

Local Heroes

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Why this passion for film?

What in national and global film history has influenced you the most?

What are your thoughts on the future of the film industry, and the fate of the film director?

»Like a maniac beyond all boundaries, go where you want to, live like a lion, totally free from fear.«

(Dzogchen-Tantra)

First of all it can of course be so that it isn't only the fate of the film industry and the director, but the destiny of the whole civilization not to be able to exist in the future. Although the destinies of all human beings are closely linked to one another. Culture reflects the spiritual environment that has reigned during an era. In a contemporary culture the actual spiritual environment is being shown also, and what has remained or succumbed from earlier cultures is being visualized. Even the future appears in the magic mirror of culture. Then, what do we see if we look in today's cultural mirror?

What face is carrying the spiritual theme that expresses the period from the end of the 20th century back to the birth of Jesus Christ?

We can see film, which probably more than any other art form has the ability to make the spiritual environment visible, show man's existence and document it. Because like no other art form – I am old fashioned enough to believe that film is art – the art of film is able to speak without words. It speaks in time, which should be able to give it an incredible visionary power. Undoubtedly it carries this power within itself as the Earth carries the fire.

If we can think of how the first images were being projected, we see a dark room, a wall and a fire glowing behind a transparent image so that a reproduction is being made. These elements – dark room, wall, fire, and as a result thereof, a picture – lead us in to the caves where the first human beings lived, in places like Lascaux and Altamira. In the caves people gathered and created images by the light from torches. Images – as an important part of the ritual. Images – that conjured, that chased the demons away. Because what can be reproduced and mentioned loses its power, and man, who since the beginning has carried fear, can finally control the evil spirits by chasing them away. Through the pictures that those people made we find ourselves in the centre of fear, and thereby at the beginning of the film culture. Yes, doesn't a simple handprint, thousands of years old, that a human being has left in a dark cave, leave a testimony of our alienation, the horrors within ourselves and our infinite longing for recognition. And don't we gather, as we did thousands of years ago, in the obscurity of the cinema-cave watching surprised and bewitched the picturegame on the wall in front of ourselves, with the vague hope that we finally have succeeded in chasing away something deep inside ourselves that has caused the fear – and that we now are only ourselves.

What we see today on the screen has hardly a ritual character; the images that are being shown only in rare cases remind us of man and his life. Even the magic insight of light, which always is an insight of the power of fire, seems almost lost. The "theatre film", which now has reached the end of its first century, can't chase the evil spirits away anymore. With a few exceptions it doesn't grow from the wounds of our being anymore. "Theatre film" at the end of

the 20th century is running around in a circle of system affirmations that never seem to end. Affirmations that already have been accepted within all cultural areas, and thereby have reached a dictatorial position.

This “theatre film” gives birth to evil spirits instead of chasing them away, since it no longer is rebellious, and only has given up, or maybe has forgotten, to fight against the dragons.

I don't know what cinema or film is. I only have a vague idea, a feeling of what it could be. And that is something that has a lot to do with love, fantasy and freedom, that only can come from our souls, and that also is something our souls have to conquer.

Our generation still hasn't expressed itself. We still haven't liberated the fire in film, and we are given only a short time to do it, in this era which have reduced culture to a ready-made product produced by the entertainment industry. Earlier generations have had obligatory topics, that have come up through personal experiences that were possible to express. Topics that demanded an expression, like the World Wars, experiences of dictatorship, the liberation of youth from the bourgeois values of their parents during the sixties, etcetera.

What obligatory topics can then our generation find? This seems to be the basic question of our time, and film art of the future depends on the answer. The new technology will not answer the question. What is lacking in most films is not the technical ability, but spiritual and emotional richness. And within the acceptance of this lack is probably where we find the answer.

The loss of visions and utopian schemes, spirituality and individuality, the collectivisation of thought, the conventionalisation of imagination and above all the absence of connection to reality are experiences that seem to tie together our generation across all national boundaries. The actual reality seems to have disappeared from their vision. Reality more seldom loses its way to the screen. Nevertheless it is so that without facing reality no Utopia is possible.

Our generation has not expressed this yet. And we have to hurry up if our aim is to make films about life and reality – and thereby also the visions – instead of movies about the life that's being led on the screen or on television. It could also be so that we one day look in our cultural mirror and still only see a demonic emptiness, where a confused grimace of our own madness is rushing forward from the background to devour us. Only to spit us out in the same desperate world that we came from, since we have become unappetizing.

But through this perhaps it will show that it is easy and fantastic to make a film, if we simply – with love and with all the means that the film gives us – look deeply and tell about the things that really touch us.

Fred Kelemen