

## Questionnaire:

### 1) Quality of the project proposal

#### 1a) Originality, scientific importance, prospects of the project and expected benefits of the project for research

The project contributes to the ongoing shift in film studies from national film histories to transnational (i.e. European) histories. These changes have been particularly important for a reassessment of East European cinemas as both Central European cinemas and Cold War cinemas. In Europe, these projects often have an empirical, quantitative orientation based in media studies rather than the kind of Anglo-American film studies with its emphasis on formal analyses and theoretical inquiry. Given these methodological differences, I see the relevance of the proposed project as an important contribution to Czech and German film history but, in its methodological contribution, limited to European research contexts.

#### 1b) Preparation of the project proposal, aim of the project and proposed deliverables

The project is well conceived in terms of its multi-year time line and its proposed deliverables. There are conference presentations, peer-reviewed articles, collaborations, and a planned anthology. I have no doubt that all of this can be accomplished; the schedule is realistic and doable.

#### 1c) Concept, methodology and timeline

Focusing on the period of the Nazi occupation of Czechoslovakia, Skopal proposes to examine changes in film production and distribution and consider the effects of cultural transfer in exhibition practices and patterns of reception. This includes examining the transfer of generic formulas (melodrama, homeland film) from Nazi cinema to Czech cinema (e.g., through the films produced by the Nazi-run Prag-Film); it also entails documenting the propagation of general notions of cinema in cultural and political publications and reconstructing reception pattern through film reviews in the German and Czech trade press as well as SD (secret police) reports and personal recollections.

The overall quality of the project proposal can be rated as:

Average - B
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### 2) The applicant(s) and his/their publication level

Dr. Skopal has an impressive record as a young film historian who has worked primarily on East European cinema in a transnational context. Most of his publications can be located in a growing subfield of European film studies concerned with questions of reception. He has extensive international experience and collaborated repeatedly with colleagues in Germany and Belgium. His research trajectory is distinguished by an impressive thematic focus on the history of Czech cinema from a comparative perspective (e.g., with the GDR, now with the Third Reich), and I have no doubt that he will be able to produce the deliverables identified in the proposal.

The qualification of the applicant(s), his/their publication level can be rated as:

Very good - A2
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## Overall commentary on the project proposal:

### a) Strengths of the project proposal:

Skopal is a film historian with a strong empiricist bend and a preference for quantitative methods. An earlier case study on Brno film culture will allow him to make optimal use of the data already collected and put him on a good track toward completion. Moreover, the applicant is well versed in the current research on European film history that favors comparative methods and transnational approaches.

### b) Weaknesses of the project proposal:

The proposal has three main weaknesses:

--a rather undeveloped concept of cultural transfer that fails to take into account the unequal relationship between German occupier and Czech occupied. This power imbalance has profound implications on the conditions of production, the promotion of certain genres, and the definition of popular/national/European cinema in what Skopal calls "the discursive appropriation of ideological concepts."

--insufficient attention to the kind of qualitative issues (of film form and style) covered in the proposal under the category of "representation." It remains unclear whether the proposal includes sample analyses of individual films (and, if yes, which ones).

--a puzzling vagueness in the conceptualization of the entire project. While there are extensive references to the existing transnational film scholarship, the proposal does not include a single name of a producer, director, or star, and it does not mention any specific films, agencies, or newspapers.

### c) General comments:

--I recommend that the applicant redefine/clarify the concept of cultural transfer and, in addition to the unequal relationship mentioned above, take the following factors into account:

1. the influence on German and Czech cinema of Hollywood as a dominant mode of production and exhibition and a dominant model of classical narrative/genre cinema. With German and Czech cinemas also defining themselves against the dominance of Hollywood, cultural transfer should be conceptualized more in the form of a triangulation than a simple comparison.

2. the function of cinema in the context of media convergence: cultural transfer in cinema culture often takes place through other cultural forms, including literature and music. For instance, think of the role of operetta or regional literature in facilitating cultural transfers within and between national cinemas during the period in question. Here better contextualization could generate a much more interesting data set and generate more interesting findings.