

Film Project : *Goodbye Lenin!* (2003)

By Randy Studt, West Lafayette High School

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Unit: Deutsche Geschichte - Nach der Wende: 1989-90

Grade Level: German III - grades 11-12

Lesson: *Ostalgie - The Nostalgia for Life Before Reunification*

Objectives:

1. To examine the concept of **Ostalgie** from examples in the film *Goodbye Lenin!* in terms of current **Ost-West** relations in Germany
2. To research the **Alltagsleben** of average **DDR-Bürger** before **die Wende (1989-90)**-- and create empathy and a deeper understanding for the desire to flee/ need to recreate idealized memory
3. To demonstrate that history is not a single linear story, but opposing points of view
4. To demonstrate language ability in written and oral application/ assessments

There are three potential areas for application of the film *Goodbye Lenin!* in the German classroom: politico-historical, socio-economic and **Ostalgie**. The third is a phenomenon present only in the former DDR portion of Germany. This is part of the cultural divide between **Ossis** and **Wessis** in current German relations. This lesson plan only examines the third portion of the overall study needed for the film.

Indiana World Language Standards:

- 3.1.4 Express agreement and disagreement, supporting opinion with simple reasoning.
- 3.2.1 Identify main ideas and topics in a variety of authentic written materials.
- 3.3.6 Give oral presentations on familiar subjects dealing with the foreign culture.
- 3.4.1 Describe cultural practices and behaviors of everyday life in the foreign culture.
- 3.6.1 Transfer knowledge and understanding of history to the study of the foreign language and its culture.
- 3.6.2 Transfer and apply process-writing and reading strategies to the foreign language.
- 3.6.4 Transfer electronic research skills to the foreign language.
- 3.7.2 Read selected magazines, newspapers and electronic media for information about the foreign culture.

The "Lesson":

Time Frame: 2 weeks

[Note: This time frame is an estimate. Depending on whether you have a 50 minute or block schedules, you will need to determine how to best break up the film/ activities. The five spots I have chosen to use for *Ostalgie* purposes could also be used for politico-historic or socio-economic activities as well.]

A. Opening:

1. Brainstorm - What 4-5 products would you have a hard time living without?
What items do you use the most?
2. Discussion --
What would it be like, if your world was turned upside down overnight?
None of these items is available -- how is life different?
What changes in your personal life would you least /most like?
What habits/ hobbies/ activities are most crucial to making you who you are?
What do Americans value most?

Activities:

1. Computer Lab - Partners
Give students the list of products (see attachment) to research.
They should find out what the item is, the current cost and/or its story
They retain for later discussion.
2. Show the movie in German with German subtitles.
Stops will be made at the following spots.
[Note: I prefer to not show an entire film and then try to go back and have students do activities, as they often miss details along the way necessary to understanding the topic at hand. Others might choose to show the film in its entirety before or after the activities.]

A. Adaptation of Youth vs Elders

MOVIE: Burger King/ Satellite TV -
change in work overnight / new furnishings / boyfriend
Plenum discussion -
How do youth adapt to changing situations?
What is the response of the older generation?
How does this relate to your life?
How much do your parents/grandparents like change?

ASSIGN: Students write in journal about this question in German.

B. Economic Change

MOVIE: Money/ Trabant/ garbage picking for the money
money exchange -- for the Trabi -- troubles in bank
(Ossi v. Wessi)/ 3 years/ frustration and anger
comment of the older man -- "look what we've come to"

Plenum discussion :

What is a Trabant and why would buying that be a big deal?

Students refer to notes

How is picking through the garbage --looking for the money--
symbolic of the changes?

(Note that the furniture was thrown away quickly, but still there.)

What is the job situation of the older generation?

Inform students of the continuing unemployment rate/ lower pay
rate and other incongruities between Ossi and Wessi today --
including the amount already invested in the Ost to bring parity.

Watch Google video of Trabi commercial.

http://www.archive.org/details/Werbung_Trabant_601

Discuss with a partner which parts of the commercial are less
than genuine compared to reality. Share.

Assign: With Partner create an advertisement for one of the other
DDR products researched before. This can be in video or
powerpoint format.

