＜研究ノート＞

Organizing and Running a Film Society Discussion Course

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Abstract

This paper aims at helping cinema afficienados interested in launching film societies, film festivals, or film studies extension courses gain insight into how to organize and structure such a course. Three examples are presented, starting with *Classic Japanese Cinema* (fall/winter, 2009/2010). The other two courses were *The Movies Go to War* (spring, 2010) and *Cinema Behind the Iron Curtain* (fall, 2010). As it would appear that classic global cinema has the strong propensity to expand in the future, and its availability has become unquestionably more widespread, the instructor hopes to identify and highlight successful points in his university program so that future organizers have a model as a point of reference for starting a similar such course.

Keywords: Global cinema, film studies, European cinema, war cinema, Japanese classic cinema.

OVERVIEW

From the autumn of 2009, the first in a series of film discussion courses began at Tsukuba Gakuin University. The first in the series was entitled, "Classic Japanese Cinema in English." As a public extension course, the main purpose of the course was to gather a diverse group of people from the university environs to watch films of renown and then discuss them. As an extension course, naturally it was hoped that the course would draw attention to the university, serving as an indirect form of publicity.

Following two successful terms, the series appears to have evolved into an ongoing course, something akin to a film society. In the opinion of the organizer (hereafter referred to as the instructor,) it is a function that is ideal for either a library or a university to carry out (in this sense, the university library plays a strong role in the success of this program, as will be discussed later in this paper.) The program also appears to satisfy the participants' zeal for continuing education, and lends the illusion of adding breadth to the university's limited, and increasingly desiccating, academic offerings.

The aim of this paper is to explain the structure of the courses in the public extension film series, highlight some of the activities carried out, and offer insight to any educator considering launching a similar such program at the public level.

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It should be noted that the course grew out of a similar program held a decade back, when the organizer showed films openly on Thursday evenings to anybody in the community who was interested. The aim of the course was to show films that were seldom made available at that time, particularly non-American films. Since Tsukuba Gakuin University (Tsukuba Women's University, by its former name) had a department of international studies, it made sense, in the late 1990s, to show films from countries that enjoyed small to no footholds in the global cinema market. In other words, the main aim of that course was to offer exposure to little known, but noteworthy works.

To attract a multinational group, the films were shown in their original languages with English subtitles. At the time, the films were attended well by both Japanese and non-Japanese locals. Most often, approximately 60% of the audience was comprised of non-Japanese, though discussion was often limited in the classroom due to time restrictions. Films were shown in their entirety, leaving time only for brief comments following the end of each work.

Using this program as a springboard, which was not a course, but a sort of film society/film series, it was decided that a fixed course requiring consistent attendance might appeal to extension students more strongly.

COURSE I: CLASSIC JAPANESE CINEMA

The aims of *Classic Japanese Cinema* were multi-fold. First, it was hoped that non-Japanese participants could enjoy samples of Japan's cinematic excellence even if they were unable to speak or understand Japanese. This was foremost among the reasons for holding the course. As can be seen from a quick glance over the scheduled films, the instructor intended initially to share a variety of films by Japanese "master" directors. Ironically, however, few foreign participants came to the first course, though this was the target audience. Most of those who signed up were Japanese.

The second aim of the course was to give participants a chance to exchange views and ideas on the films. Again, the aim was not really met, in that several of the Japanese participants appeared to have enrolled in the course not for its content, but for language practice. This was not the instructor's intention, so the classes were structured so as to dissuade participants from coming for this reason, though language interaction in English could certainly have been called a by-product of attendance.

Three participants who had come hoping to focus on language study dropped out of the course soon after it started. One, in fact, began attending a language course held at the same time across the corridor. This course was called "Beginners' English."

Finally, the instructor hoped to stimulate literary discussion in some form, which was yet another major aim of the course. Given a current preference or emphasis on visual stimuli, it was decided that film might be better than literature in the form of books or stories, though it should be noted that a literature-based discussion course was also opened in October, 2010.

