a diagnosis: the fact that the doctors smell alcohol on his breath leads them to assumptions about his medical condition while at the same time belittling the patient, who – since he is drinking – is deemed undeserving of proper attention and medical investigation. His headache is not dealt with, not taken into consideration as a symptom, because it is represented as a consequence of the patient's drinking problem.

There is one more occurrence which is worth mentioning: sarcastic humour combined with the scientific. After long struggles, the patient is finally taken to a CT scan. The doctor instructs the nurse to set the patient in position with the following words: "Put him on the slide." As if the patient is just a child who arrived at the playground and needs grown-ups' help. And then, the doctor explains, "We shall take a picture of the liver and one of the penthouse."[7] During the same scene the doctor instructs the patient: "Don't breathe now, we start

7 This is a poor translation of the original Romanian: "O poză la pateu şi una la mansardă." "Pateu" is actually a spread made of liver sold in tins (and quite cheap to buy) and "mansardă" can only derogatively be understood as the locus of the brain, but actually means the top floor, the attic – usually not inhabited, just a place where you collect objects that have a symbolic value only for their owner as memories of a past life.

launching. Attention! 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, 0." The machine makes the doctor behave like a child in front of his new toy. Not only does he associate this routine test with a mock space launch but he starts talking to the neoplasm shown on the scan: "This deserves a picture. Smile."

As I have shown the doctors in *The Death of Mister Lăzărescu* act like figurants in a play in which they choose not to participate. They are more concerned with having their authority acknowledged than acting on it. Communication and dialogue serve making this position clear. There is no gradation present, the actual starting position does not change, and the "story" unfolds, accumulates details but does not become more harmful as the narration progresses. It is even, kept level, impassioned.

The Death of Mister Lăzărescu conveys/constructs a particular viewpoint that goes against generally accepted assumptions about power relations. The dominant interpretation has been that interactions between two characters in a hierarchical power relationship refer precisely to what they seem to refer to: i.e. one powerful and one powerless. On the basis of this interpretation the powerful looks indifferent to the powerless. What happens actually is a transformation of indifference into impotence.

Negotiations with Authority Figures

Comparatively, there is a gradation present in the narration of *4 months 3 weeks and 2 days* from the innocent to the downright harmful. Authority is more explicitly present and the connection with the past as well. The film is set in the last years of communist Romania, a period described by many as the most oppressive. Both Uricaru and Pârvulescu make a point in mentioning the fact that this film remembers the past without judging, without uncritical nostalgia and it considers oppression no longer to be directly linked to government practices and to its leaders, but focuses on oppression's spectral dimension – still "there" but harder to pin down at the level of everyday behaviour (Uricaru 2008, Pârvulescu 2009). In analysing oppression and authority from a scale that goes from the innocent to the harmful, I have chosen to address a couple of scenes that can be considered (with one significant exception) even marginal to the story. The first fifteen minutes of the film carefully construct the atmosphere of a 1980s student dorm by introducing props (objects – soaps, shampoos, brand names, even rental movie titles) evocative of a certain historical period. It is a lengthy introduction that allows the viewer to experience this world or to remember it (if he or she has

lived through it). It is the innocent part, where human interaction is still possible, where people make do with what they have and fend for each other. Some critics (Pârvulescu and Uricaru) consider this introduction as a depiction of an oasis of human dignity but I tend to disagree. Such a view would encourage a belief that there was a corner of this world left untouched by "the workings of the system." As Uricaru puts it "while it was relatively easy to resist the cult of personality and to laugh at exaggerated reports of economic successes, it was much more difficult to even diagnose what the twisted gender politics, the intricate system of arbitrary interdictions, and the collection of social constraints were actually doing to our minds as we were attempting to adapt and survive" (Uricaru 2008, 15).

I intend to look at several scenes where the main character, Otilia is confronted with *authority* in its various locations because I intend to show how authority was present and harmful not even but especially at the level of everyday interactions. The first two short scenes are depictions of the main character's encounter with authority that derives its power from the centre, that is, the state.

The official representatives of the state in *4 Months 3 Weeks and 2 Days* have no authority even though they seem to be invested with it formally. For example, at the hotel reception where Otilia has managed to secure a room, the two policemen don't even pretend to be any kind of authority, they are more preoccupied with joking with the hotel manager than actually insisting on seeing Otilia's identification. Their authority is unproblematically dismissed. Otilia just goes on doing what she wants to do, after performing a sort of trial to conform. Also, in an earlier scene when Otilia is taking a bus without having a ticket,[8] the ticket inspectors have their authority undermined. Otilia manages to get a ticket and punch it before the controllers ask for it. The ticket controllers are also lower level formal embodiments of power.

The situation changes once at the personal level, when authority acts unexpectedly, from unexpected positions. When trying to reserve a room at the hotel, Otilia has to perform a full ritual of getting the attention of the receptionist who takes turns at ignoring, patronising and belittling her. The first attempt is deemed unsuccessful, but the resourceful "heroine" manages to bribe a receptionist at another hotel.

8 This scene is also described in detail by Mungiu in his *Notes* on two accounts. The first is an explanation of how a long-take functions well in keeping not only depth of image but ensuring continuity: Otilia leaves the dorm going through corridors, down the stairs and then is followed by the camera from the back as she walks through a patch of green to board the bus – all in one take. And the second is a humorous description of the overzealous "ticket controller" who managed to reach Otilia before having punched the borrowed ticket, even though she was instructed otherwise.

But it all turns terribly serious when another service provider steps in. In order to get an illegal abortion, the two women arrange for an abortionist who comes to their hotel room.

Again, we are witnessing a triangle conversation between Mr Bebe, Otilia and Gabița. Mr Bebe has arrived to perform the abortion and is about to say what he expects as payment. He demands sexual favours from both in exchange for his complicity in an act considered criminal and thus punishable by law. I will not go into describing the scene because I am interested in the emotional reactions that it engendered.

One reading of the film would consider Mr Bebe as the direct product of a time and an age and therefore not to be blamed entirely. He is what he is and does what he does because of an oppressive and controlling system which created his job and the clients for it. In this sense it is relevant to hear the director's words: "I intend to talk about this period without making direct reference to communism, but through a set of stories that look at personal choices in a time of unfortunate events that people had to go through as if these were the obvious things to happen" (synopsis of the film).

Alexandru Budac in a dialog with Alex. Leo Şerban talks about Mr Bebe in the following terms. He assigns Mr Bebe the position of an "efficient pawn." "He must not be made into a symbol, because he is a real character (based on real people), not a cardboard character (unnatural or unreal). His desires, reactions, fears and anger are not that of a "new man," but of an immoral man. I can easily see him operating in contemporary Romania, naturally, within a different "area of expertise." But Mr Bebe reminds us all too well of the specific fears of the communist regime in order to be taken out of the historical context altogether. He knew – as a being who knows how to adapt – how to find the means to survive within the system, while dodging it at the same time (Şerban 2009, 154-156).

