

NETWORK OF EASTERN EUROPEAN FILM SCHOLARS IN THE UK : ONE- DAY SYMPOSIUM.

(Organised by the *Network of Eastern European Film Scholars in the UK* and sponsored and supported by the journal *Studies in Eastern European Cinema* and the Hungarian Cultural Centre, London)

Friday 16 September, 2011.

Showroom Cinema, 7 Paternoster Row, Sheffield S1 2BX, South Yorkshire.

Programme:

Arrival and coffee: 1000 - 1030.

1030 - 1100: *Jaroslav Fuit's Dvojka (Twosome, 2009)*. Dave Morning (University of Exeter)

1100 - 1130: *From the Archive: Ovidiu Bose Pastina, the 'Artist' and the 'Worker'*. Adina Bradeanu (University of Westminster)

1130 - 1200: *Miloš Forman and Evald Schorm: Metaphors of the Repressive State*. César Ballester (Arts University College, Bournemouth)

1200 - 1300: **Lunch break**

1300 - 1330: *The ICTY on Film: Two Perspectives*. Marin Hirschfeld (University of Oxford)

1330 - 1400: *Visual Memories of Communist Romania*. Alina Popescu (Université Paris Quest)

1400 - 1430: *Ars Amandi: Eroticism in the Cinema of Walerian Borowczyk*. Michael Goddard (University of Salford)

1430-1500: **Coffee/Tea break**

1500-1530: *The Béla Balázs Studio*. John Cunningham (Sheffield Hallam University)

1530 - 1630: Screenings from the Béla Balázs Studio archive.

Abstracts:

Dave Morning

This paper considers Jaroslav Fuit's *Dvojka (Twosome, 2009)*, a film which represents a relatively radical departure from the norm of Czech film production and style. While adopting the road movie genre, and focusing on a couple who embark on a holiday to Scandinavia, the film is more concerned with the psychological and everyday drama of the nature of the couples' relationship on the journey. As well as being a rare example of a Czech film set outside of the Czech Republic, the film also adopts a Dogma inspired manifesto, the Greenway Manifesto, which positions the film within theories relating to realism and aesthetics, for instance through rules demanding the use of hand-held cameras. The filmic rules the manifesto outlines can be seen to express, like Dogma, a means of film production for cinemas of small nations. As the first feature produced by HBO Czech Republic, aspects of distribution and marketing are also a key feature of the film's release. *Dvojka* provides an interesting avenue for exploring a number of factors, including the aesthetic style, which represents a departure from the style of the majority of Czech films, while

at the same time offers an interesting case study for adopting the arguments around how Dogma film can be seen as a small nation's response to Hollywood film-making as a means to sustain domestic production in a viably affordable way.

Adina Bradeanu

Ovidiu Bose Pastina was one of Romania's most distinctive and least known authorial voices – the only documentary film-maker unreservedly deemed an 'artist' by his peers, in response to the flamboyant auteurist aura of his work. When Pastina passed away in 2006, obituaries focused on his successful career as a television producer (a professional choice made in the 1990s) and ignored the first ten years of his career spent as a documentary film-maker attached to Romania's 'Alexandru Sahia' studio in the 1980s. That omission was largely motivated by Pastina's somehow paradoxical professional biography: an iconic figure for the inner-group of the studio, he remained virtually unknown to the wider public due to the 'minor' documentary sub-genres to which he dedicated most of his studio work, and to his decision to take distance from documentary film-making and switch to television in the early 1990s. I will examine the style and production context around two of Pastina's health-and-safety films, which provide an insight not only into the aesthetic infrastructure of industrial processes of late communist Romania but also into the uneasy relationship established by Romanian documentary film-makers with their mandatory subjects, the industrial workers. Although standard knowledge suggests that the broad majority of industrial films lack both authorship and a distinctive artistic expression, Pastina's films, rooted in the strongly auteurist tradition of Eastern European cinema, transgress the boundaries of their genre to account for the discourses of professional legitimization which informed documentary practice in 1980s Romania as well as for wider societal issues and tensions.

