

特別賞

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オンラインで出会ったイギリスの友人と語り合う中で、国が違っても同じ映画に心を動かされる瞬間があると知りました。そんな共通の気持ちが、異文化の壁を越える力になることを伝えるエッセイです。

Cinematic Bridges

Is cross-cultural understanding really just about understanding differences? People often think that cross-cultural communication is to find big differences in values, customs, and ways of thinking, and that learning about these differences is the most important thing. It is true that we can learn a lot from differences. However, my experience has been just as valuable—and even more surprising. It has told me that even people from completely different countries and backgrounds can discover unexpected commonalities that bring them closer together. I'll talk about common ground with one foreigner, and common ground with people around the world.

First, I realized that sharing the same interests can connect hearts across cultural differences while discussing movies with my British friend. I met him through a language exchange app Hello Talk which allows people around the world to practice languages, make friends, and learn about other cultures. One day, while having a casual chat on HelloTalk, I asked my friend, "Do you have any movie recommendations?" Without hesitation, he recommended two movies to me: "Shutter Island" and "Fight Club". I had never seen either of them before, but just listening to his description made me excited to watch them. Feeling curious, excited, and a little nervous, I decided to watch both movies on my day off, hoping they would be as good as he said. Both movies had surprising twists at the end. I was completely absorbed, and even after watching them, I felt joy knowing I shared the same sensibilities with people from different cultures. From my friend's perspective, he was simply sharing a movie he liked and wanted me to enjoy it too, without being conscious of cultural differences. However, this simple act led to the discovery of commonalities across national borders.

Secondly, I realized that I share the same feelings not only with one foreigner but with people all over the world. I kept thinking about "Shutter Island" and "Fight Club" for a long time and looked at various people's interpretations of the stories. I thought these movies might only be popular overseas, and that my friend's taste in movies would be very different from Japanese taste in movies. However,

after doing some research, I realized that I wasn't the only one shocked by the twists in both movies. People around the world wrote about watching the entire movie again to catch every detail they had missed the first time. Just like me, they were stunned by how everything they thought they knew flipped in an instant. This shared astonishment made me realize that despite different cultures and languages, we all responded to those shocking scenes in the same visceral way. I thought I would find completely different opinions and values, but in fact, we discovered that we already shared meaningful and enjoyable things, and this gave us an unexpected sense of excitement and closeness.

My experience made me realize that sometimes we focus too much on differences. What truly connects people may be simple things, such as enjoying the same stories, feeling the same excitement, and sharing the same joys. Through this experience, I realized that cross-cultural communication is not just about discovering differences. True communication is discovering that sharing joy and interest, and the simple connections that come from them, can bring people closer together than learning about cultural differences. This experience taught me that cross-cultural communication is not about creating barriers between differences, but rather about building bridges of understanding, connection, and shared enjoyment around the world.

In conclusion, intercultural communication is not about finding differences or pointing out what divides us. It is more important to share moments, discover commonalities, and realize that we can connect with each other through the things we love, no matter where we are in the world. Cross-cultural communication is not a barrier but a bridge that connects hearts and minds across distances, cultures, and even language differences.