

Abstracts

Bálega, János Miklós

When Cinema is Free:

Two Feature Films from Krzysztof Kieślowski

The countries of Central Europe or Central and Eastern Europe, however we may designate it, have had a common destiny for centuries. The region has never been surrounded by a common geographical border. Despite this, each of its inhabitants can easily identify themselves as Central Europeans, wherever they may be – from the Baltic Sea to Vojvodina. Let us take a look at the history of the 20th century: similar achievements and similar failures. Here, we can mention the two World Wars, the meaningless loss of lives, and the victims of the Holocaust. However, the most common features binding together the fate of these nations were shaped and formed during the period of Communism from 1945 to 1989. The impact of political changes can always be found in the arts, especially in films. The present essay is about a minor, but ever so important segment of Polish cinematic art. Krzysztof Kieślowski was one of the most talented film artists, who was one of the chief representatives of the *kino moralnego niepokoju*, which can be translated as the ‘cinema of moral anxiety’. Being critical towards the system and trying to highlight the realities of Communism played a huge role both in the movement and in Kieślowski’s films. The camera always has to show the truth, no matter what it is.

Bělohradský, Václav

Gaps in Postmodernism

In his short essay, Václav Belohradsky characterizes the most important features of modern globalized politics, economics, and culture. He proceeds through quotations and ideas of various authors, mainly from the last few decades. Bělohradský sees that the root of the problems of contemporary Western society is that the dichotomy in our political system is unable to find long-term solutions for all the problems the modern world has to face. He characterizes this as the world of ‘leaked information’ or world of the ‘network society’ etc. As a crucial goal that has to be achieved by political means is the emancipation of concrete labour. Bělohradský then characterizes some features of modern society as the loss of identity in the crowd or the loss of those bonds that hold the smaller units and cells of society together. In the final part of this essay, he writes about the so-called ‘post-democracy’, in which people are able and willing to act in groups for the sake of definite issues, and then, as it is solved, split up and transform back into individual beings again.

Fitzpatrick, Matthew P.

Colonialism, Postcolonialism, and Decolonization

In the past two decades, colonial studies, the postcolonial turn, the new imperial history, as well as world and global history have made serious strides toward revising key elements of German history. Instead of insisting that German modernity was a fundamentally unique, insular affair that incubated authoritarian social tendencies, scholars working in these fields have done much to reinsert Germany into the broader logic of nineteenth-century global history, in which the thalassocratic empires of Europe pursued the project of globalizing their economies, populations, and politics. During this period, settler colonies, including German South West Africa, were established and consolidated by European states at the expense of displaced, helotized, or murdered indigenous populations. Complementing these settler colonies were mercantile entrepôts and plantation colonies, which sprouted up as part of a systematic, global attempt to reorient non-European economies, work patterns, and epistemological frameworks along European lines. Although more modestly than some of its European collaborators and competitors, Germany joined Britain, France, the Netherlands, and the United States in a largely liberal project of global maritime imperialism.

Kalinin, Ilya

The Subaltern must speak!

The Soviet Cultural Revolution in a Postcolonial Perspective

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's question "can the Subaltern speak" can be raised not only in relation to women of the Third World or residents of former colonies. The same question, half a century before the emergence of post-colonial studies, was raised during the cultural revolution in Soviet Russia, only its subject was the figure of a worker saying goodbye with discursive silence. The question of the role of the intellectual in theoretical representation on behalf of workers and the practice of their political struggle, which became the main subject of the famous dialogue between Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze, in the 1920s was at the centre of the discussion between LEF and RAPP. The question of the ideological nature of forms and institutions, put forward by Louis Althusser in *Ideology and Ideological Apparatuses of the State*, pervaded the competing concepts of 'literature of fact' and 'learning from the classics', which set the main fork in the cultural revolution. The history of the formation of the Soviet subject is not only revealed in a new way in the light of the theoretical reflection of the 1970–1990s on the nature of representation, language and domination, mechanisms of subjectivation and identity politics, but also allows us to re-describe the intellectual history of this theoretical reflection itself.

