

Postdoctoral research projects (Human Resources PN II)

The role of generic panels in European small cinemas

PN-II-RU-PD-2012-3-0199 (1 May 2013 – 30 April 2015)

SCIENTIFIC REPORT (MAY-AUGUST 2013)

Project director: Andrea Virginás

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1st of September 2013

General objectives of the project: Arguing for the hypothesis that generic elements and formulas play an important role in European small cinema industries too, in our contemporary era of digital interconnectivity. Five international conference presentations and five articles in scientific journals are targeted, as well as the manuscript of a monograph-type volume presented for peer-review at the end of the project.

The original research plan presented in April 2012 (for the period October 2012-September 2014)

2012, October-December. Contemporary Romanian and Hungarian cinema as examples of European small cinemas (preparatory phase), as well re-interpretations of the genre of melodrama, with a focus on films by Radu Muntean. Processing the applicant's existing research material, and gathering further relevant material in Romanian, made possible by a two-week research visit to the Romanian Film Archive and/or the library of the I. L. Caragiale National Film School (Bucharest).

2013, January-June. Contemporary Romanian and Hungarian cinema as examples of European small cinemas (final phase). Analysis of crime and detection genre re-workings (preparatory phase). Further material gathered during a two-week research visit to the Hungarian Film Institute's Library (Budapest).

2013, July-December. Analysis of crime and detection re-workings (final phase). Theorizing science fiction in mainstream vs. small cinemas. Processing of research material and also intensive online research, with two possible short trips to Bucharest and Budapest for lacking material and data.

2014, January-June. The representation/conceptualization of the analog-digital turn in examples of small cinemas employing film generic panels. Processing of existing material, intensive online research, incorporating results to presentations and publications resulted from the research up to that moment. This media theoretical perspective, combined with contemporary film genre research, means a serious involvement with a rapidly changing field of international

research, therefore a two-week research visit is programmed to the British Film Institute (London).

2014, July-September. Based on material gathered, presentations given and the articles written and submitted, as well as by incorporating reactions of the project's mentor, a monograph-type volume is prepared for publication, with the working title: "The role of generic panels in small cinemas in Europe". The manuscript of the volume is submitted for first review by the closing date of the project.

The actual implementation of the previous activities in the period May-August 2013

1. The project has undergone modifications due to two objective, external factors:
 - a. The project started on the 1st of May 2013, instead of its initial starting date of 1st October 2012, thus a number of activities had to be reprogrammed (for example the Budapest/Bucharest research periods, which had to be postponed until September 2013, when the libraries will be reopened).
 - b. The host institution of this project, Sapiientia University, was excluded from the list of institutions eligible to receive advance payment, thus the project had to be financially re-structured in periods of four months, with an intermediary report at the end of each period, instead of yearly projected and performed activities (therefore Project Muse will be effective from the year 2014, see details below).
2. At the same time, two from the five planned international conference presentations were effectuated in this first phase already, see details below.
3. The research topics were covered in the following manner:
 - a. "Hungarian and Romanian cinemas as small cinemas" is going to be presented, in a first phase, at the ECREA (European Communication Research and Education Association) Film Studies section at Lund University, see below. A review-type article of new volumes in this topic

has passed peer review at *Scope - An Online Journal of Film and Television Studies* (Univ. of Nottingham), see details below.

b. “Small melodramas” was presented at the annual NECS (Network of European Cinema and Media Studies) conference in Prague, and the manuscript is in its form as a first draft, see details below.

c. “Small crime and detection”: a first attempt at conceptualizing the problematic in the form of comparative analysis has passed peer review at the journal *SEEC (Studies in Eastern European Cinema)*, see details below. A second manuscript in this thematic was sent as an abstract proposal for the online journal *NECSUS*.

d. “Small science-fiction”: a first attempt at conceptualization in the form of a comparative article has passed peer review at the journal *Acta Universitatis Sapientiae. Film and Media Studies*, see details below.

Detailed scientific activities

a. Conference presentations

In this first phase of the project I participated with scientific presentations at two international conferences:

1. Spatial Confinement and Emotional Entrapment in “Global” and (“Postcommunist”) “Small” Melodramas. *Media Politics, Political Media NECS Annual Conference*, Faculty of Arts, Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic, June 20-22, 2013. Oral presentation. Conference brochure: <http://www.cefs.cz/necs/res/pdf/brochure.pdf> . PowerPoint presentation attached.

