

Markku Nenonen

The Origin of the Prerelease Examination of Films in Finland

In Finland an extensive demand for the prerelease examination of films arose in 1908. This was due to the fact that, on the one hand, the contents of the films had switched from the previous geographical etc. subjects to adventure. On the other hand, the social changes were contributing to this demand. Specifically religious and educational circles were concerned at the impact of the cinema on, above all, children and youth. They were anxious about possible distortion of world-view and embracing of wrong values by children and youth following from their cinema attendance.

The demands for tightening up the prerelease examination of films were successful, and the Finnish Senate, acting on the initiative of the Kolmisointu Society, confirmed the new rules of examination on December 12, 1910. The Society was closely connected with young clergy. Kolmisointu demanded clear instructions for the pre-examination and proposed that the examination be centred in Helsinki. Formerly films had not been subjected to any pre-examination, in the strict sense. Now the Senate Act ruled that local police authorities should preview the forthcoming films. In practice these instructions implied that e.g. a film already once approved in Helsinki had to be re-examined everywhere else. People in the film field, in practice the cinema owners, opposed to this examination procedure rejecting it as needless. They opposed also to the concentrated pre-examination of films.

The Senate Act, however, was enforced and the pre-examination started in March 1911. The Russian oppression in Finland, the so called Second Oppression, contributed to the stabilization of these temporary instructions of the Senate until the spring of 1919. Consequently, the Finnish development followed neither Sweden's nor Norway's example. In these countries the prerelease examination of films was instituted by law by 1913. In Finland the corresponding procedure was not realized until in 1946.

Translation: Veijo Hietala

Joachim Mickwitz

The Projektio Film Society or, Cultural Bolshevists against the Central Intelligence Police

The present paper deals with the Projektio Film Society, which showed films,

often banned by censorship. The Society was founded in 1934 and was cracked down by authorities in a joint action of the police and customs officers in 1936. Between these years it managed to unite a group of persons interested in modern culture and internationalism. In an age characterized by nationalist and other extremist movements active both in Finland and Middle Europe, Projektio united people from the cultural and economical élité into an internationalist and progressive minded circle. Here a network between cultural, political and economical élites emerges which did not leave many traces in the ordinary historical sources, but, which yields an outline of the views of these circles on the cinema. While the film societies in Sweden were attended by students and by oppositional cultural élité in France, in Finland representatives of the whole cultural field, professors, ministers and diplomats alike, watched films screened by Projektio.

The Projektio Film Society was founded in the European fashion, under management of architect Alvar Aalto and his friend and business associate, Nils Gustav Hahl. Alvar Aalto made his first direct contacts with alternative film-makers and experimental cinema through his architect acquaintances during his travels to Berlin and Athens at the end of the 1920s and to Paris and London in spring 1933, his aims being probably already then to start similar activities also in Finland. In Paris there was interest in experimental cinema: it was not a question of cultural democracy, but film societies in Paris recruited their members among writers, artists and intellectuals in Quartier Latin. In London "Film Society" often screened documentaries and also here the focus was on educated audience although some film education was also on the agenda. Between March 7, 1935, and May 28, 1936, the Projektio Film Society screened films that the commercial film companies did not accept, either because they were too intellectual - in fact, presumably lacking enough audience - or because censorship had prohibited their public screening. Laws regulating film screenings did not apply to closed exhibiting. Projektio can be considered a peripheral outpost of international movements but also an attempt to create a Finnish forum for international progressive culture. This internationalist faith in the future and film activity resulted in a great interest in the Soviet cinema which was not perceived by the blind-eyed national-minded Central Intelligence Police.