Kertész Noémi

Gdańsk and its German Heritage:
A Young City with a Thousand-Year Old Past

This essay shows, through the example of Danzig/Gdańsk, how the relationship to German cultural heritage has changed in Poland after World War II, from the establishment of the socialist regime to the turn of the millennium. Gdańsk shared the fate of other German cities east of the Oder–Neisse line, where the destruction of the built environment was aggravated by the disappearance of national communities that had seen it as their heritage. The unmaking of national contexts went in parallel with the making of new Stalinist regimes. Communist propaganda attacked the German character of urban pasts and discredited its ‘bourgeois’ dimension. It was the general intention in territories newly attached to Poland to make the cityscapes Polish, but for ideological reasons, the central authorities decided to support the plan of a limited reconstruction of the former historic centre of Gdańsk in the late 1940s, which was meant to corroborate that Poles (re)occupy the former Hanseatic city as their own. Among large-scale socialist investments, the rebuilding of Gdańsk became one of the promoted success stories. The coming of age of the generation born in Gdańsk in the 1940s and 1950s brought a notable shift in relating to the city’s past, its architectural heritage, and material culture. This generation started to discover the city and its German past in opposition to Polish nationalist propaganda.

Nowak, Andrzej

Imperial Victims – Empire as Victim:
An Interpretation

What should be done with former victims, who subsequently fall prey to accusations of political abuse in presenting their case, or to academic indifference? Where to find a place for them in the new-fangled discipline of ‘imperiology’? Perhaps, we need research going further than history, that examines the anthropological sources of the phenomenon of violence in human relations, that extends to sources showing this phenomenon in myths? Let’s begin our discussion from that perspective.

Příhoda, Marek

The Concepts of Space in the Works of the Authors of the ‘Times of Trouble’

Marek Příhoda’s study analyses several texts of Russian authors from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the so-called ‘Times of Trouble’. The author’s main concept is that the works of the era had an impact on Russian political thought in the subsequent centuries. Příhoda analyses various topics in these texts, for instance, in what context the authors mention the space of their states, the inhabitants of those areas, the religious aspect of the conflict, etc. These topics all form a crucial part of these texts, and later on, they play important roles in the creating of the national identity of imperial Russia. However, Příhoda concludes is that even though the

'Times of Trouble' had an impact on the subsequent centuries, mainly on the reforms of Peter I, the conclusions of the authors of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and the politicians' of Peter I's era differed.

Riabchuk, Mykola

Ukrainians as Russia's Negative 'Other':
History Comes Full Circle

The ongoing Russo-Ukrainian war, euphemistically called the 'Ukraine crisis,' draws attention to its ideological underpinnings that include a historically informed Russian hegemonic view of Ukrainians as 'younger brothers' who should be both patronized and censured for improper behavior. The paper examines a particular aspect of this superior attitude as embedded in ethnic stereotypes in both 'vernacular', primarily in folklore, and ideologically constructed, in both cultural and political discourses. In both cases, the structure of stereotypes reflects the dominant position of one group and subjugated position of the other within a more general paradigm of relations between Robinson Crusoe and Friday. A peculiar dialectics implies that a 'good' Friday can be civilized and assimilated and become almost equal to Crusoe - 'almost the same people,' in a popular Russian parlance about Ukrainians. Yet, a 'bad' ('wrong') Friday should be strongly reviled and thoroughly demonized as a complete evil, manipulated allegedly by hostile ('Western') Robinsons. The paper argues that the Russo-Ukrainian relations cannot be normalized until Russians learn to see Ukrainians as neither 'good' nor 'bad' but just different - as all the people around.

Sauer, Walter

Habsburg Colonial:
Austria-Hungary's Role in European Overseas Expansion Reconsidered

This contribution tries to re-consider the conventional thesis of Austria (-Hungary's) non-involvement in overseas expansion. In essence, three thematic areas are discussed. First, the numerous so-called explorers and researchers whose relations to political strategies employed by the Habsburg Empire or other European powers have been quite strong. They rendered an important contribution to 'informal empire'. Secondly, we deal with Austria's foreign policy paradigm which in principle was oriented towards multilateralism. Vienna therefore was more active in the multilateral coordination of European colonial policies than in raising her unilateral profile (e. g. by colonial conquest) - at least as long as this was possible given Austria-Hungary's shrinking political weight. Thirdly, even a rough overview nevertheless brings numerous colonial projects and initiatives into focus that were implemented since the early eighteenth century both by state institutions and by civil society. Admittedly, most of them failed or were not pursued thoroughly. Austria-Hungary's temporary restraint during the 'scramble for Africa' made the empire a special case in colonial politics.

