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SUMMARIES

AN IDENTITY CRISIS IN BULGARIAN ANIMATION OF THE 1990S

Nadezhda Marinchevska

The paper focuses on the identity crisis Bulgarian animators were experiencing in the 1990s. In that decade, established authors stuck to the well-trying models they themselves had developed as early as the 1960s and the 1970s. Bulgarian animated film failed to fit in the new discourse of the society and art processes were crisis-ridden: no fresh ideas, no new art forms were in place. The work of such doyens of Bulgarian animated film as Todor Dinov, Donio Donev and Stoyan Dukov among others is dealt with along with the ability of such authors as Anri Koulev to cope with the crisis by switching to successful producership. A marked change occurred as late as the end of the decade with the release of a multitude of student animations, a trend that was sustained and further gained momentum at the turn of the twenty-first century. Young people are easily addressing communicative animated forms, humour and entertainment with globalisation of images being their natural way of self-expression.

DYNAMISM OF GLOBAL AND LOCAL IN NEW BULGARIAN FEATURE FILM. FROM HEIGHTS TO ÁGA

Alexander Staykov

The paper deals with the dynamism of global and local subjects of contemporary Bulgarian film as seen in the opposition between *Heights* (by Victor Bojinov) and *Ága* (by Milko Lazarov). This interest in the subject matter has been dictated by the recent developments and processes in feature film. The terms 'local' and 'global' are defined in view of the

specific context of feature film. Outlining the thematic geography of the new film, the two pictures are treated as typical of the local and the global view respectively; the definitive differences between them are considered and the strong sides of each are brought to the fore. The two paradigms they relate to are analysed: the former steeped in the history of Bulgarian film, while the other presented by Milko Lazarov's movie alone. The trends in a possible development of the dynamism of thematic fluctuations from now on are brought forth.

THE LESSON IN THE CONTEXT OF BULGARIAN INDEPENDENT FILMMAKING OF THE EARLY TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Alexander Donev

The film *The Lesson* (2014) by Kristina Grozeva and Peter Valchanov has become synonymous with the Bulgarian independent film of the second decade of the twenty-first century. Financed almost entirely outside the state support system, it is called by the NYT 'a textbook work of neorealism'. With a series of awards, the international festival community identifies the film as a model for contemporary Bulgarian cinema with its low budget and implicit but very clear social statements, both nationally authentic and universally representative of the zeitgeist amidst the economic crisis that started in 2008. Aesthetically, *The Lesson* very clearly outlines the differences between an arthouse movie typical of the Bulgarian film tradition and the stylistics of socially committed contemporary independent film. Grozeva and Valchanov's film is the next step towards a practice represented by two other self-financed and

internationally successful productions of the previous decade: *Mila from Mars* and *Eastern Plays*. The next wave of Bulgarian independent film consists of mostly mainstream works seeking to take advantage of audiences' interest in popular genres and stories adapted to the everyday life. *The Lesson* is an example of another type of independent filmmaking: of social criticism and empathy combined with genuine realism and artistic minimalism.

THE TAMING OF THE SHREW OR THE REPRESENTATION OF FEMALE CHARACTERS IN CONTEMPORARY BULGARIAN CINEMA

Elitza Gotzeva

The article displays an overview to the perception of woman in the Bulgarian cinema. Taking as example the famous Shakespearean comedy "The Taming of the Shrew", the author analyzes the multidimensional representation of woman in art, its meaning and its reflection in the changing perceptions of the contemporary society. Comparing the different interpretations of the Shrew for stage and screen, and several of the best examples of the Bulgarian Totalitarian cinema from the 60s, the author aims to trace how a true female character reveals itself – through visual representation, way of acting, dialogue, subtext and other – evolves and becomes a cult with a strong social influence.

In the history of Bulgarian cinema, the 60s are the period where the Bulgarian woman can finally express her own personality against the popular opinion and the power of men in a more or less patriarchal society. The "true dissident" of the communist system is the Bulgarian heroine from the movies of the 60s and 70s which movies played sometimes the

high price of being forbidden to the public.

On the contrary, their Post-totalitarian counterparts are mere examples of the marginal stereotypes with flat characterizations, deprived of inner contradictions and arcs of development. The fearless outsiders have been replaced with heroines-marginal. The rebellious women showed in Bulgarian totalitarian cinema, fighting for their right to raise their voices and stand for their feelings, are now opposed to the silent pseudo-rebel heroine of the democracy. To be easier, the recent Bulgarian cinema from 2018 takes even their ability to speak – the Bulgarian heroine is now mute and expressionless.

BULGARIAN EXPERIMENTAL SHORTS

Petia Alexandrova

The term 'experimental film' assumes aspects of the terms 'independent', 'alternative' or 'avant-garde' film and their boundaries are more often than not blurred. Still, while the independence of a film is all about production and distribution, the differences between the mainstream and experimental film are primarily aesthetic. Such works are often short, lacking a clearly articulated linear narrative; the standard and conventional structures are used untraditionally. These are usually a mix of genres and styles, used both as self-identification and a label, concurring in designating the non-commercial.

How about experimental film in its Bulgarian version? Historically, it all began officially in 1974, when the Experimental Film Studio was set up. In the twenty-first century, variants of experiments are discernible in most of the movies, where the author's opinions and style are profoundly personally stated, which for some reason are not concurrent with the more general trends. At times, it is about they unconventional subgenre (documentary? feature? mystification?), and sometimes, about their non-standard

running time. In short film, experiments assume primarily the form of hybridism, a mix of animation, feature, documentary or visual and art approaches. More numerous are the works, where experiments imply onscreen rendition of the authorial ideas of Surrealism or somnambulistic visions or playful notions. Yet, an experiment suggests an extreme gesture, a radical overturn of a subject matter or a form, and such daring or recklessness is a rare occurrence in Bulgarian film.

