

Transnational cinema of Agnieszka Holland

Agnieszka Holland is the most internationally recognized Polish filmmaker. In her native Poland her popularity is not only due to her film and television work but also her activity in media and publicly expressed political radicalism. Although her public persona is created at the intersection of cinema, television, and political activism, the existing research on her output has not established this complexity of her activities as an object of systemic analysis. The three Polish monographs of Agnieszka Holland, although written from different interpretive positions, remain within the traditional paradigm of research on film authorship, which does not provide adequate research methods and tools to examine her work. International research on her creative output does not present satisfactory analysis of it either. Although she is one of the most active female filmmakers and predominant part of her work are transnational projects, contemporary research on women's cinema and transnational cinema either ignores her work or only mentions it briefly. There is a significant gap in contemporary research on Holland in both Polish and international film and media studies that needs to be filled up. The proposed project will undertake this task.

The proposed research program aims at examining Agnieszka Holland's films and television works within three main theoretical frameworks: the concept of authorship in film and media, transnational film and media culture, and global women's cinema and its correspondence with transnational feminism. These three theoretical frameworks will help to chart a concrete and nuanced approach to Agnieszka Holland's large and complex body of work. The point of departure for the analyses will be explanation of the impasse of using traditional concept of authorship in relation to Holland's work. Holland's films and television projects do not offer stylistic and semantic consistency and, thus, they do not fit the traditional concept of authorship. However, her work is still ascribed to an authorial agency which, however, is not established by immanency of her works but a chain of decision making in relation to proceeding with her film and television projects as well as performing her authorship in public space.

To break out of the impasse of using traditional concept of authorship in relation to Holland's work, the project will examine its alternative modes being constituted by thematic and stylistic dispersion rather than consistency. In order to contribute to the research in the field of transnational cinema and media, the project will analyse the noticeable evolution of Holland's work from politically determined migration to economically conditioned transnational projects. Analysis of her work from the perspective of women's cinema will demonstrate necessity of critical reconsideration of transnational feminism that in its current form has developed predominantly within the field of postcolonial studies with a noticeable marginalization of Eastern European (also cinematic) experience. My most original contribution lies in the attempt to go beyond limitations of both global (Western) and local (Polish, or Eastern-European) discourses on transnational women's film and media production.

The main product of this research project will be the first full-length monograph of Agnieszka Holland in English published in an international academic publisher and two full-length articles published in international peer-reviewed journals. Its original approach to the problem of authorship will be a significant contribution to Polish film studies, whereas its importance for international research lies in redressing the absence of Eastern European production in academic discourse.