Spring, Ulrike - Schimanski, Johan

The Useless Arctic:

Exploiting Nature in the Arctic in the 1870s

What is the discursive genealogy of an ecological approach to the Arctic? Building on distinctions suggested by Francis Spufford and Gísli Pálsson, this article examines a specific juncture in the history of European-Arctic interaction – the reception of the Austro-Hungarian Arctic Expedition in 1874 – and traces the potential for ecological and relational understandings in what seems to be an orientalist and exploitative material. Examining the medial reception in Austria and in Norway, along with certain key texts in which Arctic wildlife is described, we find that the Norwegian reception of the expedition emphasizes practical issues connected with resource exploitation in the Arctic, while the Austrian reception mostly sees the Arctic as a symbolic resource with which to negotiate issues of identity and modernity. The Austrian discourse revolves around a set of paradoxical contradictions, the most central being those between materialism and idealism and emptiness and fullness; we argue it is the instability of such ambiguities which produces the possibility of a future ecological discourse.

Tarafás Imre

Civilizing Colony:

‘Civilization,’ ‘Colony’ and ‘Barbarian’ in the Discourse of Hungarian and Imperial Historical Narratives in the Age of Dualism

The article is an attempt to examine the applicability of certain results and central notions of postcolonial studies in studying the late period of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. While certain scholars argue for the utility of such practice, others warn of potential dangers. The latter group argues that using postcolonial vocabulary would mean transferring the language of certain political groups of the Habsburg Empire into the vocabulary of historiography. The article argues that the examination of the discourse on ‘civilization,’ ‘barbarism,’ and ‘colony’ overcomes this concern as it critically analyses the usage of these concepts and the political motives behind this practice. The study analyses above all Hungarian and Austro-German historical discourses with an overlook of the contemporary political discourse operating with these notions and a glance at the Czech question.

Thum, Gregor

Mythical Landscapes:

The Image of the “German East” and the Turning Points of the 20th Century

The literature on the ‘German East’ fills libraries. And yet it would be difficult to name a book that would present the history of the space so designated in a satisfactory way. One looks in vain for a representation that would capture the interweaving of German culture with the cultures of Eastern Central Europe in its outstanding

significance for both sides, and this without succumbing to the myths that the idea of the 'German East' have always shaped. The 'German East' really did exist. It was the landscape of transition from the German culture to the cultures of the neighbouring peoples in the East, a space in which the different cultures coexisted, acted against one another and flowed into one another, it was a place of bitter conflicts and immense creativity. Its reality eluded the clichés of the German cultural mission in Eastern Europe or the German 'urge to the East'. It was far more multilayer, complex, confused. It had less to do with the meeting of peoples and states than with the interplay of innumerable individuals. Its sudden end in the middle of the last century, when the German attempt at total submission and violent Germanization of Eastern Europe during World War II led to the expulsion of Germans from East Central Europe, has long cast its shadow. The extinction of the 'German East' was not fate out of the blue. But neither was it the end of an inevitable or even necessary development.

Tereshkovich, Pavel

Obedience and Independence:

The Social Roots of the Modern Belarusian Political Regime

The article examines the interplay of several peculiarities of social history that contributed to the rise of modern Belarusian dictatorship. The severe form of serfdom, which was quite close to slavery, encompassed the majority of the Belarusian population in the nineteenth century and produced the patterns of behaviour based on subordination and self-sufficiency. Comparative economic backwardness in the first half of the twentieth century and the Soviet 'kolkhoz' system preserved these models until the 1960s. The rapid industrialization and urbanization of the 1960 and the 1980s allowed transferring them into the cities, populated almost totally by the former rural dwellers. This environment provided perfect ground for the establishment of an authoritarian regime in the 1990s.