

RTC LIBRARY E-NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2020

Welcome to the SEPTEMBER 2020 issue of RTC LIBRARY E-NEWSLETTER

In this issue: Recommended Reads: In the Loyal Mountains, Man with a Movie Camera, Sonita

Recommended Reads from the RTC community

In The Loyal Mountains by Rick Bass

Rick Bass is an environmental activist along with being a rather prolific writer of fiction and non-fiction. That much is evident in his writing, in each of the ten stories collected in this book. Ten beautifully written stories too short to be even called short stories- more akin to the kind Yasunari Kawabata published as 'Palm of the Hand Stories'.

All stories have in common a lonely, disconnected male first person narrator, and a lonely, disconnected valley or town somewhere off the map, the kind of place that has a dozen, maybe two, residents. People live off the land, hunting, fishing, and off the little company of the townsfolk. Make no mistake though, none of these characters are stuck where they are- most are there by choice, not lack of imagination.

Rick Bass deftly animates the Setting of remote rural America into Character. The land, the mountains, the valleys, and the rivers are more than scenic backdrops- they are what form the actual heart of the stories- the humans are, in a way, mere framing devices for the plots. Anyone who calls the Himalayas home will understand the awe the mountains can inspire, and Bass captures that perfectly in words.

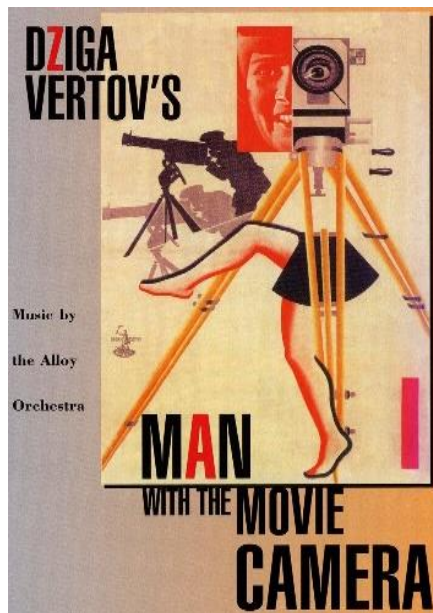
The Earth is a vast and magnificent place. We humans are but a tiny speck in its grand history. This is a beautifully written book that brings this fact back into perspective, and I'm really glad I came across it. Highly recommended for storytellers and environmentalists alike.

Thank you
Utsav Khatiwara Sharma
Part-Time Lecturer
Humanities

Man with a movie camera by Dziga Vertov

Directed by Dziga Vertov in 1929, the self-reflexive narrative film 'man with the movie camera' depicts the life in the city of Moscow. The film shows the mundane life, silent town and establishes location for the viewers in the beginning.

The documentary begins as the cameraman descends from a camera and enters the backstage of a large cinema hall. People start to get in the hall and the film starts to play; thus introducing music in the movie. The next scene is a new sequence which captures a city in slumber. Slowly, people start to wake up; a cameraman gets into a car and starts filming in the city. He films a train, then a woman waking up. After the woman wakes up she gets ready for the day's work and so the whole city comes to life. The cameraman goes onto filming the work and life in the modern city. He portrays workers society by connecting people, machines and film making. The comparison between the three attempts to create sequel harmony. For instance, in one scene, a woman is getting her hair washed, followed by a woman washing cloth, barber shaving, woman packing cigarettes, and a man on a car capturing the lives of the people on the camera. By this, we come to realize how busy people's life was.



In the contrast, the film also contains leisure scenes such as men playing chess, drinking alcohol, shooting a gun, doing exercise etc. which depicts that men with busy jobs still find time for recreation. The film shows the daily routine of the people merrily taking part in the country which has gain momentum in machines and motors.

It utilizes parallel editing where cuts are made between relative concepts to show simultaneous action such as the awakening city compared to the women's daily routine.

These shots create semantic connection and viewers understand them even without the sound. The film has creative shots and transition such as tracking shots, double exposure, slow motion, split-screen etc. which are still common in modern films.

It is also popular for the use of cinematic techniques such as freeze frame, jump cuts, and reverse footage. It contains no dialogue or a focus on any particular character. The film is understood by the visual storytelling fused with the background sound.

“The film drama is the opium of the people... down with bourgeois fairy-tale scenarios... long live life as it is!” -- Dziga Vertov.

Thank you
Bishnu Bhakta Rai
BA Mass Communication

Sonita by Rokhsareh Ghaemmaghami

“Sonita” is a documentary film about a 14-year-old girl from Afghanistan who fled to Iran as a refugee. Her social life in Afghanistan was very difficult because it always clashed with her dreams or goals in life. She wanted to be a rock star and she looks upon Rihanna (music artist) as her role model. She lives in a society where the girls are oppressed, deprived of modern education, and are sold to rich people like a sheep. She wanted to avoid marriage at an early age, thus she flees to Iran to pursue her dreams of becoming a rock star. There she lives with her sister and a cousin. She works as a cleaner at refugee center for ends meet. She wants to become a rapper. Her lyrics are all about social violence faced by young girls in her society. She is an activist yet she does not know about it.

The climax arrives when her mother pays a sudden visit to Iran to take her back to Afghanistan. Her mother wants her to get married to an old man, so that her brother could buy a bride (when a man marries a girl, he has to pay a bride price to girl’s family. The younger the girl, the higher the price). Thus, her mother had an agreement to give Sonita to a man who is willing to pay around \$900 USD. The same amount would be used to buy a bride for her own brother. However, Sonita plays a trick to avoid the marriage and flees to America with the help of the film director. After struggling for many years, she gets an opportunity to record her first rap song. Soon after releasing her official music video, she becomes famous of her lyrics and messages in the rap song. Later she gets a scholarship in America to study at a music school. By then she had finished her teenage years.

This documentary film consists of drama, emotions, struggle, and a unique figure who could inspire anyone. I liked the way that director cinematizes her story. The director appears in the film as a part of the story. In addition, the visual story was a thrilling experience. The story not only contains the aspect of film making but also has some themes which an anthropologist or an anthropology student can reflect upon. As mentioned above, the director creatively discloses the culture of Afghan people.

A social student would first notice a clash between a culture and individual identity, as well as the commodification of the culture as a consequence of post-industrial society. I would highly recommend this film for Mass Communication, Anthropology and Political Science students to reflect upon the social issues captured in this film.

Moreover, this film will give insights into political systems of Middle East countries, which are ultimately associated with the region's chaotic history.

Thank You
Chek Nath Bhattarai
BA Anthropology

Wanted! Book reviews from Faculty, Staff, and Students

If you have read a good book and would like to contribute a review to the Library Newsletter, we would love to receive one from you. Tell us a little about the book and why you liked it in 250-500 words. If interested, send your review to gyanupradhan@rtc.bt or come by the library and see the library staff.

Thanks!!

YOU MUST TELL YOURSELF, “NO MATTER HOW HARD IT IS, OR HOW HARD IT GETS, I AM GOING TO MAKE IT...”-Les Brown.