

Delia ENYEDI

3D Attractions: Recycling the Monomyth in Post-Cinema

Abstract. Forays into the origins of cinema have lead André Gaudreault to correct the use of the collocation “early cinema” in regard to the approximate period 1890-1910 with the term “kine-attractography”, thus designating the use of recording and projecting devices into already existing forms of popular entertainment. Nowadays, the narrative engagement standardized by the institutional cinema is infused with digital stereoscopy which promises audiences an immersive experience. The emerging clash between “attractions” (as proposed by Tom Gunning and André Gaudreault) and narration could never be resolved by separating their dominance during various periods in film history. When confronted with technical innovations such as sound and color, cinematic storytelling strived to balance the re-acquired attractional dimension of the medium. The paper compares the post-cinematic intermediality of 3D filmmaking with that of kine-attractography and discusses the monomyth as its favored narrative solution.

Keywords: 3D filmmaking, attraction, narration, monomyth, post-cinema.

In a famous account related to the rise of the studio system, acclaimed writer F. Scott Fitzgerald returned to Hollywood at the peak of cinema’s conversion to synchronized sound that started in the late 1920s. At the time, MGM stood as the major studio least affected by the national economic crash and the consequent Depression. Irving Thalberg’s creative vision and control had resulted in a house style dominated by prestige films destined for first-run theaters, feature films oozing glamour by means of cast and composition. In 1931, Fitzgerald seemed the perfect choice to polish the narrative of such a Jean Harlow vehicle, an adaptation of the best-selling sex farce *Red-Headed Woman* (1932).

Delia ENYEDI

Babeş-Bolyai University, Romania

Email: delia.enyedi@ubbcluj.ro

EKPHRASIS, 2/2016

POST-CINEMA ATTRACTIONS

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