Hollywood Ascendant: American Films in Hungary in the 1970s

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American films dominated Western cinemas after 1945. Even great film-producing countries were unable to stop Hollywood's takeover,[1] while the example of the "coca-colonization" of Austrian cinemas suggests what could have happened if the Hungarian film industry had existed outside the Warsaw Pact.[2] Cultural contacts and transfers between East and West were a key part of the ideological struggle during the Cold War after Krushchev's thaw as well. Controlling American cultural subversion was a major concern of Hungarian cultural policy and state security.[3]

As the de-Stalinization process unfolded, the composition of cinema programs almost immediately changed. The unwritten proportion of Soviet/communist/non-communist films of the late 1950s was still valid in the 1970s, but the growing number of films released in Hungary demanded more and more films from the ideologically antagonistic part of the world. Although American films were again accepted from 1957 in spite of the freezing Hungarian–American relations after the 1956 Revolution, in the 1950s and 1960s most movies came from the "tame West": France and Italy. The 1970s was the decade of change. American films climbed to first place among Western countries and to second place after the Soviet Union. Due to the improved state of American–Hungarian relations and the wave of progressive Hollywood films and entertaining movies in the 1970s alone as many as 200 American films crossed the Iron Curtain. Film excitement was associated with Hollywood in socialist Hungary of the 1970s. Hollywood's supply was abundant enough to find a dozen or so "ideologically correct" movies per year that could be labeled as the voice of "the other America." Films imported from Hollywood were, however, not restricted to these progressive or critical films. Hungarian film admission policy bowed to the public demand for highly acclaimed films, light entertainment, and cult movies, for which it established a secondary distribution channel in the late 1950s.

In light entertainment, ideological filters were partly and sometimes selectively switched off, causing internal debates along the socialist/non-socialist division line, while the conflict between highbrow and lowbrow cultures also played a part. Cultural policy was permissive with the entertainment industry in the 1970s, and policy-makers believed (or wished to believe) that in a socialist environment such exposure would not exert

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negative effects. It would not, for instance, distract people from public affairs (or building socialism), nor would it promote violence or cherish the American myth. Financial considerations also mattered; Hollywood blockbusters helped bolster the budgets of the cinema companies and allowed for cross-financing as well.

What made this influx of movies from the citadel of capitalist film production possible in a communist bloc country? How did Marxist critics perceive films from Hollywood? Answers lie at least in part in the previously neglected information about Hungarian film importing in general and the archival documents of cultural policy and the minutes of the Hungarian Film Admission committee in particular. Examining the operation of state controlled film admissions, this study also deals with such questions as: which American films qualified as most appropriate for Hungarian release and why? How and why was Hollywood popular culture accepted? What ideological debates did those movies imply, and to what extent did ideological control explain refusals and delays in film admission?

Hungarian audiences were denied American movies for a relatively short period of time after World War II. The emerging single-party dictatorship refused films offered by the Hollywood export company MOPEX, which after 1945 had successfully reestablished the pre-World War II dominance of American movies.[4] In 1949 the last remaining American films disappeared from cinemas,[5] and the yearly absence of some fifty Hollywood films and dozens of French, British, and other motion pictures resulted in a noticeable shortage of movies. "Hollywood" became a curse word in the Soviet bloc, the synonym of imperialist propaganda spreading cold war hysteria.[6] Therefore, the return of Hollywood could not be achieved quickly and smoothly, despite the fact that the Khrushchev thaw was soon felt in Hungarian cinema programs. As soon as in 1954, twenty-nine of the ninety-one films released were made in capitalist countries, most of them in Italy and France. Movies from the West made up a third of film premiers from the mid-1950s. But Hungarian spectators had to wait for an American picture until the summer of 1956: *Little Fugitive* was an off-Hollywood movie of the free cinema movement. Another American film on the socialist "wish-list," *The Salt of the Earth* (winner of the Karlovy Vary Film Festival in 1954), was eventually not purchased due to its high asking price.[7] Two other movies, *Marty* (1955) and *Blackboard Jungle* (1955), were also suggested by the Hungarian embassy in 1955 as realistic depictions of American life.[8] Just before the outbreak of the revolution in 1956 the deal seemed final: Eric Johnson, head of Hollywood export, left Hungary two weeks before October

23 with only the details of the purchase needing to be sorted out.[9] The agreement was not forgotten in spite of the crushing of the revolution and the freezing of Hungarian–American relations.[10] In 1957, when Hungarian cinemas kept projecting Western European films while Soviet films were temporarily withdrawn due to concern about the sensibility of the Hungarian public,[11] negotiations continued and the deal was completed by the summer. Hollywood returned with a fresh spectacular circus revue, *Trapeze* (1956), in December 1957. From 1958 on, American films were a regular feature of the program of Hungarian cinemas. Initially, about five to nine films were introduced per year, but in the second half of the 1960s ten to thirteen Hollywood movies were released annually.

American films passed through the gates of censorship just as any other foreign movie had to. The Committee for Film Admission (CFA)[12] worked under the coordination of the Film Directorate of the Ministry of Culture.[13] CFA had the duty of overviewing the international film supply and deciding whether a film could be released in Hungary, applying both ideological and artistic criteria in its judgments. CFA had official members, including representatives of the ministry, the executor of the film import decisions, Hungarofilm, and the internal distributor MOKÉP, as well as delegates from social organizations. Professionals (filmmakers and film critics) were also present on the committee. If the CFA failed to reach consensus, the final decision was made at the Film Directorate. Some films were evaluated by smaller delegations of the CFA, for example, on foreign trips, at organized screenings, and at film festivals.

There were no obligatory quotas on importing films. The Film Directorate, however, held the existing distribution of socialist and non-socialist films appropriate and exemplary. This meant that 30-35 percent of films shown in Hungary were from capitalist counties. In any case, the stable ratio included a growing number of Western films, because the number of yearly film premiers kept growing. In the first part of the 1960s it remained under 150, but a decade later it reached 170 and increased dynamically in the second part of the 1970s: in 1979 and in 1980 the number of new films screened exceeded 200. These numbers caused a chronic dilemma: the larger part of the film supply arrived from communist countries and had to be selected from a narrow base that demanded concessions in quality. On the other hand, the assortment of the 50-60 Western films was selected from a much larger offering that allowed for the easy application of ideological and artistic filters.[14] Thus the average Western film was better than the average film from within the Soviet bloc.

Potentially problematic films were shown in a separate distribution channel. The Film Museum was opened in 1957 and (based on bilateral cultural agreements) offered centrally organized film days and weeks as well, where for one or two screenings films otherwise unavailable could be seen.[15] Such films were, for example, Michelangelo Antonioni's *Zabriskie Point* (1971) and John Schlesinger's *Midnight Cowboy* (1975).

Improvements in Hungarian–American relations went hand in hand with a growing Hollywood presence in Hungarian cinemas in the 1970s. With the resolution of the Mindszenty case, economic cooperation, and the return of St. Stephen's Crown in 1978, bilateral relations were as normal as they could possibly be.[16] This notwithstanding, the containment of the ideological influence of the United States as the prime capitalist (and imperialist) country remained continuously on the agenda.

