

Five Filmmakers. Tarkovsky, Forman, Polanski, Szabó, Makavejev. Ed. Daniel J. Goulding. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994. 289 pp. Illustrations. Selected bibliography. Filmography. Index. \$18. 95. Paperback.

Five Filmmakers consists of five essays on directors who "started working in the East and subsequently either moved their careers to the West or worked primarily in co-productions with Western companies" (vii). According to the editor, Daniel Goulding, they all "have successfully (although not without pain and some failure) challenged and breached the boundaries that for nearly five decades separated 'East' and 'West'" (xi). This is how the selection of precisely these five is explained. Inevitably, however, more names come to mind: Passer, Mészáros, Skolimowski, Holland, Kiesłowski, Kusturica, and Mikhalkov-Konchalovsky, who also fit the above description; having worked abroad and succeeded in attracting the interest of foreign audiences.

Casting aside the issue of these overlooked directors, one still might question the selection of the book's five subjects, since their adjustment patterns differ so widely: Tarkovsky came to the West as an accomplished filmmaker and worked with foreign producers only twice, whereas Polanski made one full length film in Poland and is best known as a Western filmmaker, not as an East European; Szabó, who was never an émigré, continues to live in Hungary and works only with European producers, whereas Forman has become an established figure in American cinema. Makavejev's adjustment ordeals are the most interesting and controversial ones, but his complex relations with producers are only touched upon vaguely in the book. Not all of the authors in Five Filmmakers deal with the particularities of filmmakers from communist countries adjusting to the conditions of filmmaking in the West. Thus, if one considers Five Filmmakers as a book which aims to provide the reader with analyses of success stories in émigré filmmaking, it misses the target.

If one considers Five Filmmakers, however, as a collection of independent essays written by authorities in East European film, it is an important one. All five chapters offer insightful explorations of the visions and ideas of the selected filmmakers, focusing on the body of their work from different methodological angles.

The first essay, by Vida Johnson and Graham Petrie, provides a detailed account of Tarkovsky's relations with Russian film bureaucrats and Western producers. The authors note many times that Tarkovsky's stubbornness and whims would be unacceptable for the Western standards of filmmaking. His premature death does not let anybody draw conclusions of the chances of his adjustment, but Johnson and Petrie are right to underline Tarkovsky's inability and unwillingness to adapt to Western models. Their well documented essay is the only one to fall within the originally proclaimed idea of the book, to not only explore the work of the authors, but to look in depth at the particularities of their adjustment to living and working abroad. Thus as a study of the psychological features of artistic émigré adjustment it stands out in the book.

Although the essay on Tarkovsky provides accounts of all his films, its main focus is on issues of production and exhibition. One will expect more in depth cinematic analysis from the forthcoming book of Johnson and Petrie on Tarkovsky, which is currently in press.

Peter Hames, the highly acclaimed British authority on the Czech New Wave, has authored an insightful analysis of Forman's work, balancing it properly within the Czech, and eventually the American, cultural context. He also considers the difficulties of Forman's transition to a foreign environment, although he does so almost without comment on Forman's motivations for going abroad. Hames's hypothesis about Forman's success is very interesting: "Feeling that he could never be 100 percent creative outside of his own culture, he deliberately set himself the task of working within American themes, forms, and traditions" (50).

Hames points at Forman's earlier work as a source for the subtle political sarcasm perpetuated in movies such as Taking Off and One Flew Over the Coo-coo's Nest. He is very convincing in tracing early Czech influences in all Forman's later movies, without neglecting the new American themes and styles of his work.

Herbert Eagle, who at one time or another has written probably on all filmmakers in this volume, portrays Polanski. He chooses to analyze only some of his movies and to underline specific features of his work. He focuses on the dialectics of good and evil in Two Men and a Wardrobe, sexual and class tensions in Knife in the Water, voyeurism and creeping insanity in Repulsion, sadism and terror in Rosemary's Baby, alienation in Macbeth, and patriarchal evil in Chinatown. Nothing of Polanski's later European work -- The Tenant, Tess, Frantic, or Bitter Moon -- is included for consideration here. Eagle's essay is so concise that it is worth including as textbook material for courses dealing with Polanski's work.

Unlike the other directors, Szabó continues to live in Hungary and his relations with Western producers are only briefly mentioned by David Paul. Paul provides a straightforward account on all works of the director and divides Szabo's films into three major periods. Naturally, most attention is paid to the third period - the co-produced trilogy Mephisto, Colonel Redl, and Hanussen starring Klaus Maria Brandauer. Paul provides elaborate conclusions, praising Szabo's work as one of the most significant achievements of Central European filmmaking.

Daniel Goulding's on Dusan Makavejev opens by placing the director in the context of Yugoslav new wave filmmaking and continues with accounts of all his films, which receive the same share of detailed attention. Unfortunately, this equality leaves the impression of an absence of analysis since important feature films such as WR: Mysteries of the Organism receive as much consideration as the less significant works. Makavejev's émigré predicaments are probably the most interesting ones but they remain unexplored. Important questions remain unanswered, for example: Why does Makavejev gradually

abandon his innovative techniques of intercutting documentary material but still keeps the graphic representations of sexuality in his more commercially oriented Western features when it is exactly the quazi-pornographic Balkan-flare erotizism, and not the usage of documentary footage that attracts the prudential critical disapproval in the West?

Isn't it ironic, as Goulding notes, that Makavejev's commercial success comes rather with films such as Montenegro and Coca-Cola Kid in which he abandons his political concerns? Is it possible that the recipe for success lies in turning one's back on the pending political issues of a filmmaker's native realities? Hames observes, for example, that even though Forman's films often carry an overt political dimension, they "do not have a clear political message" (87). Only few pages later Eagle observes of Polanski that "in the body of his work over more than three decades, there appears to be no explicit position on the major political, social, and ideological issues which characterized the Cold war and the period of Soviet domination over Eastern Europe"(92). Paul makes a similar remark regarding Szabo. It seems that the chances for politically engaged filmmakers to get the attention of worldwide audiences are getting weaker. This conclusion, however, should not sound too pessimistic. The success of all these filmmakers indicates at the very least that humanism is to the liking of today's public.

Five Filmmakers is a book of interest to a large audience of scholars and students of East European film and culture. Its publication in paperback makes its access to targeted audiences simpler and more effective.

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