Scheduled Films

The course was held every Thursday evening, 7:00–9:00. At the outset, the following works were scheduled or offered: *Sisters of the Gion* (Mizoguchi, 1936); *Ugetsu* (Mizoguchi, 1954); *When a Woman*

Ascends the Stairs (Naruse, 1960); *Late Spring* (Ozu, 1949); *The Burmese Harp* (Ichikawa, 1957); *Ikiru* (Kurosawa, 1954); and *Good Morning* (Ozu, 1959). It was decided, however, to poll the participants during the first class and eliminate any film that had been seen by too many, as one objective of the program was to expose the audience to works with which it was not familiar.

Furthermore, the instructor had planned initially to end the class each week based on the length of the film. In other words, for a two-hour film, the class might last two and a half hours after allowing for discussion. It was discovered that this would not be possible due to university policy, and since discussion was one of the important undertakings of the course, the instructor altered the intended procedure for the course based on these conditions. It was decided that most of the films would be broken into two parts so as to allow for discussion within the allotted time frame.

The Actual Schedule

Ultimately, the number of films that could be seen was markedly different from the intended slate: *The Sisters of the Gion, Late Spring, Ikiru,* and *When a Woman Ascends the Stairs* were the four films that could be completed. No film was shown at the first session. On the second evening, *The Sisters of the Gion*, just 66 minutes in length, could be shown in its entirety. All of the other films were divided into two parts, with review and discussion taking place before the start of Part II in the case of all three films.

This was not viewed as a drawback; it means that half of the course could be postponed cleanly to the following year to serve as a sequel to the first. (The second group of films was shown in the winter of 2011.)

Presentation

Though several short film-based presentations were planned for each week, the amount of discussion sought by participants ruled out most of them. The aim of the presentations was to deepen appreciation for certain aspects of the film world. Some dealt directly with the course content: “The Japanese Masters” (an overview of the works of Kenji Mizoguchi, Mikio Naruse, Yasujiro Ozu, Akira Kurosawa and Kon Ichikawa) was shown over the course of the first four weeks, in accordance with the film chosen for each director. In the case of Ichikawa, clips from his works were shown during the first week. The presentation was structured quite simply: Clips from four of his films were shown in sequence. The audience was then asked to comment on the four clips. Only after talking about them were they told that the clips had come from works by the same director (the films were all from very different genre). The main point was that Japanese directors tend to get pigeon-holed or stereotyped; Ichikawa’s diversity and virtuosity were clearly displayed through this short presentation. These traits seem to be overlooked frequently in Japanese film directors.

Other presentations dealt with relevant or tangential topics. One such topic was “The Lubitsch Touch” defined as, “a style characterized by a parsimonious compression of ideas and situations into single shots or brief scenes that provide an ironic key to the characters and to the meaning of the entire film.” (Katz, p. 852) As academic work on the various directors identified Ernst Lubitsch repeatedly as having had an influence on Japanese directors, it was decided that some of his work be shown,

and some of his techniques, such as the ellipse, explained. Other aspects of Lubitsch's work were explored, such as the opening to one film:

> "*What Lubitsch and (Sam) Raphaelson finally came up with was the famous opening where the singer of a glorius operatic air turns out to be a trash collector. Even in glorious, romantic Venice, someone has to pick up the garbage, but this being Venice- and Lubitsch- they must do it with panache. This sardonic undercutting of the ordinary is perhaps the quintessential "Lubitsch touch," but the director was careful not to overdo a good thing.*" (Eymen, p. 190)

Lubitsch worked extremely cooperatively with Sam Raphaelson to craft the scripts for many of his films. Collaboration, too, was critical to the success of many of the Japanese masters. Kon Ichikawa, for example, relied on Natto Wada for his finest scripts. "That she was responsible for many of the excellent qualities of Ichikawa's films is evident in a certain decline in their quality after her death." (Richie, p. 152.) Ozu, as well, worked closely with Kogo Noda, in addition to using a regular cameraman. It would seem that Kurosawa, too, could have much of his success credited to his cinematographer.

One further example of the Lubitsch touch came in *Ninotchka*, another of his renowned films. "*The transition of the commissars from loyal apparatchiks to sybarites is effortlessly visualized by dissolving from their battered head-warmers on a rack to their shiny bowlers and top hats on the same rack.*" (Eyman, p. 272)

For many reasons, this presentation on Lubitsch was important to the series. It provided enlightenment on a common source of inspiration for Japanese directors of yore.

