

# Treasures from the Trash

## Some Remarks on the Earlier Television

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**Abstract**— In the present paper we aim to present some old films and shows having been once successful in many countries and now being abandoned. We prepared a questionnaire concerning these old programs. That has been filled out by 287 randomly chosen persons being in their thirties or forties. Our goal is to find out whether the Hungarian society nowadays the television of the past more appreciates. We let our test run through some arbitrarily chosen films and shows.

### I. INTRODUCTION

The historical events of the late eighties and the early nineties have profoundly affected the contents of the Hungarian television. The weakening and final decline of the Soviet Union enabled the import of more and more films and shows from the West. But the time passed and these programs became oldies. And the above mentioned programs are not only old, but many of them are really hard-to-find treasures. In the first part of this paper we describe the main facts about the once fashionable programs we chose out for our researches. In the second part of the paper we present the results of our questionnaire and we try to draft some conclusions based on our results.



Figure 1. Hard Time on the Planet Earth

Our list of TV movies and shows from the past that are hard-to-find in Hungarian follows.

#### A. *В поисках капитана Гранта* (1985)

At first we present a masterpiece of the late Soviet productions. Our first candidate is a Soviet series based on Jules Verne's novel "Les enfants de capitaine Grant". This is a Soviet-Bulgarian coproduction of the Odessan Film Studio and the Boyana Film. It is considered as one of the most faithful adaptations of the original book. The series was released on DVD in Russian. But there is no other known DVD-release in any other language. In East

Germany the series run under the title "Auf der Suche nach Kapitän Grant". Unfortunately, we did not find any trace of the German dubbed version on the internet. We only found the following side in German giving a detailed description of the series: [http://www.j-verne.de/verne8\\_f3.html](http://www.j-verne.de/verne8_f3.html). The German public could see it for the first time at Christmas in 1986, on the channel DDR2.



Figure 2. В поисках капитана Гранта

The Hungarian television MTV broadcast all the seven episodes many times. In our investigations we found out, that the series run in 1989, 1991, 1999 and 2002 in the television. Due to the lack of any Hungarian DVD-release, it is in Hungarian only as VHS-rip available. We did not find any references to broadcasts in any other western countries.

#### B. *Der Alte* (1977-)

Germany made famously many crime television series. Here we want to present the series "Der Alte". It was firstly shown in 1977 and even in 2014 have been made new episodes. The episodes were produced by the German channels ZDF, SRF and ORF. The series was broadcast nearly all over the world. It was released on DVD in Germany (only the original version, no other dubbing).

The central figure of the first hundred episodes was the chief inspector Erwin Köster played by actor Siegfried Lowitz (1914-1999).

Some episodes of the series were translated in Hungarian. According to our investigations the last episode that was shown in Hungary was the first episode of the seventh season with the title "Die Spuren eines Unsichtbaren" on 12. 03. 1989. We found in Hungarian only a fragment of this episode as a VHS-rip.



Figure 3. Der Alte

### C. *Those Glory Glory Days* (1983)

As a television movie made by director Philippe Saville the film “Those Glory Glory Days” presents ridiculous and sad moments of the lives of four Tottenham Hotspur-enthusiast girls on the streets of London. The main character of the film is Julia Herrick, the manifestation of the screenwriter Julie Welch, who was Fleet Street’s first female football reporter. The four girls use all means in order to be present at the final match of the Spurs. In the meanwhile we become witnesses of the crisis concerning the parents of Julia who intend to divorce. The obsession of the girls and the fact that Julie does not show any interests what her parents happens are surreal elements of the movie.



Figure 4. Those Glory Glory Days

The movie was released on DVD in English.

In Hungary the film was broadcast on 03.02.1989. Its Hungarian dubbed version is only as VHS-rip available. In our investigations we found out that the movie was shown in Poland, too.

### D. *Hard Time on Planet Earth* (1989)

This is a funny television series from the USA with 13 episodes. The story is very simple: an extraterrestrial being is condemned to dwell some time on the planet Earth as a punishment for his war crimes. He finds himself in the USA, where he accidental gets the name Jesse. According to his punishment he is forced to carry out beneficial acts. But it is not so easy to become a decent member of the human society. In spite of his efforts and helpfulness he always becomes victim of some misunderstandings.

In Hungary the series was shown in the famous Walt Disney-afternoons for children in the early nineties. Later it was broadcast with a new Hungarian dubbing on the channel RTL Klub. Not even in the USA were the episodes on DVD released. The series is only as VHS-rip available. Due to the fans, some episodes can be found in Hungarian on youtube. We found some episodes in French and Russian language on the net, too. We have information about the existence of a German dubbing (the

series run on Super RTL in Germany), but we did not find any episodes in German.