In an article published in the Romanian online magazine *LiterNet*, the artistic director of the Transylvania International Film Festival (TIFF), Mihai Chirilov says that instead of journalism that only seeks to diminish the accomplishments of the film he prefers the emotional reactions of domestic or international audiences. Among the emotional responses to the film, Chirilov mentions the furious question of an Englishman from Brighton concerned with the current fate of those abortionists that he identified with members of the "Securitate." Mr Bebe is equated with the system, with the body that was invested with sustaining the system, the political militia (the same organ that Mr Bebe feared terribly for putting him in jail for performing the illegal abortion). It is exactly this collapsing

of the controlling, oppressive power of the state with the power of the individual that interests me the most. For other viewers (Christina Anghelina on *LiterNet*) he belongs to a type: the outspoken Romanian, resourceful and capable, who lands on his feet no matter the situation and who would "sell even his mother." You can see him everywhere, on the tram, on the beach, in pubs, in hotels and on the *corridors of public institutions* (my emphasis). He is your next door neighbour, your host in a village, who pulled the right cords and has built a small pension or a pub; he is the man who despises women with one possible exception, his own mother. But he is not afraid to scold and reprimand even her.

Re-evaluating State-Socialism in Romania

From the above reactions the characteristics of the "new man" forged in state-socialist Romania were revealed: opportunistic, controlling, profit oriented and exploitative, adjectives that bring to mind the descriptions applied to ruthless capitalists. This brings me back to my original question: why is this re-evaluation of state-socialism in Romania possible now? Possibly because these films which focus on everyday life were made in a period when in the contemporary Romanian society the "full social and intellectual impact of 'real-existing capitalism'" was felt (Pârvulescu 2009) and because the main "culprit" of power has disappeared, leaving us one option – to look *elsewhere* than the "totalitarian state" to explain everyday violences, coercions and "horrors."

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New Filmic Waves in Hungarian and Romanian Cinema: Allegories or Stories about Flesh?

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Abstract. Presupposing that historical and generational resemblances allow for a joint reading of their films, postcommunist Hungarian and Romanian (also nicknamed "New" and "New Wave") directors' films are examined (Radu Muntean, Szabolcs Hajdu, Attila Gigor). The proposal of allegorical reading is made, with specific filmic locuses highlighted as creating cinematic allegories out of (graphic) isolation and intermedial mixes.

Overview

My chief aim is considering the phenomenon of the Romanian New Wave and the Hungarian Young/New Film, in the working stage of a research project focused on those Hungarian and Romanian filmmakers who began their careers in the post-communist period.

Hungary and Romania are neighbouring Eastern-European countries; yet, different historical trajectories and, therefore, different EU accession dates (2004 and 2007) characterise their existence. However, both being former Soviet satellite states, with their cultural and filmic production structures corresponding to socialist cultural policies and developing along different routes after the changes occurred in their post-1989 social regimes, their study offers the possibility of multifaceted conclusions.

The somewhat arbitrary (yet, of course, historical) date of 1989 defines the outlines of mainly two (distinct) groups of film-creators:

a.) those who already had a career before the collapse of the socialist regime, and, consequently, continued their career in the post-socialist era as well. Although we will make references to such authorial names (from Dan Piţa to Lajos Koltai), our interest and the focus of our analysis lies elsewhere;

b.) those who began their filmic career after the year 1989, so, for whom socialism and communism is, at best, a vivid childhood and teenage memory, and whose artistic-formal sensitivity developed in the post-1989 media environment, characterised by the plurality of available sources (as compared to the one TV-channel and one, state-controlled movie theatre-chain), the growing dominance of commercial television, internet usage and fragmentary-spectacular genres such as videoclips and advertisements.

In the absence of acclaimed critical consensus and widely accepted gestures of canonisation, it is hard taking for granted that New Waves or New Films exist at all in these two neighbouring countries. Or, better said, that these labels are anything more than well sounding and marketable labels in festival or mass media contexts eager for sensational news. What is, however, certain, is that there are a number of filmmakers – both in Hungary and in Romania – who definitely began making shorts and features after the 1989 changes in social and political structures, in a "postmodern postcommunist period" as Christina Stojanova names it. The fact that these filmmakers were coming of creative age (more or less) simultaneously with the processes of postcommunism allows us to presuppose a generational resemblance and a common sensibility in their working and creating methods, and the poetical functioning of the films themselves.

At this point I advance one of the working hypotheses: namely, that the novelty and the "new wavism/new wave quality" of these films resides only partly in their formal creativity in using the filmic medium. "The freshness and the astonishing quality" of these movies (and here I am citing newspaper and poster slogans) is equally deriving from their innovatory style or mode of representation, and from the stories told as well as the objects, sites, places and human bodies represented. In short, mise-en-scène, or the self-enclosed diegetic world must be considered and mentioned à propos their "New Wave" quality besides narration and audio-visual qualities creating diegesis. Actually, this was more or less the case with the French New Wave in the 1960s or the Hong Kong New Wave in the late 1980s-early 1990s as well (see Abbas 1997).

Trying to find a point of entry common enough to the various films of various filmmakers of Hungarian and Romanian New Wave/New Film background, I consider that the idea of cinematic allegories being created on screen is one worthwhile. Therefore I proceed with examining how allegorical constructions are created, and to what end, in some of the films in question.

Allegory in Moving Images

Creating allegories and relegating subtle meanings into allegorical realms is a well documented and deeply researched process à propos (post)modern nations and countries with dictatorial and war experiences when and where censorship is unusually active. As Ágnes Pethő writes in connection with Mircea Daneliuc's *Glissando* (1984): "There is nothing surprising in the fact that, in times of dictatorship and a general ban on individual and artistic freedom, a work of art deploys techniques that raise the concrete elements of the story into the realm of the symbolic and tries to convey a message to its audience through the language of parables and allegories." (Pethő 2005, 166) Thus it is even redundant to state about Central and Eastern European, and, moreover, Balcanic films, that they resort to allegorisation, visibly a critical commonplace ever since such corpuses are supposed to exist and exert an influence in world cinema (e.g. the post WWII era). Still, keeping up with allegorical structures in films made well beyond the shadow of communist-socialist dictatorships, in a global climate of "laissez-faire" and "everything goes", seems to be a more curious choice.

It appears that the re-conceptualisation of our understanding of allegories might help us to see better the need for using them in contemporary Hungarian and Romanian films made by postcommunist, young filmmakers. As Ismail Xavier summarises in his theoretical overview, it was Walter Benjamin's change of perspective at the beginning of the 20th century which made possible the reconfiguration of allegory – vis-à-vis the symbol: "in this new theoretical framework, the romantic opposition symbol/allegory, which degrades allegorical expression as arbitrary, nonorganic, mechanical, is reversed. The idea of an unmediated experience of meaning embodied in the symbol is now seen as an illusory attempt to deny the mediation of language, and allegory is redeemed as the discourse that immerses itself "into the depths which separate visual being from meaning" (Benjamin 1977: 165)." (Xavier 2007, 346.) From a mechanical and dull process of multiplication allegory has been turned into a method adequate for expressing "the crisis of culture in modernity," "not only a language trope but also a key notion in the characterisation" of this crisis. (Xavier 2007, 333.) Xavier has a further observation which allows us to redirect (re-position) the notion of allegory in the context of the specific audio-visual medium of the moving image: "one strong reason for its [allegory's] reawakening in modern times is the fact that it has always been the signifying process most identified with the presence of *mediation*, with the idea of a cultural artifact that requires specific frames

of reference to be read, quite distant from any sense of the 'natural.'" (Xavier 2007, 333.) Such an overlapping between the activities of "mediating," "creating mediations" and "creating allegories," "allegorising" allows me to go one step further in trying to understand "the need for allegorisation" in young Hungarian or Romanian cinema. Thus if resorting to allegorical doubling rests on the idea that cultural crisis, shock, or trauma are better represented while "specific frames of reference for reading" are supposed, with "senses of the natural" being suspended for the sake of "mediation" coming to the forefront, we might have a firsthand, rough answer to the question I began with: why such an "allegorical" need in a climate of acceptance and (much) milder censorship?