Discussion

Perhaps the most intriguing and in-depth discussion came after watching the 1949 classic, *Late Spring*. Not only were cinematographic techniques discussed, such as the famed Ozu "tatami shot" and his disdain for dissolves, but the story, too, and culture came under lengthy scrutiny and discussion. Since each participant was invited to comment at length, the discussion touched on many different aspects of the film. Most notable was a final overview of the film by an American participant who saw it as a work focused almost entirely on loneliness and alienation. It was a view of the film that this organizer had not yet encountered in any written review of the film.

The viewer interpreted the film from an existential tact. Loneliness reigned pervasive throughout the film, not only at the end, when the father was left alone following the departure of his daughter from his home to set out on her new life following marriage. He saw loneliness in every relationship, emptiness, a void throughout the scenes and the action within the film. Essentially, he interpreted Ozu's message to be that modern Japan is a lonely place. The Japanese participants became stonily quiet following his analysis. Though it was culturally tinged, it still gave the participants- and the instructor- a great deal, as well as a new perspective, to consider.

As Ozu once said, "The attractive thing about film is this transience, this mist-like vanishing quality." (Richie, p.129) Though Mr. Richie argues that Ozu tries to accept tradition, preserve it, and la-

ments its disappearance, that particular discussion in class veered more in the direction of Mikio Naruse, that tradition is something to destroy, that it ruins life.

Discussion on Naruse's attempts to convey *honne/tatemae*, Mizoguchi's passion for painting transferred to film shots, and the state of male/female relationships in pre-war Japan were also topics of interest that arose during the course. As was made clear in the course evaluations written by the participants, discussion was a critical aspect of the course that did not seem to have been undertaken to a sufficient extent.

Feedback

The feedback was uniformly laudatory. Participants enjoyed the short presentations, the talks, the choice of films, and many Japanese participants were happy to have seen films that they otherwise would not have sought out. Given its original aims, the course could be considered a success.

On the negative side, less than stellar use of the technical equipment was identified as a weak point. The copies of original work, done on antiquated, battered equipment available at the university, proved unsatisfactory to some in the course. Also, the instructor's poor capability with technology most certainly played a strong part in the poor quality of the presentation film clips.

COURSE II: THE MOVIES GO TO WAR

The second course, held from May until July, focused on war films. The main aim of the course was to view war films from different countries, and compare/contrast the content/style. As with the previous course, it was hoped that participants could watch and discuss the films for both technique and content. Finally, as with the previous course, the instructor hoped to make use of the mini-presentations at the start of many sessions to introduce the participants to a spate of films, films that were to be made available in the university library. (NOTE: Due to university policy, funding could not be made available for films purchased in February and March. Because the instructor was unaware of such a policy regulation, funding had to be made available out of the instructor's private resources. Hence, this large number of films remains in the instructor's private collection rather than being available from the university for the public.)

War films appeared to be a particularly good genre for a film course. Despite the fact that such a program ran the risk of alienating women, who tend not to gravitate toward violence and war films in general, the genre generates enormous profits in the film industry. Many of the top ten grossing films of all time are war films. Furthermore, many of the awards given to movies go to war films. Their profitability may reflect this, or vice-versa; because they are so profitable, war films garner more awards than those of competing genre. Moreover, in a literary sense, war films tend to deal with conflict at many levels. Conflict is sought in films, so war films often offer conflict on multiple levels: Conflict with the enemy, conflict with one's own comrades, conflict with oneself, to name a few. Perhaps this propensity for conflict is what makes war films so very popular.

Finally, for the fortunate majority of us, war films offer us a chance to experience war. Only a minority get to actually take part in it, thankfully. This may be another reason for its popularity as a genre.

Scheduled Films

The original schedule was fairly well-adhered to in this course. Having learned that discussion time was necessary/desired, the instructor limited the number of films to four. Here is a list of the films that were initially scheduled for the course:

1. *Ballad of a Soldier* (Grigori Chukhrai, 1959; Soviet Union)
2. *The Grand Illusion* (Jean Renoir, 1937; France)
3. *Paths of Glory* (Stanley Kubrick, 1957; United States)
4. *Fires on the Plain* (Kon Ichikawa, 1959; Japan)

All films were to be shown in their original languages with English subtitles.

