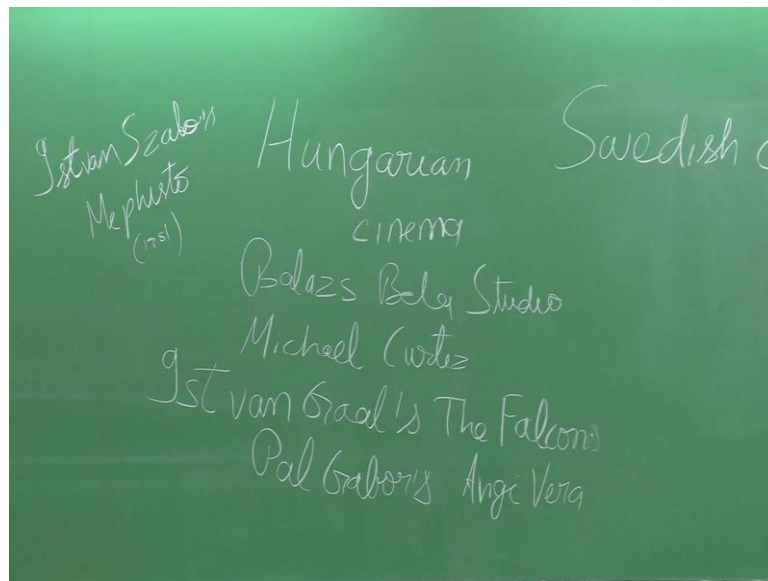


Film Appreciation
Prof. Aysha Iqbal
Department of Humanities and Social Science
Indian Institute of Technology, Madras

Lecture - 39
European Cinema: Hungary, Sweden, Greece

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Good morning. So, we continue with our discussion of European cinema we have been talking about eastern European cinema last time, where we ended, we were talking about Czechoslovakian films and we talked about a wonderful film called Calliope. Today, I am going to focus on Hungarian cinema, Swedish cinema, as well as some major achievements in Greek cinema. So, that will be in a sort of our discussion of world cinema that we had been doing from the beginning of this course. So, coming to Hungarian cinema, the first nationalization of the film industry happened in 1919 in Hungary; however, after the fall of the communist government in 1920, cinema was again put under private ownership. This was the time when influential film makers, such as Alexander Korda and Michael Curtez were forced to leave Hungary.

Michael Curtez, as you might remember, is the director of Mildre Pears, as well as Casablanca. He made these two great iconic films in Hollywood. In the late 1950s, a younger generation of film makers came up into the picture, and set up the Balazs Bela studio; it is BBS. This is the Hungarian BBS, not to be confused with the Hollywood

BBS that we have been talking about; the studio or production company, associated with Berg Schneider, Barbara Friesen and Steve Lamere. So, this is Balazs Bela studio, named after the famous film maker and film theorist from Hungary. Now, this studio started first as a film club in 1959, and was refound in 1961 as a film studio, and worked both inside and outside the structure of the socialist state film production in nearly five decades.

It produce and co produce more than 500 films in all genres, including short features, documentary films, long documentaries, feature films, (refer time: 02:47) films, animation, documentary, etc. The films produced by Balazs Bela studio tell a remarkable story, engaging the social problems under communism that range from the unequal treatment of ethnic minorities in a film, Gypsies; it is a 1962 film, to the exploitation of every citizen's good faith in communism by party functionary, then Long Distance Runner, which is a 1968 film.

These films also dealt with the alienation and liberties of citizens in the film called New Year's Eve, which is a 1974 film. Though the film makers could not control the distribution of their own films, we did receive the economic and technological resources, necessary to realize (refer time: 03:40) works and ambitious films for, you know, niche group of audience, intellectuals and professionals, who have more interested in more cerebral aspects of cinema, and there were also, they also appeal to foreign critics, who in the 1960s, awarded BBS films, a number of prizes at various film festivals and competitions.

Now, Istvan Gals, the Falcon draws an analogy between the teaming of wild birds and way of life that requires blind obedience. These are the films that came out of Hungary in the 60s. Back to Grabor's Angi Vera deals with the repressive climate of stylish Hungary in the late 1940s. One of the supreme achievement of Hungarian cinema is Mefisto, which is a 1981 film, directed by Istvan Szabo, is an exploration of the actor, living through the rise of Marxism in Germany, and conforming to the new regime in anyway, necessary to maintain his position. To their screen play, which Szabo co wrote is based on the 1936 book also, titled Mefisto by Klaus Mann the son of Thomas Mann.