C. The Search for Ostprodukte/ Ostalgie

MOVIE: Alex searches for item containers to convince his mother she's
still in DDR. DDR becomes a Wessi consumer nation overnight.
July 1990 - no more Ostprodukte.
Concept of " ein buntes Warenparadies"

Plenum Discussion:

In what ways do the characters become more consumer oriented?

How is that symbolic of a Western culture?

What foods does he transfer to convince his mother?

Today we can find many of these products, although they were
discontinued by the firms at the time, in favor of the West
products. Why is that?

Where can you get these items? What kind of items are
available?

ASSIGN: Shopping project- Go on line to produce a full meal from
DDR products. Record the food items, quantities, prices, and
any extra item to recreate the meal, as Alex might have for his
mother. Extra credit for including pictures.
Explain in German in class what you chose and why.

D. 79 Quadrat Meter DDR

MOVIE: The Birthday Party -- this is how it was in 79 Quadrat meter....and DDR

Plenum Discussion: DDR -Alltagsleben

How was work/ employment, consumer goods, security, police, education different before the Wende? (principal, neighbors, Junge Pioneere)

What is considered a great gift? (Sekt, peas and coffee)

Why is that a big deal?

Discuss the deprivation common in DDR --
lack of consumer goods

ASSIGN: Reading on Ampelmännchen

Be prepared to discuss: What is it?

Why was there controversy? What was the result?

E. Reality?

MOVIE: Mother leaves the apartment

Confrontation with the changes outside

ASSIGN: Journal entry: What will the mother think/see/be surprised by when she leaves her 79 Quadrat Meter DDR?

Plenum Discussion: Following day

What would you project would be her biggest surprise?

How would she react to these changes?

How does she feel about her children's efforts to shield her from the truth?

C. Closing:

1. READ: *Le Monde diplomatique* article -- 2004 to help formulate ideas

2. ASSIGN: Aufsatz

What is Ostalgia? How is it demonstrated in the film?

Why would anyone want to return to the time before reunification?

Address the quotes: Truth can easily be adapted..

“The future lay in our hands.” Alex

“Wir waren alle wertvolle Menschen.” Herr Klappprath - Schulleiter

“Es kann nichts ändern, wenn alle abhauen.” Mother

What promises were made or implied by reunification?

How does this feed the distrust and disillusionment of Ossis today?

3. DISCUSS: The class will take the test at www.ossi-test.de/duell

together in the computer lab as a closing/ fun activity

Assessments:

Journal Entries (2) - 10 each

Advertisement (1) - 25 points

Shopping List (1) - 10 points (+5)

Aufsatz (1) - 40 points

Participation (3)- 30 points

Resources/ Materials:

Goodbye Lenin! - X Filme in Koproduktion mit WDR/ARTE, Deutschland, 2003
Regie: Wolfgang Becker, Drehbuch: Bernd Lichtenberg, Wolfgang Becker
www.79qmDDR.de

Trabant commercial -- **http://www.archive.org/details/Werbung_Trabant_601**

Ampelmännchen reading adapted from **www.ampelmann.de**

Ostprodukte websites -
www.ostprodukte.de
www.ossiversand.de
www.ostkost.de

Trabant website - **www.trabi-web.de**

Research articles on the topic of Ostalgia -
mondediplo.com/2004/08/04ostalgia - article on the phenomenon of
Ostalgia - English

www.ddd-alltagskultur.de

Closing game
www.ossi-test.de/duell

Attachments:

Product list for web research

Ostprodukte

Name _____

Finde diese Produkte in den folgenden Webseiten und mit www.google.de . Was sind sie? Woher kommen sie? Was kosten sie heute? Was ist die Geschichte davon? Schreib Notizen unter dem Thema mit Hilfe deines Partners.

www.ostprodukte.de
www.ossiversand.de
www.ostkost.de
www.trabi-web.de
www.sandmaennchen.de

1. Rotkäppchen Sekt

2. Spreewalder Gurken

3. Trabant

4. Vita Cola

5. Perlodent

6. Mocca Fix Gold

7. Sandmännchen

8. Tempo Bohnen

9. Globus Erbsen

10. Pittiplatsch