Applying the structure/trope of allegory to the specific filmic medium of the moving image helps us to approach the concrete examples themselves. In her mentioned essay Ágnes Pethő writes that "allegorical representation means in this case, as it always does, a systematic multiplication of meanings on different levels of the cinematic text." (Pethő 2005, 166.) Ismail Xavier is even more specific in this respect: "When conveyed by a narrative film, allegory is not simply produced by a storytelling process involving agents and actions, but also results from visual compositions that, in many cases, establish a clear dialogue with particular iconographical traditions, ancient and modern. Depending on the particular editing strategy adopted, a filmmaker can privilege the horizontal, narratological, succession of shots to create specific space-time structures of action, or can privilege the vertical relationships created by the interaction of image and sound, or by the intertextual connections between the film's pictorial composition and cultural codes deriving from painting and photography. Therefore, reading films allegorically is always a multi-focal cultural gesture." (Xavier 2007, 337.)

(Graphic) Isolation as an Allegorical Source

If allegorical processes may be going on different levels, structures and medial channels of a movie, interpretation has several pillars to rest on. For the time being I intend to speak about two possibilities for/of allegorisation that appear in young Hungarian or Romanian cinema of the 1990s and 2000s, both of them resting on the idea of "isolation," once in a visual and once in a concrete, spatial sense.

Based on the mentioned work of Angus Fletcher and also Miriam Hansen's interpretation of D.W. Griffith's *Intolerance* (as summarised by Ismail Xavier) we may identify the "graphic isolation of images" as a visual-compositional

method dependent for its decoding on an allegorical eye, and I quote: "Fletcher cites surrealism and the work of Eisenstein as vivid examples of the principle of allegorical juxtaposition, emphasising their common anti-realist techniques of isolation (the perfect delineation of contours, the relative autonomy of each image forming part of the montage)." (Xavier 2007, 347) Meanwhile, Miriam Hansen is speaking about "an impulse toward allegorical constructions based on the "graphic isolation" of images." (Xavier 2007, 353.)

Well delineated, strongly separated images with emphasised contours, graphically isolated, might find their correspondent on the narrative level and in the mise-en-scène in stories of characters cut off from social turmoil, living through personal-emotional dramas in isolated places and spaces, this latter itself an archetypal topos of/for creating allegories about malfunctioning communities or disintegrating countries and nations. As Christina Stojanova summarises in her essay about, as she calls it, "young cinema in Central and Eastern Europe:" "In such a world [e.g. chaotic postcommunism], community, traditionally based on emotional commitment and reciprocal responsibility, is all but impossible, and if marginally present, is either hostile or ironically distant or just plain indifferent. This explains young directors' penchant for tight claustrophobic shots, disengaging the world of the protagonists from community and environment, whose inconsequentiality is reflected in casual details and a scarce number of extras." (Stojanova 2005, 216)

An adequate example in this respect, both in the sense of isolated place, cut-off community and extremely well-delineated contours is the introductory sequence of Szabolcs Hajdu's 2004 *Tamara*, the story and drama of four eccentric characters, mirrored and commented by the farm animals around them, a full blown allegory in itself.

Graphically isolated from the rest of the world, composed in tight, claustrophobic shots, a preference for casual details: these are features which may be also cited à propos many of the well known titles of the so-called Romanian New Wave: *Traffic (Trafic),* Cătălin Mitulescu's 2004 short film, *Sick Love (Legături bolnăvicioase),* Tudor Giurgiu's 2006 feature, *432 (4 luni, 3 săptămâni şi 2 zile),* the 2007 feature by Cristian Mungiu, and finally *Boogie,* the 2008 feature by Radu Muntean.

A good example is the end discussion between husband and wife in *Boogie*, a 2008 movie directed by Radu Muntean and co-financed by one of the biggest commercial television channels in Romania, Antena 1. The title character, Boogie or Bogdan (Dragoş Bucur) is at a Romanian seaside resort with his pregnant wife, Smaranda (Ana Maria Marinca) and their 5 year old son. Accidentally, they meet

with his former college friends, none of whom has established a family yet. Constant rows and reproaches from his wife, as well as nostalgia for "days of being wild" result in a noisy night out, with drinking and a prostitute. The sequence analysed is the ending, where Boogie comes home to find his wife awake.

The "formal-narrative entity" which emerges can be seen as characteristic of all of these examples to a certain extent, and may be described by

– the employment of static cameras;

– which are shooting from a lower level than normal eyesight,

– while the filmed mise-en-scène is usually the dramatic-climactic height of the conflicts

– and these conflicts are concretised in intimate discussions of two or three characters.

– Further, shot-counter shot construction is avoided for the sake of what may be called medium or American totals of groups of people, thus all of the participants in the dialogue remain still and in place during whole sequences as long as 10 minutes.

What we remain with is the memory of two-dimensional pictures of living characters as no camera movements and no cutting interrupts or dissects the scenes. These are theoretically long takes, yet without the real effect of this method, since the different planes lose their relevance as the camera and the viewer's distance from the scene seen is very little.

Paraphrasing Angus Fletcher's observations about "allegory as a symbolic mode," Ismail Xavier also points to the fact that fragmentary texts, with no obvious codes offered for interpretation, or simply enigmatically composed – as was the case with modernist collages or Eisensteinian intellectual montages – are more probable to invite allegorical readings, opacity favours allegory. This may be a last reason why young directors, usually at their second or third feature, favour processes that allow one to speak about the allegorical dimension of Hungarian and Romanian New Wave films.

Instances of Reality

Questions about "the real" (and its filmic representations) in the post-communist Eastern European region are not innocent ones and are not lacking deeply ideological foundations. The postcommunist region, thanks to nearly commonplace historical reasons, appears to be "closer to real experiences" in several cultural discourses, and here I have specifically in mind film and literary

criticism, or film history as such (as an example we may think of Bordwell and Thompson's *Film History*, and its account of Hungarian cinema). Furthermore, we cannot overlook the fact that filmic representation to be decoded as "realist" eases such suppositions, and the realist features of Hungarian film (or Eastern European cinema, for that matter) have not gone unnoticed since István Szőts's remarkable film from the 1940s, *People on the Alps* (*Emberek a havason*). What "reality" is and how it may be represented emerged as a key question in another recent context: namely the "screen culture" born out of technological developments of the post-media age, affecting Central and Eastern Europe, and in conclusion contemporary Hungarian film too.