In 1972 the Film Directorate declared, "capitalist films that make it possible for [Hungarian] people to get acquainted with the contradictions, problems, and social developments of the capitalist system with political and artistic credibility should be prioritized." In addition, the Directorate also emphasized the importance of introducing the outstanding filmmakers and significant artistic movements of the world and added that light entertainment was also tolerable in order to make film supply more digestible.[17]

While basic principles remained untouched, the proportion of film import significantly changed in the 1970s. The ratio of Western films did not rise, but the composition of films by country became modified. The main beneficiary was Hollywood. According to the data of the Hungarian Statistical Office and the Film Directorate (fig. 1), more than ten percent of the films released in Hungary between 1971 and 1980 were American. This meant that on average nineteen new American movies were shown in Hungarian cinemas every year during that period. The numbers soared by the end of the decade: in 1979 twenty-three, in 1980 twenty-nine Hollywood films premiered in Hungary. Two important factors contributed to this significant growth. On the one hand, the signing of the Hungarian–American agreement on cultural, educational, and scientific cooperation and the return of the Holy Crown indicated a new level of bilateral relations. On the other hand, the new strategy accepted in foreign trade relations in the late 1970s,[18] and thus the growing pressure on the cultural budget, partly allowed for, partly demanded larger importing of financially rewarding cultural products.

	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980
Hungarian	20	23	22	23	19	18	24	27	28	26
Soviet	32	31	36	37	38	34	40	37	41	42
Czechoslovak	12	13	12	14	12	17	11	12	11	15
Polish	11	8	10	7	12	9	10	8	11	9
East German	9	8	12	10	7	8	8	7	7	8
Romanian	6	7	7	5	7	6	10	7	7	7
Bulgarian	n.a.	6	7	6	6	1	6	5	9	5
Yugoslav	8	6	4	6	6	7	2	5	3	7
American	**20**	**20**	**18**	**19**	**13**	**17**	**16**	**17**	**23**	**29**
French	18	12	7	10	16	11	15	18	15	20
Italian	8	11	11	13	12	16	9	15	17	14
British	9	11	14	7	6	8	7	4	10	3
Other	12	8	11	11	17	26	27	26	28	35
Altogether	**165**	**164**	**171**	**168**	**171**	**178**	**185**	**188**	**210**	**220**

Figure 1: Films released in Hungary by country of origin (1971–80). Source: KSH (Hungarian Central Statistical Office)

Thus Hollywood (with 192 films between 1971 and 1980) became the second largest film exporter to Hungary after the Soviet Union. Hollywood outstripped Hungary's traditional Western partners including France (142 films in ten years) and Italy (126), and also the most important socialist exporters, Czechoslovakia (129), Poland (95), and the German Democratic Republic (84).

"Good" American movies: The voice of "the other America"

Hungarian cultural policy preferred American films that drew a dark picture of American society, focusing on its failures. Some of these could be read as (self-)criticism of the capitalist system—rarely deemed sufficient. Critics and censors often dismissed these movies for being too soft and misleading, selectively targeting issues such as social tensions, racial inequality, and the negative consequences of the Vietnam War. In the 1970s Sidney Pollack's *They Shoot Horses, Don't They?* and Martin Ritt's *Norma Rae* were the best received American films in Hungary.[19] Marxist critics emphasized the uncompromising depiction of capitalism in Pollack's movie: the artistic representation of the dance marathon was praised as the exposure of the inhumanity and manipulative nature of "liberal free competition."[20] It was so highly esteemed that it guaranteed entry for Pollack's other films (*The Way We Were*, *Three Days of the Condor*, *Bobby Deerfield*, *The Scalphunters*), which

received less favorable reviews at CFA. In contrast with what Marxist critics considered "typical" American movies, *Norma Rae* was a classic trade union story featuring a lonely hero fighting injustice against greater powers at a Southern textile factory. *Népszava* emphasized the credible representation of the specific problems of the American workers' movement: "Our viewers may find it strange that the portrayal of the workers' struggle is heavy-going at some points. But whoever comes out of the cinema will appreciate the power of solidarity. He will reach this insight with a more simple mediation and most of all sooner than if he had read hundreds of brochures and heard hundreds of boring speeches."[21] The third most acclaimed American film of the decade was Stanley Kramer's *Bless the Beasts and Children* (released in Hungary in 1973), which could be read as the epitome of capitalist society where raw power prevails in a ruthless race. The film was highly appreciated for its humanist stance and its indictment of the world of selfish achievers and oppression. The tacit messages conveyed by artistic devices seemed all too familiar in countries where political censorship existed.[22]

Hungarian distributors looked for movies that criticized American society in some way. In the 1970s these included films that displayed revolt, exposed racial prejudice, inequality or despondency, or criticized the Vietnam War and pointed to its social consequences. The number of films released did not exceed six or seven in any of these categories. Revolt against and anger with the prevailing order featured primarily in the "1968 films." These films arrived in Hungary only in the early 1970s, after the great wave of student revolts on university campuses and the rise of counterculture: *The Strawberry Statement* in 1971, *Zabriskie Point* and *Easy Rider* in 1972, and *Vanishing Point* in 1973. *The Strawberry Statement* focused on student demonstrations at Columbia University in New York, but Hungarian critics assessed it only as a spectacle, "a buoyant operetta performance" that "promises to offer the real thing in revue-style, attractive scenes,"[23] documenting police brutality without exposing the roots of the problem.[24] Antonioni's *Zabriskie Point*, on the other hand, was described as a contemplative piece that expressed dissent from the establishment and called for revolutionary change.[25]

Marxist critics could not accept separation from society as an individual choice. They only accepted the need for freedom as a rejection of American society and as long as it did not offer surrogates, such as drugs.[26] Thus, *Vanishing Point* was seen by Hungarian critics as "a basically poor story [that] was masked in and colored with elements of successful social critical American movies. But those elements remained narrative-artistic panels, vacant signposts."[27] Indeed, most Hungarian spectators attended the cinemas

to watch these films for the fascinating car-chases. As letters to the editors of *Autó-Motor* demonstrate, movie-goers were most interested in the make of the car on the rampage in the film.[28] They were much less concerned about any American social crisis.

The limits of social criticism in Western films were a major concern in all socialist countries. Critical American films were hailed as the voice of "the other America," as powerful statements by leftist, progressive filmmakers. Still, these movies were seen as flawed for being unable to break out of the framework of their "bourgeois world." As Marxist critics argued, these film-makers did not wish or did not dare to offer more in-depth criticism of the American system since they wished to meet the financial demands of the film industry. This was typical of the "bad mood" films as well (including *The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds*, *The Last Picture Show*, *Scarecrow*, *Midnight Cowboy*, *Taking Off*, *A Dream of Kings*, and *Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore*), whose characteristic environment was the American small town with people seeking their place on earth in vain. Hungarian critics perceived such films only as symptoms and asserted that the American dream was being buried even by "Hollywood realists," so the era of the "dream factory" was over.[29] The sharpest representation of conflicts stemming from the struggle against a neglectful, alienating American environment appeared in *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest*.

