School of English and American Studies

Eötvös Loránd University Budapest

ELTE
EÖTVÖS LORÁND
TUDOMÁNYEGYETEM

| From Research to Practice |
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ABSTRACTS

ELTE SEAS
THE REEL EYE '21
INTERNATIONAL ONLINE FILM CONFERENCE
SEPTEMBER 17TH · 09.00 AM-7.00 PM

Vera Benczik (ELTE)
Monstrous utopias: the pastoral landscape in postapocalyptic films

Catastrophes have abounded in post-apocalyptic literature and film for the last two centuries, and the post-apocalypse has become one of the primary modes to reflect on and react to the human-induced transformation of the ecosystem in the Anthropocene. Whether it is a new Ice Age, cataclysmic tectonic shifts, a pandemic, or eco-catastrophes caused by pollution, most of these narratives chronicle the catastrophe and the aftermath from a human point of view, and chiefly focus on the possibility of survival and rebuilding in a monsterized environment. This monstrous terrain often features glimpses of the pastoral, idyllic, even utopian constructions of space, which seem at odds with the bleak message(s) these texts try to mediate. The present paper seeks to explore the possible uses of these spatial constructions through films like *Logan's Run* (1976), *I Am Legend* (2007), *Z for Zachariah* (2015), or *The Girl with All the Gifts* (2016). It will focus on the spatial politics behind the paradox of the postapocalyptic utopia, scrutinize the various versions of such locales, and also look into their ideological implications.

Annamária Fábián (ELTE)

William, Will, Billy: Shakespeare Lightened in British Television Biopics

Shakespeare's figure has been several times depicted in films and movies. His conveniently opaque character and the fact that we have next to nothing concrete about his personality and private life made it easy to portray him in any possible way from the contemplating genius through the common man with financial problems to the sarcastically hilarious player. In my presentation I will examine how Shakespeare was depicted in British biopics, and I will attempt to show how and why in recent years the BBC versions of the bard seem to be emphasizing the light-hearted, humorous aspect of all the possible approaches available for interpretation. My main line of thought will be along the British TV films and series depicting William Shakespeare that can be considered "biopics" (*Will Shakespeare* 1978, *A Waste of Shame* 2005, *Bill* 2015 and *Upstart Crow* 2016), but I will also glimpse at movie productions and American series for comparison (*Shakespeare in Love* 1998, *Will* 2016, *All Is True* 2018).

Cecilia Gall (ELTE)

Ned Kelly without a beard: Justin Kurzel and *The True History of the Kelly Gang*

Before Justin Kurzel's 2019 adaptation of Peter Carey's 2001 Booker Prize winning *The True History of the Kelly Gang* came out, a minimum of 10 films had already been made about the outlaw Ned Kelly. Raising money for a new film seemed like an impossible task. What untold aspects are there of this story? Kurzel, as Carey, was not interested in telling how it really was. Rather he became interested in how history can be 'stolen' and turned into political agenda. The oft-told story of the Kelly Gang continues to define the way Australians think about themselves and their national identity. Kurzel's disturbing take on Carey's book is not likely to turn out to be a crowd pleasing, popular film. The current paper aims to examine how the movie deliberately breaks with the received notions of Kelly representations. A beardless Ned Kelly succeeds in alienating rather than identifying the viewer with the main character, thus highlighting the artificial character of the Ned Kelly myth.

Márta Hargitai (ELTE)

Chronotopes of hell in two film adaptations of *Macbeth*

Although representations of hell and the journey to and from hell in literature and film are dominantly through katabatic experience, i.e. narratives about a *descent* into Hell and the return made by a living human, in the present paper I will discuss another technique, i.e. the presentation of hell on a *horizontal* plane. I will focus on images and structures of evil space in two film adaptations of *Macbeth* (Welles, 1948 and Goold, 2010), both of which often juxtapose images of heaven and hell, light and dark, confined vs open spaces, etc.

My contention is that hell in *Macbeth* (both in the play-text and in the selected film adaptations), similarly to the existential kind of hell presented in Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*, is a state of mind; it is in us. Crossing the threshold or border on a horizontal plane, I argue, is easier than taking a deliberate downward motion, such as for example, taking an elevator to the basement or wilfully sinking to the level of beasts. A horizontal trespass can materialize almost imperceptibly, *stealthily (c.f. Mc 2.1.54)*; so gradually that one almost does not notice that they have transgressed, as the numerous examples taken from either film will testify.

Using horizontal images of hell in these film adaptations is therefore a more refined, albeit perhaps less spectacular, means to underline the basic theme of the drama: the gradual process of self-damnation.