Though it was possible to show the first film with Japanese subtitles, some of the participants protested, as the general practice from the outset was showing the films with English subtitles at all times. The reason for doing this was to attract participants of many national backgrounds, not only Japanese.

Ultimately, the instructor decided to keep with the customary practice of showing all films with English subtitles, in accordance with tradition.

Several other films were offered as possible substitutions:

a. *The Shop on Main Street* (Czechoslovakia, 1965)
b. *Cold Days* (Hungary, 1966)
c. *Jakob the Liar* (East Germany, 1974)
d. *Dr. Strangelove* (United States, 1962)

The Actual Schedule

Just one film was substituted for a scheduled film (*Dr. Strangelove* was shown in lieu of *Paths of Glory*). The change was voted upon by the participants, and the rationale seemed straightforward: A World War I film had already been shown in the course, and *Paths of Glory* was set in the First World War as well. Since *Dr. Strangelove* was a Cold War picture, it lent the program diversity. Furthermore, because *Dr. Strangelove* was a black comedy, it was of a slightly different genre. The other three films were of a very serious nature.

Finally, one short film was added to the list. *The Hedgehogs vs. the Squirrels*, a North Korean animated work from 1977, was shown. This worked well because the film was just 24 minutes in length, and followed a discussion on war films as propaganda. This particular work served as an overwhelmingly irrefutable example of film as propaganda. Like many of the works in this course, it had won awards, most notable being the Kim Jong Il Award in 1977.

Presentations

The overview for this course was extensive. It began with in-depth coverage of silent films dealing with war, then it advanced to Soviet "talking" war pictures. This took a particularly long time, as Sergei Eisenstein's career and work required considerable coverage.

The Soviet film experience was significant for a variety of reasons. First, as Denise Youngblood

pointed out, there are four reasons why the Soviet Union is so adept at war films: "1. The nation was born out of war in the Russian Revolution and ended in war, in Afghanistan. 2. War justified an authoritarian state: The country was surrounded by enemies. 3. The revolution was both socialistic and militaristic; it required encouraging compliance with "fronts." 4. Filmmakers worked as pseudo-historians, molding the heroism and sacrifice of people and the nation." (Youngblood, p.3)

This lengthy presentation was divided into three sections.

The Early Period. Basically, this period of the 1920s/1930s covered three wars: the 1905 uprising, the Great War (as World War I was called up until that time,) and 1917 (February or October, and the period thereafter, of the Russian Revolution.) During the 1920s, for example, 15% of all films dealt with war. *The Battleship Potemkin*, generally recognized globally as a classic, featured bold imagery, stylized compositions, and powerful, rhythmic editing. Furthermore, Jay Leyda provided two interesting anecdotes to bolster discussion of the film. First, there was one particularly interesting episode in which the facts of an incident were altered by the film. One of the mutineers thanked Eisenstein in a letter for including the scene about a tarpaulin in the film, signed, "One of those under the tarpaulin." Apparently, the soldiers on the ship had refused to shoot their compatriots hiding under a tarpaulin on the ship's deck, but in actuality, there had been no tarpaulin. Eisenstein had invented it for dramatic effect. (Leyda, p. 199) In a scene preceding Ronald Reagan's many confused mix-ups of cinematic events and reality, Eisenstein marveled that his film had had the power to alter the memory of a participating soldier.

In another interesting account, Grigori Alexandrov recalls the final editing. Apparently, when the movie premiered at the Bolshoi Theatre on December 21, 1925, with snow falling, it had not yet been completed. The editing was finished while the movie was being shown.