Films exposing racial issues also enjoyed priority in Hungarian cinemas. *In the Heat of the Night*, the story of a black detective from the North who gets involved in an investigation in the South, points to sustained prejudice and discrimination against people of color. *Change of Mind*, a sci-fi movie, features a white public prosecutor whose brain is transplanted into a black man's body: thus he must live as a black man and experience racial prejudice. *Hurry Sundown* is a story of two farmers, one black and one white, who unite to prevent a bigoted white plantation owner from acquiring their farmland. *Conrack* also addresses the problem of racial inequality and prejudice as it dramatizes the struggles and dismissal of a white teacher who is trying to create an empowering educational environment for children mostly from poor black families. The critic of *Népszabadság* singled out the individualistic approach of the film: "Why does he think that he alone as a lonely cowboy can cut off each and every head of the seven-headed hydra of racial prejudice?" Thus, from the Marxist point of view *Conrack* was just another "liberal film" from America that specified social problems that everybody was aware of anyway but failed to explore their roots in the social

system. Thus, it only upheld the illusion of freedom of speech by scratching the surface.[30]

Vietnam films necessarily conveyed a more direct message. Among them, for example, *MASH* and *Catch 22* were dismissed for their general antimilitaristic attitudes.[31] By emphasizing the absurdity of all wars, including World War II (remembered as the Great Patriotic War in the Soviet Union and as the sacred antifascist alliance in communist remembrance), these films failed to draw a line between good and bad wars.[32] *Coming Home*, on the other hand, weaved its antimilitaristic message into a classic love triangle. Milos Forman's *Hair* (1979) also belonged to this group, and its short transit time suggests that Hungarian film policy regarded it as an adequate depiction of protest against the Vietnam War.[33] The movie also paved the way for the original rock musical, which could not be performed in the early 1970s because of its 1968 character.[34] *The Trial of the Catonsville Nine* was based on a real story of nine religious people who were tried for dodging the draft. Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now* (also from 1979) was well received in Hungary. It was deemed to have adequately expressed the horrors of the Vietnam War with exaggerated visual and sound effects but was criticized for not offering a more in-depth psychological evaluation of its main characters.[35]

By the end of the decade censors cleared some critical films targeting the dark practices of Western politics and capitalist media. *The Day of the Locust* depicted the seamy side of Hollywood glitter, while *Network* was a denunciation of television news factories. *Capricorn One* unmasked the operation of the propaganda industry, where business and political interests demanded the "selling" of a failed mission as a success story to the public. Some other films in this category were based on political power games and practices, most notably, *The Conversation* (1974), in which a wire-tapping professional addressing his personal dilemmas over his job was seen as a clear allusion to the Watergate scandal. It exposed the invasion of the private sphere and depicted alienation and the dangers of modern technology as typically American symptoms.[36] *Front* and *The Way We Were*, two lesser known movies, took a jovial look back at the McCarthy Era.

Mainstream American films: Entertainment with excitement, tears, and laughter

Due to the de-Stalinization of the cultural and private sphere, entertainment became a recognized necessity in communist countries. In Hungary the partial relief of privacy from ideological control went hand in hand with conscious depoliticization after the revolution of 1956. Domestic

production could not satisfy the growing public demand, so importing movies from the West became inevitable after the mid-1950s. Film admission policy preserved qualitative requirements; still, the decisions were heavily contested. This turned out to be one of the battlegrounds between promoters of mass culture and high culture.

Of the thirty-eight Hollywood movies, including crime stories, comedies, melodramas, as well as musicals, twenty-five were released in the second half of the decade, which indicates a certain degree of mitigation of the ideological rigor. *The Organization*, *Fuzz*, *Serpico*, *The Drowning Pool*, *Convoy*, and *Three Days of the Condor* reflected on police corruption. *Serpico* was best received as it portrayed the all-penetrating depravity of, and corruption among, the highest ranks of the police and politicians. László Zöldi of *Népszabadság* interpreted the film as a "biting rebuttal of capitalism even if in a liberal, concessive way."[37] The perception of the audience, however, often proved to be different. *Three Days of the Condor* was understood as an exciting action movie by most spectators, while critics focused on the unscrupulousness of the CIA.

The success of American thrillers (*Bird of Prey*, *Juggernaut*) was guaranteed by the fact that they were more exciting and spectacular than their slower-paced European counterparts from either side of the Iron Curtain. In any comparison with socialist crime stories (like the Soviet *The Mission of the Inspector*) *Népszabadság* could only praise the latter as: "it sincerely faces the operation of a shortage economy in the textile industry."[38]

Marxist critics emphasized that a minimum level of social content had become part of the recipe for success in American films of the 1970s. And yet, social criticism was considered to be a trick only, inspired by business interests. They pointed to meaningless brutality, nudity, or inappropriate sexual content, for example, the appearance of naked lesbians in the 1973 version of *The Long Goodbye*.[39]

Népszabadság criticized the same half-hearted critical tendency in the romantic movie *A Night of Full Rain*, claiming that its soft criticism of capitalism was but a social psychological trick that helped dress up a trivial story as something specific: "That's the way we get 'social drama' out of a saloon comedy, a communist journalist out of a clueless man with an honorable bourgeois profession, and a progressive housewife out of an extravagant American woman."[40] Few melodramas passed the CFA annually, which suggests that the selection criteria were stricter for this genre than in the case of thrillers. Film journalists repeatedly argued that one of the main tendencies of global cinema was a wave of sentimentalism, but Hungarian

decision makers tried to resist it. Although Hungarian cinema-goers could watch *Summer of '42*, *Jeremy*, *Griffin and Phoenix*, *Julia*, and *Bobby Deerfield*, the seminal film of the genre, *Love Story* (1970), initially failed to pass CFA and reached Hungarian audiences only in 1986.

The struggle against "petit bourgeois kitsch" was more enduring in the 1970s than the fight against violent action films. Marxist cultural theory regarded kitsch not as an aesthetic but as a social phenomenon. István Hermann, a leading ideologist of his time, argued that kitsch highlights bits and pieces of truth, but its questions are always deceitful. It contains some criticism but carefully avoids the substantive questions; instead, it settles for addressing peripheral symptoms. Thus kitsch was deemed reactionary, because it helped to conserve the given relations and balked against revolutionary change.[41] The danger of melodramas was also justified by the fact that sentimental kitsch had strong roots in Hungary. Operettas were on the program of theatres even in the Rákosi Era, while Hollywood action movies had no domestic equivalents. Hungarian remakes could never match their intensity, nor their special effects. More importantly, decision makers did not consider thrillers to be potentially harmful: "Those prototypes, the real equivalents of those ideals, do not exist for us. Neither Colombo nor Kojak, not even Derrick can be inserted into them. Therefore, [American thrillers] cannot have significant destructive ideological effects. Still they satisfy a general public demand."[42]

Official assessment of popular culture varied from bad by definition to possibly good. Cultural policy admitted the human need for recreation and relaxation, but could not supply it with Hungarian (or other socialist) products. This resulted in the import of British, French and Italian films even in the early years of de-Stalinization. By the 1970s these movies dominated cinemas. A survey for the Film Directorate in 1973 analyzed the film supply of two weeks in Budapest cinemas. Of the 426 films screened more than half were "commercial" ones. Among them seventy-one were categorized as adventure (action) films, sixty-seven as comedies, forty-two as crime stories, and twenty-one as musicals.[43]

Cultural policy cherished the ideal of a popular culture that develops and improves existing public demand and not simply serves it. Dezső Tóth, Deputy Minister of Culture, emphasized that the main difference between socialist culture and market-based capitalist mass culture was that the former aimed to uplift people, while the latter strove to prevent people from becoming politically self-conscious. Tóth also argued that the Western entertainment industry "takes back from the working classes the free time

gained due to technological progress and uses it for its own financial and ideological benefit by impeding the transformation of pastime into meaningful and productive time."[44] Western entertainment films were tolerated in Hungary as exceptions to the general rule to the effect that for 90 to 120 minutes "the cultural revolution was temporarily suspended."[45]

The New Economic Mechanism (introduced in 1968) strengthened already existing tendencies in the field of culture although it was rather intended to save culture from commercialization.[46] The drive to make more profit, or at least to avoid losses, became more apparent. This, in turn, increased the importance of cross-financing: art that served cultural and political goals offered for lower prices was compensated for by art and performances that attracted a larger audience.[47] Category C was introduced in 1968 and the largest number of films imported from the West fell into this (tolerated) category. Some of these films were also selected for distribution at a higher price. As was argued in the circular of the Film Directorate, "They are not subverting our program policy, so we tolerate them in order to diversify the cinema program and satisfy the significant, spontaneous public demand."[48] Thus by the 1970s the expected revenue was a calculated factor in the decisions of the CFA, and, as a result, westerns, crime and action movies, as well as comedies could be screened.

