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All's right with the world = 歌舞昇平

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All's Right With the World

Hong Kong

Director: Cheung King Wai

Director's Profile:

Cheung King Wai is the director of *All's Right with the World*. He is an independent Hong Kong director. He first studied for a music masters degree in City University of New York but he finally graduated in film production with a minor degree in philosophy. Besides being a director, he is also a script writer who has collaborated with Ann Hui. Cheung's film *KJ: Music and Life* won many awards and this film makes many people begin to be aware of documentary film. Cheung King Wai loves to use some on the edge situation as his film's topic. He mentioned that he only does what he likes to do and loves to express his feelings and understanding through filming.

Synopsis:

The director focused on five families, telling their stories before and after the Chinese New Year. Although the five families come from different places and live in different areas in Hong Kong, they all live in poverty and receive government subsidies. This film tries to tell their stories and to articulate their attitudes towards poverty and the welfare system. The film asks a key question: is everything really all right with their world?

Production History:

This film is supported by CNEX. Clippings indicate why Cheung King Wai made this film. Cheung mentioned that poverty has a different face nowadays, for it is not as easy to identify. The question "What does poverty look like now?" made Cheung pursue this film.

Documentary Types:

Poetic

Cheung mentioned the film is about the emotions of these people and also the emotional scars inside their heads. So "emotion" is very important in this film. One way to document "emotion" is to make a "Poetic" documentary. According to Bill Nichols, a poetic film can evoke a particular mood or atmosphere, and prompt an emotional rather than intellectual response from the viewer. In this film, Cheung uses visual effects--a filter to create a cold color tone--to make us feel sadness.

Interactive

We can also consider this film an interactive documentary. Do you notice that most of the scenes involve an interview question? Most of the information comes from interviewees' responses, and oral history is also an important element in this film. For example, Cheung interviews Wang, and as a result of her responses, we know that she is divorced and that she barely is able to take care of her children alone.

Reception:

More than 24 screenings and discussion sessions were held by different schools and organizations, such as City University, Hong Kong University, Hong Kong Polytechnic University. Students said they changed their views about poor people as a result.

This film won the 32th Hong Kong International Film Festival's Humanitarian Award in the documentary section. This film was screened in the 2008 Seoul Independent Documentary Film & Video Festival and the 3rd Beijing Independent Film Festival.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why do a lot of people apply for the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) Scheme?
2. What do you think about the people who are assisted by the CSSA Scheme even though they have the ability to work?
3. Imagine if your family was supported by the CSSA Scheme. Would you dare to speak up?
4. Do you think there are numerous dishonest cases involving the CSSA Scheme? Compare the way in which people receiving benefits through the CSSA Scheme are represented in the mainstream media and in this documentary.
5. Should a person's contribution to society be measured only in terms of his/her economic contribution (such as working in a company)?
6. Why did the director choose to explore the issue of poverty through documentary filmmaking, rather than through fiction?

Why does this film count as a 'must see' film?

1. It relates to daily life

The content of the film is common issues in Hong Kong society. In daily life, CSSA news is always reported in newspapers. The issue is close to HK students' lives and the film gives them a thoughtful perspective on it.

2. It allows for a different way of seeing CSSA people

Hong Kong newspapers always report on CSSA cases and on the gap between rich and poor. The main point of view is that subsidy recipients cheat and are not willing to find jobs. Students who read the news may develop a negative image of CSSA people. In the film, all the families are honest and do not hide the truth of their getting CSSA. They are willing to change their life and do not want to live on CSSA. Students can cognize another side of CSSA people and may come to understand the role that the media play in propagating a certain image of CSSA people.

3. To know more about intergenerational poverty

In the film, whether poverty is due to laziness or a vicious circle is a key question. In one case, a poor old woman remembers having had no time to take care of her children because she needed to earn money to feed them. As the old woman lacked the time to take care of children, her sons behaved badly and took drugs. The problem of poverty extends from the old woman to her sons. Since her son is a drug addict and not well educated, her son does not have a job. It makes the situation even worse and the problem of poverty can never be solved. It shows that poverty and CSSA not only affect adults but also children.

