

# Film & Culture

A Collection of Essays on Film, Literature, History, and Culture

MÁRTA HARGITAI & ANDREA VELICH

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The idea for the *Reel Eye* special issue of *The AnaChronisT* was prompted by a workshop and conference held at Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE) in September 2021, as part of the ELTE Film and Culture BA Specialisation Programme of the School of English and American Studies (SEAS). The programme was launched in 2015 to improve BA education with the encouragement of the late Prof. Tibor Frank, director of SEAS back then, and of Prof. Ákos Farkas, head of the Department of English Studies (DES) back then. They were both highly dedicated to starting a new Film and Culture programme, which was co-hosted by ELTE SEAS and the Department of Film Studies. With this *Reel Eye* special issue, we would also like to pay tribute to the work and support of three colleagues: the late Prof. Tibor Frank, Prof. Ákos Farkas, and Prof. Marcell Gellért (now retired), who also participated both in the creation of the *Film and Culture 2016* textbook and in the *Reel Eye Conferences*.

By now, we have trained almost 100 students in the Film and Culture programme, who continued their MA studies at different film departments after graduation, finding their feet either in academia or in the film industry. Among our first-generation students, there were young talents who, since then, have proved to be important parts of the Hungarian and international film industries, either as theoreticians, scriptwriters, or filmmakers, of which we are all very proud.

As part of this team effort in 2019, we started a conference series called the Reel Eye Film Workshop and Festival, which we then continued biannually. The second workshop was held online in September 2021, including international scholars.

It is our honour that among the keynote speakers we could host Prof. Sue Harper from the Film Department of Southampton University, UK, who is known for her very well-received books and her BAFTA award, and Prof. Teréz Vincze, associate professor of the ELTE Department of Film Studies.

Besides the regular lecturers and seminar leaders of the Film and Culture Programme, there were other ELTE SEAS colleagues to present interdisciplinary papers on film and culture in three sections (Film and Literature, Shakespeare and Film, and Film and History) at the RE21 conference that this volume collected papers from.

This volume reflects and highlights all the inter- and transdisciplinary teamwork and collaborations during the last eight years. There were numerous people participating and supporting us in organising the RE21 conference and editing this volume, including all the colleagues on *The AnaChronisT* editing board and Éva Mészáros, a PhD student at ELTE SEAS, to whom we are very grateful.

It is the editors' hope that this assortment of scholarly essays also captures the interdisciplinary spirit of the event and that it provides a deeper insight into research carried out at ELTE SEAS as part of the Film and Culture programme.

Collected in this volume are extended versions of the papers presented at the conference.

Cecilia Gall (ELTE) discusses Justin Kurzel's 2019 film, *True History of the Kelly Gang*, investigating how and why this disturbing take on Peter Carey's 2001 Booker Prize-winning book deliberately breaks with the received notions of Kelly representations, in specific, how 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) looks at chronotopes of hell in Welles's 1948 and Goold's 2010 film adaptations of *Macbeth*, focusing mainly on horizontal images and structures of evil space, suggesting that horizontal trespassing, in contrast with katabatic experiences, can happen so gradually that one almost does not notice that they have transgressed, underlining the basic theme of the drama: the gradual process of self-damnation.

Sue Harper (University of Portsmouth) explores the bumpy road from research to practice following the trajectory of an outstanding academic career taking new turns. Hitherto primarily concerned with hidden and repressed aspects of film history, such as working-class audiences and films for women, more recently she has decided to engage in some creative work of her own, which would nevertheless rise out of her academic work and be dynamically related to it. Thus, she started to write short stories, and in 2020, a book was published with Egaeus Press, *The Dark Nest*, which sold out immediately. In her present paper, she argues that researchers and creative writers are not as far away from each other as we might think, and the work of the latter can be seen as part of a continuum of thinking about gender and culture.

Dóra Janczer Csikós (ELTE) investigates the myth of the rape of Lucretia. Lucretia's inner turmoil after her violation has been the subject of countless poems, plays, paintings, and musical compositions, almost uniquely depicted from a male viewpoint. The focus of her paper, however, 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, the paper examines how Shaw departs from Britten, and whether her staging revises the interpretive tradition of Lucrece's ethical and psychological stance.

Éva Péteri (ELTE) takes a closer look at two Victorian paintings: John Everett Millais's *The Knight Errant* (1870) and John Melhuish Strudwick's *Acrasia* (1888) in the context of Oliver Parker's 2002 film adaptation of Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895), where shots of Cecily's fictional diary feature the two above mentioned pictures. In her paper, she explores 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) explores the connection between Shakespeare and the popular film industry, in specific, how and why Shakespearean allusions and adaptations can contribute to box office success. Her paper includes case studies of *Romeo+Juliet* (dir. Baz Luhrmann, 1996), *Shakespeare in Love* (dir. John Madden, 1998), Joss Whedon's film noir-inspired *Much Ado About Nothing* (2012), and Richard Eyre's film of *King Lear* (2018), arguing that success relies on some form of crossover effect.

Eglantina Rempert (ELTE) examines Ken Loach's *Jimmy's Hall* (2014), focusing on the motif of dancing, in specific the peculiar fusion of traditional Irish dancing with jazz dance, to make a case for dancing being an expression of freedom for many Irish people in the 1930s. The dancing scenes, she argues, 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) focuses on repetition in *Paterson*, and addresses issues of duality and identity. She highlights the relationship between life and its representation, how a book-length poem can be adapted to film. As the author claims, 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) discusses the differences between biography and film adaptations, showcasing two films on the Kray brothers: *The Krays* (Peter Medak, 1990) and *Legend* (Brian Helgoland, 2015). The fascinating real-life story of the Kray twins (East-London mafia leaders and bar owners in the 1960s) begged for the big screen, a wish hoped for and indeed promoted by the twins to come true. They entrusted John Pearson to write their biography, and eventually *Notorious: The Immortal Legend of the Kray Twins* was turned into films.

It is here that we wish to thank our ELTE SEAS colleague, Dr. Zsolt Bojtí, for his tireless commitment to our project from the moment of the online conference to the final stages of copy-editing. Without his hard work, dedication, and expertise, this special issue would not have been possible.

We do hope that this special issue will prove engaging and worthy of interest for film students, academics, and the general public alike.