Comedies were in short supply in socialist cinemas, so securing the optimal quantity of such films was a chronic dilemma. The most highly regarded items were the Italian social, satirical comedies. But in the 1970s the number of Hollywood comedies also increased. Some forty-five American comedies, including a nine-episode Chaplin-series and three slapsticks, were screened in Hungarian cinemas, which means four to five films a year. Neil Simon was a major hit in Hungarian theatres, and his films were accepted one after the other.[49] Hungarofilm willingly bought the film versions of other stage blockbusters (*Follow me!*, *Cactus Flower*) as well. Woody Allen was also introduced to the Hungarian public in this decade. *Take the Money and Run* was released as early as 1971, *Play it Again, Sam* arrived in 1974 and *Annie Hall* in 1980. Critics believed that most of the audience would miss Allen's biting social commentary and would see his films as comedies filled with obsolete jokes.[50] Film authorities tried to keep the number of explicitly fumbling comedies to a minimum; yet, some gag parades still reached Hungary. One of them was *The Love Bug*, which was first rejected by the CFA stating they would not take it even if Volkswagen had paid in hard currency for its screening.[51]

Musical films were the fourth popular Hollywood genre. In this decade these were either film adaptations of stage musicals or concert movies. In the first half of the decade a series of Broadway successes were screened: *Darling Lili* and *Oliver* in 1971, *Hello Dolly!* and *Funny Girl* in 1972, *West Side Story* in 1973 (with twelve years of delay), and Bob Fosse's *Cabaret* in 1974. The musical as a genre first appeared in Hungarian theatres at the beginning of the 1960s. Cultural policy accepted the demand for the light musical genres but the introduction of musicals showed an effort to both overcome the kitschy world of operettas and avoid the return to the Stalinist operettas of the 1950s. The "new" Western genre enticed Hungarian cultural policy by transcending kitschy content.[52] But it could only work with the best pieces and not the mediocre ones.

West Side Story, *Cabaret*, and *Hair* were interpreted as progressive and realistic film musicals. The ghetto scenes of *West Side Story* were praised for accurately depicting the "true face" of the United States: "There [in America] anything is possible but not everything comes true. Yet what surely comes true is fear and hatred and the escalation of violence into stupid, meaningless death. This is what America is all about."[53] *Cabaret* could expect positive reception due to its antifascist content, just like the anti-Vietnam War protest film, *Hair*. In this category *Fiddler on the Roof* also passed the CFA in 1973: it was evaluated as a bitter-sweet picture, entertaining and elevating at the same time. However, due to unsuccessful price negotiations, it was only released in Hungary in 1986.[54] "Spectacular but insignificant, ear catching but mind crippling"[55] sentimental operetta stories, such as the dumpish career story of *Funny Girl* or *Darling Lili*, also featured in movie theaters. The press dismissed Gene Kelly's classical musical film series titled *Hollywood, Hollywood* similarly as an antiquated and tastelessly nostalgic selection.[56]

Beat and rock were considered the genre of the young generations, and screening such films in the 1970s met their demands. When the Beatles movie *Yellow Submarine* was discussed at the CFA, the representative of the Hungarian Communist Youth Organization (CYO) argued that youngsters deserve to see it, even if the above-30 population would not show much interest in it.[57] While in the 1960s and early 1970s British films offered some rock experience for the Hungarian public, later in the 1970s American movies (*The Concert for Bangladesh*, *Let the Good Times Roll*, and *The Last Waltz*) dominated this segment.[58] *The Song Remains the Same*, filmed at the 1973 New York City concert of Led Zeppelin, was described by the Hungarian critics thus:

> The auditorium is a fantastic landscape that sometimes stiffens into motionless trance (and this time some frames are indeed ironic), and at other times hysteric tidal waves bubble through the crowds of lava, the rows are seething as if all of this would have happened before or after human history. Sweat is pouring down from the half-naked body of the singer; the guitarist is jumping as if the volcano was burning his feet. He takes out a bow from nowhere, and sticks it into his guitar as if he were a musical clown tickling the audience in a circus; the worn bow turns into a stick, but there is neither tragedy nor humor in the scene.[59]

The evaluation of rock music, however, had changed by the 1970s: it became something more than a grudgingly tolerated form of art. More and more observers accepted it as an expressive language that linked the youth all around the world. The comments on *The Concert for Bangladesh* praised rock music as a progressive genre: "At this stage pop and rock is not merely an excuse for the youngsters to be together in large numbers, not merely instinctive self-realization, daydreaming about a different life, but a unique artistic creation, merging folk and jazz, that directly expresses the way of thinking of those longing for a better world."[60]

The popularity of American films in the 1970s

A number of Hollywood blockbusters were purchased for Hungarian distribution to generate revenue. The Committee of Film Admission served not simply as a board of censors, but also evaluated entertaining movies against a set of criteria designed for commercial films. Post-screening discussion addressed issues such as artistic quality and the potential domestic success of these films. The most popular Hollywood movies were the ones that offered classic cinematic experience, most of all spectacle, tension, and action.

Westerns remained quite popular after their official return to the Hungarian movie theaters in 1969. *Once Upon a Time in the West* was a roaring success: it circulated in Hungarian cinemas for one and a half decades, and it attracted 4.4 million viewers before the regime change.[61] A quality western easily reached the one million mark: *3:10 to Yuma* (released in 1971) had 1.09 million spectators, *Soldier Blue* reached 1.22 million viewers, and *The Scalphunters* attracted 1.12 million people. Hollywood action movies, among them *Easy Rider* (1.9 million), *Breakout* (1.43 million), *Silver Streak* (1.09 million), and *Death Wish* (1.09 million) moved large crowds in communist Hungary, too.

Adventure movies also attracted a great number of spectators as the success of the historical adventure film, *Mutiny on the Bounty*, demonstrates with 1.06 million cinemagoers. Similarly, *Lucky Lady* (introducing the viewers to the world of gangsters and bootleggers in the 1930s) also closed in on the dream limit of one million (875,000). *Spartacus* was even more popular with 1.12 million viewers. Adventure films featuring animals were also popular. *Big Red*, the dog conquered the hearts of 1.07 people. Spectacular American science-fiction movies such as *Star Wars* or the *Planet of the Apes* demonstrated the popularity of the genre. Steven Spielberg's *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, however, flopped at hardly over 500,000 spectators. The excitement of the iconic disaster movie of its time, *The Towering Inferno*, attracted more than two million people.[62] Comedies usually appealed to fewer people than action and adventure films, but there were some blockbusters in this category as well. Spielberg's World War II parody, *1941*, drew 1.02 million viewers. Woody Allen's intellectual satires also proved popular. *Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Sex but Were Afraid to Ask* reached 814,000 people in the early 1980s, while the multiple Academy Award winner *Annie Hall* was only seen by 350,000. Broadway musicals became blockbusters in US cinemas, but in Hungary decision makers had to decide whether revenues would return the enormous license fees.

Films rejected

Hungarian film agencies had enough space to maneuver in their selection of Hollywood products since the cultural policies outlined allowed for the acquisition of only one out every 10-15 Hollywood movies released. A closer look at the policy choices in the case of films which failed to clear the selection process sheds light on the various reasons (other than political and ideological ones) for their rejection, including reservations about artistic quality, aversion to certain genres of popular culture, as well as financial considerations.