歌舞昇平

導演簡介：

香港獨立電影工作者張經緯是電影《歌舞昇平》的導演。他曾於紐約市立大學修讀音樂課程，後來卻畢業於電影製作，並副修哲學。張經緯除了拍攝紀錄片外，也常與許鞍華合作編寫劇本。《KJ：音樂人生》是張經緯導演的成名作，並獲得多個國際性獎項，引起大眾對紀錄片的關注。張經緯導演愛拍攝邊緣題材，並愛利用電影抒發情感，表達對事情的認識。

故事大綱：

《歌舞昇平》的故事圍繞著五個貧窮的家庭，從新年前後訴說他們的故事。儘管他們擁有不同背景，居住於不同地方，但他們都同樣地領取綜援，面臨貧窮的問題。電影透過他們的故事，表達出他們對貧窮及社會福利政策的看法。在歌舞昇平的背後，究竟他們正面對著什麼問題呢？

製作經過：

這電影是由CNEX贊助拍攝，另外這剪報也暗示了張經緯拍攝這電影的原因。張表示貧窮的形象已經改頭換面了，不同於以前人們只能穿著破鞋，住在鐵皮屋的形象，現今的貧窮已經是不容易的辨別出來。張也因為「現今的貧窮是怎樣？」這個問題，令他開始拍攝這電影。

紀錄片類別：

詩意

張經緯曾講述這紀錄片是描寫被訪者的感受和他們心中一直存在的情感傷口。所以於這記錄片中，感情描寫是十分重要。美國紀錄片理論家 Bill Nichols曾形容，這類電影主要是帶起一種特定的情感或氣氛，另外，引發起觀眾的情緒是這種電影的主要目的。在這紀錄片中，導演使用了不同的視覺效果來引發觀眾的情感，最容易看出的就是電影的色調，張經緯使用了濾鏡來讓電影的色調變冷，也令我們感到傷感。

互動

這電影同樣可以屬於互動的紀錄片。你留意到極大部分的場景內容都是由張經緯和被訪者的訪問帶出嗎？電影的內容都是從被訪者的回應帶出的，而口述歷史也成為了這部電影的重要元素。例如，於阿旺的訪問中，我們從她講述的故事知道她已經離婚，另外她也需要一手支撐起整個家庭。

外界迴響：

電影完成後，不同的學校和組織舉辦了二十四次以上的放映會及座談會，例如香港大學，城市大學及理工大學。學生於放映會後表示自己對香港貧窮人口有了一個不同的觀點。另外，這電影贏得了第三十二屆香港國際電影節紀錄片組別的人道獎。這電影同時是二零零八年首爾獨立電影節的閉幕電影，以及在第三屆北京獨立電影節中亮相。

討論問題：

1. 為甚麼有那麼多人申請綜合社會保障援助計劃（綜援）？
2. 有些人即使有工作能力，但仍然申請領取綜援，你對這些人有何看法？
3. 試想像如果你的家庭正接受綜援的支助，你會有願意告訴別人嗎？
4. 你認為騙取綜援的個案多嗎？試比較領取綜援的人在主流媒體的形象和電影《歌舞昇平》中的形象有何分別。
5. 你認為一個人的社會貢獻只是在於經濟貢獻嗎（如上班）？
6. 為甚麼導演不選擇以劇情片，而是紀錄片來探討貧窮問題？

為何電影值得欣賞？

1. 貼近生活

電影內容與香港生活息息相關。綜援報道在香港很常見，容易令學生引起共鳴，增加興趣。

2. 從不同角度認識綜援人士

報章經常報導騙取綜援的案件，與綜援人士騙援助金和不願工作有關，給學負面形象。電影裡五個領綜援的家庭誠實講出領綜援是迫不得已，想改變生活，不想倚靠援助。學生看完電影能體會綜援人士另一面實況和理解傳媒如何傳播不良形象予綜援人士，訓練批判性思考。

3. 認識跨代貧窮

電影探討其中一個問題是貧窮是由於懶惰還是惡性循環。電影中的金水婆婆工作賺錢養家，沒空照顧子女，兒子學壞吸毒。她的兒子學歷低，而且失業。貧窮問題由金水婆婆伸延至兒子一代，可見貧窮不單影響成年人，還會影響孩子。