

PHILIP ZITOWITZ: TRIBUTE HOMENAGEM

Em julho, em Avanca! Estavas sempre lá! De ti, guardo a imagem do homem sereno, delicado, extremamente educado, com uma energia fabulosa. O teu olhar, as tuas palavras transmitiam-nos um valor tão especial! Nas intervenções de Avanca, projetaste sempre a tua energia e a tua vontade de trabalhar connosco. O teu olhar penetrante e sereno, o rigor das tuas palavras ficam na nossa memória! Recordo a primeira vez que falei contigo. Foi durante um passeio, de moliceiro, contigo e com a Nina. A paixão com que falaste dos teus projetos, do teu trabalho, dos teus alunos! Recordo o orgulho que senti quando elogiaste o meu artigo e me pediste para assumir em permanência a crítica cinematográfica do International Journal of Cinema. Recordo todas as vezes que trocámos ideias sobre a revista, todas as vezes que me desafiaste e perguntaste a minha opinião. Lembras-te dos desafios que me colocaste acerca da revista, a última vez que falámos? Vou seguir as tuas sugestões, vou tentar cumprir o que me pediste, mas quero dizer-te uma coisa: A magia do cinema que te habitou, a força do ensino que projetaste, os grandes planos que nos ofereceste na tela de Avanca não acabaram. Porque é que apagaste a luz do projetor? Porque é que a tua sessão de cinema acabou tão cedo? Estávamos todos na sala, todos, para te ver, para ver a tua metragem que desejávamos que fosse bem longa... Deixaste a tela branca e vazia. E é um branco tão difícil e tão diferente daquele branco da roupa que vestias, em Avanca, em julho... Era em julho, em Avanca, que costumava falar contigo. E a última vez que te vi foi em agosto. E foi muito triste!

Anabela Oliveira

O Philip irrompeu nas nossas vidas com toda a sua elegância, generosidade e curiosidade. Entrou para ficar, injetando em nós e no AVANCA uma energia positiva, como poucos sabem fazê-lo. “15h de Portugal são quantas no Japão?” Aquela ou noutra hora compatível para todos nós, lá entrávamos em contacto para uma sessão de brainstorming, daqueles pensamentos por vezes utópicos que nos transportavam para um mundo ideal, em que tudo era possível, em que os sonhos se realizavam e o cinema acontecia... mas era também naquelas sessões que algo bem real surgia entre nós. A amizade, certamente, e a preparação minuciosa dos projetos comuns. O festival e a conferência de Avanca, o IJC, o CosmoFest, todos eram convocados para conversas de horas a fio. Às vezes, em Portugal sentia-se o stress da aproximação dos eventos, mas o Philip nunca abdicava da sua calma filosófica, nem do seu sorriso, nem de um certo grau de relativismo. Era sempre, sempre mesmo, compreensivo e profundamente humano nas suas relações. Uma ou duas vezes por ano, os nossos encontros passavam a ser presenciais. O Philip chegava a este país que amava e queria conhecer todos os detalhes da vida de cá, de como se dizia e fazia por cá, de como a gente de cá pensava. Muitas vezes, as conversas partiam da organização concreta de eventos e do cinema, para algo bem maior. Era um homem reto, delicado (nunca lhe conhecemos um tom de voz mais alto nem qualquer palavra descabida) e belo, cuja humanidade fazia com que chegasse a todos, tocasse cada um de nós. Preocupava-se com cada um e com o mundo inteiro. E depois houve aquele gesto, tão terrivelmente definitivo, tão dramaticamente inesperado, tão inexplicado e desestabilizador. O IJC ficou manco, mas nós sentimos a amizade amputada de um pedaço que nunca mais iríamos recuperar e cuja dimensão eu nem sequer tinha medido bem até lá! Tu partiste e eu pensei que deveria ter aproveitado mais, muito mais, essa nossa amizade. A nossa condição humana tem destas aberrações: nós de facto aprendemos muito de nós próprios nos momentos mais duros. Aquele terá sido certamente um dos mais difíceis. Mesmo assim, as principais recordações que guardo do tempo que passámos contigo são felizes, joviais por vezes, divertidas outras vezes e, sobretudo, de grande incentivo. Aquela tua energia não nos deixou e é com ela que avançámos e avançaremos. No que me toca, espero ter a honra de encontrar pelo caminho muitos Philips, apesar de saber que és insubstituível. Muitos Philips, ou mesmo só alguns, seriam certamente uma lufada de ar fresco para nós, teus amigos, e para o IJC, teu projeto. Por isso, vamos a isso, vamos lá procurar esses Philips, pelo mundo fora, em honra a ti, à amizade e à vida digna!