Between 1966 and 1980, fifty-seven films received an American Academy Award.[63] 46 of those also reached Hungarian cinemas. Among the eleven films not shown, there were two that Hungarofilm was not allowed to purchase: *Patton*, which won seven Academy Awards in 1970, and *The Deer Hunter*, which won five in 1979. Both movies dealt with key wars in modern US history, and both dealt with their topic in a way which was found incompatible with Hungarian cultural policy. The biographic film on General George S. Patton was considered by CFA, but, of course, a film about an anti-Soviet American military officer reinforcing the notions of American

glory and honor could not pass. *The Deer Hunter* did not even reach the screening rooms of CFA. Michael Cimino's movie generated harsh debates even in the West. Marxist critics judged it as reactionary, and the delegations of the socialist countries left the West Berlin Film Festival in protest against the film in 1979.[64] The literary journal *Alföld* labelled it as an "outrageous lie" to depict North Korean fighters as war criminals and torturers of POWs. The author argued that it falsely represented American society and its reaction to the Vietnam War because the film featured three apolitical American workers who accepted their draft calls without any principled considerations; they took war as an adventure, and the director did not reflect on the fact that in reality any such experience would inevitably change one's world view. The lack of in-depth presentation of the characters was also mentioned: "According to the film there were only stupid, cruel, perverted creatures of instinct in the enemy's camp. Cimino's Vietnamese soldiers are men with the devil's horns. And, above all, the film falsifies the single most important factor by not making clear which side is the victim and which one is the aggressor."[65]

There were no such ideological concerns about the other nine Academy Award winners not screened in Hungarian cinemas. Stanley Kubrick's *Barry Lyndon* was rejected for financial reasons, since the director demanded a percentage of the revenues while Hungarofilm was only willing to pay a fixed price. Socialist film policy did not favor romantic dramas either: therefore, *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, *Ryan's Daughter*, and *Women in Love* were not purchased. *Love Story* met the same fate. The Committee was divided over its purchase. The majority did not consider it openly harmful, stressing that the film was not worse than most tolerated novels or theatrical plays. Two members directly argued that the demands of the audience should be taken into account: "we also have a duty to inform, to make it possible for the Hungarian spectators to watch films that achieved world-wide success." Others supported the film because they expected high revenues and believed that financial success would justify its purchase. Eventually, the deal was not concluded in order to protect public taste.[66]

Save the Tiger (1973), starring Jack Lemmon, was neglected because of its piquant episodes (the main character picks up a prostitute in his car and orders striptease dancers for his friends), in spite of the fact that the moral conflict the film presents—saving a capitalist entrepreneurship by insurance fraud—would have fit the prevailing ideological guidelines. No depiction of prostitution was welcome, so CFA hesitated to give the green light to any film that addressed the issue. For example, the western musical *Paint Your*

Wagon was called the "apotheosis of prostitution and bigamy" in 1970.[67] The American style of depicting carnal encounter was branded as "sex films serving public demand"—as was the case with *You Are a Big Boy*, which was first refused in 1968 but released in 1986.[68]

Various crime comedies, among them *The Hospital* and *The Producers*, were also rejected. The latter was regarded as improper mainly due to its depiction of homosexuality, which proved as problematic as prostitution. This explained why the remarkably successful *Midnight Cowboy* was released with considerable delay only in 1975. [69]

Despite the efforts to purchase blockbusters to increase revenues some big hits could only reach Hungarian audiences with several years of delay. Many iconic films of the 1970s, among them *Love Story*, and *The Godfather*, were only screened in the 1980s. The sci-fi sensation of the late 1960s, *The Planet of the Apes*, was screened in the Film Museum in 1977 but was granted nationwide cinema distribution only in 1981.

Science fiction had an inexplicably tough time in Hungarian cinemas, in spite of the fact that SF novels had been published ever since the late 1950s and the genre could well be promoted along the Marxist ideological lines arguing that it represented and popularized a scientific worldview. The Committee of Film Admission, however, had various debates whether these films were progressive enough in their content as well, or only in terms of their technical accomplishments. For example, the 1957 movie *Forbidden Planet* (in fact, a *Tempest* adaptation) was rejected as "being nothing more than a 1930s-style B-movie" in 1972.[70] *Fantastic Voyage* was screened after sixteen years of delay in 1982 and only in the Film Museum. Stanley Kubrick's *2001: Space Odyssey* was delayed for 11 years, while his other cult SF/dystopian movie, *A Clockwork Orange*, never made it to Hungarian cinemas before 1989. Science fiction was not embraced by film admission in spite of a strong lobby for the genre. There were only three sci-fi films that quickly and smoothly reached Hungarian cinemas: *The Andromeda Strain* in 1973, *Star Wars* in 1979, and *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* in 1981.

Although CFA accepted a fair number of action movies it also tried to filter out the more violent ones, such as the crime story *Bullit*. Another such film, *Joe*, depicted the expansion of fascism among the American petit bourgeoisie, which was ideologically acceptable, but the gutting of a hippie commune was judged too brutal and, therefore, it was rejected.[71] Despite the efforts of the advocates of progressive westerns, *Soldier Blue* was delayed for years because of its two massacre scenes.[72] This very attitude made it impossible for horror films to pass selection. CFA also examined a zombie

film, probably without any real chance of acceptance. According to the minutes, *The Night of the Living Dead* "resulted in loathing, tediousness, and ridicule among members of CFA."[73]

Few films were openly dismissed for ideological reasons. *Patton* and *The Deer Hunter* were the best examples of such undesirable cinema. Some famous rock films also received the axe. *Woodstock* was rejected in spite of the songs criticizing consumer culture and the war in Vietnam. Although CFA accepted it with a majority vote, the ministry supported those who claimed that the interviews in the film were confusing and bore the spirit of revolt; therefore, it would be rather harmful to Hungarian youth.[74]

Many films that would have been judged similarly could not even reach the stage of CFA discussion. Several American films were declared "reactionary." One such example was *Wild in the Streets*, diagnosed as "a barely enjoyable, maliciously minded, deeply reactionary film," which abused and distorted many catchwords of the American students' movement.[75] Ideological incoherence was also often the verdict. For example, in the case of *MASH* the question was whether it offered criticism of the war waged by the United States or glorified the survival skills of ordinary Americans.[76] American war movies posed a dilemma whether the antimilitaristic standpoint and anti-war attitude of civilians or the aims of the war were to be considered more important.

Delayed films and genres

Delayed distribution was common for American films. Statistics reveal that American movies were significantly older than the socialist and even Western European ones at the date of their Hungarian release, with three to five years of delay on average before they were screened in Hungarian cinemas.[77] This did not mean that Hungarian cinemas offered only relatively old American films, yet the whole system of the Hungarian film admission procedure and the number of stakeholders (first, CFA had to accept the films, then the Ministry approved/disapproved it, and only at that point could the Film Directorate instruct Hungarofilm to purchase a copy, dubbing could then be managed by Pannonia Film Studio, and finally the Film Directorate had to decide about the schedule of release) created a serious lead time.

Three important issues influenced the procedure. The higher purchase price of the American films caused some delays. Since the Hungarian economy and foreign trade—with Hungarofilm as one of the specialized Hungarian export-import companies—was sensitive to hard currency, in the case of dollar-based purchases a delay of one or two years

significantly decreased the price. In some special cases it was the copyright holder (or even the State Department) who objected to the display of a film in socialist countries. And in certain cases Hungarian cultural policy prevented or prolonged the admissions of "sensitive" movies and even genres. Consequently, fifty-one American films were five to ten years old at the time of their Hungarian release in the 1970s. This makes up more than a quarter of all American movies offered.