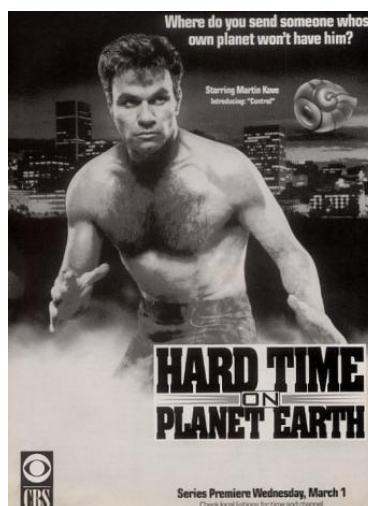


Figure 5. Promotional Poster for Hard Time on Planet Earth

### E. *The 100 Lives of Black Jack Savage* (1991)

This is again a series from the USA. It contains only 7 episodes. The ghost of the cruel Caribbean pirate Jack encounters the fraud Barry after having been condemned to saving 100 lives as a penitence for his brutal crimes.

They recognize that they must work together in order to compensate for their delicts. They find themselves in funny and extraordinary situations during their cooperation. The so called “snarks” are fictional characters of the story persecuting Jack, who is always saved by his friend Barry using a Hoover-like machine against the vicious monsters. The “snarks” have the intention to bring Jack back to the hell.



Figure 6. The 100 Lives of Black Jack Savage

In the USA the series originally aired in 1991. The small number of episodes can be explained by the fact that the series had not a greater success at the time.

We do not have any information about any DVD-release. The episodes can be found in English and French as VHS-rips. In Hungary the series (similar to “Hard time on Planet Earth”) was shown in the Walt Disney-show in the early nineties.

### F. *Jack the Ripper* (1988)

The murder series of the nineteenth century’s London had even much later a great influence on the society. A lot

of films have been made concerning the cruel murderer who was nicknamed as “Jack the Ripper”. In spite of the fact that there were a lot of suspected persons, the real perpetrator could not be revealed at the time.

In 1988, one hundred years after the notorious murder cases in England the director Kimberly Seilhamer made the mini-series “Jack the Ripper”. The movie depicts a fictional investigation after the brutal killer who shocks the inhabitants of London. After having killed the victims he always mutilates the corpses. The detective and main character of the film is played by the famous actor Michael Caine. The producing company Euston Films’ alleged that this is a proper telling of the real story.



Figure 7. Jack the Ripper

There are two episodes, each of them having a runtime of circa one and a half hours. The series was released on DVD in a lot of countries (in England, the USA, Germany, France and a lot of other countries). During our investigations we found out that it was shown even in Hungary with Hungarian dubbing in the nineties. But we do not find any details of the movie in Hungarian.

#### G. *Toto cerca casa* (1949)

The Italian cinema often depicts the difficulties of the after-WW2-epoche with some irony. We chose out the above mentioned movie because it was shown in Hungary only in the nineties on the channel Duna tv. The Hungarian version was made by this channel, too.

After the WW2 it was very hard for many people to find a proper appartement. The protagonist of this movie struggles with this problem, too.



Figure 8. *Toto cerca casa*

We become witnesses of a series of surreal and very ridiculous stories. The whole movie is a farce-like depiction of an Italy after the war where the people face profound problems concerning their everyday life. The main character and his family, losing their home, are seeking for a new flat. They always find the most bizarre places for living (school, cemetery, atelier). This is the first film directed by the legendary Steno. The film released on DVD in Italy and was shown in a lot of

European countries. But we do not have any information about a release having some non-Italian-dubbing. In Hungarian (similarly to the series and movies before) it is available only as a VHS-rip.

#### H. *Premiers Baisers* (1991-1995)

This is a French series made by the AB Production for adolescents in the nineties. The series was translated into many languages, for example into Spanish, Polish, Russian, Hungarian. There are 316 episodes. The story tells about the adventures of some adolescents in Paris. And the main topic of the episodes is naturally love. The series shows in a funny manner how certain characters of the show fall in love with each other and how they interrupt their relationship.



Figure 9. *Premiers Baisers*

In Hungary all of the episodes run on the channel RTL Klub at the end of the nineties. But now we could not find any fragments in Hungarian language on the net, however one can find the original version of the whole series on youtube and it is available in French language as a DVD-version, too. The series had a great success in French as being one of the first sitcoms in the country.