> "*Cameraman Eduard Tisse left for the Bolshoi Theater with the completed first reels so that the screening could be started. Eisenstein followed him as soon as the next to the last reel was ready. I stayed behind to splice the last reel. As soon as I finished, I started off with it, but my motorcycle refused to go beyond the Iberian Gate, and I had to run from there to the Bolshoi. As I raced up to the projection booth, I was overjoyed to hear the noise of applause coming from the theatre. This was the first happy sign of our film's success.*" (Leyda, p. 196)

As Eisenstein himself wrote, "*Conditions make our work easy. The government supplied the arms and uniforms, as well as the army. The Black Sea fleet was put at our disposal. We likewise had the use of tanks and artillery.*" (Eisenstein, p. 25) This admission from Eisenstein was to serve as a standard. The Soviet epics of the 1950s, in particular, were wholeheartedly supported by the government, making their state of grandeur something practically attainable. This was one of many differences between the war films of Hollywood, for example, and the Soviet Union.

During the presentation on Soviet War Cinema, one work shown was the iconoclastic blockbuster *Chapayev*, which Joseph Stalin supposedly watched at least 38 times. This film required extensive explanation and coverage, including the famous scene in which Vasili Chapayev uses potatoes to plot out a battle strategy on a table.

The period called “The Thaw”, following the death of Stalin, an era of relative freedom in film production, also served as a concept behind a mini-presentation supplemented by film clips. This era began following Nikita Khrushchev’s secret speech denouncing Stalin at the Twentieth Party Congress in February, 1956. (Youngblood, p. 108) Among the films introduced were *My Name Is Ivan* (Tarkovsky, 1962), *The Cranes Are Flying* (Kalatozov, 1957), *The Fate of a Man* (Bondarchuk, 1959), *Clear Skies* (Chukhrai, 1961), the five-hour epic *Quiet Flows the Don* (Gerasimov, 1957-58) as well as several other films of noteworthiness.

It should be stated here that in the opinion of the instructor, it seemed remarkable, upon researching for this course, to note how many excellent films were produced in the Soviet Union during this period, and how few are known commercially in the West. Several participants, after viewing the clips of the films, said that they looked forward to seeing some of these films, which looked to be very good as presented in the short introduction period at the start of each class. This alone makes holding the class worthwhile: There are few venues where such classic work can gain new exposure in these times. Courses like these are essential in making such work known. As we will see, this is truer to an even greater extent in the third course on Eastern Europe, a colossal cultural and commercial blind spot in all spheres of the West.

Finally, the two mini-presentations on *Love and War* and *The War Movies Make Us Laugh* could have been developed into courses by themselves. For organizers considering topics for the future, these are two that might prove fruitful. Also, the presentation entitled *The Book vs. the Film*: *Two Case Studies* was also well-received. In this presentation, the better book was pitted against the inferior, but Academy Award winning film, *All Quiet on the Western Front*. Representing the superior film (when compared with the book) was *The Third Man* (Reed, 1949). One interested in going into detail could indeed spend four class sessions on each, once again offering a superb concept for an eight-week course.

Discussion

Perhaps the most insightful of discussions came following a viewing of the 1937 classic *Grand Illusion*. Quite the opposite occurred with the first film, *Ballad of a Soldier*. In that film, it was through discussion that participants realized how deep this simple-seeming film was. All of the participants, the instructor included, seemed to agree that they had come away from these two viewings, and discussion, with a greater appreciation for a film that on the surface appears to do little more than present a compelling story.

With *Grand Illusion*, the restored new copy of the film, nonetheless, most participants expressed considerable disappointment with this film about which they had heard so much. Stu Klawans offers a neat and laudatory overview of the film’s structure: He sees it as divided neatly into three acts, like a European theater piece, each with a particular emphasis. (Klawans, p. 214) He also goes on to cite the wonderful acting, yet another point on which the participants offered little dissent. Instead of seeing this as the work of an avid pacifist looking to renounce war, the participants saw it as a resounding booster for war. Furthermore, the Japanese participants tended to praise it for its ostensibly gentlemanly depiction of war (perhaps forgetting that the film focuses on *officers* as prisoners of war, not the masses).

Klawans goes on to offer a superb account of how the original print of the film was salvaged. Apparently, Dr. Frank Hensel, a Nazi who also worked as co-founder of the International Federation of Film Archives, safeguarded many French films by sending them to the Reichsfilmarkiv in Berlin. Fortunately, or unfortunately, those archives lay in the Soviet sector following the division of Berlin, and wound up in Moscow. In the 1960s, *Grand Illusion* found its way back to France as part of a film exchange···· yet it was not until the 1980s that someone realized what was in that film canister. (Klawens, p. 216)

Thanks to Hensel, it is possible to see a version of *Grand Illusion* that seems to have been shot just a few years before. The film class at Tsukuba Gakuin University, however, would not much care about this. A cinematic work deemed a classic by so many was, on the whole, spurned by this film audience.