Among the delayed releases we find westerns, horror films, and sci-fi movies. Hungarian cultural policy proved to be more hostile towards westerns than other socialist countries including the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, and Poland. In these countries not only imported westerns could be seen in the 1960s, but also their socialist versions (the so-called "easterns") were shot. In Hungary the first actual American western was screened in 1969. *Hombre*, directed by Paul Newman, was more the exception than the rule, since its release followed the world premier only by two years. Between 1971 and 1980, eighteen additional American and some Italian western films were screened, thus making up for the backlog. *The Magnificent Seven* was released in 1971 in Hungary, while it had already been shown to Soviet audiences in 1964. Two oldies were dusted off: *The Big Country* (1958) and *3:10 to Yuma* (1957). Still, the "national epic" film conceptualizing the American national myth, *How the West Was Won*, suffered the longest delay. Critics had reservations about this movie. *Népszabadság* called it not only kitschy but a historical travesty because it suggested that America was "the nicest and the most noble of all continents and countries, and its social system was the dream of the Founding Fathers come true."[78] Objections against the genre fit into the discourse on low vs. high culture. The western was basically regarded as trash culture that affects inferior instincts and preconditions violence. It was also described as a vacuous and even kitschy type of narrative that "treats . . . adults as children while terrorizing them with ghosts and bad people, wild Indians, and even wilder white men."[79] The advocates of this characteristically American genre emphasized that good westerns were similar to folk tales, where good and evil battle, and it makes the viewer commit to the good side. Others saw the discrimination of westerns as pointless: they were neither better or worse, nor more harmful than, for example, costumed adventure movies that were also bloody and propagated "superheroes." And some claimed that there were huge differences within the genre: "some western films show democratic and progressive impulses that strive for social justice, and there are those which are racist and reactionary . . . and flirt with all-out fascism."[80] Notwithstanding this debate, in the mid-1970s some progressive westerns, for example, *Little Big Man*, *Soldier Blue*, and *Buck and the Preacher*, were released in Hungary.

Horror was also screened belatedly and remained hardly tolerated. CFA did make an effort, however, to introduce Hungarian spectators to the world of Alfred Hitchcock. The majority supported the view that the British-born director had become the most notable icon of the genre.[81] Yet, in spite the huge public interest, following the Hungarian release of *Psycho* in March 1972, opponents of the genre led a successful campaign stressing the intolerable sadism of the film. "In horror films there is no place for humanism, solidarity, or any other notion that informs human life," a review in *Népszava* stated.[82] The film was pulled back from cinemas, despite being seen by 334,000 spectators in the first three weeks. *Psycho* returned to the cinema screens only in 1982. Interestingly, in 1979 Hitchcock's *Family Plot* smoothly passed through the various stages of film censorship, as did the sci-fi horror *Phase IV* by Saul Bass, in which mutant ants attacked people. The greatest horror film sensation of the 1970s was delayed for a decade in Hungarian cinemas: Spielberg's *Jaws* scared the world to death in 1975 but its nomination for Academy Awards was called a bad joke by one of the most significant mediators of Anglo-Saxon culture, Tamás Ungvári: "It is incomprehensible how this perfectly mimed millboard shark with so much painted blood pouring out of its jaws attract crowds of spectators."[83]

Cultural thaw beginning with the de-Stalinization process after 1953 and improving cultural relations between the countries of the two Cold War blocs in the 1960s opened the gates for American films in Hungary as well. During the seventies the normalization of the bilateral relations made wider Hollywood exports to Hungary possible. Nevertheless, this cultural interaction between a global American film industry and Hungarian communist film admission and censorship was by no means harmonious: partly for financial reasons, partly due to political-ideological considerations, but also as a consequence of different artistic tastes less than one tenth of the total American film output reached the Hungarian audience; and many films did so only with a serious delay. Some genres—especially western, melodramas, horror, and sci-fi—were regarded as problematic, while, primarily for financial reasons, film admission allowed the acquisition of several blockbusters that did not fit strict cultural policy guidelines. By 1989 the loosening of censorship and the arrival of VCRs and bootleg versions of movies with single voice-over dismantled the remaining barriers set up for American films.

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Notes

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[1] Jens Ulff-Møller, *Hollywood's Film Wars with France: Film-Trade Diplomacy and the Emergence of the French Film Quota Policy* (Rochester: U of Rochester P, 2001).

[2] Reinhold Wagenleitner, *Coca-Colonization and the Cold War: The Cultural Mission of the United States in Austria after the Second World War* (Chapel Hill: The U of North Carolina P, 1994), 222–71.

[3] Tibor Glant, "US-Hungarian Relations Ten Years After 1956," *Hungarian Cultural Studies* 9 (2016): 189–94.

[4] See Róbert Takács, "Tehenészgiccs a kultúra bölcsőjébe: Amerika-kép Hollywoodon innen és túl 1945 és 1948 között a koalíciós pártok napilapjainak tükrében" [Cowboy-Kitsch to the Cradle of Culture: The Image of America Through and Beyond Hollywood in the Mirror of the Daily Press of the Coalition Parties Between 1945 and 1948] *Médiakutató* 15.2 (2014): 75–77; Tibor Glant, "Amerikás könyvek és Amerika-kép a két világháború közti Magyarországon" [American Books and the Image of America in Interwar Hungary], *"Minden gondolatomra számtalan másik árnya hull": Emlékkönyv Frank Tibor 60. születésnapjára* [The Shadow of Numerous Other Thoughts Falls on Every Single Thought of Mine. Festschrift for the 60th Birthday of Tibor Frank], ed. Tamás Magyarics, Miklós Lojkó (Budapest: Prime Rate, 2008) 79–85.

[5] Released in Hungary in 1947, *The Sky's the Limit* was still on the program of the cinemas in February 1949.

[6] As *Szabad Nép* put it: "Of course, American film capitalists have . . . switched to the cult of films propagating killing, bloodbath and cruelty. Today shallow love stories and false career stories are not enough to distract people's attention from real problems. Today American—and following them Western European—film factories are on the payroll of warmongers. Hollywood films want to persuade spectators that the natural path to happiness leads through the use of brutal force, crime, and the annihilation of rivals. They pursue the awful propaganda of sadism and crime to awaken inhuman instincts in the soul of the spectator, to ruin his moral foundations and, therefore, to promote the insane war adventures of the lords of Wall Street." ("Csókold meg a halált" [Kiss Death], *Szabad Nép* 12 Jan. 1950). Unless otherwise noted, all translations are mine. Selections from film reviews are offered to demonstrate the change in tone, or the lack thereof.

[7] Report of Ambassador Károly Szarka, 18 September 1954. XIX-J-1-k 1945-1946, USA, Box 40, Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Országos Levéltára. Hereafter cited as MNL-OL.

[8] Report of Ambassador Károly Szarka, 18 July 1955. XIX-J-1-k 1945-1964, USA, Box 40, MNL-OL.

[9] Minutes of the negotiations with Eric Johnson at the Ministry of Culture. 13 October 1956. XIX-J-1-k 1945-1964, USA, Box 41, MNL-OL.

[10] László Borhi, *Magyar–amerikai kapcsolatok 1945–1989: Források* [Hungarian–American Relations: Documents] (Budapest: MTA TTI, 2009) 70–95.

[11] Róbert Takács, "In the Pull of the West: Resistance, Concessions and Showing off from the Stalinist Practice in Hungarian Culture after 1956," *Hungarian Historical Review* 5.4 (2016): 814–33. Hereafter cited as: Takács, "In the Pull of the West."

[12] In Hungarian: Filmátvételi Bizottság (FÁB).

[13] Except for a short period, because in 1968 a joint film holding company was created.

[14] The circular letter of the Film Directorate to the Executive Committees of County Councils (16 December 1958). XIX-I-22, Box 34, MNL-OL.