OUTCASTS IN FILMS OR MARGINAL FILMS?

Yancho Mihailov

In the recent decade, a trend is discernible in Bulgaria the subjects and plots of the new Bulgarian pictures to deal with personages that in one way or other, are social misfits, dropouts or outcasts. This can, on the one hand, be interpreted as a new stage in search of the identity of the Bulgarian film itself, and on the other hand, it seems to be a result of certain expectations for the East-European and post-totalitarian film in general. This approach seems to show every mark of yielding good results in the form of festival awards, but does not, unfortunately, take into consideration the Bulgarian audiences' interest in such films. Regardless of the objective prerequisites for low attendances at such movies relating to the insufficient number of cinemas in this country and the domination of Hollywood film industry over Bulgarian distribution, there are still factors to be identified in these very movies. The paper deals with titles in the filmography of directors Kamen Kaley, Konstantin Bojanov, Kristina Nikolova, Kristina Grozeva and Peter Valchanov, Dimitar Dimitrov, Grigor Lefterov and Todor Matsanov, Ralitz Petrova and Stefan Komandarev, analysing the main subject matters underlying their works, the central characters and the artistic devices used.

CONTEMPORARY BULGARIAN FANTASTIC AND ADVENTURE STORIES FOR CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

Radostina Neykova

Children and teenagers are now looking for what is supernatural, exaggerated and unbelievable. But these can be found not in historical, narrative or even structurally implausible meetings with sought out and favoured personages alone. It is these unexpected and often impossible meetings of characters from different works, media and styles that have to be subject to a certain and conceptual directorial idea. A hyper-visual and three-dimensional realistic visual solution does not necessarily build the missing aesthetic parameters of a narrative.

The article deals with both the fantastic and the so-called adventure children and teenagers' films with a ring of nostalgia to it where the Bulgarian film of the previous century is concerned. At the time, science fiction and fantasy genre and all the sub-genres seemed to be deficient, still children's movies abounded in adventures. The term '*adventure film*' is now really obsolete. Children are now aware of the fact that a movie always offers adventures or, to put it more up-to-date, action. Children like any consumer of films, wouldn't go to the pictures, if not offered constant battles, chasing, certain forces getting the upper hand over other forces, contests for victory, rewards, love or life...

This paper focuses on several children's contemporary Bulgarian post-totalitarian films with a sci-fi and adventure action angle on them.

WANDERERS WITH MOVIE CAMERA: THE MYSTERIOUS LYUBA AND NICOLA KUTINCHEVS

Andronika Mårtonova

The study delves deep into Lyuba Kutincheva-Dagorova's personal archive, kept at the Sofia State Archive (SSA). Central to the study is the

information of Lyuba Kutincheva, who visited Asia in the 1920s/1930s, having film reels.

For the purpose, many pieces of information have been found and compared to fill the lacunae in the traveller's life. Pages of her albums have been deciphered, with photographs and dedications by esteemed persons, whom Lyuba Kutincheva met. The study focuses on Japan as the most substantial element of the documentary collection. Lyuba Kutincheva, in her capacity as the author of the book, *Japan: Personal Impressions, Observations and Examinations* has given a number of talks of the Land of the Rising Sun across Bulgaria, interpreting artistically and knowledgeably the specifics of Japanese history, culture, ethnography and explosive growth during the *Shōwa* period, which commenced in 1929 with the enthronement of Emperor Hirohito. Her public lectures have been widely covered by various publications found not only at the archives. These are of particu-

lar importance to the articulation of Asia's image in Bulgaria of the early twentieth century.

This study is the first to give currency to Nicola Kutinchev, related to Lyuba Kutincheva, who would also shoot and show cultural films in Bulgaria and abroad. The figure of a traveller/cineaste is undoubtedly a novelty for the history of Bulgarian film and Bulgarian film studies.

AN EPISODE OF BULGARIAN NEWSREEL THE BALKAN WAR HAS BEEN SHOT BY BRITISH FILM CORRESPONDENT GEORGE ERCOLE

Peter Kardjilov

The abounding in unsolved mysteries film *The Balkan War* (1912–1913) by Alexander Ivanov Zhekov (1879–?) has for a century or so now challenged Bulgarian film historians. The greatest of these mysteries relates to the opening episode of the

newsreel, described in the preceding intertitle: *Hamidiye damaged by Drazki torpedo boat leaves the battlefield for good*'. The visual content of this second shot has been believed for decades now to fully correspond to the intertitle quoted above. After studying the site of British Pathé though, the boat proved to be *Medidiye*, rather than its twin light cruiser *Hamidiye*. Still, the enigma lingered as to when and who has filmed the armoured cruiser? It was Russian researcher at Gosfilmofond, the film archive of the Russian Federation, Denis Fedorin who helped to unravel this mystery. The episode proved to be shot in 1915 by George Ercole, a film correspondent for Pathé. This poses yet another mystery: how come this footage made for the French film company in the Gulf of Odessa was incorporated in the Bulgarian film? For *The Balkan War* is a Bulgarian work, part of the history of Bulgarian film, no matter how sensational is the piece of information disclosed in this article.

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