The title is an ironic reference to the actors in the film, celebrated role Mephistopheles in fast Johnathan Onegatives fast, based on that legend. Mephist delineates the course of an opportunist, whose life is nothing more or less than the some of all roles he plays. Now, coming to Swedish cinema, most of us associate Swedish cinema with (refer time: 05:38)

personality; that is in Ingmar Bergman. We should also know that Sweden has produced other great artist also; for example, particularly, its actors Ingri Bergman, who was not any relative of a relation of Ingmar Bergman and also, the great Greta Garbo. So, Ingmar Bergman is of course, the most celebrated film maker from Sweden and from across the world.

Coming to the early origins of Swedish cinema in 1907, the Finska Bio studio was formed in Sweden. One of the earlier significant films from Sweden was the *Wagabonds* *Geluscious*, based on the host Christian Anderson's Fairy Tale, which had a scene shot and location in France and the US, involving the tracking short, which is remarkable for those days, and important film of the 1940s was *Frenzy*, which launched the career of Ingmar Bergman as a screen writer and this film also, mark that when I saw Swedish cinema, which was not doing too well during this period. About Ingmar Bergman; Bergman was born in 1918. His father was a pastor and one of the recurring themes in his films is an ongoing clash, which is a strict confrontation, with his strict religious are bringing.

He made it directorial debut with *Crisis* in 1945. From the 1950s onwards, he became the face of Swedish cinema. One of his most popular films is *Wild Strawberry*, which is a 1957 film. Its expression predouses with Freudianism with dream sequence, as dream imagery, and it at its center, 76 year old; 75 or 76 year old professor isle Berg, who is a distinguished medical scientist, who has to take a journey from his stock home to learn with a daughter in law, to receive a honorary doctorate. During the car journey, the old man remembers his past; the girl he loved who, but who married in turn, his brother instead, and his own bitterly unsuccessful marriage.

The film opens with the famous dream sequence; both arise at house with whom did up windows in the old quarter of a stock home. He sees a clock with no hands and an old house, approaching. One of its wheels get caught up on a lamp post and a coffin falls out and the outstretched hand of the corpse within tries to pull warms inside. So, critics have tried to reach several meanings into this passage. Other great film by Bergman is the *Seven Seal*, which is an allegory for man's confrontation with the ultimate reality of death. Bergman sets that spiritual film in a medieval setting as Sweden is suffering by plague. A square, a happy square is returning with its knight after the battle. The knight in a state of existentialism and despairing over the meaning and you know, the reason for living.

Among the many people, they interacted during the course of the journey is death and one of the greatest scenes and most oft quoted scenes from the films is when the knight invites death for a game of chess. Here is a scene from *The Seventh Seal*. Bergman then went on to make a series of psycho dramas in the 1960s, most of which with Ståhlkvist Olmann, personify about a young nurse Alma, played by Bebe Anderson, whose play is in charge of a famous actress Elizabeth, which is played by Liv Ullmann, who was a constant feature or a constant player in most of Bergman's films. Elizabeth, as Almison informed her some sort of breakdown; breakdown while performing on stage and now, refuses to speak or even more, though it is somehow been determined that she is perfectly fine, both physically and mentally.

The doctor suggests that Alma take Elizabeth to stay at a sea side cottage where the two women gradually, develop a close bond of friendship even though, Elizabeth still doesn't utter a word. Other remarkable films by Ingmar Bergman include *Scenes from a Marriage*, *The Wild Duck* and quietly, you know, it is one of its later master pieces *Atom Sonata* again, starring Lasse Åberg and Ingrid Bergman. Now, moving on to other great directors from Sweden can take Forelock and his *As It is in Heaven*, is an important film. It is a 2004 and a fascinating work on Swedish country life, love and the power of music. The protagonist Daniel Darius makes his career as a young musician and soon becomes one of the most celebrated conductors in the world; however, there comes a point when he collapses on a stage and has a sort of nerves breakdown. He is forced to rethink his life and in order to recuperate. He goes back to the place, where he had grown up. So, this is a place somewhere, in the north of Sweden; he was brought up there. His journey through that woods of this Scandinavia is interspersed with flash backs of his youth also, the death of his mother. Soon, he realizes that all is not perfect even with the rural life and its pastoral setting.