[15] As part of the British film days in 1968 even a James Bond episode, *Thunderball*, was shown in Budapest with the title *Sea Sharks*. (László Zay, "Nagyítástól a kicsinyítésig" [From Blow-Up to Reduction] *Magyar Nemzet* 2 April 1968).

[16] László Borhi, *Dealing with Dictators: The United States, Hungary, and East Central Europe, 1942-1989*, trans. Jason Vincz (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2016) 265–322.

[17] Principles for the work of the Film Admission Committees issued by the Film Directorate (14 March 1972), XIX-I-22, Box 138, MNL-OL.

[18] György Földes, *Kádár János külpolitikája és nemzetközi tárgyalásai I.* [The Foreign Policy and International Negotiations of János Kádár I] (Budapest: Napvilág, 2015) 228–48.

[19] István Kondor's reply to Ede Vajna on film admission policies (27 November 1973). XIX-I-22, Box 144, MNL-OL.

[20] Ervin Gyertyán, "A hét filmjei" [Films of the Week] *Népszabadság* 24 Feb. 1972.

[21] Gábor Thurzó, "Tájékozatlanság vagy felületesség?" [Ignorance or Superficiality?] *Népszava* 22 Oct. 1980.

[22] Ervin Gyertyán, "A hét filmjei," *Népszabadság* 13 Dec. 1973; "A hét filmjei," *Magyar Nemzet* 13 Dec. 1973.

[23] Zoltán Hegedűs, "A hét filmjei," *Népszabadság* 22 July 1971.

[24] "A hét filmjei," *Magyar Nemzet* 22 July 1971.

[25] Ilona Gantner, "A hét filmjei," *Népszava* 29 April 1971; László Zay, "Tanú-e a film vagy szereplő?" [Is Film a Witness or an Actor?], *Magyar Nemzet* 21 March 1971. National daily newspapers avoided detailed commentary on the famous sex scene of the film; however, for example, the university magazine *A jövő mérnöke* offered space for debate on this issue as well. According to Marxist interpretation, the desert scene "symbolizes the escape of Western youth, its escape from civilization, from the world of colorful advertisements . . . to nature, to the dreary grey desert, to bestial sex" (Tamás Szabados, "A megértés hiánya" [Lack of Understanding] *A jövő mérnöke* 15 May 1971).

[26] Zoltán Hegedűs, "A hét filmjei," *Népszabadság* 6 Jan. 1972; "A hét filmjei," *Magyar Nemzet* 6 Jan. 1972. On Hungarian drug policy see: Sándor Bajzáth, József Rácz, Eszter Zsófia Tóth, *Repülök a gyógyszerrel: A kábítószerezés története a szocialista Magyarországon* [I Am High on Drugs: A History of Doing Drugs in Socialist Hungary] (Budapest: l'Harmattan, 2014).

[27] András Gervai, "A közhelyek jegyében" [In the Name of Commonplaces] *Kritika* 11.10 (1973): 31.

[28] "Száguldás a semmibe" [Vanishing Point] *Autó-Motor* 26.19 (1973): 10.

[29] V. P., "A hét filmjei," *Magyar Nemzet* 26 Jan. 1978.

[30] Ervin Gyertyán, "A hét filmjei," *Népszabadság* 30 Sep. 1976.

[31] László Zöldi, "MASH," *Népszabadság* 12 June 1980.

[32] László Zay, "A 22-es csapdája" [Catch 22], *Magyar Nemzet* 7 Sep. 1972.

[33] V. P., "Hair," *Magyar Nemzet* 17 Jan. 1980.

[34] *Hair*, the musical, was put down as a sexually overloaded play in the early 1970s. Even Tamás Ungvári, who otherwise praised the script, described it as "having chosen such unusual forms of persuasion as the vision of half-naked bodies and a sequence of diabolic songs" ("Minden Musical!" [Everything is a Musical!], *Magyar Nemzet* 20 Nov. 1971). As Pál

Pándi put it: "For us, anarchic glint and generational dynamism of the performance would probably prevail more energetically than its anti-imperialist protest, and its eroticism would certainly get farther from the function that it fulfils over there" ("Németek és németek II" [Germans and Germans II], *Népszabadság* 20 Sep. 1970).

[35] "A hét filmjei," *Magyar Nemzet* 24 April 1980.

[36] See Vance Packard, "A meztelen társadalom" [The Naked Society], *Valóság* 9.1 (1966): 93–98.

[37] László Zöldi, "Serpico," *Népszabadság* 29 June 1978.

[38] László Zöldi, "A hét filmjei," *Népszabadság* 22 Feb. 1979.

[39] "A hosszú búcsú" [The Long Goodbye] *Magyar Nemzet* 14 Aug. 1975.

[40] László Zöldi, "Világvége közös ágyunkban" [A Night of Full Rain], *Népszabadság* 19 June 1980.

[41] István Hermann, *A giccs* [Kitsch] (Budapest: Kossuth, 1971) 98, 135.

[42] László Zappe, "A televíziós szórakoztatás rangja" [The Prestige of Television Entertainment], *Népszabadság* 6 Nov. 1978.

[43] Report of the Work Commission to the Film Directorate (July 1973). XIX-I-22, Box 144, MNL-OL.

[44] Dezső Tóth, "A szórakozás kultúrája" [The Culture of Entertainment], *Népszabadság* 30 Apr. 1978.

[45] Koltai Tamás, "Színházi esték" [Nights at the Theatres], *Népszabadság* 21 Jan. 1972.

[46] Róbert Takács, "A kultúra reformja–a reform kultúrája" [The Reform of Culture–The Culture of Reform], *Eszmélet* 27.3 (2015): 137–53.

[47] For book publishing see István Bart, *Világirodalom és könyvkiadás a Kádár-korszakban* [World Literature and Book Publishing in the Kadar Era] (Budapest: Osiris, 2002.) 26–31.

[48] Circular letter of the Film Directorate to cinema companies (16 December 1967). XIX-I-22, Box 117, MNL-OL.

[49] Altogether there were seven American films released in Hungary in the 1970s whose script was written by Neil Simon: *The Odd Couple* (released in Hungary in 1971), *The Out-of-Towners* (1972), *The Prisoners of the Second Avenue* (1977), *The Sunshine Boys* (1977), *Murder by Death* (1978), *California Suite* (1980), and *The Goodbye Girl* (1980).

[50] László Zöldi, "A hét filmjei," *Népszabadság* 22 May 1980.

[51] Gál Mihály, "*A vetítést vita követte": A Filmátvételi Bizottság jegyzőkönyvei 1968–1989* ["The Screening Was Followed by a Debate": The Minutes of the Committee for Film Admission 1968–1989] (Budapest: Gondolat, 2015), 155. Hereafter cited as Gál, "*A vetítést vita követte.*"

[52] Róbert Takács, "A magyar kultúra nyitottsága az 1970-es években" [The Openness of Hungarian Culture in the 1970s], *Múltunk* 61.4 (2016): 49.

[53] László Zay, "A hét filmjei," *Magyar Nemzet* 18 Jan. 1973.

[54] Gál, "*A vetítést vita követte*" 253–55.

[55] V. A., "A hét filmjei," *Magyar Nemzet* 12 Aug. 1971.

[56] László Zöldi, "Hollywood, Hollywood," *Népszabadság* 6 Apr. 1978.

[57] Gál, "*A vetítést vita követte*" 118.

[58] Besides the four American rock films two Beatles films and one French (*The Five Crazy Boys*), one West German (*Heintje*), and one Polish (*Big Beat*) films were played in the Hungarian cinemas in the decade.

[59] "A hét filmjei," *Magyar Nemzet* 15 June 1978.

[60] "A hét filmjei," *Magyar Nemzet* 3 Apr. 1974.