Sue Harper (University of Portsmouth)

From Research to Practice

When you get to a certain age, it is important to assess your own work critically and to continue to rise to fresh challenges. If you do that, you stand a reasonable chance of not becoming an intellectual fossil - complacent and resentful of the young people who come after you.

When I reviewed my own academic work, I saw that it was primarily concerned with hidden and repressed aspects of film history: working-class audiences and films for women. I was always very interested in visual style and the way in which cultural codes were imprinted into it. I decided that it would be interesting to engage in some creative work of my own, which would rise out of the academic work and be dynamically related to it. I published a lot of very short stories (none more than 500 words) on my website (www.sueharper.co.uk) and in 2020 I published a book with Egaeus Press, *The Dark Nest*, which sold out immediately.

The stories often deal with female transformations (a woman who turns into a fly, a vagina that learns to talk) and with surprise (the finding of a Martian in a wood). Many of them, following on from my academic work, are about dress and adornment. Others are more speculative, asking the big questions about gender and spirituality. Mostly, they are playful in mood. I hope, in this paper, to argue that researchers and creative writers are not as far away from each other as we might think, and to present some of my stories as part of a continuum of thinking about gender and culture.
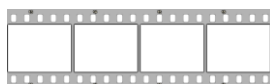
Dóra Janczer (ELTE)

Glyndebourne *Lucretia*

In the presentation I intend to explore the myth of the rape of Lucretia. Lucretia's inner turmoil after her violation has been the subject of countless poems, dramas, paintings and musical compositions, almost uniquely depicted from a male viewpoint. In the focus of my paper is the 2013 Glyndebourne performance of Benjamin Britten's opera *The Rape of Lucretia* (libretto by Ronald Duncan) directed and adapted to the screen by Fiona Shaw. In particular, I will examine how Shaw departs from Britten, and whether or not her staging revises the interpretive tradition of Lucrece's ethical and psychological stance.

János Kenyeres (ELTE)

Identity and trauma in Atom Egoyan's recent movies

The depiction of troubled identities and trauma has always been a hallmark of Atom Egoyan's cinematic world, and this paper aims to explore variations on these themes in the Canadian director's recent films. In some of Egoyan's movies, we witness the lasting impact of major historical events, whereas in others, small and local narratives unconnected to major events in history take centre stage. In *Remember* (2015), Egoyan takes up the subject of the Holocaust, but in a way that gives it a new representation, different from the familiar grand narrative, while confronting the viewer with the protagonist's search for revenge, and eventually, his identity crisis. *The Captive*, which premiered a year earlier, presents the consequences of the actions of a deformed and sick personality through the individual trauma and shock of ordinary people while also giving us a glimpse into the unfathomable mechanisms of evil. The 2019 *Guest of Honour*, by contrast, reveals the traumatic consequence of an ordinary person's own bad choices. The complexity of Egoyan's movies is enhanced by the fact that they typically present individual, communal and national identity, as well as the impact of tragic events of the past on the present, in the context of the ethnic and cultural diversity of contemporary society. Egoyan's recent films can be seen both as a continuation and a summation of the director's oeuvre, in the sense that they seek to explore the hidden components and unknown depths of trauma and identity.

Miklós Lojkó (ELTE)

Soundscaping stage play into film reel:
Ron Grainer's *musique concrète* for *The Caretaker* (1963)

There are countless ways to adapt, reimagine, re-jig textual-visual works of art into the filmic format. Film is an (almost) endlessly malleable art form. In this presentation, it will be argued that perhaps the most imaginatively adaptive technique with which Harold Pinter's 1960 stage drama *The Caretaker* was transposed to the film screen was the subliminal use of sound rather than visual reconfiguration.

It was Robert J Flaherty, the pioneering early 20th century American filmmaker, who perspicaciously observed: 'Sounds are pictures in themselves; you can use them without the supporting visual image […] to recall things without having to show them.' Ron Grainer's soundtrack for *The Caretaker,* produced in the BBC's Radiophonic Workshop in 1962-63, can be interpreted on the multiple borderlines of diegetic and non-diegetic sound or music (as *musique concrète*) and of Foley sound and added sound effects. The (perhaps arcane)
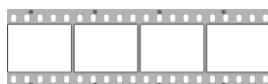
terminology will be explained during the presentation. Only one of them fits the confines of an abstract: the term *musique concrète* is derived from Groupe de Recherches de Musique Concrète, an electro-acoustic music studio founded in France in 1951 which influenced, among others, the Beatles and Pink Floyd. The technique utilizes recorded sounds (of any kind) modified with analogue audio (amplitude and frequency) manipulation.

