

Abstract (EN)

The habilitation thesis *Aesthetic Criticism, Ideological Criticism: Explorations and Points of Contact*, submitted at the Doctoral School of the National University of Theatre and Film "I. L. Caragiale" – Bucharest, is composed of three parts.

The first section offers an account of my development as an academic since 2004. While not neglecting my other academic activities – my teaching, my involvement with Romanian translations of classic film books (André Bazin, James Naremore) – the account centers on the development of my interests as a critic and scholar. The starting point is the doctoral research I conducted between 2008 and 2011. The resulting thesis and the 2012 book based on it amounted to a historically informed exploration of the relevance of Bazinian theory in discussions of the New Romanian Cinema (NRC) aesthetic. Since it constituted the first book-length attempt (in any language) at a theorization of the NRC (a very recent and still ongoing phenomenon at the time), the book aroused significant interest: it remains my most cited work on Google Scholar (45 citations as of April 2023); at the time of its publication it was also widely reviewed and debated in the non-academic cultural press. Here I briefly summarize that 2012-2013 debate and my subsequent – 2014-2019 – efforts at bridging aesthetic and ideological criticism. Those efforts resulted in two edited collections of essays: the first – on the NRC – brought together auteurist surveys of individual oeuvres, exercises in stylistic analysis, and ideological readings; the second – on the Romanian cinema of the pre-NRC decade (which was also Romania's first postcommunist decade) – offered a similar mix, adding studies of institutions, of the mechanisms of financing Romanian films, etc. (My co-editor on the first collection was Andrei State; my co-editor on the second was Gabriela Filippi.) During the same period, my preoccupation as a film critic with finding a balance between the analysis of form and the analysis of ideology produced two other books. The first juxtaposed the NRC with another model of cinema – a more political cinema – built on long takes: Hungarian director Miklós Jancsó's work from the 1960s and 1970s. The second was a collection of studies and polemics from the 2010s, amounting to an account of my own formation as a critic, and also to an interrogation of the current state of the discipline.

This first section ends with a short presentation of the 2023 book *Beyond the New Romanian Cinema: Romanian Culture, History, and the Films of Radu Jude*, co-authored with Veronica Lazăr, soon to be published by Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu Press.

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The monograph on Jude is part of a larger project which I delineate in the second section of the habilitation thesis: an effort at mapping what I consider to be the transition of the Romanian cinema, during the last 10 years or so, from the NRC to a post-NRC era.

Finally, in the third section I revisit some of the explorations – into the political dimension of film style – which took up a sizable part of my 2010s

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