The fortunes of the Society vividly manifest the conflict of interests between the national efforts to create a strong nation in the stormy era, and, on the other hand,

the cultured élité who longed for international influences and who regarded the European culture as the ideal which they wanted to import into Finland. The contradiction between national and international culture prevailed in whole Western Europe in the 1930s, and Projektio is an excellent example of the various different aspects in this game where the antagonist was the Central Intelligence Police, among others. One can also note how certain ideas of the cinema, of the importance of the cinema and of film as art broke through from the big cities of Europe. On their arrival in Finland, through Projektio or Projektio activists writing in papers, the ideas were often somewhat simplified or lost. However, it was considered important to make them public in a small country like Finland in order to avoid making the country an isolated periphery. In an after-piece the Central Intelligence Police placed Projektio on a list of societies infiltrated by communists and published the names of some members, a minister among others which resulted in the resigning of the Finnish government.

Translation: Veijo Hietala.

Jari Sedergren

The Film Dispute in Finland, 1941-1944

In spring 1942 the film censorship in Finland was not under the official German pressure like other censorship. Unofficially, private efforts were made to ban American films in Finland. The campaign was organised as a part of German policy by the International Film Chamber.

The boycott or in the *Film Dispute*, the Film Chamber of Finland (FCF) was divided into American oriented and German oriented parties. After losing elections in FCF, the German orientation, to which all the big producing companies in Finland belonged, established a new organisation, the Film Union of Finland (FUF). The services to German propaganda assured raw film and other material import from Germany. Moreover, by the new organisation FUF could easily change the production, distribution and exhibition system to the more profitable direction.

The goal of FUF was not only political but also ideological. The paper of FUF, "Suomen Kinolehti", "New Germany" was supported. The paper published articles in order to throw out the "anti-Finnish" people out of Finnish film business. The fact was that FUF had even stricter line concerning the boycott of American (and English) films compared to the line the

International Film Chamber had practised in its member countries.

In 1943, the Film Dispute produced parliamentary reaction. The parliamentary committee succeeded in cancelling the distribution boycott -- German and profitable Finnish films were given only to the cinema theaters where also German production were shown -- only in late spring 1944. FUF demanded German acceptance for agreements with The Film Chamber of Finland as late as in June 1944.

The Americans couldn't import raw film to Finland until October 1943. By then, the German propaganda had lost a lot of its influence because of development of war situation. Only one of the biggest companies in Finland, Suomen Filmitoimisto Oy, was to take its part of American raw film bribe to break FUF. Cinema theater owners who tried to avoid economic disaster by choosing opportunist attitude. Many of cinema theater owners joined to both organisations and made a contract for several years. Because the Finnish law was hard to contract violations, all kinds of films were to be shown in Finnish theaters, both American and German.

In autumn 1943 HQ's and the Germans' common pressure reached the film. In October the State Information Agency demanded general censoring of all films censored earlier than June 1941. The understanding about the line of censorship in the Press affairs between the State Information Agency and HQ was made only few weeks earlier. Now was time to clear the air in the field of film. Fifty films were banned. Many of them were American films, pacifistic films like *A Farewell to Arms* or *Road to Glory*, or propaganda films about Army, Navy and Air forces from the end of 1930's (*Filming the Fleet, Our Navy in Action, The Conquest of the Air, Wings of the Navy, Shipmates forever, Annapolis farewell, I wanted wings, Submarine Patrol, Thunder Afloat, Ceiling Zero, The Dawn Patrol, Devil Dogs of the Air*), and some, like *Inside Nazi Germany, March of Time, Nazi Conquest and Arise My Love* were anti-German. Three German films, five French films (anti-German films and films about First World War or pacifistic films), an Italian film about *Gibraltar*, a fascist Hungarian film *Bela Nemoc - die Weisse Krankheit* and a Czechian film, *A vykrik do sibirske noci*, were banned. Besides clear propaganda films many films were banned because they had something to do with Russia/Soviet Union (*Kurier des Zaren, A Woman Alone, Port Arthur*) or the British World (*Life of Edward, The Coronation of George VI, Our Fighting Navy, Last Outpost, The High Command, Goodbye to Mr. Chips, Lloyds of London, 60 Glorious Years*).