COURSE III: CINEMA BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN, 1945-1989

The aim of this course is perhaps reflected in what Andrzej Wajda, the Polish film director, once said:

> "*Films made in Eastern Europe seem of little or no interest to people in the West. The audiences in Western countries find them as antediluvian as the battle for workers' rights in England at the time of Marx. Thus our efforts here in Eastern Europe have nothing to show audiences in the West, which look upon their world as permanent.*" (Iordanova, p. 92)

Reminiscent of Kenzaburo Oe's Nobel Prize acceptance speech of the early 1990s (yet uttered years prior to that event), the aim of the comment appears to be identical with Oe's. The West, according to both men, was preoccupied with itself and its own culture; while not disdaining ordinary Japanese life or Eastern European film culture, Westerners, and more specifically Americans, simply know absolutely nothing about the two, deeming them meaningless or insignificant in the Western sphere of being or thought.

For most of those in a country such as the United States who do know that Eastern Europe differed from its Western counterpart, their views could be summarized or simplified as follows: Eastern Europe seemed to be a grey, squalid region··· dreary, colorless, backwards, and claustrophobic. The Cold War backdrop, quite naturally, might have been a major force behind why so many ostensibly reached such conclusions.

It is therefore this organizer's aim to present Eastern European cinema in a different light, as a historic and cultural gem. On a stylistic, geopolitical, and thematic level, Eastern European film can only be embraced as fascinating. As a *designation*, it cannot be melded in with Western Europe and simply thought of as "European," as happened to a great extent with many phenomena in the case of German reunification, for example.

It is imperative that scholars and academics protect this precious body of cinematic work; it will serve as an ongoing window to a massive social experiment devoid of historical precedence. The differ-

ences in the way films were produced alone tells us much about Eastern European cinema. The directors did not engage in fundraising, which often marred or destroyed projects in the West; they were privy to centralized financing. Also, though the periods of filmmaking parallel those of the Soviet Union somewhat closely, each country brings its distinct and decidedly different cultural mark to filmmaking. There was a high degree of exchange within the East Bloc, meaning that contrary to common beliefs, there were substantial audiences outside of each country, and there was little need to think about commercial interests. (Considering what national film ministries would accept, however, was a different story.)

In her excellent introduction to *East European Cinemas*, Aniko Imre suggests that though Soviet-style censorship led to a censoring of oneself, the dictatorship of the market place in the West could- and still can- be equally brutal. Furthermore, the fall of the Berlin Wall has resulted in Eastern European cinema that aims to achieve popularity- market popularity- by emulating the Western style of movie-making. The period prior to 1989 is often looked upon as mere history. (Imre, p. xxii)

Thus this course aims to generate interest, awareness, and understanding of a region during a specific period in time. As with the other courses, the instructor aims to introduce a spate of films that should prove interesting to viewers, though in this case, the undertaking should prove easy: Few people outside of Eastern Europe know much about Eastern European cinema.

The scheduled films and supplementary library holdings offer much to participants. Why is Hungarian film during this period so alienating? What was the Czech New Wave, and why were its films so timelessly hilarious? How did Yugoslavian filmmakers differ from others in the East Bloc, and why? Why was DEFA so enormous, yet its films so seldom seen in the West?

It should be noted that as of this writing, the course has not yet begun. Even several weeks prior to starting the course, the schedule of suggested films cannot be finalized, as the field of potential films is so vast.

Scheduled Films

Though the instructor plans to offer a number of mini-presentations to enhance exposure to offerings and provide background to feature films, it is hoped that a greater number of films can be shown in this course.