César Ballester

Miloš Forman in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1975) saw an opportunity to return to his Czech themes, to make a "Czech film about the society [he] had just left behind, about everything [he] knew. [He] understood how the characters felt" (Forman in Charles Kiselyak's *Completely Cuckoo* [1997]). The psychiatric hospital becomes a metaphor for a repressive state. To a certain degree this metaphor reappears in *Amadeus* (1984). Forman, though, was not the first Czech director to use such a metaphor. He was not even the first Czech New Wave director to do so. Evald Schorm had already explored, or perhaps *established*, the metaphor in *The Return of the Prodigal Son* (*Návrat ztraceného syna*, 1966). It is a much more complex film than Forman's. Schorm's not only explores the theme of madness, of the madman (individual) repressed by the hospital (state), it also adds the Absurd and Existentialist philosophy, in particular Camus, and more specifically his *Le Mythe de Sisyphe* and ideas on suicide. Furthermore, Schorm also explores religion as a metaphor for the Communist Party (in a similar way to what Koestler, or

Gide had done in the late 40s [see *The God That Failed*]; Jerzy Kawalerowicz in *Mother Joan of the Angels* [*Matka Joanna od Aniołów*, 1961] or František Vlášek in *Valley of the Bees* [*Údolí včel*, 1967]). Schorm uses all this to illustrate the generation of disillusioned intellectuals (people like Kundera, Vaculík, or Kohout) who, as members, had *believed* in the Communist Party and actively took part in establishing its totalitarian regime. In this paper I want to explore these themes and metaphors; its origins and how Schorm uses them; the extent to which he influences Forman.

Marin Hirschfeld

After 18 years in operation, the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) at the Hague originally planned to complete all of its trials by the end of this year – although the inevitable appeals and the fact that Karadžić and Mladić were only captured relatively recently makes this aim somewhat optimistic. While the tribunal was a major part of the news landscape in the 1990s, it has received increasingly less coverage in recent years, except when major war criminals are arrested or charged. If the tribunal has been largely absent from the small screen, it is practically non-existent on the large screen. This paper offers a brief retrospective of films that do feature the ICTY. Even with only a few examples, two distinct categories become immediately apparent: those made in the West, portraying the prosecution's professional and personal struggle to attain justice; and those made in the former Yugoslavia, focussing on the witnesses or indictees, portraying the tribunal as clueless outsiders, hoodwinked by local politicians and intelligence services. Using Hans-Christian Schmid's *Storm* (2009) and Dejan Šorak's *Dva Igrača s Klupe* (2005) as case studies, I will explore how choice of protagonist and genre in these films help illuminate how and why outlooks on the ICTY are so different in the West and in the former Yugoslavia.

Alina Popescu

The goal of this paper is to illustrate the general lines of the development of Romanian cinematography during Communist period and to highlight the main political, economic and ideological factors of its evolution. The communist regime chose the year 1945 as marking the beginning of Romanian cinematography, even if a Romanian cinematography had already existed before. This bureaucratic birth date marks the fact that the destiny of cinema will, from now on, be closely mirroring the political destiny of the country. From 1945 until 1989 cinematography modernized and specialised, trying to answer the qualitative and quantitative demands of the state-imposed cultural politics by producing numerous fiction and documentary films. The themes and genres imposed to film directors, such as historical films, “everyday life” films, films for children, art films or comedies provided the cinematographic production with a high degree of unity. Among these genres, historical films seem to have been much appreciated by Ceausescu's regime and are still alive in the memory of their spectators. Films about contemporary actuality gave in turn the biggest number of censored productions and many of them remain still unknown to public. By analysing the important political moments, the specificity of the institutional organization, the role of cinema criticism and the place of spectatorship we wish to exhibit the specificity of the relation between cinematography and politics within the Romanian context.