While in the first discursive field (aka "real experiences of history") what is "real" might equate accounts of historically significant events and panoramas of postcommunist everydays, in the second sense "the cinematic real" would mean correspondences with "realist modes of representation in the cinema," and also oppositions with "non-realist" paradigms. Finally, in the third discourse, "the real" could emerge from for example Barthesian definitions of the medium of photography as "indexically pointing to the real" (see Wells 2003), and in contrast with other media that have no "real" referent whatsoever: this opposition may be translated and simplified as the "analogue-digital binary."

Needless to say, the above sketch is disputable, and it should only serve the goal of contextualising the meaning of "real, reality, the real" as connected to the cinema. Thus, in the cinema, something "being real, belonging to reality" may be constituted by any of the above sketched methods, and I re-iterate them:

– depiction (re-staging) of historically accurate events (that had a correspondent referent in the past reality)

– documentation of geographically or ethnically "exotic," current phenomena (which have a correspondent referent in existing reality)

– adherence to a loosely understood "cinematic realism" (as defined in famous "realist" trends by location shooting, amateur actors, routine, everyday happenings "spiced" by chance, moving or shaking camera, absence of post-production soundtrack)

– definition of "the real" in the current turmoil of mobile and tactile multimediality by favouring one type of media-coding over the other as supposedly more faithful in reaching "reality."

"Real" Allegories

However, a number of more or less recently seen filmic instances from New Hungarian Cinema seem to create "a sense of the real and reality" not by favouring the possibilities of one media over the other and suggesting that for example a painting or a photo is "more real" than filmic representation. Rather such a clash of differently mediated representations is created that the viewer is urged to meditate and generate for herself what may be classified as "real or reality" in these cases. It is important that the clash of different representational modes is realised by confining all these to a single, possibly continuous interior or exterior space, thus signposting the impossibility (therefore: non-reality) of the scenes in an unmistakable manner.

In Attila Gigor's 2008 *The Investigator* (*A nyomozó*) a highly unresponsive, resigned and unfriendly pathologist is hired by a one-eyed man, Cyclops, to kill a physicist after the latter attends a mandolin concert at the Music Academy. The pathologist, Malkáv, accepts the offer because he may save his ill mother's life with the pay. However, as in any film noir pastiche, the victim turns out to be the killer's half brother after he is already dead, and a web of intricate happenings unravel, naturally. The sequence when Malkáv, the fresh killer opens the letter sent to him by the man he murdered the night before is especially illuminating.

The tightly composed night scene of the pathologist's reading the letter lightens up and the eye-level camera is transposed to a high angle as if surveying the scene from above, the latter losing its exact spatial context created by the apartment – so well known by this point, therefore able to generate "a sense of the real." We re-gain the view of the two protagonists, victim and killer, half-brothers, in an obviously de-contextualised, therefore abstract setting: they are treading on the carpet-like magnified letter the pathologist is reading during the scene. This verbally coded printed page, which in the introductory sequence is an object in Malkáv's hands, changes its dimensions and position in space, and it is also re-configured aurally, as the simultaneous, eloquently theatrical monologue of the victim. Thus letters, words and embodied utterance meet and clash, literally.

I choose to compare this extract from *The Investigator* to another genre-movie example, namely the famous "Welcome to the desert of the real!" sequence of the Wachowski Brothers' *The Matrix* (1999), where a profound recognition must occur in the mind set-up of hero Neo as re-configured by hacker Morpheus. While in *The Investigator* Malkáv faces a huge printed page in the abstract white space, in *The Matrix*, in similar surroundings, a visibly outmoded television set acquires

the same role. Namely, of enlightening the hero who must undergo a traumatic re-cognition or understanding of self if he is to continue training in the matrix, a process equalled by the "unsought" quest in Gigor's genre pastiche movie.

In another example, *Bibliothèque Pascal* by Szabolcs Hajdu (2010), we face the traumatic life-story of a young single mother, Mona Paparu, embedded in the conversation she is having with a state official in order to regain the custody of her daughter. When supposedly recounting the occasion of meeting the father of her child, who has taken her as a hostage since he is pursued by the police, we are witnessing, together with Mona, an interesting sequence.

As Mona wants to flee from the derelict beach house, ill-lit and tight, strange creeping noises make her look at the cheap plastic covering of the walls, and the soft smoke whirling around his guard's sleeping figure. Parallel to the golden covering's tearing apart, a similar abstraction of the redundant spatial markers occurs as in *The Investigator*, the camera moving backwards to reveal a profile view of the two heroes sitting at a table, with huge flower wreaths framing their faces. Fascinating bugs and butterflies fill the air, and the shots go on to include the "real" Mona watching and participating in the scene at the same time, again, in a manner similar to Malkáv's being a spectator of the letter and an actor in its being performed. In *Bibliothèque Pascal* we witness the embodiment of Viorel, the hero's "love dream," as explained later, since he has "the condition" of his dreams being projected on the space surrounding him while he sleeps. No such diegetic explanation is offered for Malkáv's being transposed to "abstract" theatre-scenes along *The Investigator*.

In the last of my examples, Szabolcs Hajdu's 2004 *Tamara*, the already highly theatrical filmic space – a faraway farm house and a cast of four isolated characters playing stories of love and marital infidelity – is further expanded to include stages within the main stage. The four actors speak Hungarian, while the animals living on their farm have a nonsense language of their own, of which they make good use as voiceover commentators, and their often humorous, sometimes rather pompous commentaries are being translated to us as Hungarian-language subtitles.

Because of their "non-real" role as commentators, we would not classify the speaking animals as part of the diegetic world, nevertheless, the continuous, uninterrupted moving camera and their appearance along with the human heroes, as in the sequence seen, suggests a similar inclusion in the reality of the diegesis of a non-real (imagined, allegorical) element, as the materialised letter or the embodied dream in the previous examples. However, a strange detachment is prevailing in all three mentioned sequences: the white abstract space, the glowing,

over-heated room of unidentifiable geometry, and the cheerful, unnatural colours of the animals do not allow for total immersion in the respective worlds of diegesis.

Certainly, the examples did not catch my attention only thanks to their innovative beauty, although that could have been simply the case. Rather they seem, to my mind, to reverberate (remind of) an idea I have been considering for a long time, and accurately summarised by David Jay Bolter and Richard Grusin in their 1999 *Remediation, Understanding New Media*. Here they state the following: "Media function as objects within the world – within systems of linguistic, cultural, social and economic exchange. Media are hybrids in Latour's sense and are therefore real for the cultures that create and use them." (Bolter and Grusin 1999, 58.) More visible and tangible – in our post-media screen cultures – than ever, media have a reality of their own and they truly generate and/or constitute our sensations of reality as well as experiences of "the real". Instead of simply representing or mirroring the real images and objects that stand as models for them to copy and imitate, in Bolter, Grusin and Latour's idea contemporary media go beyond representation as mimesis or imitation, to become themselves constituents of our real worlds – which they have, of course, always been, as material objects.

