

OSA Visegrad Fellowship March/April 2020  
Gendering and Decolonizing the “Patriarchive”.  
New focuses on Peter Forgács’s works

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In this research my initial aim was to reveal the function of some recently opened OSA holdings, the audio interviews with amateur filmmakers and / or their family members and the original amateur footages in the works of Péter Forgács. I intended to use a new approach namely comparing the gender and power relations in the original footages and the documentaries thus examining the patriarchive (the results of the originally male dominated filmmaking as memory places).

In my modified research question, I put larger stress on the changing role of the archive itself and the analyses of the Forgács-material became crucial examples that shed light on this transformation. I would like to point out the growing importance of moving images and the new critical method of archiveology (a term defined by Catherine Russell, my crucial reference) in approaching the archive not just as “an image bank from which collective memories can be retrieved. The archive as a mode of transmission offers a unique means of displaying and accessing historical memory, with significant implications for the ways that we imagine cultural history” (Russell, 2018:2).

During the research I was examining parallelly the Forgács-works and mapping the related theories. I will describe and summarize these connected elements separately and at the end of my report, in future perspectives interpret them together.

Concerning the research process first I examined the catalogue and searched for material where the audio interviews with the filmmaker and/or the family members, the original amateur footages and the documentaries made by Forgács are at disposal. (To my opinion, this is a rather unique opportunity: in most cases researchers can use such background material only with special permissions.) Thus, I was able to reveal the three layers of found-footage films: *origin, context, use* (Ebbrecht-Hartmann 2016).

For mapping the state of the art, I identified a few crucial scientific terrains (and their overlapping fields):

- archiveology / archival studies
- memory / trauma studies
- gender studies
- film studies.

Dagmar Brunow film historian points out “the theoretical shift from the notion of the ‘archive’ to the process of ‘archiving’” and the paradigmatic turn from the storage of knowledge to its production, and the new role of the archivist. „Archivists are therefore agents who can contribute to renegotiating audiovisual memory—they do not determine, but can influence whether it will be perpetuated or subverted.” (Brunow 2019:101)

Deeply influenced by the Derridean understanding of the archive I took the researcher-archivist role on myself and tried to place the rich research material in a new interpretational framework: gendering and decolonizing the patriarchive.

Catherine Russell argues: „From the perspective of the early twenty-first century, we can certainly add a long list of humanist inequities that desperately need to be redressed through techniques of awakening, *détournement*, and remediation. However, given the deep-seated gendering of twentieth-century image culture and the systematicity of misogyny within its archive, the most urgent and immediate mode of awakening pertains perhaps to the *détournement* of woman’s image. Such an awakening would aim at a restoration of women’s subjectivity, agency, and labor in the construction of the phantasmagoria. To think of awakening as a technique and not simply a theme or a metaphor, we need to perform a dialectical reading of the image through archiveology as a language of image history.”

I could work out three case studies examining the function of the woman informants and their personal narratives in Péter Forgács’s artistic activity, the surprising importance of the woman interviewer, Judit Scherter.

Józsefné Jeszenszky, the author and main character of the *Notes of a Lady* (Private Hungary 8, 1994) told about the circumstances of her amateur filmmaker practice. Dr. Katalin Pető, psychiatrist revealed the traumas of the World War II in her family saga and the influence the previously unseen pre-war footages made on her (*Free Fall*, Private Hungary 10, 1996 and *Class Lot*, Private Hungary 11, 1997). Nándorné Andrásovits the ex-wife of Captain Andrásovits contextualized the amateur footages of the *Danube Exodus* (1998).

Analysing the connections between the interviews, amateur footages and documentaries, previously underrecognized stories were discovered that enrich our knowledge not just about this material, the exceptional oeuvre of Péter Forgács but the functioning of the archive itself. Placing it in the interpretational framework of memory and trauma studies, applying the critical method of archiveology this knowledge is an important contribution to film studies, developing further the notion of the “pensive spectator” of the “delayed cinema” (Laura Mulvey) empowered with the empathy mode, the attitude toward the past that is urgently needed in our post memory age (Aleida Assmann).

These new visions hopefully open new futures and can also contribute to critical archival pedagogy, to the education of engaged students empowered with critical understanding of the world.

This work is still in process: I will continue revealing other records looking for new aspects, new relations.

### Planned publication and presentation of the research:

*Alphaville: Journal of Film and Screen Media*, Summer 2021 (Issue 21) dedicated to the theme of Cinema and Memory – Issue Editor: Gwenda Young, University College Cork

14 October 2020: Webseminar for doctoral students and university lecturers at Linnaeus University, Centre for Intermedial and Multimodal Studies (invited by Prof. Dagmar Brunow)

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Audio interview	Informant	Amateur film	Documentary
320-1-3-094	Jeszenszky Józsefné Katalin	320-1-2: 149 074_dvd_05.mp4 320-1-2: 150 074_dvd_08.mp4 320-1-2: 150 075_dvd_01.mp4 320-1-2: 150 075_dvd_02. mp4 320-1-2: 150 075_dvd_03.mp4 320-1-2: 151 075_dvd_04.mp4 320-1-2: 151 075_dvd_05.mp4 320-1-2: 151 075_dvd_06.mp4	<i>Egy úrinő noteszából</i> (Privát Magyarország 8)
320-1-3-085 320-1-3-086	Ravasz Éva	-	320-1-4:17/1 A <i>püspök kertje</i> (Privát Magyarország 14)
320-1-3-093	Dudás Lászlóné Dudás László	320-1-2:39/2 320-1-2-041 320-1-2-042 320-1-2-043 320-1-2:40/2, 320-1-2:41/1, 320-1-2:48/2, 320-1-2:49/1, 320-1-2:50/1, 320-1-2:51/1, 320-1-2:52/1, 320-1-2:53/1, 320-1-2:55/2, 320-1-2:61/3, 320-1-2:63/2	<i>D-Film</i> (Privát Magyarország 5.) <i>Fényképezte: Dudás László</i> (Privát Magyarország 6.)
320-1-3-109 320-1-3-112 320-1-3-126	Pető Katalin	320-1-2:182/1, 320-1-2:183/1, 320-1-2:184/1, 320-1-2:203/2, 320-1-2:204/1, 320-1-2:331/1, 320-1-2:332/1, 320-1-2:333/1, 320-1-2:382/1, 320-1-2:271/2, 320-1-2:277/1, 320-1-2:278/1,	<i>Az örvény</i> (Privát Magyarország 10), <i>Osztályorsjegy</i> (Privát Magyarország 11)

		320-1-2:398/1, 320-1-2:399/1, 320-1-2:401/1, 320-1-2:438/1	
320-1-3:16/1 320-1-3-016 320-1-3:17/1 320-1-3-017	Kemény György édesanyja	320-1-2:137/2, 320-1-2:141/2, 320-1-2:153/3	-
320-1-3:140/1 320-1-3-140 320-1-3:141/1 320-1-3-141 320-1-3:142/1 320-1-3-142 320-1-3:142/3 320-1-3-142	néhai Andrásovits Nándorné	320-1-2:167/1, 320-1-2:175/2, 320-1-2:176/1, 320-1-2:177/1, 320-1-2:350/2, 320-1-2:351/2, 320-1-2:352/1, 320-1-2:353/3, 320-1-2:361/1	<i>A dunai exodus</i>