

Ilya Tsibets, MA

Summary of the Doctoral Dissertation titled: *Identity Narratives in the Cinema of the Baltic States*

This doctoral dissertation is an attempt to explore contemporary cinematographies of the Baltic countries (i.e., Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia) in light of my formulated concept of film identity narratives. The primary research objective of the dissertation is to demonstrate the functionality of the aforementioned concept for analyzing the Baltic States' cinematographies since their re-institutionalization. This is the first scientific monograph on this topic in Polish humanities.

The realization of the research objective required recognizing the genesis and structure of such narratives based on appropriately selected scientific methodologies derived from various fields of the humanities. Therefore, the dissertation is inherently interdisciplinary. The theoretical basis of the titular concept is formed by combining Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutic approach to narrative identity, Hayden White's metahistorical and historiophotical reflections, and references to broadly understood narratology (with particular emphasis on the concepts of Mieke Bal and Robert Birkholc). Identity narratives can be defined as paradigmatic constructs that articulate a cognitive or hermeneutic understanding of oneself as part of a larger community and/or reality. In the context of the described dissertation, these are media constructs represented through the filmic means of expression.

The methodology of the work is enriched by theories from the field of memory studies, particularly the reflections of Jan and Aleida Assmann or Astrid Erll. The extraction of the identity-forming character of the studied film narratives was correlated with film studies reflections (David Bordwell's neoformal analysis method) and institutional analysis. A valuable theoretical supplement that expands the set of research tools and the analytical context of the work are references to research by Lithuanian, Latvian, and Estonian scientists in the fields of film, literature, culture, and history, which is particularly important for outlining a postcolonial perspective on the studied cinematographies. The work also abounds in cultural and historical references concerning the studied geopolitical/geocultural area, which facilitate the implementation of the basic methodological assumptions during the analyses and expand the research context.

The doctoral dissertation consists of an introduction, three chapters containing the basic methodological and analytical assumptions as well as the film analyses themselves, and a

conclusion followed by a list of utilized scientific sources in the form of a bibliography and netography, as well as a list of cited or analyzed films in the form of a filmography.

In the introduction, the objectives and assumptions of the work are presented, as well as the research inspirations of the author, stemming from years of interest in this geopolitical and cultural area.

The first chapter contains the description of the fundamental methodological apparatus of the work based on the aforementioned concepts, including the previously mentioned theories (by Paul Ricoeur, Hayden White, Mieke Bal, Robert Birkholc, David Bordwell, and others). In this chapter, based on the theories of the mentioned scholars, the basic operational concept of the work, namely the concept of film identity narratives, is described and characterized.

The second chapter serves as a complement to the assumptions included in the first chapter and simultaneously provides a unique elaboration of the institutional profiles of the Lithuanian, Latvian, and Estonian cinematographies from a memory-forming perspective (with reference to the Assmanns' considerations on individual and collective memory and the memory-forming function of media by Astrid Erll). Besides theories from the field of memory studies, the findings of this chapter relate to regulations and statistical data from the film institutes of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. In this chapter, descriptions of memory-forming practices are provided using the example of the film institutes' programs dedicated to the centenary of independence of these countries celebrated in 2018. Additionally, the chapter contains the criteria for selecting films analyzed in the subsequent chapter for their identity-forming narrative potential, which is inextricably linked to the institutional dimension of film production and culture in the Baltic States.

The third chapter is an analytical chapter containing multidimensional analyses of selected film works produced in the Baltic region (including international co-productions). The analyses are based on the methodological apparatus formulated in the first chapter, enriched with reflections on the role of institutional practices in the film sector in the context of collective identity practices. The chapter includes analyses of over thirty films that demonstrate the functionality of the methodological concept proposed in the earlier parts of the dissertation. At the same time, these analyses illustrate the close relationship between identity narratives and institutional practices in the area of film production and film culture.

The conclusion summarizes the theoretical assumptions and results of the film analyses contained in the previous chapters, confirming the prevalence of identity narratives in Lithuanian, Latvian, and Estonian cinema. The hypothesis about the applicability of the methodological apparatus used in the work for multidimensional analyses of historical film narratives has been verified and confirmed.