In this context, it becomes more complicated to understand and define "the real"/reality as that which opposes the represented, the mediated, the imitated, since in specific cases exactly what and how is represented adds up to constitute reality. By highlighting a few – and perhaps even incidental – sequences from films belonging to New Hungarian Cinema, I meant to suggest that current filmic discourses from Central and Eastern Europe may be questioned for their definitions of what is real, what is reality, and "answers" given are very much reminiscent of the above citation. Intense moments of mediation and remediation – in Bolter and Grusin's sense (that is, the representation of one media in another media) – that create inter- and multimedial constructions in these filmic sequences allow for proposing that in New Hungarian Cinema mimesis and representation do not always counterpoint the real and reality. By juxtaposing what may count as real and what may be seen as imagined in the same spatial surroundings, "the real," "reality" is forced to emerge in the viewer's minds in these specific filmic instances. Interestingly, "the real" is not represented so much along the commonplace post-media age differentiation of "the analogue/ the digital," but it becomes articulated in medial structures that use theatrical scenery (make reference to the theatre, to dance or to the museum), and are prone to be interpreted as allegorical. This is an idea articulated by others as well, and also worth further considerations.

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How to Rule a TV Show? Narration in *24*

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Abstract. In my paper I examine *24* (2001–2010, Fox), a contemporary TV show, which gained high critical and public attention thanks to its narration technique. In my view, this technique has its roots in classical television narration, so the discussion starts with an introduction, in which the rules of traditional television narratives are summarised. After discussing the most important terms, such as series/serials, narration, schedule, flow, etc. the concept of the *host* is introduced. It is the narrator of documentaries and news, but some TV shows have hosts as well. Traditionally, the presence of such an on screen and/or voice-over narrator leads to disbelief, because it points out the fictional character of the story. Each episode of *24* can be divided into two parts: the recap with its homodiegetic voice-over host/narrator (the protagonist, Jack Bauer), who updates the viewer; and the show itself which is transmitted from another, invisible narration level. Why does this discrepancy not affect our trust in the presented possible word? How can the show unite former distinct categories? What could have been the secret of *24*'s rise and failure? What is the role of Jack? These questions will be examined in my essay.

24: An Introduction

With its 8 seasons *24* (2001–2010, Fox) has received significant critical and public attention, and it is highly possible that its success lies partly in the provocative plotting of the show, namely in the evocation of the terrorist threat. Aired shortly after the catastrophe of WTC, the serial mirrors the deepest frustrations and fears of our time, which rise from the shock of America becoming a target of a successful terror attack. *24* recalls the latest buzzwords of headlines like 'the enemy is among us,' 'everybody can be a victim' and the idea that there must be a government conspiracy in the background. In every season the focal point of the events is a terrorist threat inside the US, which has to be countered by the Counter Terrorist Unit (CTU), a fictional agency.

The serial is also famous for its narrative structure, and it is probably the first show the title of which refers to its narration technique. Each season of the programme represents the events of a single day, so the running time of the episodes is one hour, and each season contains 24 episodes. "The defining idea of the show – strict unity of time – demands that the 24 hours of season one constitute a single narrative" (Birk and Birk 2005, 48). In contrast, there is a huge narration gap between the events of the seasons, and it is never completely explained what happened in the meantime. So the viewer meets the characters mainly in one situation: during work – as if their civil life were unimportant.

This is also true for the main character, Jack Bauer (played by Kiefer Sutherland). He is one of the field agents of CTU, a former special force soldier. He is a stubborn and aggressive character, who always follows his own instincts instead of the official orders, and that is why in the course of the day he is forced to work alone or with the help of just a few co-workers. He is not idealised, often makes mistakes, his wrong decisions even cost him the life of his wife, and sometimes he is driven by his vindictiveness (this aspect reaches its climax in the 8th season, after Rene Walker has been killed). Each season starts with Bauer just regaining his mental / physical / emotional equilibrium, which is completely destroyed until the end of the day. In spite of this, he never gives up putting things right from one season to another, and he is always willing to start another fight against terrorists. Little by little he is becoming depressed, and he is slowly losing all of his loved ones in the fight for the 'American dream.'

All in all, he never learns from his own mistakes, which is very strange, because the other characters of the show change a lot: Chloe, for example, was introduced in the third season as an antisocial weird geek, and becomes more and more 'normal'. She becomes a reliable helper of Jack and will even have a family and a child. Similarly, the directors of CTU (Ryan Chapelle, George Mason, Bill Buchanan, Erin Driscoll and Karen Hayes) are at their first appearance strict and they stick to the rules, but sooner or later they realise that bureaucracy has to be ignored in favour of stopping terrorist attacks. The three men even sacrifice their lives for this case, which testifies to their significant change. Some characters are capable of developing within just a few episodes, like Linn McGill who at first sets back the work of the agency with his exactitude, but when the office itself becomes the target of a nerve gas attack because of his fault he restarts the air circulatory of the building which costs him his life.

Change – or in the terms of television studies 'twist' – is characteristic of the show in a number of other ways: people, intentions, targets can change, for

example the interrogator becomes the suspect and thus interrogated, or moles are uncovered at the agency. Furthermore, a lot of deals are made, which for instance help terrorists start new lives in exchange for important information. This lack of stability requests high attention from the viewer to be able to understand the events, and pushes the show towards the serial format, in contrast to series.

But in spite of these rapid changes of relations, in most cases the viewer knows who to trust – Jack is undoubtedly the most stable point in the world of *24*, and even when he becomes suspicious in the eyes of the senior colleagues or co-workers, we are (and we *can be*) sure that he is reliable and serves the 'greater good.' It is not just because of the fact that he plays the leading role, but the show uses well-tried as well as rewritten narrative strategies to convince the audience that he is right. In my paper, I will discuss these techniques by comparing them with the traditional forms of TV narration.

Narration on TV: Another Introduction

It is a cliché that we are surrounded by narratives. Our everyday life is accompanied by novels, movies, tales, and jokes, and in some ways billboards as well, as a huge number of other types of printed advertisement also challenge us to develop a story. However, I will argue that nowadays television is the main source of narratives. Surveys have shown that in most households TV is a kind of family member, people switch it on as soon as they arrive home, and it works until late in the evening. Furthermore, TV has even overcome radio in some workplaces. This phenomenon led John Fiske and John Hartley to speak about the 'bardic' function of television (Fiske and Hartley 2003).

The very concept of television lies in storytelling: films, news, advertisements, reality shows, etc. – except for a few talk shows and game shows we can hardly mention a programme or a sequence which is non-narrative. What is more, "narrative structure is, to a large extent, the portal or grid through which even nonnarrative television must pass" (Kozloff 1992, 53). But the most interesting narration technique used most of all by television is serialised narration which Seiter calls the "television's definitive form" (1992, 33). Serialised narration means on the first level that the viewer cannot watch the whole story at once, but is forced to follow the rhythm set by the broadcasting company (Allen 1992b; Allrath, Gymnich and Surkamp 2005).

Although serialised narration has its roots in older media, such as books, newspapers, and radio, and it was the main cause of these media becoming

mass media, the appearance of new media forced television to try to gain back audience's attention by using serialised narration. This attempt brought the flourishing of this technique, which can be observed from the late 90's (Kozloff 1992). Not only series and serials which use the same characters and places from episode to episode can be mentioned as an example for serialised narration, but – as a number of theorists argue – also the news and other programmes (advertisements, reality shows, etc.) which develop a narrative in a longer period (Allen 1992b; Allrath, Gymnich and Surkamp 2005; Ellis 1992; Kozloff 1992).

