dizione, dato che il rinnovamento è solo e sempre rielaborazione delle proprie radici. Fra le ascendenze teatrali poi la Commedia dell'arte costituisce una vera e propria morfologia e tipologia che il cinema italiano sembra avere pienamente metabolizzato e spesso riprende e rielabora, anche senza saperlo, anzi soprattutto quando non lo sa. E infine anche la direzione opposta, quella verso la realtà, con la metabolizzazione a tutti livelli, dal più alto e rarefatto cinema di poesia a quello più schiettamente commerciale, dei generi, dove la grande esperienza neorealista, come disse Alberto Farassino, ha "sporcato" il cinema italiano.

Il resto è la storia. Ma, partendo da questo assunto e con questo teorema da dimostrare, le altre cinquecento pagine diventano una affascinante e avvincente sfida, una corsa attraverso gli anni e i film, che leggiamo quasi d'un fiato passando dagli autori alle strutture alle leggi, alle cadute ai rilanci, ai fallimenti ai successi, arriviamo al cinema di ieri. Dal Pinocchio di Antamoro a quello di Benigni, dalla Presa di Roma al caso Moro di Bellocchio.

Un cinema che sa coniugare il realismo e i modelli teatrali, sia in forme alte che in forme basse. Scusate se è poco.

1  David Bordwell, Kristin Thompson, Film History. An Introduction (New York: Mc.Graw-Hill, 1994); trad. it. Storia del cinema e dei film (Milano: Il Castoro, 1998), vol. 1, p. 255.

## SELECTED BY: FRANCESCO CASETTI, MARIAGRAZIA FANCHI

Mark Jancovich, Lucy Faire, with Sarah Stubbings, The Place of the Audience. Cultural Geographies of Film Consumption (London: BFI, 2003)

"The following study is an attempt to move beyond the analysis of how audiences interpret text and to open up ways of studying film consumption as an activity" (p. 3).

Film Studies have long included the study of the audience among their fields of research, recognizing an essential role to reception practices in the understanding of cinema. Yet the experience of vision, with its complex intertwining of relations with the context, is still relatively unexplored. The concept of cinematic experience emerges in the field of filmology after World War Two, mainly to indicate the psychological aspects involved in vision, from the "need" of cinema to the "belief" in the represented reality. More recently it has grown to a larger field of references, up to including cultural processes as well as the historical conditions underlying vision. Through a renewed reading of Benjamin, cinematographic experience has appointed the place where cinema and its consumption acquire meaning within daily life practices (Thomas Elsaesser has presented a dense paper on this theme at the Conference of Ascona in honour of Noelle Brinkman). The study by Jankovich and Faire, with the collaboration of Stubbings, marks a significant advancement in this direction: not only for the quality of their case history, but also for the thesis underlying the research: the usefulness of an enlargement of frame in order to understand why and how the spectator approaches the film.

The activity of film consumption in Nottingham is the object of the research, from the first appearance of the filmic spectacle in the city fairs to the recent construction of a futuristic multimedia centre. Transitions are interpreted on the background of the changes that invested the geography of the city, particularly urban transformation and the new forms of relations brought by it. These transitions are described keeping in consideration the complex of actions involved in the spectator's experience, including the choice of the medium for film viewing. Those actions reflect not only personal instances but also life style, social class, gender, the ties and pressures of the social system, and they thus high-

light how movie going has an exemplar value within the environment and circumstances where it takes place. Besides the suggested periodization and the detailed analysis of each phase, the work of the authors has the merit of introducing some new or less explored issues. Let's take as an example the topic of security and social control.

In 1910 a law is issued in Great Britain, named Cinematographic Act, in order to guarantee the audience's safety against the dangers of fire. The application of the law brings as a result the construction of specific sites for cinema viewing, a practice that thus moves from city fairs and cafés to the Cinematographic Theatres. But to a close look the act leads to even larger consequences. The distribution of licences shows a precise intent of social control over the spectator's experience, one example being the setting of theatres in upper class city areas, another being the imposition of a strict separation between the filmic spectacle and other forms of consumer goods, such as food and alcoholic beverages. The regulation of the filmic spectacle is a clue to the understanding of the growing popularity of cinema at the beginning of the century, but also of the discomfort and social tension produced by the urbanization process over the previous decades. Security and control re-emerge in the study's historical overview also in later phases: in the fifties and sixties, for example, the perception of a deregulation of the suburbs contributes to the abandonment of local cinemas; or, more recently, the building of a multiplex, attracting crowds of young people, in the same area as the theatre and music hall, is perceived by the local population as a destabilizing factor.

We insisted on control and safety because it represents an essential element of the cinematographic experience. We could go further: movie going can be seen as characterized by the intervention of a series of "disciplines" in the sense given to the term by Foucault. These are of course disciplines of a different nature from those defining seventeenth and eigh-

teenth century modernity: they do not have a repressive character, but they equally make use of techniques such as spatial division, serialization of behaviour, definition of programs of action, and so forth... Their intervention aims at making the body of the spectator meek, in a situation where at the same time a wide range of freedom is guaranteed, favoured by the darkness of the theatre and the participation in a strongly identifying spectacle. Thus we can well say that "discipline" and freedom are both present in cinema, and that the consumer activity sets itself as the site where the two terms literally negotiate their reasons. We will not go further in this suggestion, which is at the centre of the ongoing research of the authors of this review.

Getting back to Jankovich and Faire, we must add to the appeal of their book the conjunct use of more traditional sources of reference, such as local newspapers, and personal remembrances, collected with an advanced and aware use of the ethnographic method.

Therefore, this work presents itself as a virtuous example also in its ability of creating a dialogue between different approaches and disciplines.

## SELECTED BY: LORENZO CUCCU

Vito Zagarrio, Cinema e fascismo. Film, modelli, immaginari (Venezia: Marsilio, 2004)*

* Lorenzo Cuccu si scusa per non aver potuto inviare la sua recensione.

## SELECTED BY: THOMAS ELSAESSER

Heide Schönemann, Paul Wegener. Frühe Moderne im Film (Stuttgart-London: Axel Menges, 2003)

It has always been axiomatic – and not only thanks to Lotte Eisner's The Haunted Screen –