The re-censorship operation proves that SBFC couldn't take care of film censorship at the highest political level in Finland. Operation was organised by the State Information Agency which was directly under political control. Now it could be explained to Germans that censorship is still working for the good relations between comrades-in-arms, Germany and Finland.

The change in censorship policy of newsreels realised in September 1943. Now the problem for Americans' efforts was the raw film. In October 1943, enough raw film for 70 copies of feature films and few copies of newsreels was imported, but in spring 1944 not many American newsreels were shown in Finnish cinema theatres. Americans were not so eager to contribute any more to situation in Finland. What was important was politics, not propaganda.

German newsreels were banned among 16 other movies immediately after the truce in September 1944. Because of the lack of raw film, there were no American newsreels either at the market. When the Russians were preparing to enter into Finnish Cinema Theaters, the Americans activated. Small amount of raw film guaranteed the American newsreels into Finnish screens in mid November, at the same time as Soviet Union did. Because of collaboration with Nazi Germany, many Finnish film companies organised in FUF, were put to s.c. black list. After negotiations and changes in ownership situation, the last Finnish company was dropped off from the black list in November 1945.

Satu Kyösola

The Broken Mirror - On Second-Degree Representation in Aki Kaurismäki's Hamlet

In his book *L'enonciation impersonelle ou le site du film* Christian Metz discusses the filmic second-degree representation in terms of so called self-reflective structures. Metz presumes that film speaks about itself, about film and the position of the spectator through flashbacks, subjective images, mirrors or e.g. intertitles.

Just like William Shakespeare's tragedy *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark* also *Hamlet Goes Business*, the film directed by Aki Kaurismäki in 1987, contains some self-reflective structures and second-degree representations. Both in the play and in the film second-degree representations are connected to the themes of overall deception and illusion. In Kaurismäki's version the most central second-degree representations include, for instance, intertitles and a night at the theatre sequence. Also the art objects in

the company headquarters, the doubling of the characters either through mirrors or their deeds, numerous references to film genres and the various periods of film history and, in addition, allusions to technical and artistic features of the cinema can be regarded as second-degree representations. Although almost every film by Aki Kaurismäki contains self-reflective structures or second-degree representations, it is readily understandable that *Hamlet Goes Business*, in particular, should deal with this problem most thoroughly: after all, it is an adaptation of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* whose main theme is the complex dialectics between reality and illusion, truth and falsehood.

Translation: Veijo Hietala.

John Sundholm

Rock and Roll as Truth in Calamari Union and Hamlet Goes Business, Aki Kaurismäki's Two Film Grotesques.

Taking Adorno's thinking on aesthetics and Jan Kott's discussion of the grotesque as my starting-point I attempt to define Calamari Union and *Hamlet Goes Business*, two films directed by Aki Kaurismäki, as grotesque. At the same time, I try to pursue an "old-fashioned" qualitative and empathic objective in my paper. That is to say: if I am able to demonstrate convincingly that these films attest to the grotesque, this implies that they have aesthetic value and they state something "objectively true" about the society in which they are made. Kott's main thesis is namely that the grotesque is an indispensable form whereas Adorno concludes that the artistic experience, as a subjective moment, can never be that without simultaneously being objective. In other words a work of art can never be plausible if it does not, at the same time, contain some conceptual truth of the society in which it takes place. I therefore argue that it is rock music which makes the actual subjective moment in Aki Kaurismäki's grotesques and which therefore reveals itself and the form it takes in these films. Rock music, as a realization of industrialized music, puts criticism on itself (as calculated spontaneity which must render spontaneity and authenticity valuable) and, consequently, corresponds to the modern form principle of the grotesque. Both of these depend on each other in order to be realized as modern tragedies: rock music on the grotesque to be truthful and the grotesque on rock music to be able to realize its potential for the tragic. In this sense I argue that these films are firmly based on realism, on emphatic one which is true both to the aesthetic and the cognitive.

Translation: Veijo Hietala.