Claudia Ferreira



I met Prof. Philip Zitowitz for the first time at the first AVANCA | CINEMA conference, in 2010, of which he was one of the founders. The way he conducted his lectures and conference sessions was always vibrant, provoking interesting debates on the topics covered. His activities and initiatives were diverse and caused positive impacts among his peers, including me, and allow a great interaction between academics and professionals in the field of performing and visual arts. The news about his passing let all his colleagues very sad and who knew Prof. Philip feel the missing of his energy and the joy that he performed his works.

Joao Victor Boechat Gomide

Phil often compared himself to a big wall
With his strong, tall body, topped with his crown of silver
Phil looked indeed so solid, so robust, so trustworthy...
Phil was the wall on which you could lean to rest
Phil was the wall which could protect you, bring you shelter
Phil was the wall you would never imagine going down
But as thunder in our hearts the wall collapsed, crumbled down
Leaving us in the rubble and dust of his big, generous and wonderful mind...

Marc Rigaudis



Phil Zitowitz. Ah, yes. I remember him well. It is difficult for me to imagine not having a conversation on the phone with him or sharing a bottle of wine at an overly priced restaurant. Phil was highly creative, artistic and resourceful. He was also a genius as a business person. As an educator he was totally dedicated to the students and willing to help them progress even after they had graduated from MU.

When I first heard the news from Kevin Mark I was in shock for about three days. At one point when I was working on the final touches of the app version of A Christmas Carol, I started crying. Phil gave me the final critique before I put the app up for sale in the Apple Store. Even during his busy schedule he made time for me. During the summer of 2014 shortly before his death I sent him two emails. He asked me to download photos of the second film festival I had taken at his request. He gave me the option to wait until he returned in September. I said I would wait until he got back from Portugal. Well, how was I to know that fate would step in. Phil never returned to Japan.

So many memories of him remain inside my heart and mind. His good work will continue in the efforts and works of the students he had taught and inspired.

Good Bye, old friend.

Kermit Carvel



Recusei-me durante muito tempo a escrever este texto, pois este não deveria ser escrito.

Adiei e adiei, não conseguia e não consigo encontrar palavras que façam a justa homenagem que mereces de minha parte, mas exigi de mim e procurei honrar-te de maneira simples, mas genuína.

Sabes que não acredito em anjos, mas acredito em ti. Passam muitos dias em que não te recordo, mas naqueles momentos chave tu surges. Surges para dizer que consigo, que acredito em mim. Num grande momento, tu vais estar na primeira fila a bater palmas, a sorrir, cheio de orgulho em mim a dizer “A minha Rita” pois eu sou a tua Rita e tu és o meu Philip.

Ainda me lembro da primeira vez que te conheci em Avanca... Eras enorme, americano, professor no Japão e judeu, tudo combinado era muito para mim, que me senti intimidada... pouco depois já nos olhávamos nos olhos, tu sabias como o fazer, chegar às pessoas para ti era simples, era tão natural... e não tinhas que te baixar!

Os braços abertos e o teu coração franco e generoso recebiam, atraíam as pessoas, todos se encantavam contigo.

Genuinamente eras um bom homem, um bom amigo, um excelente profissional e um apaixonado pela vida e pelas pessoas.

Eras grande em tudo, tudo em ti apoiava-me. Trabalhamos com grande seriedade nos projetos que tínhamos juntos, longas conversas e discussões com o objetivo de melhorar. O que eu aprendi contigo! Obrigada.

Tu és o meu Philip e eu sou a tua Rita!

O mundo foi o teu palco e tu brilhaste, meu Philip! Era impossível ficar indiferente pois tu eras diferente! Um corpo de gigante, um rosto de sábio e aquele sorriso de menino.

Adorava cozinhar para ti, sabias?! Ver-te comer?... uma delícia! Bebermos o nosso vinho, chatear a Maria pois queríamos beber e comer mais! Parecíamos duas crianças traquinas!

Tão bom, tão simples! Que maravilha recordar estes momentos, fomos tão felizes!

Eu sou a tua Rita e tu és o meu Philip!

Estava em Rimini quando recebi aquela mensagem perturbadora, na agenda do dia estava a visita ao túmulo do Federico Fellini. Devia ser uma confusão, uma grande confusão! Impossível, não, não queria acreditar. Não alterei os planos do meu dia, lá fui, o coração apertado. E no monumento La Grande Prua chorei por ti! Fico então com o nosso Amacord! Uma festa, uma grande festa e nós, duas personagens fellinianas! Tu, o grande Maestro! Iremos fazer os nossos passeios noturnos pelas ruas de Rimini ou Roma, de braço dado, parando nos cafés para beber um copo e falar com as gentes. Da janela a Maria vai gritar: “Que andam a fazer na rua a estas horas?!”. E nós vamos rir e responder a uma só voz: “Só mais um bocadinho, Maria!”

Eu sou a “tua Rita” e tu és o meu Philip!