The tentative offerings are to be selected from the following slate of pictures:

Man of Marble (Wajda, 1977, Poland) OR *Night Train* (Kawalerowicz, 1959, Poland)
The Little Valentino (Jeles, 1979, Hungary) OR *The Merry-Go-Round* (Fabri, 1955, Hungary)
The Firemen's Ball (Forman, 1968, Czechoslovakia)
Man Is Not a Bird (Makavejev, 1965, Yugoslavia)
Cold Days (Kovacs, 1966, Hungary)
The Shop on Main Street (Kadar, 1965, Czechoslovakia) OR *The Ear* (Kachnya, 1970, Czechoslovakia)
Traces of Stones (Beyer, 1966, East Germany) OR *Berlin Schonhauser Corner* (Klein, 1957, East Germany)
The Architects (Kuhalde, 1989, East Germany)

It should be noted that creating this schedule was extremely difficult. In all likelihood, the offerings will be divided into two, as the number of movies is too great to view without proper discussion. Substantive discussion should lead to a greater understanding of both the works themselves and this period in history in terms of its impact on the lives of ordinary people.
After organizing and planning the course, the instructor realizes that each country could have served as a course in itself. (For example, the films of Czechoslovakia, Hungarian movies of the 1950s, etc. Even such designations might be too broad. There could be numerous other sub-divisions therein, such as the Czech New Wave, the works of Andrzej Wajda, etc.)

Planned Presentations

As can be expected, the number of presentations designed to highlight films and develop background knowledge is numerous. Certain directors themselves, such as Andrzej Wajda, Krzysztof Kieslowski, and Milos Forman, to name just a scant few, merit their own presentations. However, the works of the likes of Frank Beyer and Dusan Makavejev will be presented instead, as they are lesser known and their body of work is of irrefutable excellence in terms of diversity.

As with the war course, a short presentation on comedy in Eastern Europe would be helpful in guiding participants to noteworthy films and directors. A significantly more straightforward critical view of the Holocaust, and Nazism, merit such a presentation. The role of women and their struggle within “worker states” is an appealing theme as well, since Eastern Europe appeared decidedly more progressive than Western Europe in terms of the social benefits it offered in inducing women to join the workforce in significant numbers.

Many, on the other hand, argue that a less sophisticated workplace with outdated equipment required larger numbers of workers. While homemakers and other women could vacate the workforce in the West, the East did not have the liberty of doing so, a supporter of this view might argue.

Conclusion

With its new approaches to funding (i.e., cobbling together funding from a variety of private and public investment sources), interest in appealing to mass markets, and ostensible zeal to integrate completely in the “global order,” it is safe to say that Eastern European cinema has vanished along with its geo-political designation. However, its film work could not only live on, but flourish to an extent heretofore unknown if treated as a culturally, stylistically, and thematically unique medium very different from its Western counterpart in many ways.

As with war films and even Japanese movies from decades past, exposure is the key to keeping these genres alive. As is the case with publishing, a number of factors threaten originality and creativity. Funding and financing in particular will account for the success of many future directors, not ability or skill exclusively. On the other hand, thanks to forms of technology, more and more films have become available to the average person. This is a decidedly double-edged sword. While many more fine films become available to the average viewer, the amount of mediocre work through which one must wade to find it expands exponentially.

It is this access that university academics need to help identify and highlight. The bold filmmak-

ers of yore need assistance in succeeding in this day and age, even if their work may have long ago been written off as commercial failure.

Film societies or film discussion courses are ideal for carrying out this objective. Though such courses are difficult to organize in terms of film selection, conditions today make such an undertaking quite easy in terms of technical aspects. Films are easy to procure; information on movies is equally widespread given the proliferation of the Internet and the zeal of those interested in dealing with seemingly obscure treasures such as the films shown in these aforementioned courses.

Such courses are beneficial for participants whose exposure to films is understandably limited by commercial interests in the neo-liberal paradigm that dominates global economic activity. Furthermore, a film course can serve as an alternative outreach to the community from the university. By attracting a participant interested in such work, the university stands to gain by promoting diversity. Finally, film courses are not only good for the public and the university, but ultimately, for the artists who toiled so hard to create them.

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Films

It would be impossible to list all of the films that influenced this paper to some extent. Personally, I would like to thank all of the directors who made the effort to produce so many wonderful films over the past 100 years. To those who thought they had failed, it might still be too early to decide. May the work of those in my generation, and the next, help to shine light upon works toiled upon in the past.