The villages start looking to profit from his fame. He is approached by the local church choir to accept the role of a choir master, which he reluctantly, accepts. The choir, now we understand, is a microcosm of the rural society and Daniel rediscovers his love for music, while working with these people; however, the harsh reality of everyday life keeps resurfacing; however, in the end, the music triumphs. Daniel has one more nerves breakdown; however, at an international competition in Austria, the village choir sings in the final and astonishes the audience. The film's appeal lies in its magnificent acting and its cinematography with trips through snow covered forest; the church twinkling

with Christmas lights and the warmth of the glowing sun on the lake.

A highlight of the film was Gabriel song, which has acquired a cult following across Europe. Here is Gabriel song scene from *As It is in Heaven*. Lasse Hallstrom is another important director, who is more recent. His outstanding film is *My Life as a Dog*, which is set in a small village in Sweden. The protagonist Ingmar is a 12 year old boy, dealing with his mother's death and he is separated from his beloved dog. The film was appreciated for its gentle tone and lack of sentimentality. Lasse Hallstrom was invited to Hollywood, where he has directed acclaimed and successful films, such as *Whats Beating Gilbert Great*, starring Leonardo Dicaprio and Johnny Depp.

He also made *Shokolla* with Julian Binoche and Johnny Depp *Bessider Huose Rules* and *Casanova* are his other great films. I would like to end today's lecture with just a brief overview of an introduction to Greek cinema. The first Greek film appeared in 1912, but it was followed by a period of instability, preventing any attempts to form a strong film industry. From the 1950s, Michael Cacoyannis has become a strong and leading force and reached the peak of popularity with his film *Zorba The Greek* in 1964. Here is a famous dance scene from *Zorba The Greek*. Other Master from Greece is Theo Angelopoulos, a leading force of his generation. He recently died in a road accident.

He was much influenced by the cinema of Antonian, the great Italian director especially, in his use of landscape to mirror the mood of a scene and are so called dead time when nothing is happening and yet, Angelopoulos camera goes on filming even after the characters have walked out of the shots. So, he is considered a master of cinematography and style. His sparse style; basically, he is very sparse and it needs as much intensity and focus to understand his kind of cinema as you have to, for understanding Antonian or Bergman. So, this is the style, that his sparse style was demonstrated in his first film, *Reconstruction*, which is a 1970 film. The film is short in high contrast; black and white and was about a Greek migrant worker, who returns from Germany, and he is murdered by his wife and her lover.

It was immediately clear that the director was less interested in the crime story than the ideological individual and collective implications of contemporary society. Angelopoulos then, emerged on the international scene with his historical cryptic, such as *Deal of Thirty Six*, *The Traveling Play* and *The Hunters*; these are some of the most ambitious Greek films to date, and they deal with long contemplative studies of Modern Greek

history. Now *Traveling play* is one of his most beloved films set in 1952. It focuses on a troop of actors, recalling Greek political history and their own personal histories, since they last visited the country in 1939. The film is almost four hours long, which is another characteristic of all Angelopoulos films, which are very lengthy by western standards; very long by western standards.

Now, Angelopoulos creates the bleak and profoundly, tragic portrait of the national film, of the national soul in the film. The bleak landscapes mirror the bleakness of the national soul. He also famously frames the characters through medium and long shots in order to create kind of a distant perspective. One should also notice the masterly moving camera shots in most of his films. So, here is a scene from *The Travelling Play*. Angelopoulos is another great movie is *eternity and a day*. As that title suggest, time is a central concern to celebrate writer Alexander and he is played by Brounu Vins, and he has been diagnosed with a terminal fatal illness. As he makes preparations prior to entering the hospital, and he knows that he is not going to come out alive from there. He travels in and out of his past and in and out of fantasy, seeking to make peace with a lifetime, which is coming to an end. Then the fluidity of time and character in the narrative structure is a key characteristics; something that has to be seen to be believed. This is at the route of our Angelopoulos work, and definitely, it is not at the films by Ingmar Bergman. Here is the famous bus scene from *Eternity and a Day*.

Ulysses Gaze's 1995 film is a retelling of the epic *Odyssey*, drawing together three separate narrative strands; Greek mythology, the plight of the former Yugoslavia and the centenary of cinema, which is as we know, is a 1995 film and cinema started in 1895. Now, Hollywood star, Harvey Keitel stars as an emigrant film director, who goes on a location, hunting his prey in the war ravaged Balkans in search of a surviving scrap. A film by the brothers Yan Eakes and Milters Vanikies, who at the dawn of cinema, celebrated everyday life in the region, without any regard for ethnic and religious distinctions. So, this was a very well acclaimed film and with this, I end my introduction to European cinema.

Thank you very much. We will continue for our next class.