Although the division of fictional series and serials is not as strict nowadays as it was when serialised stories appeared, both terms can be helpful in analysing contemporary fictional shows. While series contain episodes which are connected only by topic, characters and places, serials develop a story during weeks, months or even seasons. But the two categories are not discrete ones; shows can be put on a scale which starts with programmes with the extremist types of closure episodes (*The Simpsons* [1989–, Fox] as well as most of the situation comedies for instance) and reaches soap operas, in which everything is in connection with everything, so an action of a character can rewrite the relationships of a number of others (see for example *Dallas* [1978–1991, CBS] or *The Shield* [2002–2008, FX Networks]) (Allen 1992b; Allrath, Gymnich and Surkamp 2005). The most important difference between the two types for the present analysis is that while series can be seen and understood even by an occasional viewer, serials can only be enjoyed with some kind of prior knowledge. In short, the method of building the narrative significantly differs in these cases, which influences the attitude of the audience towards them.

But there is a number of other factors in the interpretation of TV narratives which determine the audience's relationship to the programmes. In her work on television narration, Sarah Kozloff virtually divides TV narratives into story, discourse and schedule (Kozloff 1992). The first two categories, which answer the question of what is told and how it is told, can be familiar from other theories on classic narration, but schedule is something that has to be explained, because it is unique for television as an audiovisual medium. As Kozloff argues, this term means that TV programmes not only have to be coherent on their own, but must also fit in the profile of the channel on which they are running. What is more, each station has a special concept about what would be the most popular programme among their viewers in a given time, which leads Kozloff to assume the working of a so called 'supernarrator' behind each station. John Ellis argues that "scheduling is the means by which a day's broadcasting is arranged so that particular programmes coincide

with particular supposed events in the life of the family. Scheduling provides a regular, week by week, slot in which the repetition of particular series formats can take place" (1992, 116). In short, we can say that the façade of a channel is basically established by its schedule, which is available on the Internet and in newspapers, thus it can introduce the channel for viewers in advance.

Schedule produces the phenomenon that Raymond Williams calls 'flow:' the uninterrupted line of programmes and advertisements running on TV (Williams 2003). It is not just a list of programmes, but it also has to be coherent in itself, because TV companies do not only want to catch viewers' attention, but they also try to make them watch the given channel as long and as frequently as possible, besides raising the level of attention. That is why the items of the flow build on each other: news refers to series, serials refer to each other, etc. This effort is based on the assumption that a high number of viewers, who switch to a channel for a specific programme, can be convinced to stay for the next programme; but when it is not interesting enough, the viewer will switch to another station just after a few minutes. In the discourse on television it is a commonsense that audience vote for or against a show with the remote control, so the product of television is more likely the flow than the distinct programme.

In short, the flow specifies the broadcast time of programmes, and can be changed just under extraordinary circumstances (for example in case of an inland catastrophe). It means that time in connection with television programmes has more layers than in films or novels: "there are really three time schemes operating: the time of the told, the time of the telling, and the time of the broadcasting"[1] (Kozloff 1992, 69). What makes the situation more complicated is that television is the most common audiovisual medium which is able to broadcast events live, when the above mentioned three time layers become one. But in most cases there are distinctions between them, although a lot of 'canned' (which means recorded and edited in advance) programmes just like talk shows, reality shows or films try to use the codes of live broadcast, thus creating a sense of spontaneity and reality in order to heighten suspense.

The aim of the effort to make viewers stay is very simple – the programmes of commercial channels are nothing but by-products, as they live on advertising revenue. The advertisers pay per 20 seconds in the break or for product placement, and for their money they have to be sure that the message reaches as many people

1 Kozloff starts from Christian Metz's idea: "[t]here is the time of the thing told and the time of the telling [...] One of the functions of narrative is to invent one time scheme in terms of another time scheme." (Kozloff 1992, 65; Metz 1974, 21.)

as possible. In consequence, stations have to broadcast popular programmes, thus producing high views to be able to sell the time of the break for the highest price possible. The more popular a channel and a specific programme is, the more the advertiser is willing to pay for advertising time and product placement (compare the enormous prices of the advertisement time in the break of the *Lost* [2004–2010, ABC] final episodes). From this point of view, television can be recognised as an economic project to engage the highest possible number of the viewers to maximise their income, rather than as "free" entertainment as viewers may feel (Allen 1992a; 1992b). This feature is the most recognisable in connection with commercial television; this is what determines its programme structure in the first place. This is especially true for America, where the concept of state-owned television is not an important phenomenon, and the TV companies have far less duty as in Europe – for example, they do not have to inform the public and the time and the frequency of the advertisement breaks is unlimited.

Channels in the competition for viewers develop more and more sophisticated techniques to grab and hold people's attention. To this end, as Kozloff argues, they put great emphasis on narration, which she defines as a set of events that are connected by temporality or causality. As she puts it: "television, like all other narrative forms, takes advantage of the viewer's almost unquenchable habit of inferring causality from succession" (1992, 54). In spite of this, one can argue that television series – as well as other programmes – are highly formulaic, which means that for a regular viewer events are predictable well in advance. For instance, the main character of a serial never dies, 'good' people usually survive and 'bad' people get caught. But this limited suspense – which originates from the effort to serve the viewer with familiar stories – can be raised, as Kozloff's analysis about the docudrama series *Rescue 911* (1989–1996, CBS) shows. She lists three reasons: 1. self-contained episodes, which means that the places and the characters change from episode to episode, so there is not a protagonist who joins the season and thus can be seen as guideline, 2. the series borrows a huge amount of unforeseeable events from real life, which suggests that no screenwriters had worked on the show, 3. real life events have their unpredictability, so in series based on true stories there is a bigger chance of an unhappy end – at least as viewers feel it, because for example fatal accidents are never adapted in the mentioned series.

As it can be seen, the narrating agency – which is a construction, not a living person – tries to compensate the audience for the restricted suspense in a number of ways. Fictional series and serials also frequently simulate the feeling of live broadcast, but they also use a number of other techniques. One of the most

important of these is multiple storytelling during which not only one storyline is developed in an episode, but there are up to 6-7 ongoing lines, which in many cases interfere with one another and cross each other. This technique raises the viewer's curiosity for the development of the story, in contrast to the events – as Kozloff writes: "television stories generally displace audience interest from the syntagmatic axis to the paradigmatic" (1992, 58).

Because of the above mentioned regularity and the process of programme production in the case of television, we cannot talk about an author in the same meaning as in films or novels (Allrath, Gymnich and Surkamp 2005). However, in some programmes which are more experimental and contain some novelty, an implied author can be detected who addresses the audience (for instance *Lost* or *The Shield*); but in other cases the show is so formulaic that such an attempt is unreasonable – the story and the narration follow well-tried rules (this can be observed in most daily soaps) (Allen 1992a).