This presentation is the first result of my examinations referring to the role of melodramatic elements in Danish, Hungarian, and Romanian films, through a comparison with classical Hollywood models. The text is in the process/phase of a first draft, and the panel leader in Prague, Anikó Imre, from the University of California, will offer consultancy while writing the text.

2. First Films and Generic Allegories: on the Role of Complex Narrative Designs in Films by Natali, Aronofsky, Tykwer. *2013 International Conference on Narrative*, Manchester Metropolitan University, UK, 2013 June 27th – 29th. Oral presentation. Web page: <http://www2.hlss.mmu.ac.uk/conferences/international-conference-on-narrative/> . PowerPoint presentation attached.

This presentation referred to the theoretical problems of using generic elements in various film industries and production contexts, as well as these questions related to the authorial profile of the directors, fundamental questions of the project. The edited text will be part of the monograph presented at the end of the project, in 2015.

b. Abstract accepted for presentation at conferences

Three abstracts, with themes closely related to the argumentation and objectives of the project, have been accepted for presentation in 2013-2014:

1. Analog and digital, immediate and hypermediate: examples from contemporary detection and science-fiction. *Rethinking Intermediality in the Digital Age Conference*. Sapientia University, 24-26 October 2013, Cluj-Napoca. Webpage: <http://film.sapientia.ro/en/conferences/rethinking-intermediality-in-the-digital-age>

2. Generic Panels and Small Cinemas: Scandinavian and Eastern European Examples. *ECREA Film Studies Conference - European Film Cultures*. Lund University, Sweden, 8-9 November 2013. Webpage: <http://conference.sol.lu.se/en/ecrea-film2013>

3. Cultural Studies Approaches in the Study of East European Cinema. *ESSE 2014 Kosice Conference*, Slovakia (roundtable, together with György Kalmár and Zsolt Győri, Debrecen University).

c. Scientific articles: texts gone through peer-review, accepted for publication, in the phase of editing or linguistic revision

1. Moments of trauma for female heroines in Eastern European settings: a comparative interpretation of five films by Szabolcs Hajdu, David Lynch, Cristian Mungiu and Peter

Strickland. Forthcoming in *Studies in Eastern European Cinemas* 2 (2014).

<http://www.intellectbooks.co.uk/journals/view-Journal,id=176/>

2. Embodied genetics in science-fiction, big-budget to low-budget: from Jeunet's *Alien: Resurrection* (1997) to Piccinini's *Workshop* (2011). Forthcoming in *Acta Universitatis Sapientiae, Film and Media Studies*, 8 (2014). <http://www.acta.sapientia.ro/acta-film/film-main.htm>

3. Review of Anikó Imre (ed.) *A Companion to Eastern European Cinemas*, Ewa Mazierska *European Cinema and Intertextuality: History, Memory and Politics*, Daniela Berghahn & Claudia Sternberg (ed.) *European Cinema in Motion. Migrant and Diasporic Film in Contemporary Europe*. Forthcoming in *Scope* October 2013, <http://www.scope.nottingham.ac.uk>

d. Texts submitted for peer-review

1. Screens “as representation” and screens “as simulation” in mainstream cinema detection: between *Blade Runner* (1982) and *Splice* (2009). *The Nordic Journal of Aesthetics* (Result of peer-review evaluation: September 2013).

e. Abstracts presented for peer-review

1. On the medial coding of traces: “immediate” and “hypermediate” detection, or Katalin Varga and Lisbeth Salander. *Necsus*, The journal of NECS, the Network for European Film and Media Studies, Amsterdam UP (result of evaluation: September 2013)

Financial report

Overhead: During these four months I worked with the project administration (preparing and finalizing the contract, the annexes, and an additional act).

Logistics: I procured price offers and I bought the various elements of logistics projected in the plan: an exterior hard storage unit, a laptop with temporary windows and antivirus, and a multifunctional scanner-printer. A logistics element projected for this period (a Project Muse Humanities subscription) was postponed for the next phase, September-December, since the

subscription is valid for one calendar year, and also the library of the host institution (Sapientia University, Cluj-Napoca) is in the process of relocation.

Travelling: I participated with oral presentations at two international conferences, on the routes Cluj-Napoca-Prague, respectively Cluj-Napoca-Manchester. The remainder of the 2013 projected sum for travelling was re-distributed for the phase September-December, with the aim of documentation and research in Bucharest/Budapest libraries (closed during the summer period).

Salaries: See the attached table for project director and mentor salaries.

Project director

Virginás Andrea