

A – EMPOWERMENT THESIS

SUMMARY OF THE THESIS

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B.i – EMPOWERMENT THESIS

Introduction

The empowerment thesis contains excerpts and abstracts of the main studies and papers in the domain of film studies and audiovisual studies that I have published in the past period. They reveal some academic interests that guide my research. Today in the Romanian academic landscape there is a lack of interest for the domain of film analysis operated within a cognitive framework even if one can see that abroad it has gained the position of a classical approach in film and media studies. This state of fact determines me to further continue the research in this domain and to explain to students this domain of reference.

2009. A study about the cinematographic work of the Italian director Federico Fellini

A first axis of research can be described as a cultural study and reveals the interest in the popular culture phenomenon, festive and carnival events where comic, derision, satire and ludic-obscure discourse occupies a main position. The films directed by Federico Fellini that represent a moment of reference for this cultural tradition are at the core of the analysis. The directing idea behind the research is new and was less studied in the fellinian exegesis. The cinematographic work of the Italian director is compared to the work of Francois Rabelais. We argue that a similar approach to popular culture drives the two artists. They collect and re-contextualize motifs of the popular culture in an encyclopedic text.

The study proved to be useful in order to generate conferences, round tables, workshops and film courses that introduce to the audience the motifs and symbols of the festive and carnival tradition (definitions, examples, interpretations) and a detailed analysis of their presence in the films of the Italian director. From a theoretical point of view the study introduces and applies the concept of descriptive system (a encyclopedic conceptual structure that defines a semantic domain like the „circus”, the „feast” or „festival”, „film” but also the „actor” or the „clown”). The notion is useful in order to organize a series of conceptual aspects and features of the carnival tradition manifested either in popular festivals or ceremonies or in literary, plastic, theatrical or cinematographic works. The study gives students and scholars a useful analytic tool in order to make analysis, comparative studies and interpretations.

2011. Cinematographic studies collected in the volume *Camera secundă*

The volume presents a few studies about the work of Federico Fellini. Three studies focus on the deconstructive mechanism at work in Fellini's films, the manifestation of the Renaissance doctrine of the motif of the The Three Graces and the political aspect of Fellini's films.

The second part of the book is dedicated to the analysis of the dissident interpretation of the cinematographic works of two Romanian directors : Lucian Pintilie and Mircea Daneliuc.

Several studies in the volume draft on the relationship between verbal and visual discourse in the cinematographic texts. The essay on comics indicate some elements of this analysis. Some further aspects are explored in the relationship between illustration and visual quotation of the film in the critical discourse. The quotation in the critical discourse of is not a simple illustration but a creative critical intervention; a new editing of the film, but embedded in the critical meta-discourse. From this perspective film criticism specificity can be defined as the hybrid result between verbal and visual creative writing.

2013a. Studies collected in the volume *Cinematograful postfilmic*

The studies collected in this volume are critical readings of several approaches and recent studies of film criticism. The main goal of the book was to offer to the reader an access to the diverse and complex discourse on film today. Introductory remarks on cognitive approach of film studies, the deconstructive approach of David Rodowick, the neo baroque of Hollywood popular movies of the 1990-2010 and the posthumanist perspective or the Garrett Stewart view on postfilmic cinema open some studies on mixed contemporary media. Some essays discuss the relationship between theatre and film, screen and theatrical auditorium, internet and home cinema. One complementary direction of investigation was the comment on the nonverbal aspects of theatrical, happenings and filmic experiences. Still the main framework of the critical approach is cognitive and pragmatic. In a second part I collected essays on the works of Bela Tar, Julian Pölsler, Steven Spielberg and the Romanian directors Cristi Puiu and Cristian Mungiu.

2013b. Volume about the semio-cognitive approach of film analysis

The volume represents an introduction of film analysis from a semio-cognitive approach. On one hand the semio-pragmatic model of analysis developed during the 1990 by Roger Odin in France is introduced. On the other hand further developments by classical promoters of cognitivism are explained and ordered in a systematic way (Edward Branigan, Noel Carroll, Torben Grodal, David Bordwell, Murray smith, Carl Plantiga, Grag Smith). As an element of novelty I explore the systematic notions developed by the Cognitive Grammar as it was constructed by its founder Ronald W. Langacker. I consider that many notions of CG can be useful in the film analysis and that we can propose a film grammar based on

cognitive assumptions. Fruitful insights can be obtained by the elaboration of a common semantic bridge to be established between linguistic, verbal, and visual semantic constructions. Also I revived the concept of descriptive system elaborated in the study about Fellini's cinematographic work.

2014. Investigations in the semio-cognitive analysis of cinematographic discourse (work in progress)

In order to pursue my interests in the semio-cognitive approach of film I wrote a paper about the cinematographic metaphor using the conceptual theoretical apparatus developed by the cognitive grammar. Starting from a description of conceptual metaphor, a requisite of filmic interpretation, I opened the discussion – starting from an application on the Michael Haneke film, *The Seventh Continent* – about intermedial intertextuality, performative aspects of film and a general situation of visual inside the cinematographic scopic mechanism.

A second study applies other concepts of cognitive grammar to film analysis. I can quote, as a quick reference, some concepts used: *modifier*, *complement*, *appositional structures*, *point of reference*, *control cycle* and the functional level (the *conceptualizer*) in order to pinpoint some expressive filmic syntactic expressions. Further the study proposes an analysis of the narrative levels and narrators in film using the notion of conceptualizer. The narrative levels proposed are : the experiencer (the effective level of the conceptualizer that experiments the filmic diegesis), the profiler (the epistemic level as conceived by the virtual conceptualizer of the grounding element), the cinematic narrator (the extradiegetic conceptualizer of the scenario of the discursive imaginary speech act), the extrafictional narrator (the conceptualizer of the particular discursive speech event) and the actual conceptualizer of the film's production.

B.ii – Personal development plan

The plan is organized synthetically as a sequence of general objectives that encompass an area comprising theoretical interest and practical actions. The main objective as a lecturer at CESI is to further develop my scientific experience, teaching and research in order to form specialists in the humanistic domains at CESI, and in particular in the domains of history, theory and film analysis. Furthermore a priority is the acquisition and teaching of recent theories and contemporary approaches of film studies and media.

Didactic activity is focused on the work with students. Courses using updated scientific literature (film theory, history of theories of cinema, cultural study and film history) are provided in order to enhance their level of knowledge. Also I search the improvement of students papers and written works about film. The practical and didactic activity has three chapters: the students have to be familiar with a series of often quoted films, the students have to participate in debates and communication on topics of media and film and the students have to be implied in the activity of producing, archiving and dissemination of

audiovisual material about communications and conferences organized at the doctoral school, CESI.

The personal research is directed at several works in progress or topics of interest:

- Application of research results from cognitive psychology to film analysis.
- Application of cognitive grammar notions to film analysis.
- Research on the phenomena of hybrid discourses – intermedial discourses – produced by the use of new technologies and communication platforms, but also blendings of theatre and film.
- Narrative analysis in film.
- Contemporary film.
- Carnival and festive traditions in film.

Finally research is conjugated with didactic activity such that students are encouraged to participate to the effort of understanding cognitive aspects of film and to actively participate in debates around different media topics. Besides collective volumes organizing international conferences and seminars will provide a plus of interest, excellence and implication from the young generation of students.

B.iii – SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Selected bibliography consists of volumes and articles from the domain of interest that are to be studied: film, cognitive science and language. I quoted a series of other bibliographical references in the chapter about *Empowerment Thesis – B (i)* at the end of the studies resumes.