The BBC's Radiophonic Workshop provided the tools for the Australian-born Grainer to compose and create an ambient soundscape in the synesthetic context of which this film lives. The curiously familiar yet otherworldly sounds pervade the film from the first moment to the last; blending into its silences, its objects, its people with sickly heartbeats and recurrent, dissonant, drowning outcries from a sinking ship of marginalized urban humanity. The soundtrack could be played from a speaker system during a stage show with some effect. Yet, it is the rolling dynamic of the filmic sequences where they come into their own and almost imperceptibly create a mental soundscape in the viewer.

Ivan Nyusztay (ELTE)

Stoppard's Shakespeare: triple adaptation

Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, an innovative adaptation of Shakespeare's Hamlet, is the critical reassessment of the source play's claims for meaning and truth from the perspective of the postmodern and the absurd. The titular characters' mission to "glean what afflicts" Hamlet is doomed to failure from the start not just because they lack the intellectual and cognitive competences to carry out this task, but due to the sheer existential incompatibilities and incommensurabilities that present themselves between the seekers and the sought. In this lecture I approach Shakespeare's spies as Stoppard's heroes, who embody the futile struggle to master a meaning that is far beyond them, but which, nevertheless, eventually victimizes them. They are signifiers who point to each other rather than penetrating what lies beyond their reach, and whose interchangeability and arbitrariness reveal something of the Saussurean doctrine of signification. Moreover, as such they dramatically capture the Derridean inaccessibility of an infinitely far removed signified. I see the adaptation of the Shakespearean tragedy that is to an extent also an adaptation, and further, the film adaptation of Stoppard's play as the triplication, and thus the intensification of this impasse. Stoppard's take on Shakespeare on the other hand, shows what is at stake and lost in the course of this utter confusion (shambles) to master reality and establish the situation.

Dániel Panka (ELTE)

The Vast of Night **(2019) and Auditory SF Film**

It is a truism of SF film and television scholarship that the spectacle (one might somewhat maliciously amend that as "Debordian spectacle") is part and parcel of the mode, an observation that seems commonsensical today. The recent *The Vast of Night* (2019, dir. Andrew Patterson) swims against that current and subverts the conventions of contemporary SF cinema by disposing of visuality almost completely. Besides being a homage to such classics as Orson Welles's *The War of the Worlds* (1938) and the original *Twilight Zone* (1959–1964), the film also hearkens back to some traditional principles of filmmaking in that not only colour, but even light is a device whose use has to be motivated by the intention to create meaning. The film sets up the auditory experience as the primary site for the narrative to unfold and uses the

visual dimension as a productive counterpoint, thus luring the audience into a dynamic process that goes beyond passive reception.

Éva Péteri (ELTE)
Victorian Paintings in Oliver Parker's Adaptation of Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*

In Oliver Parker's film adaptation (2002) of Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895) Cecily's fictional diary features two Victorian paintings: John Everett Millais's *The Knight Errant* (1870) and John Melhuish Strudwick's *Acrasia* (1888). In my presentation I would like to explore how these visual references contribute to the viewers' understanding of the plot and the characters, and what is suggested by their application about the director's view of the pictures themselves.

Natália Pikli (ELTE)

Shakespeare and the popular film industry: from allusion and adaptation to successful crossovers

Shakespeare's popularity on the big screen increased exponentially in the 1990s, largely thanks to Kenneth Branagh's and Baz Luhrmann's relevant films and *Shakespeare in Love* (1999), co-written by Marc Norman and Tom Stoppard, which became the highest grossing Shakespeare movie so far. In the recent two decades the popular movie industry has also rediscovered the marketing value and crowd-tickling element in Shakespeare allusions, and several box office success genres like superhero movies relied on such "Easter egg" inclusion of well-known Shakespearean quotes or motifs. This paper offers a bird's eye view of several tendencies characterizing the attitude of the popular film industry to Shakespeare in the last 30 years. Then it focuses on case studies to investigate what makes or unmakes a "Shakespeare film" at the box office and in critical opinion, and how theatre and film can work together in a meaningful way, arguing that success relies on some form of a crossover effect. The films in focus are the following: *Shakespeare in Love*, Joss Whedon's film noir inspired *Much Ado About Nothing* (2012) and Richard Eyre's film of *King Lear* (2018).

