

its German translation—a real victory for Dimitrova (!), is an impressive illustration of the inferno of censorship in totalitarian regimes.

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***Czech and Slovak Cinema: Theme and Tradition.*** By Peter Hames. Traditions in World Cinema. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010. Dist. Columbia University Press. viii, 264 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Filmography. Illustrations. \$35.00, paper.

Not many fields of academic inquiry are as strongly defined by the work of a single person as Czechoslovak cinema is by the scholarship of Peter Hames. His seminal book *Czechoslovak New Wave* (1985/2005), the edited collection on Jan Švankmajer, *The Cinema of Jan Švankmajer: Dark Alchemy* (1995/2008), and a scattered series of chapters and articles form the basis, in English at least, of our understanding of the film cultures of Czechoslovakia, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia. Hames's work is characterized by a primary aesthetic interest in film as film, a secondary interest in film as part of a political and historical discourse, and hardly at all by the vagaries of film theory. In this new work, Hames offers an overview of the development of Czechoslovak cinema since the 1930s organized around a series of broad themes rather than any strict chronology. This method allows a mapping of connections that could easily have been lost in a more linear approach.

Hames chooses a fascinating collection of chapter headings to frame his exploration: History, Comedy, Realism, Politics, The Holocaust, Lyricism, The Absurd, The Avant-Garde, Surrealism, Animation, and Slovak Directions. Only one, comedy, is related to a specific film genre. The history, realism, politics, and Holocaust chapters could broadly be classed as historical, while the remaining chapters are related to aesthetic style apart from, of course, the broad summary chapter on Slovak cinema at the very end of the book. In his introduction, Hames sets out the aims of his book: to situate Czech and Slovak cinema “within its overall context,” examining the “historical relations between Czechs and Slovaks” (1) and determining the relevance of this context to the cinema of the two countries. While he certainly achieves this, the main interest of the book is its generous and informative discussions of the films themselves, since, unless one is already acquainted with the material, it is unlikely that a general film enthusiast would have had the opportunity to see many of the films mentioned. Thus while the general thesis of the close relationship between the Czech and Slovak Republics informs Hames's analysis, in many ways the value of the book is in opening up access to a cinema that, apart from a handful of exceptions, does not travel much beyond the borders of these small nations. While some of the better-known films are now released in the United Kingdom and the United States via specialist distributors such as Second Run and Criterion, many of the other, less well known films are relatively easy to obtain on subtitled DVDs from the Czech Republic itself and Hames provides an important guide for any reader wishing to explore this terrain in more detail.

Hames begins with a concise but illuminating summary of the complex political background to the current national configuration of what is sometimes referred to as the heart of Europe and continues in the first chapter, “History,” to explore this geopolitical scene by looking at the way in which Czech films have both promoted “national and social cohesion” while also providing a “means of commentary on the present” (15). Hames favors what might be broadly termed an “auteurist” approach as he tends to discuss films associated through their director, although he is always attentive to the production context of the films and often highlights the importance of seemingly minor personnel such as the scriptwriter, costume designer, director in her own right, and general muse to the New Wave of the 1960s, Ester Krumbachová. Whether examining the filmmakers of the 1930s (Otakar Vávra), the 1960s (František Vlácil, Miloš Forman), or the contemporary cinema (Jan Svěrák, Jan Hřebejk), Hames's style is seemingly transparent, with his analyses and judgments (he is not afraid to comment on the achievement or otherwise of a particular work) arising naturally out of his careful descriptions of the films and their action. He also wields the technical terminology of visual film language with ease and never loses sight of

the cinematic nature of the material, all the while exhibiting an encyclopaedic knowledge of Czech and Slovak literature, theater, and art. Hames is not averse now and then to a sly, but affable, dig at the pretensions of film theory as when he writes that the questionable sexual politics in Jiří Menzel's *Obstuhoval jsem anglického krále* (I Served the King of England, 2006) "will no doubt be the subject of dissertations offering further discussion of the 'male gaze'" (47).

*Czech and Slovak Cinema* is an invaluable introduction for the novice as well as an extremely useful reference book for advanced research in the area. Hames offers not only a well-balanced overview of important themes, styles, and personalities in Czech and Slovak film but does so in a spirit of good-humored critique that never mistakes hagiography for history or description for analysis.

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***Shrinking Citizenship: Discursive Practices That Limit Democratic Participation in Latvian Politics.*** Ed. Maria Golubeva and Robert Gould. On the Boundary of Two Worlds: Identity, Freedom, and Moral Imagination in the Baltics, no. 26. Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi, 2010. 197 pp. Notes. Figures. Tables. €40.00, paper.

Maria Golubeva and Robert Gould's edited book highlights the discursive construction of nation, ethnicity, and political culture in Latvia. The writings draw on a three-year study (2007–2009) of the media, in particular the dual "information spaces" of Latvian- and Russian-language media and parliamentary debate records and pose the broad question of how discourses, understood as "not simply a verbal practice, but . . . also a social practice constitutive of social realities" (11), limit the field of participatory democracy in Latvia. The result is an illuminating treatment of a topic that is important for understanding the contours of contemporary society and politics in Latvia.

In their foreword, the editors argue that three "principle discourse strategies are employed in social and political contexts . . . The constructive strategies apply to the construction and development of a specifically Latvian national identity nearly twenty years after independence; the destructive or dismantling strategies are applied to the delegitimation of the 'Russian' minority, and the preservation strategies are applied to the upholding . . . of a national identity threatened both by the minority itself and by the proximity to a numerically superior Russian nation" (11). Chapters in the book effectively elaborate and illustrate these strategies in action.

Gould's introductory chapter offers an overview of "discourses of exclusion" in the European Union and sets out a context within which to view the Latvian case. The chapter provides a good discussion of European right-wing politics, though Gould's observation that European politics in countries like the United Kingdom, Germany, and the Netherlands shows "the pressure which this discourse from the extreme right exerts on that of the centre and its policies" (37) is arguably less pertinent in the Latvian case, where, as Iveta Kažoka's well-documented chapter points out, categories of right and left are unclearly marked and the "principal political cleavage" (81) is not economic but ethnic across the political spectrum.

Auksė Balčytienė's chapter follows with a discussion of "Baltic media structures" and highlights the close links between the mass media and political figures in small media markets. As she astutely notes, with "only a limited number of news sources . . . available for journalists to comment on a particular political or economic matter . . . relationships between journalists and political or economic experts are structured differently than in larger states" (54). The result is a media environment more vulnerable to "clientelistic relationships" (55) that undermine democratic journalistic practices.

Anda Rožukalne's chapter on the Latvian print media offers a description of the state of Latvian- and Russian-language media in the postcommunist period and sets the stage for the book's most distinguished contributions—that is, Rožukalne's (second) and Am-