To wake viewers' attention some shows try to personalise the narrating agency by giving face and voice for it and to address the audience: the so-called 'host' can be the commentator of documental series, the showman of a quiz or a reality show and so on (Allen 1992b; Kozloff 1992). Fictional series and serials tend to use some kind of host as well,[2] consider for example Dexter, the popular serial killer of Showtime, who presents his own story (*Dexter*, 2006–, Showtime). He is not only the main character of the serial, but he also narrates the onscreen events from his own point of view (homodiegetic narrator with the term of Genette), thus guiding the viewer in the world of the show. Mary Alice Young from *Desperate Housewives* (2004–, ABC) can be regarded as a similar voice-over narrator: her death is the starting event of the series, thus the narration is 'post-mortem.' So she is a very special example of heterodiegetic character narrators who unites her own and an omniscient viewpoint, which enables her to see events with a special kind of irony. Thus with her reflections she as a host bridges the story world with the world of the audience.

These kinds of hosting have a lot of benefits: the voice of the narrator can summarise the events for the viewer and thus s/he puts them in another light, s/he can even reflect on the events happened some episodes earlier, unfold motivations, uncover discrepancies, etc. which extends suspense and helps

2 The phenomenon may go back to the anthology series, in which the episodes did not have a common story, and even used different characters from episode to episode – only the atmosphere of the series remained the same. The host's appearing before the show makes clear the connection between the parts, thus helps the viewer recognise the similarities (Kozloff 1992).

the audience identify with the narrator. Traditionally these hosts – just like their antecedents in documentaries, quiz shows, and other programmes – are trustworthy because, as Ellis argues, one of its first tasks is helping the viewer to follow the events even when s/he can just listen without watching, so the audience can put their faith in them without any fear of being misled (in contrast to the character narration in cinema, which in many cases turns out to be misleading, see for example Hitchcock's *Stage fright* [1950]) (Ellis 1992). This repetition between image and sound is typical on television, and leads critics to the conclusion that TV programmes have a low artistic value (Seiter 1992).

However, primarily in the case of contemporary series and serials, an exciting paradox can be observed: although the role of the character narrator is to help us understand the onscreen story, it does not simplify the interpretation itself, because the viewer can note discrepancy and sameness between the narration and the events, s/he can discover another possible interpretation, or detect signs which the narrator did not mention or does not even know about (Allrath, Gymnich and Surkamp 2005). It is a frequent occasion in the case of non-omniscient character narrations (see for example *Dexter*), which can even produce the classic type of suspense in case of which tension comes from the larger knowledge of the viewer. Thus the viewer is involved in putting together the story, and because of this activity (and of course the above mentioned identification) his/her commitment to the show rises.

Of course the presence of the character narrator weakens the reality effect in the case of fictional series and serials, because it uncovers the 'fictional contract' (term from Genette), which means that fictional narratives try to pass themselves off as non-fictional, and also the interpreter sees them that way. The voice-over of the characters expresses the distance between the story and the narrator, which can be found in time (see *Dexter* and *Sex and The City* [1998–2004, HBO]) or on level of discourse (see *Desperate Housewives*), so it points out that the plot is constructed – these shows can be regarded thus as self-conscious. However, the degree of their self-consciousness can vary on a long scale, which is in connection with their relation to the story they tell (Kozloff 1992). It is not accidental that fictional shows, which would like to preserve the illusion of reality, do not use character narration in this way, but try to hide the presence of the narrator – see for example the *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation* (2000–, CBS) and its spin offs, *X-Files* (1993–2002, Fox), *The Shield*, etc.. To make it possible, they mostly use strict chronological order; they avoid repetition of certain stories and motives; and try to diminish the difference between discourse time and story time.

On the other hand, the host in non-fictional programmes (for example in news) can function as the presenter of the viewer, thus create authenticity (Seiter 1992); what is more, it can address him or her directly which is called the 'rhetorical mode of television' (Allen's term 1992b). In the first case, the host's attention and questions represent that of the audience, for instance by asking a correspondent. In the latter, the host turns directly to the viewer and – as a number of television theorists argue – this gesture restricts the six elements of the classic narration theories (author, implied author, on screen narrator, narratee, implied viewer, and viewer) to two (the first three and the last three) (Kozloff 1992). "Although theoretically there is always a distinction between these roles, the distinction in such cases is nearly indiscernible" – as Kozloff highlights (1992, 62). As Allen puts it: "rather than pretending the viewer isn't there, the rhetorical mode simulates the face-to-face encounter by directly addressing the viewer and, what is more important, acknowledging both the performer's role as addresser and the viewer's role as addressee" (1992b, 89). It is because this action mimics the interpersonal communication, thus overshadows the role of media and mediation. This technique is especially effective in the case of live broadcasts, but advertisements and recorded shows (talk shows for example) tend to use it also, because television can reach the highest level of intimacy in this way.

Narration in *24*

In my opinion *24* can be seen as a paradigmatic show, because it uses and also renews the above mentioned narration techniques, which dominate classic television narration. With its simulated real time format it tries to come near to news, especially to 24-hour news channels like CNN, on which the viewer is kept in the illusion of omniscience. These channels, with the almost exclusive use of live broadcasts supplemented with news feeds, would like to make us feel that we never miss any important event and we learn crucial information in time. As Kozloff argues "'live' broadcasts offer a simulation of traditional oral storytelling, in which the audience hears the tale at the moment that the storyteller speaks it" (1992, 68).

In *24* the split screen (which is a special form of parallel montage borrowed from comics) is partly used to replace the written text of the news feeds, thus to update us on the parallel events. So besides acting as an authentic source of knowledge, the show tries to cancel the discrepancy between the discourse time and the story time, thus mimic the unpredictability of real life. These techniques are very close to that used in the above mentioned *Rescue 911*: the status of the supporting actors is very unstable (usually the viewer cannot predict who will survive, or who will appear

in the following season, because the show frequently eliminates also 'good' people) and there are closed lines of events, which are self-contained (Kozloff 1992).

It means that *24* uses a unique technique to combine serial and series format. At first glance the show is almost clearly serial, but if we have a closer look, two crucial differences can be observed. On the one hand, many parallel storylines can be regarded as the follower of episodic structure. So *24* uses multiple storytelling to heighten suspense, and every storyline is in connection with the others – although these connections are not always clear by the time they are introduced. However, these lines are not closed in a single episode but are stretched for 3-4, their function is similar to the episodes of the series: new members of the audience can catch up easier and understand more than they would in the case of a pure serial-like structure. Evidently this closure can be found at the level of the events, but the concept of a conspiracy is stretched in the background of more seasons. This technique was developed gradually – the first season can be regarded as a serial, its structure (as well as its motivation network) does not radically differ from that of soap operas; but in the following seasons more and more closed lines are used.[3] In the middle of the 7th season, there is even a point at which it would be easy to end all the storylines, the only – referential – sign of continuing for the audience is the knowledge that the show has to reach 24 episodes, thus cannot end after the 13th.

On the other hand, there is a significant difference in the degree of closure of the seasons and that of the episodes. Each season can be regarded as self-contained; usually very few references on the previous events are made – although not all the storylines are finished during seasons they start in. However it is not a unique technique (for example *Dexter* or *Desperate Housewives* are very similar from this aspect), in this case the contrast between the structure of the seasons and the episodes is much more radical, which goes back to the presented diegetic world: the episodes of the seasons are meant to be successive, while there are huge ellipses between the seasons.

