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# Miklós Erdély's Theory of Montage in the Light of Philosophical Tradition

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Theses of the Doctoral Dissertation

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In Miklós Erdély's description the film is a form of artistic expression lined paradigmatically around montage. Thus, if we want to immerse ourselves in his montage conception, first we have to take a close look at his thoughts whirling around film. This determines the direction of the first block of my dissertation. I am expecting that with subjecting the constantly recurring 'montage' to inquiry we can come near to the base of his strivings: to that conceptual ground that legitimates film as art, which gives an organizational and interpretative sphere for the frames and sounds, and which also provides an opportunity for Erdély's abruptly expanding thoughts to always point beyond the celluloid. The presentation of this moving beyond is the main aim of the first six chapters of my thesis.

I am going to describe the aesthetic aspects (and those aspects that pointing far beyond the realm of aesthetics) of Erdély's film theory through his far-reaching montage-process. Besides unstitching the focal points discovered, I intend to pinpoint the outer relations of Erdély's texts. However, in order to avoid the charges of an interpretation "reading violently apart," I will pay special attention to rely predominantly on authors and texts cited by Erdély himself.

This will bring us to the second stake of my thesis: the identification of Miklós Erdély's montage-aesthetics' discursive position within the realm of aesthetics, philosophy of art, and philosophy. Or to be more precise, experiments toward identification. Because, as it will hopefully turn out throughout my interpretation, it is not a light undertaking to determine Erdély's proper place – even if we set out from this single segment of his oeuvre as a starting point. His texts written about montage carry along so diverging elements that are considered to be the irreconcilable poles of theories concerning film, arts, truth and knowledge.

Miklós Erdély's colliding thoughts embrace along each other the demand for ontological groundedness and the operation of the montage principle. It is a classic antagonism. But at least this is the demarcation line thought to be impossible to overstride, which breaks up the theoreticians dealing with the topic into two camps. And of course there comes the question: are they indeed in an out-of-reach distance from each other? In other words: which are those segments in Erdély's thoughts that are *not* harmonizing with each

other *yet* or *anymore*. Since it is possible to say in a well-established and strongly aporetic manner that Miklós Erdély is an advocate for ontology and montage simultaneously, but only with the immediate addendum that his texts are speaking about the possibility of the presentation of truth in a way of producing a constructivist theory, nearly excluding the possibility of truth itself. But we need to see that these are only nearing understandings of Erdély's endeavours. Condensing, simplifying, compartmentalizing, possible phases of our understandings – but only phases. If we take a closer look at the problems, they immediately reorganize themselves, and new dilemmas come to the surface: this is how his relentless, fluid-like theory fluctuates between the poles of structuralism-poststructuralism as well as the poles of modern-postmodern.

This is related to my third but not at all irrelevant question. How is it possible to write about such a radical theory that resolves the clashing points of antagonistic theories? How can we write about Miklós Erdély who is not intending to eliminate the territorial borders of different scientific disciplines, but who simply ignores those boundaries? How can an interpretation that is striving to understand, classify and systematize reflect on a theory that is always in flux, always in expansion, and do this all in a way to not to stop the flux but set it in motion? That is, if it is so difficult to position Erdély, what can we say at all and how do we say it?

Looking at my thesis from this angle, it can be interpreted as a test of comparison, the long experiment of finding the firm grip. It is an intellectual adventure around Miklós Erdély's intellect, which the longer it gets the better it sees its own failures. And we can convey this suggestion only after our questions chasing themselves have already lost their breath: that we have possibly arrived at some place. That we have possibly arrived at montage itself. Without our knowledge, since in most instances we lose something out of sight when trying to speak about Erdély's texts: we lose out of sight the restless expansion of montage. No matter how cautious our interpretation is, if it tries persistently to follow the traces of Erdély, in the end it cannot avoid to become the part of its subject's subject, the activation of the montage-technique.

## I. Publications related to the dissertation

Erdély Miklós filmesztétikája montázsának tört tükrében – avagy dialektikus zárójelek mint

Erdély mosolyai. In: *Apertúra*. 2007. ősz, III. évf. 1. sz. Interneten:  
<http://apertura.hu/2007/osz/kohalmi>; 2016. 05. 02.

Szelíd, de nem súlytalan. Pop art, konceptuális művészet, politikum: Erdély Miklós és

Szentjóbby Tamás progresszív munkái a '60-as évek második felében. In: *Különbség*.  
2012. május, XII. évf. 1. sz. 151–191. o. Interneten:  
<http://www.kulonbsegfolyoirat.hu/index.php/kulonbseg/article/view/35/23>; 2016. 05.  
02.

A semmi felől. In: *Tiszatáj*. 2014. április, LXVIII. évf. 4. sz. 37–50. o. Interneten:

[http://epa.oszk.hu/00700/00713/00271/pdf/EPA00713\\_tiszataj\\_2014\\_04\\_037-050.pdf](http://epa.oszk.hu/00700/00713/00271/pdf/EPA00713_tiszataj_2014_04_037-050.pdf); 2016. 05. 02.

A preszókratikától a kvantummechanikáig. In: *C3 Gyűjtemény*. 2016. április. Interneten:

<http://www.c3.hu/collection/kohalmi/preszokratika.html>; 2016. 05. 02.

A zen út fokozatai. In: *C3 Gyűjtemény*. 2016. április. Interneten:

<http://www.c3.hu/collection/kohalmi/zen.html>; 2016. 05. 02.

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<http://www.c3.hu/collection/kohalmi/kreativitas.html>; 2016. 05. 02.

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