Michael Goddard

Among Polish filmmakers, Walerian Borowczyk, is undoubtedly the most associated with eroticism if not pornography, while at the same time being seen, at least in some of his work, as one of the most artistic Polish film directors. This paper will argue that Borowczyk's art and eroticism are inseparable, that in line with Gombrowicz's aesthetic prescriptions he was not interested in any non-erotic artistic transcendence but rather explored via different modes of filmmaking both the sexual power of art and the artistic transfiguration of sexuality. The surrealism of Borowczyk's work derives precisely from this: an unwavering devotion to the surrealist ethos of "mad love", whatever the risks and negative this would produce in Borowczyk's career as he became known from the mid 1970s on as an artistic pornographer. For this reason the supposed break in Borowczyk's career between an artistic career stretching from his internationally acclaimed animations to his first feature films (*Goto*, *Island of Love* (1969), *Blanche* (1973)) and a later trashy or pornographic career (*The Beast* (1975), *Behind Convent Walls* (1978)) simply makes no sense as his work was always pervaded by the power of the erotic, even in his animations, and the erotic continues to be mobilised for artistic purposes even in his supposedly most pornographic works. It is not only the case that there are highly undervalued late masterpieces in Borowczyk's work like *Doctor Jekyll and his Women* (1981) and *Love Rites* (1987), not to mention a continuation of his short animation work, but the whole of Borowczyk's career has to be understood in terms of eroticism-not as a mere representation of sexual acts but in the sense of the "erotic arts" as exemplified by the title of his late film *Ars Amandi*, a space in which artistic creation and eroticism are inseparable. This paper will analyse key works of Borowczyk within this framework and in relation to the erotic currents of thought and practice that emerged out of surrealism, especially in the work of George Bataille and Pierre Klossowski.

John Cunningham

During its existence (roughly 1958-2004) the Budapest-based Béla Balázs Studió was a unique institution within Eastern European cinema. Dedicated to development of experimental and avant-garde cinema the Studio attracted such notable Hungarian filmmakers as István Szabó who made a number of short films there in the early period of his career. It is probably best known however for its association with directors such as Miklós Erdélyi and Gábor Bódy. The work of these and other directors will be discussed and a number of short films from the BBS will be shown, some of which have only rarely, if ever, been seen in the UK.

Directions to the Showroom Cinema

The Showroom is almost directly opposite the railway station in Sheffield and very near the bus station. Car parking is available nearby in a multi-

story car park next to the railway station. You will find a map and other information on this link: <http://www.showroomworkstation.org.uk>
The last trains back to London are at 1927 (arr. St. Pancras 2137) and 2039 (2306).

Lunch

There are several places nearby to eat and details will be provided. The Showroom Cinema has a restaurant but service can be slow when it is busy.

Attendance charge

There will be a charge of £8 for anyone attending the Symposium, £6 for unemployed, post/undergraduate students. **Sorry, cash only** (anyone coming from abroad can pay in Euros if this is convenient: 9 and 6 Euros respectively).

Sheffield

If this is your first time in Sheffield then I hope you enjoy your visit and you are welcome to stay after the Symposium and chat over a pint in a nearby hostelry. Among its many achievements (first football club in the world, first ever radical working class newspaper, first women's hospital), in the pioneering days of cinema Sheffield was home to a thriving film producer, The Sheffield Photoplay Company whose film *A Daring Daylight Robbery* (1903) is one of the first narrative films made anywhere in the world and thought to be an influence on Edwin Porter's *The Great Train Robbery* (1903). The cameraman on this film, Frank Mottershaw also shot the oldest existing film in Serbia, an *actualité* of the Coronation of King Peter 1st in 1904. As well as being the setting for *The Full Monty*, Sheffield has also hosted a number of films from Ken Loach (e.g. *Looks and Smiles*, *The Navigators*). The former Sheffield Art College (now, after a number of metamorphoses, Sheffield Hallam University), was one of the first educational institutions in the UK to teach Film Studies.

If anyone has any questions or needs help with anything please let me know. I look forward to seeing you soon!

John Cunningham

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