In my opinion the introduction of these new techniques has crucial role in the success of the show. Namely, *24* is a so-called water cooler programme that refers to its role as topic of workplace chats.[4] After leaving out a few episodes one cannot participate in the discussion of the show, because s/he does not know anything about the new storyline, and this will motivate him or her to catch up. Besides,

3 I do not agree with Elisabeth and Hanne Birk, who analyse only the first season of the show, "since the formal characteristics remain largely the same in the later seasons" (2005, 48).

4 Allen argues that speaking about the soaps in the break is nearly as important for the viewer as the watching itself. (Allen 1992b)

for the new viewer who starts watching during the season (or starts viewing not with the first season) it is easier to follow the events than in the case of serials. But with the use of the open end in episodes (borrowed from serials) the show engages the members of the audience. The closure of the seasons has also benefits: in each season the staff can create a brand new storyline without using the rules of the previous seasons, and the audience can observe in each season how the discourse is built up. So this is also a kind of repetition which is – as mentioned before – one of the most important features of television. In short: this special mixture of series and serials format is able to catch viewers' attention no matter when they start watching, and also to maintain the attention of former audiences.

This structure – together with the illusion of live broadcast – is especially important in the fight against time shifting. Nowadays the phenomenon of time shifting has become more and more defining in the TV viewing habits, which means that a notable amount of the audience do not watch programmes at the time indicated by the schedule, but record them to see it in a more convenient time (thus the definition of serialised narration above no longer works, or at least not in the same way). Of course it is not too favourable from the aspect of the advertiser, because it allows viewers to skip the advertisements; what is more, the new DV-recorders do not even record them. The only case in which time shifting is not a choice for the great majority of the audience is live broadcast, most likely because of the so called 'aura' of reality (Csigó 2009). *24* copies the codes of being lifelike to persuade the audience to watch the programme on TV when it is broadcasted, thus making it more attractive in the eyes of advertisers. Moreover, the high suspense is not only favourable for product placement, but also lasts for the breaks.

Besides copying the news channels, authenticity and intimacy are also generated in another way. As mentioned before, the host helps the viewer feel more comfortable in the represented possible world. But, on the other hand, character narration weakens the reality effect, because it refers to the onscreen events from a distance. *24* solves this problem in a very elegant way: the show itself tries to be as real as possible, but in the recaps Jack Bauer navigates the viewer. He says the sentences: 'Previously on *24*…' before the sequence, and 'The following takes place between this and that,' and – if it is said – 'Events occur in real time.' If we add that in the first season he also summarises the plot,[5] it seems obvious that he rules these sequences, he is the one who informs

5 He says: "Right now terrorists are planning to assassinate the presidential candidate. My wife and daughter have been kidnapped. And people that I work with may be involved in both. I'm federal agent Jack Bauer. Today is going to be the longest day of my life." The future tense he uses is especially strange, and contributes largely to the

the audience what has happened before. And although we cannot establish his connection to the shown pictures in time and space (when, where and to whom he speaks), he never misleads us – like the great majority of hosts and character narrators in television. According to Birk and Birk, Jack's voice-over "serves primarily to privilege Jack's voice. Jack seems to 'host' the show and thus can be seen as a character-focaliser, though not in the literal (perceptual) sense, but on the 'ideological' level" (Birk and Birk 2005, 55). I think – besides highlighting Bauer's main role and promoting Kiefer Sutherland's celebrity – the trust Jack gained with this reliability is crucial in understanding his role in the serial. That is the main cause why we trust him, even when he becomes suspicious from the viewpoint of other characters.

It is evident, however, that he is not a character narrator who tells the episodes. His function only concerns the previous events; the episode itself is presented by another narration level, which – again – tries to eliminate the differences between the time of told, the time of telling and the time of broadcasting. As Birk and Birk put it: "the 'camera' acts largely as an extradiegetic and heterodiegetic narrating agency" (2005, 54). This technique is brought to the extreme in *24* with the help of the digital clock's frequent appearance on the screen and with the strict chronological order. This way the show gets as close to the form of live broadcasts as possible for a serialised narrative. On the other hand, the use of the split screen foregrounds the presence of the narrator who guides the viewer between the storylines according to its intention: creating suspense, unfolding parallel events, showing different camera angles, etc.

The use of the host in the recaps and the use of the omniscient narration techniques in the episodes do not generate unreliability as we might think, because of the unfitting of the parts. Yet the show provides audience the feeling of safety (in the sense that we always know who to trust) while maintains a high level of suspense and intimacy. Furthermore, as Kozloff puts it, "the decision to use an actor as a narrating figurehead (either on screen or in voice-over) is always a move toward foregrounding the discourse" (1992, 64). Therefore we can say that the recaps are self-conscious, and do not try to hide their constructed nature from the viewer.

But one can also argue that a certain degree of self-consciousness can be observed in the show itself. Firstly, the 24-hours long, lifelike serial aired in weekly portion is so paradoxical that it points out one of the defining features of

uncertain position of the character narrator. In spite of this, I am not sure, that we can accept the idea that the whole first season was the flashback of Jack (Birk and Birk 2005). What is more, this idea is obviously wrong in the case of the other seasons.

television, namely that it can broadcast live events as well as taped live events, and the two cases can only be distinguished referentially[6] – in contrast to cinema, where present is the normal tense and past should be constructed if necessary (Allen 1992b; Kozloff 1992). Secondly, as mentioned before, break means an important feature in the case of television (Allen 1992b; Kozloff 1992), and *24* highlights it by including the time of the break in its own story time: the digital clock (which shows the story time) can be seen before as well as after the break. Thus "[a]s the story time in *24* is supposed to continue while the discourse time is zero, the commercial breaks seem to constitute a kind of 'ellipsis' rather than a 'pause'" (Birk and Birk 2005, 51). This technique wakes the audience's curiosity and generates tension with the threat of missing something – although it is hard to mention any event that happened in the meantime (except for the raping of Teri in the first season) (Birk and Birk 2005). This high degree of self-consciousness and self-reflexivity allows us to assume that the lifelikeness is only necessary because of the 'race against time' narrative.

To sum up, I regard *24* as an experimental primetime show that is highly aware of the conventions of storytelling in television, but breaks up with them in order to maximize viewers' attention and convince them to stand by also for the break. It mixes previous distinct categories like self-reflexivity and the illusion of being lifelike, episodic and serialised narration, character narrator and omniscient narrating agency, etc. But the introduction of a characteristic protagonist who significantly differs from the other characters preserves the coherence of the show, while fully incorporating the viewer in the presented possible world, thus depriving him/her of the distance to the show. This fact, together with the rapid changes of relations, has two major consequences: firstly, the viewer cannot have an objective point of view on the show, so s/he cannot note the heterogeneity of the used techniques. Secondly, while the show causes so called 'chips syndrome,' which means it is addictive, at the end of the season it is hard to recall the events of the story – even if we have seen the whole season at once (on DVD, for example). I am not convinced that this kind of narration as a whole has a future (the original show also ended last year, since it did not produce high enough rating), but parts of it, as well as its results, could be important sources for further series and serials.

6 Furthermore, the production of one season of the show lasted one and a half month.

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