Rita Capucho

My family was emotionally devastated and shattered on hearing of Philip's unnatural death. My wife wept and cried "No, Never. Philip can't do it." He was not meant to leave us so early. He was for life because he lived every minute of it. He came to our university twice to attend conferences and endeared himself to all the students and faculty members of our department with his disarming smile and childlike innocence. His ever-smiling face electrified the gathering the way no body could do. He was the darling of all the delegates and I envied him for this. He could dance with my students for hours together to the beats of Haryanvi Music. Simply wonderful! Such a volcano of energy he was! Philip could not attend our last conference and every student, faculty member and delegate had only one question to ask me, "Where is Philip? Where is Philip?" He came from a distant country and became one of us. I will not blame God for Philip's untimely departure from the earth because He also must have missed his company. I can only say, "He was a man in every sense of the word." May God grant peace to the departed soul.

S. P. S. Dahiya



The Tremendous Contributions to Japan by Professor Philip Zitowitz

Philip David Zitowitz was many things: a director and a producer of musicals, plays and films, the author of numerous books and articles, a scholar of great prominence, a lecturer and supervisor to many students in the School of Political Science and Economics at Meiji University, and above all, a loved and respected friend and colleague to many around the world.

Before Philip Zitowitz came to Japan, he had achieved acclaim across the world. He was a Phi Beta Kappa Commonwealth Scholar at the University of Massachusetts, a 'Shubert Fellow' at New York University's Doctoral Program in Performance Studies, a director of Cultural Programs at Long Island University, where he was voted 'Administrator of the Year,' and an editor of the journal, *Westbere Review*. He had also been an artistic director of Odyssey Repertory Company, where he directed Maxim Gorki's *The Lower Depths* and James Baldwin's *Amen Corner*. He continued to teach at Tennessee State University, where he became the managing director of Gospel Arts Productions, and produced and directed the Gospel Musical, *You Gotta Believe It*. He had worked to promote gospel musical artists to a wider audience, and to develop the use of gospel music through non-traditional media in the performing and visual arts. He had also served as General Secretary of 'WASLE,' which is based in India, devoted to the production of journals, books and conferences internationally. This allowed him to tour India in order to provide workshops and lectures on performance.

Coming to Japan, Philip Zitowitz energetically continued his work in various fields including journalism, films, performing arts, and academia. He wrote reviews and interviews for *The Japan Times* (cf. Zitowitz, 2000), and two books *The Spirit of Broadway*, *The Spirit of America: An Introduction to the Broadway Musical* (Zitowitz, 2001) and *The Poetry of Film* (Zitowitz et al., 2009). In these books, he laid the foundations for the study of film, performing arts, and education. Using his theoretical approach, he lectured in the School of Political Science and Economics at Meiji University. As soon as he started working there, his charming character soon attracted students and colleagues as well (Morimoto, 2000). He organised the Zitowitz Seminar, which invited those who were interested in global culture to explore different cultures through English language films. He mounted productions with his students such as *The Lion King*, *Peter Pan*, *High School Musical*, *West Side Story*, *Evita*, and *Beatles: The Musical*. Since 2011 he and his students have produced the film festival, 'Cosmo Fest Tokyo', with the sponsorship of prestigious companies. Thanks to his devotion, this festival has been associated with the Avanca International Film Festival. Overcoming grief and loss, his students successfully held the Cosmo Fest Tokyo in December, 2014 with the theme: *In Memory of Our Friend Philip Zitowitz* (Cosmo Fest Tokyo, 2014). He was, however, more than a lecturer to students. Many graduates of his seminar often visited

him and some of them established the non-profit organisation, 'Cosmo Fest,' in Tokyo with him. This genuine interest that Philip Zitowitz had in his students was something that applied to all of his interactions with others. He was also generous and sincere to those who worked with him, treating us all as friends.

But to list Philip Zitowitz's academic achievements in Japan is to illustrate only a small part of who he was. He served as judge for the *ITO-EN OI Ocha International Haiku Contest*, as well as Vice Chairman of the Haiku International Association. He was skilled at introducing people to others. Finally, he was about to explore an interdisciplinary field connecting film with English education in Japan.

The last conversation I had with Philip Zitowitz took place on the day before he left for Avanca in late July, 2014. He was discussing the exploration of the new interdisciplinary field, and his plan to realise the idea. He looked very energetic and was looking forward to visiting Avanca Film Festival and the International Conference there. He emailed me after the festival via conference to tell me of the successful closing. This was just a few days before he passed away.

I was fortunate as so many others to have been a colleague of Philip Zitowitz at Meiji University, and to benefit from the full range of his dedication to supporting students, young scholars, and colleagues, and the many opportunities provided to them. Such dedication in turn inspired tremendous loyalty, in the form of numerous tributes and reflections. It is my wish that during the whole conference every member will recall his extraordinary life and the many ways he contributed to us. He taught us that it was not good enough to be the best in your field. He will be greatly missed, but I am comforted by the knowledge that his accomplishments will continue to exemplify the very best in the field of film, performing arts and education.

Yumiko Mizusawa

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