

— Call for papers —

Submission deadline : 6 July 2020

**PICTURING THE MARGINS :  
PERIPHERIES, MINORITIES AND TABOOS IN THE FILMS OF  
MARCEL ŁOZIŃSKI, PÁL SCHIFFER AND ŽELIMIR ŽILNIK**  
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

4-5 FEB. 2021, PARIS  
SORBONNE UNIVERSITÉ (EUR'ORBEM)

Keynote speaker : Prof. Dina Iordanova (University of St Andrews, U.K.)

In 1991, Marcel Łoziński brought together in Warsaw seven old childhood friends with Jewish roots. From this situation came out a unique film: *Seven Jews from My Class*. Łoziński managed to create a space for an exchange that is both intimate and formal and in which the protagonists can testify freely about their experience. Each individual account unfolds and is given attention and respect just as the geopolitical framework is moving towards a democratization process in the making. Through these exchanges the events of March 1968 are approached, events that forced Polish Jews into exile, and this drama appears to be as much a biographical turning point as a testimonial challenge. In many ways the film turns out to be a disturbing experience, echoing what François Niny conceives as an 'épreuve' (Niny, 2002). Apart from the work developed by Marcel Łoziński in the early 1970s, this interest towards disqualified social groups is fostered by two other filmmakers of the same generation: the Hungarian Pál Schiffer and the Yugoslav Želimir Žilnik.

These three filmmakers display in their films a whole set of discredited realities under social, moral, religious and ideological pretexts, such as the peripheral existence of Gypsy communities in the Hungarian context, and the precarious life of Albanian minorities in the Yugoslav context. This international symposium offers to review the rich filmography of these figures who are still too unknown in the history of cinema, and to encourage the analysis of the poetical exposure of the margins in an extended prospect, opening up on historical, sociological, anthropological and philosophical issues. In the light of these approaches we are faced with a question at the core of documentary film-making: in what way can a film essentially *donner à voir* (Daney, 1988) past and present reality by pointing out marginalized populations?

In opening this type of reflection, well inscribed in the sociohistorical field, the conference intends to study films as tools representing the socialist and post-socialist societies in their diversity. More precisely, it is an inquiry on how, on one side of the spectrum, filmmakers put at the heart of their approach a group of rejected individuals (women, farmers reluctant to agrarian reforms, factory workers living in rural areas, etc.) and, on the other, minority groups (Gypsies, Jews, homosexuals, etc.). Above and beyond the aforementioned approaches, some films deal with sensitive issues that are specific to their national context, such as memory taboos or underestimated phenomena (unemployment, alcohol addiction, domestic violence, education issues). Therefore, it becomes stimulating to think of the historical ground for the filmic actions to reveal the relations between individuals and several instances of power, and the specific ways of opposition thus emerging (claiming alternative cultural roots, intergenerational transmission of unofficial languages, etc.). Embracing the period from 1968 to 1998 will enable us to better understand these continuities and disruptions, depending on the ideological bases concerned (communism, nationalism, conservatism and liberalism).

As the issue is also well rooted in the aesthetic and the visual anthropology fields, a second crucial question is raised: what are the new poetic strategies that filmmakers are conceiving both with and in the face of the new realities they wish to capture? The question itself is to know how these approaches venture to give pause for thought about physical and verbal expressions, memories and imaginaries, that are totally excluded from propaganda imagery or from traditional media. In this respect it seems interesting to measure to what extent films constitute expressive modes that connect with a 'dialogical model' (Roche, 2001), aiming at the conception of cinema as *co-savoir* and as a group of equalitarian methods for understanding the 'Other'. Therefore, it appears relevant here to perceive the film as a true critical intervention, focusing more on the unsettling character of experience than its accuracy. As it encourages to examine the 'ethics of gaze' (Rollet, 2011), this conference seeks to more generally evaluate the tendency of documentary cinema to restore a human integrity that was previously attacked, violated and even defeated.