Eglantina Remport (ELTE)

Dancing for Freedom: Ken Loach's *Jimmy's Hall* **(2014)**

Ken Loach's *Jimmy's Hall* recounts the story of Irish socialist hero Jimmy Gralton, who was deported to the United States of America in 1933. Jimmy's hall was a local community centre in Co. Leitrim, where Irish men and women used to gather to further their education and experience a sense of freedom from the restrictions of the new Irish Free State under Prime Minister Éamon de Valera. Director Ken Loach fuses traditional Irish dancing with jazz dance, popular in America at the time, to make a case for dancing being an expression of freedom for many Irish people in the 1930s. Jimmy and Oonagh's cautious, yet passionate night dance in the hall is the epitome of the forbidden pleasure that dancing represents in the movie. Together, the dancing scenes create a magical, musical journey of love, passion, and politics in the Ireland of the 1930s. On this journey, Irish history is re-invented for cinematic purposes to see the narrative reach its culmination: Jimmy's deportation, Oonagh's heartbreak, and the destruction of Jimmy's community hall in Effrinagh, Co. Leitrim.
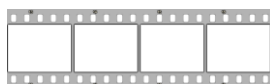
Katalin Szlukovényi (ELTE)
Doubles in *Paterson*

Paterson is a poem and a film about a man and a town, both called Paterson. The town Paterson is full of twins, or at least the viewer's attention is guided so that one notices them all over the place. Are twins really identical? Is identity defined by one's circumstances? What is the relationship between life and its representation? How can a book-length poem be adapted to film? Jim Jarmusch's adaptation is a contemporary tribute not only to William Carlos Williams, *Paterson*'s author and a prominent figure of American modernity, but to the poetry of everyday life.

Andrea Velich (ELTE)

**From biography to film adaptations: *The Krays* (Peter Medak, 1990)
and *Legend* (Brian Helgoland, 2015)**

The Kray twins were East-London mafia leaders in the 1960s who owned clubs and bars and terrorized London at the time. They hoped that their story would be turned into a movie one day to enhance their fame. They entrusted John Pearson to write their biography. While the Kray twins ended their lives in life-long imprisonment (where Ronnie Kray died in 1995 and Reginald Kray in 2000), their fame and notoriety survived them. John Pearson's biography of the Krays, *Notorious: The Immortal Legend of the Kray Twins* was finally turned into films. In my paper I will address and contrast the two film adaptations, *The Krays* (dir. Peter Medak, 1990) and *Legend* (dir. Brian Helgoland, 2015).

Teréz Vincze (ELTE)

**Long Twilight at the end of History
Long Twilight (1997) as a literary adaptation**

During the 1990s several significant literary adaptations appeared on the Hungarian movie screens. Two of the most memorable of these were *Satantango* (adapted from a Hungarian novel by Béla Tarr in 1994) and *Long Twilight* (an adaptation of Shirley Jackson's short story, *The Bus*, by director Attila Janisch in 1997). The common motif of the two award-winning films is the deep interest in the conceptualisation of time. As adaptations, they effectively contemplate the possibility of transforming the concept of time present in literature into a cinematic structure. In my presentation, I will show how this interest in the representation of time guides the adaptation in Janisch's film and try to answer why Hungarian cinema was so interested in *time* in the 1990s.

Roel Vande Winkel (KU Leuven)

What is a Germanic film? The adaptation of "local" stories by the German film industry in German-occupied countries (1942-1944).

During the Second World War, the German film industry had unprecedented access to the European film market. In many countries, which were either occupied or under German influence, American and English films were banned. In many countries this gap was filled primarily by German productions. Some of these German films were also produced in occupied territories. This paper discusses two feature films that were produced by the German
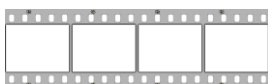
company Terra. Both films were set in the "Low Countries" and were also filmed in those regions, which were at the time occupied by Nazi Germany.

"Rembrandt" (1942), directed by Hans Steinhoff, was partially shot in the Netherlands, where the story was also set. The film was an adaptation of Valerian Tornius' novel about the life of the famous Dutch painter. "Wenn die Sonne wieder scheint" (When the Sun Shines Again, 1943) was partially shot in Flanders (Belgium), where the story also took place. The film was an adaptation of the famous novel "De Vlaschaard" (The Flax Field, 1907) by Stijn Streuvels, who had a cameo in the film. Both films were made with resources local Dutch or Flemish filmmakers had no access to.

In Belgium and in the Netherlands, the distributor (Ufa) marketed both Terra films as "Germanic" productions. Nevertheless, in those occupied territories, the films caused some controversy and initiated, among local National-Socialists, debates about the future of the Belgian or Dutch film industry in the "New Order".