

J. Marek Haltof, Department of English
Faculty Research Grant: Final Report
14 October 2019

Book Project Title: Screen as Battlefield: Contested Memories in Central European Cinema after 1989

Project Abstract: My intention is to produce a book about Central European film industries (Czech, Hungarian, Polish, and Slovak) after the 1989 transition to democracy. More specifically, I plan to examine how filmmakers in that region have represented some important aspects of the last century's complex history.

For years, historical subjects have attracted a number of leading filmmakers whose struggles with communist censorship were frequently as absorbing as their completed films. Subjects previously banned or altered by censors can now be represented on screen. In recent years, however, the screen has become a battleground of memory; different political factions try to enforce their vision of the past through selective funding and political pressure.

My proposed book examines several seminal films that received international awards, including Oscars, such as *Son of Saul* (2015, Hungary), *Ida* (2013, Poland), *Burning Bush* (2013, Czech Republic) and *I, Olga* (2016, Czech-Slovak). I have approached several publishers informally about my project, and Berghahn Books, one of the leading academic publishers on Central European issues and the publisher of two of my earlier books, has expressed an interest in my proposal. I am confident that I can secure a book contract at a later date.

Project and Related Activities

1. In the spring of 2018, relying on online sources/archives and utilizing materials from my previous research trips to Poland, I started outlining the first chapters of my planned book.
2. In May 2018, I travelled to Poland to visit libraries and archives. During the same visit, I also acted as a Visiting Professor at the University of Silesia (Poland), Faculty of Arts and Education in Cieszyn. I delivered a series of eleven lectures/seminars (ranging from 2.5 to 6 hours) on various aspects of Polish, American, and Australian film industries.
3. In June 2018, I presented a conference paper at Columbia University in New York (The Harriman Institute) on "The Treatment of History in Wojciech Smarzowski's Cinema: *Unbearably Brutal yet Hauntingly Romantic.*"
4. In mid-September of 2018, I participated in the Festival of Polish Films in Gdynia, Poland (16-22). The festival program includes the annual feature Polish film production, film retrospectives, seminars on Polish films and filmmakers, events promoting newly released scholarly books on cinema, press conferences with filmmakers, and specialized seminars (e.g., workshops with film practitioners). This year, for the first time, it also included a one-day conference on Polish historical cinema. I actively participated in this conference, which is organized by the Polish Society Film and Media Studies (I am a member of this academic organization).
5. In mid-September (Gdynia Film Festival) once again I participated in the Gdynia Film Festival where I had a presentation related to my recently published book, *Polish Cinema: A History* (2019).

PUBLICATIONS (appearing during the grant period)

Books

Screening Auschwitz: Wanda Jakubowska's The Last Stage and the Politics of Commemoration (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2018 (202 pp)).

Polish Cinema: A History (New York: Berghahn Books, 2019 (505 pp)).

Essays/Book Chapters

“Film-świadecko, film-dokument: *Ostatni etap* (1948) Wandy Jakubowskiej” [Film/Testimony, Film/Document: Wanda Jakubowska's *The Last Stage* (1948)]. In *Wizualne źródła w badaniach nad historią kina polskiego* [Visual Sources in Researching Polish Cinema], ed. by Piotr Zwierzchowski. Bydgoszcz: Bydgoszcz University Press, 2018: 119-127.

“The Casualty of Jewish Polish Polemics: Revisiting Andrzej Wajda's *Korczak* (1990),” *Studia Filmoznawcze* 39 (2018): 53-66 [Polish/English language edition of academic journal *Film Studies*, published by the Wrocław University Press, Poland].

“*Rosemary's Baby*, Roman Polanski, and the Horror Genre,” submitted book chapter, forthcoming in Spanish translation in 2020.

Book Reviews

Grzegorz Rogowski, *Skazane na zapomnienie. Polskie aktorki filmowe na emigracji* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Muza, 2017). *The Polish Review* 64, no. 1 (2019): 79-81.

Annette Insdorf, *Intimations: The Cinema of Wojciech Has* (Evanston, Ill: Northwestern University Press, 2017). *The Polish Review* 66 (forthcoming 2020).

Conference Presentations

2019 Seventh World Congress on Polish Studies. University of Gdańsk and PIASA (Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences), Gdańsk, Poland. Paper (in English): “Revisiting Krzysztof Kieślowski's European Art Films: *The Double Life of Veronique* and *Three Colors Trilogy*.”

2019 Polish Society for Film and Media Studies (PTBFM) Third Conference, University of Lodz, Poland. Paper (in Polish): “*Ida* (2013) in America: On the Promotion and Reception of Paweł Pawlikowski's Oscar-winning film.”

2018 Columbia University (The Harriman Institute) and PIASA, New York. Paper: *The Treatment of History in Wojciech Smarzowski's Cinema: “Unbearably Brutal yet Hauntingly Romantic.”*

Invited Presentations

- 2018 University of Southern California. Invited keynote speaker (October 2018). Two 50-minute presentations at the *Memory Through Screen: Polish Cinema and World War 2* conference: (1) “The Most Important Polish Film? *The Last Stage (Ostatni etap, 1948)*,” (2) “Representations of World War 2 in Contemporary Polish Cinema.”
- 2018 University of Silesia (Poland), Faculty of Arts and Education in Cieszyn. Visiting Professor (May 2018). A series of 11 lectures/seminars (ranging from 2.5 hours to 6 hours) on various aspects of Polish, American, and Australian film industries.

Other Academic Activities

- In 2018, I joined the advisory/academic board of scholarly Polish journal, *Narracje o Zagładzie* [Narrations of the Holocaust] (University of Silesia, Poland, 2018–).
- In October 2018, I delivered two presentations (1-hour each) in Calgary, invited by the Polish Canadian Cultural Center. Topics: “History of Polish Cinema before the Return of Democracy (1989)” and “The New Polish Cinema.”

Expenditures:

- Travel, Research Trip to Poland in May 2018, \$2,210.99
- Travel, Gdynia Film Festival, September 2018, \$2,839.70
- Travel, Gdynia Film Festival, September 2019, \$1949.31, (the remaining cost was covered by the AAUP funds)

TOTAL:

\$6,999.00

I would like to use this opportunity to thank NMU for the financial assistance, which has been always acknowledged in my books.

Please let me know if you require more information.

Sincerely,

J. Marek Haltof
Professor, English Department

Cc: Dr. Lynn Domina, Head, English Department
Dr. Robert Winn, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
Dr. Lisa Eckert, Assistant Provost, Graduate Education and Research
Erica Lynn Goff, Director, Grants and Research