

Mgr Marta Kasprzak

Paris – the imagined city as an object of the tourist, immigrant and post-nostalgic gaze.

Analysis of selected feature films produced after 1995

The main aim of my doctoral dissertation is to distinguish three different film strategies of representing the urban space of Paris by applying the theories of the tourist, immigrant and post-nostalgic gaze. Each of them produces a conventionalized image of “the capital of the world” – the imagined city (Bronisław Baczek, *Wyobrażenia społeczne: szkice o nadziei i pamięci zbiorowej*), which is based on the topography of Paris that does objectively exist, but is strongly transformed by consistently used film means of expression. Since all these strategies are characterized by internal homogeneity of iconography, narrative solutions and types of characters, I have decided to illustrate my thesis with a limited set of film examples. The case study method is aimed at emphasizing the analogies between films representing a specific type of the gaze, produced in various countries over more than two decades. As I argue in the following chapters, the past twenty-five years have not brought any radical changes within above-mentioned strategies; subsequent films do not deconstruct, but preserve the conventional images of Paris, which have grown on the ground of literature and visual arts (Roger Caillois, *Paryż, mit współczesny*).

The paradigm of the tourist gaze (John Urry, *Spojrzenie turysty*; Tom Selwyn, *The Tourist Image Myths and Myth Making in Tourism*; Sue Beeton, *Film-Induced Tourism*), which is the foundation of the film studies analysis included in the first chapter, allows me to indicate the distinctive features of films set in Paris, where urban space is portrayed in accordance with the dominant mode of tourist experience. The iconography of the films that I analyze in the second chapter in the context of the immigrant gaze includes neglected housing estates with no common areas, distant from the center of the metropolis both geographically and, above all, culturally; Parisian suburbs are consistently portrayed as specific ghettos whose inhabitants live not only on the margins of the city, but also of the society (Adrian Fiedler, *Poaching on Public Space: Urban Autonomous Zones in French Banlieue Films*; Dayna Oscherwitz, *Past Forward: French Cinema and the Post-Colonial Heritage*; Ginette Vincendeau, *La haine*). The phenomenon of mediatized memory is the essential component of films, which I discuss in the last chapter as typical examples of the post-nostalgic gaze (Vivian P. Y. Lee, *Hong Kong Cinema Since 1997: The Post-Nostalgic Imagination*); their common feature is the longing for an idealized

and medialized image of the city (mostly realized by embedding the film story within the self-referential discourse, which recollects the canon of French culture).

The multitude of publications dedicated to the medialized images of Paris and the interdisciplinarity of the approaches that characterize it, which place the research within such disciplines as film studies, media studies, cultural studies, sociology, philosophy and social geography, may indicate the impossibility of conducting further research (or the ability to update it only on the basis of recent cultural texts). In the course of getting acquainted with the current state of film studies research and attempting to systematize applied methodologies, I diagnosed the loophole in a comprehensive study of an important issue, which is the imaginary image of Paris mediated through the cinema industry (which continues the strategies within the arts preceding the birth of the cinema). Therefore, due to transferring the theory of the tourist gaze to the film studies discipline and developing subsequent modes of the immigrant and post-nostalgic gaze, I supplement the current state of research on media representations of Paris with three strategies for creating its cinematic image, based on the concept of the imagined city.