The international conference bears a transdisciplinary outlook as it cross-references a variety of scientific fields (history of cinema, aesthetics, philosophy, history, political science, anthropology, sociology, etc.). A film retrospective of documentary films will be held at the Cinémathèque du documentaire (Centre Pompidou, Paris), as well as screenings followed by debates and panel discussions at Inalco in the presence of the filmmakers Marcel Łoziński and Želimir Žilnik.

Hence, submissions are welcomed across a range of topics including, but not limited to:

- Cinema and the margins: imaginaries, strategies, ethics.
- Documentary cinema and marginalized populations in the Central European and Balkan context before and after 1989.
- Cinema as an artistic method of understanding an 'unrepresented reality' (Kornhauser & Zagajewski, 1974).
- Film comprehension of the margins as a factor of gaze shift: aesthetic challenges.
- Filmmakers confronted with Power: norms, negotiation, censorship.
- Margins and national context: reflecting on shifting relationships with the State and the filmmakers between 1968 and 1998.
- Cinema as a political gesture: rethinking the link between praxis and aesthetics.
- De-stigmatisation by cinema: defining film representation as a way of surpassing and overthrowing 'stigma' (Goffman, 1963).

## **SUBMISSION RULES AND CALENDAR**

All proposals (500 words maximum), written in French or English, along with a bibliography and a short biography, must be sent before 6 July 2020. The answers to these propositions will be returned by the organizers on 20 July 2020. Please submit your proposals to the following address: [margins.parisconference@gmail.com](mailto:margins.parisconference@gmail.com).

Considering the difficulty to access certain films, the conference team will try to put at any researcher's disposal required resources (on demand).

This symposium will give an important role to the communications of young researchers (doctoral and postdoctoral students). The propositions referring to a film work in particular, or analysing a limited corpus and/or delineated subject (under the form of case studies, for example) will be privileged. Finally, propositions by researchers that are not specialists on Central European or Balkan cinematography but willing to initiate a comparison with the methods of documentarists coming from other contexts are most welcomed. Transport and accommodation of the participants could be covered by the budget of the symposium, partly or entirely, depending on the financial conditions.

## INSTITUTIONS

This international symposium is organized by Sorbonne Université (Eur'Orbem), in partnership with Université Sorbonne Nouvelle – Paris 3 (IRCAV), Université Aix-Marseille (LESA), INALCO (CREE), BULAC and the Cinémathèque du documentaire (Centre Pompidou).

## SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

Jérôme Bazin (Université Paris-Est/Créteil Val-de-Marne), Nevena Daković (University of Arts, Belgrade), Kristian Feigelson (Université Sorbonne Nouvelle-Paris 3), Xavier Galmiche (Sorbonne Université), Philippe Gelez (Sorbonne Université), Martin Goutte (Sorbonne Nouvelle-Paris 3), Dina Iordanova (St Andrews University, Scotland, U.K.), Luba Jurgenson (Sorbonne Université), Tadeusz Lubelski (Uniwersytet Jagielloński, Cracovie), Andrea Pócsik (Pázmány Péter Catholic University, Budapest), Thierry Roche (Aix-Marseille Université), Sylvie Rollet (Université de Poitiers).

## ASSOCIATE RESEARCHERS

Mateusz Chmurski (Sorbonne Université), Daniel Barić (Sorbonne Université), Galina Kabakova (Sorbonne Université), Agnieszka Grudzińska (Sorbonne Université), Dunja Jelenković (Université de Versailles Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines), Anne Madelain (INALCO), Damien Marguet (Université Paris 8), Sacha Markovic (Sorbonne Université), Clément Puget (Université de Bordeaux Montaigne), Kinga Siatkowska-Callebat (Sorbonne Université), Małgorzata Smorağ-Goldberg (Sorbonne Université), Caroline Renard (Aix-Marseille Université), Ania Szczepanska (Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne), Matthias Steinle (Université Sorbonne Nouvelle-Paris 3).

## CONFERENCE TEAM

Naïma Berkane (PhD candidate, Sorbonne Université, EUR'ORBEM)

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