#### I. *Les enfants de la liberté* (1989)

This is an animated series consisting of 8 episodes and made for the occasion of the bicentenary of the French revolution. The director of the series is Patrick Schwerdtle who has worked as an animator, too. He is famous for having been involved in the production of many cartoon series, such as “Pif et Hercule” or “Lucky Luke”. The series “Les enfants de la liberté” tells the story of three children during the French revolution. The series intends to present the dangers of the social inequality and stresses the importance of the human rights that must be dispersed equally for all the people in all the world. The series was made with the aim that the children of the late twentieth century comprehend the important message of the revolution. The series run in French on the channel FR3 and Canal+. It was translated into Hungarian and German, too.

Unfortunately, the series does not have any VHS or DVD-release. Nearly the whole series can be seen on youtube in French language as a VHS-rip. We do not have any information, whether it was translated into English. We carried out an intensive search in order to find episodes in German or in Hungarian. But our efforts failed. We only found two episodes on VHS in Hungarian and none of the episodes in German.

According to the German RTL (they broadcast all the episodes in German) the episodes are in their possession.



Figure 10. Les enfants de la liberté

The Hungarian MTV notified to us that they do not have the Hungarian version of the series any more.

*J. The Puppy's Further Adventures*

This is an American cartoon series consisting of 13 episodes having aired between 1983 and 1984 in the USA. The story is about the adventures of five dogs in America.

One of them is seeking for its former keeper. The series was shown in the Hungarian channel MTV, too. We only find some episodes on youtube, but none in Hungarian.



Figure 11. The Puppy's Further Adventures

The series was produced by Ruby-Spears productions. The whole story is based on Jane Thayer's children book titled „The Puppy Who Wanted a Boy”.

II. OUR QUESTIONNAIRE AND THE RESULTS

We posed the following questions to 287 persons aged between 30 and 45 years at different points of the country:

Q1 How many of the given ten programs did you ever see?

Q2 Which are the programs you would like to see again in the television?

Q3 To what extent do you agree with the following statement? “The TV programs of the past were more enjoyable than the programs nowadays” (scale from 0 to 10, 10 marks total agreement).

The results of the questions were the following:

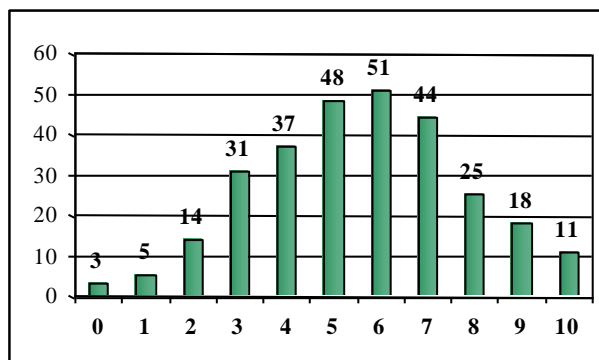


Figure 12. Results of Q1

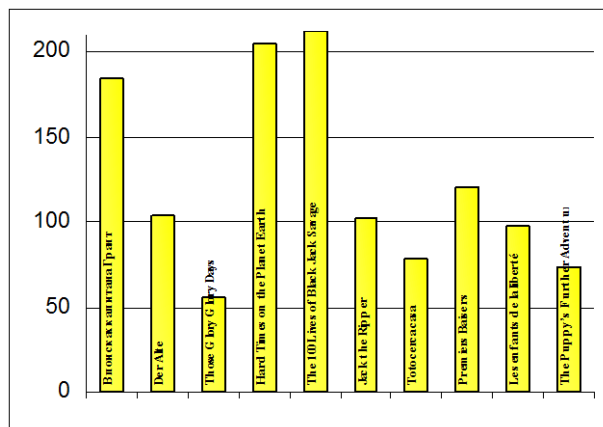


Figure 13. Results of Q2

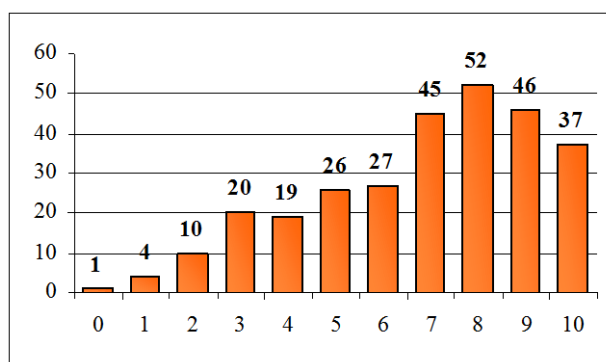


Figure 14. Results of Q3

### III. CONCLUSIONS

More than 80% of the persons having filled out our questionnaire remembers at least 8 of the programs below. The most successful programs are adventure films thought for the younger generation. It is very interesting that two programs of the Disney-afternoon took the first places. More than half of the asked persons think that the television nowadays does represent a weaker quality than 15-25 years before.

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