[61] Data of attendance were retrieved from Gál, "*A vetítést vita követte*."

[62] "A legnézettebbek: *Pokoli torony*, *Csillagok háborúja*" [The Most Popular: The *Towering Inferno*, *Star Wars*], *Népszabadság* 14 Dec. 1979.

[63] The fifty-seven winners of the six most important categories (Best Picture, Best Director, Best Actor, Best Actress, Best Cinematography, Best Original Screenplay) between 1966 and 1980 are the subject of the analysis.

[64] Péter Rényi, "Érzéstelenítés nélkül" [Without Anesthetics], *Népszabadság* 15 May 1979.

[65] József Veress, "A szarvasvadász" [The Deer Hunter], *Alföld* 26.10 (1979): 94–96.

[66] Gál, "*A vetítést vita követte*" 192.

[67] Gál, "*A vetítést vita követte*" 151.

[68] Gál, "*A vetítést vita követte*" 82.

[69] Gál, "*A vetítést vita követte*" 165–67.

[70] Gál, "*A vetítést vita követte*" 213–14

[71] Gál, "*A vetítést vita követte*" 206–07.

[72] Ervin Gyertyán, "Mackenna aranya" [Mackenna's Gold], *Népszabadság* 20 Aug. 1972.

[73] Gál, "*A vetítést vita követte*" 197.

[74] Gál, "*A vetítést vita követte*" 161–62.

[75] The film is a politico-fiction, in which under-30 youngsters assume the power in the United States. Gál "*A vetítést vita követte*" 134.

[76] Gál, "*A vetítést vita követte*" 194–95.

[77] The calculation does not include the renewed pre-1945 films and the films of the Chaplin-series between 1973 and 1977. The period of delay had decreased under three years in 1974 (2.4 years).

[78] László Zöldi, "A vadnyugat hőskora" [How the West Was Won], *Népszabadság* 12 July 1979.

[79] V. A., "Mackenna aranya" [Mackenna' Gold] *Magyar Nemzet* 10 Aug. 1972.

[80] Gyertyán Ervin, "A hét filmjei," *Népszabadság* 25 March 1971.

[81] Gál, "*A vetítést vita követte*" 142. Hungarian Television broadcast Hitchcock's *Notorious* at Christmas 1968. "Rádió, televízió, múzeum" [Radio, Television, Museum], *Népszava* 23 Dec. 1968.

[82] "Milyen filmek ezek?" [What Kind of Films Are These?], *Népszava* 25 March 1972.

[83] Tamás Ungváry: "Oscar—közelről. Filmlevél Hollywoodból" [Academy Awards Close-up: A Film Letter from Hollywood], *Magyar Nemzet* 13 Apr. 1976.

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Filmography

3:10 to Yuma (American release: 1957; Hungarian release: 1971)
1941 (1979; 1982)
2001: Space Odyssey (1968; 1979)
A Clockwork Orange (1971;–)
A Dream of Kings (1969; 1975)
A Night of Full Rain (1978; 1980)
Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore (1974; 1977)
Annie Hall (1977; 1980)
Apocalypse Now (1979; 1980)
Barry Lyndon (1975;–)
Big Red (1962; 1970)
Bird of Prey (1973; 1979)
Blackboard Jungle (1955;–)
Bless the Beasts and Children (1971; 1973)
Bobby Deerfield (1977; 1978)
Breakout (1975; 1977)
Buck and the Preacher (1972; 1973)
Bullit (1968; 1987–television)
Cactus Flower (1969; 1971)
California Suite (1978; 1980)
Capricorn One (1978; 1980)
Catch 22 (1970; 1972)

Change of Mind (1969; 1972)
Close Encounters of the Third Kind (1977; 1981)
Coming Home (1978; 1978)
Conrack (1974; 1976)
Convoy (1978; 1979)
Darling Lili (1970; 1971)
Death Wish (1974; 1980)
Easy Rider (1969; 1972)
Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Sex but Were Afraid to Ask (1972; 1984)
Family Plot (1976; 1979)
Fantastic Voyage (1966; 1982)
Fiddler on the Roof (1971; 1986)
Follow me! (1972; 1974)
Forbidden Planet (1956;–)
Funny Girl (1968; 1972)
Fuzz (1972; 1975)
Griffin and Phoenix (1976; 1979)
Hair (1979; 1980)
Hello Dolly! (1969; 1972)
Hollywood, Hollywood (1976; 1978)
Hombre (1967; 1969)
How the West Was Won (1962; 1979)
Hurry Sundown (1967; 1971)
In the Heat of the Night (1967; 1971)
Jeremy (1973; 1977)
Joe (1970;–)
Juggernaut (1974; 1976)
Julia (1977; 1979)
Let the Good Times Roll (1973; 1976)
Little Big Man (1970; 1973)
Little Fugitive (1953; 1956)
Love Story (1970; 1986)
Lucky Lady (1975; 1977)
Marty (1955; 1958)
MASH (1970; 1980)
Midnight Cowboy (1969; 1975)
Murder by Death (1976; 1978)
Mutiny on the Bounty (1962; 1973)

Norma Rae (1979; 1980)
Oliver (1968; 1971)
One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest (1975; 1977)
Once Upon a Time in the West (1968; 1974)
Paint Your Wagon (1969;–)
Patton (1970;–)
Planet of the Apes (1968; 1980)
Play it Again, Sam (1972; 1974)
Phase IV (1974; 1980)
Psycho (1960; 1972)
Ryan's Daughter (1970;–)
Save the Tiger (1973;–)
Scarecrow (1973; 1975)
Serpico (1973; 1978)
Silver Streak (1976; 1978)
Soldier Blue (1970; 1976)
Spartacus (1960; 1970)
Star Wars (1977; 1979)
Summer of '42 (1971; 1974)
Take the Money and Run (1969; 1971)
Taking Off (1971; 1976)
The Andromeda Strain (1971; 1973)
The Big Country (1958; 1971)
The Concert for Bangladesh (1972; 1974)
The Conversation (1974; 1975)
The Day of the Locust (1975; 1980)
The Deer Hunter (1978;–)
The Drowning Pool (1975; 1978)
The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds (1972; 1974)
The Godfather (1972; 1983)
The Goodbye Girl (1977; 1980).
The Hospital (1971;–)
The Last Picture Show (1971; 1973)
The Last Waltz (1978; 1979)
The Long Goodbye (1973; 1975)
The Love Bug (1968; 1980)
The Magnificent Seven (1960; 1971)
The Night of the Living Dead (1968;–)
The Odd Couple (1968; 1971)

The Organization (1971; 1974)
The Out-of-Towners (1970; 1972)
The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie (1969;–)
The Prisoners of the Second Avenue (1975; 1977)
The Producers (1967;–)
The Salt of the Earth (1954; -)
The Scalphunters (1968; 1980)
The Sky's the Limit (1943; 1947)
The Song Remains the Same (1976; 1978)
The Strawberry Statement (1970; 1971)
The Sunshine Boys (1975; 1977)
The Towering Inferno (1974; 1978)
The Trial of the Catonsville Nine (1972; 1974)
The Way We Were (1973; 1978)
They Shoot Horses, Don't They? (1969; 1972)
Three Days of the Condor (1975; 1978)
Trapeze (1956; 1957)
You Are a Big Boy (1966; 1986)
Vanishing Point (1971; 1973)
West Side Story (1961; 1973)
Wild in the Streets (1968;–)
Women in Love (1969;–)
Woodstock (1970;–)
Zabriskie Point (1970; 1972)

Other films mentioned

Yellow Submarine (British, 1968)
The Mission of the Inspector (Soviet, 1977)
Thunderball (British, 1965)