

sous l'égide duquel on a placé l'évolution du cinéma et du film – voire son “langage” – se voit ainsi contrebattu par une permanence et une diversification des procédés et procédures inverses qui comportent leur face purement mercantile (plus-value des *bonus*, énièmes restaurations et autres “déclinaisons”) mais aussi bien leurs virtualités critiques ou de renouvellement.

L'ouverture qu'opère ce livre doit emporter l'intérêt et l'adhésion précisément parce que cette opposition oral/écrit, performance/texte, sous-tendue par des relations de pouvoir, de domination, représente un enjeu très actuel à plusieurs niveaux: dans l'art (performance, installation) comme dans les médias (interactivité).

- 1 Ce chapitre est peut-être le plus fragile de l'ensemble et celui qui est le plus appelé à “vieillir” car l'état de l'information évolue très vite en un certain nombre de cas. Si la situation française demeure encore sous-explorée, faute de documents exploitables (alors que des témoignages attestent de la réalité du phénomène: voir André Gilloix par exemple) et aussi parce qu'elle offre de possibles complexités qui lui sont spécifiques (Alain Carou a entrepris d'étudier la place de l'écrit “aléatoire” dans les salles), celle de la Russie, en particulier, dont les données ici demeurent très frustes (travaux pionniers mais déjà anciens de Vance Kepley jr, est appelée à être reformulée de fond en comble (une recherche en cours, au CNRS – menée par Valérie Posener – a démultiplié les sources et les faits sur la question et donc la signification du phénomène).
- 2 Cf. dans le même sens, les propos de Hanns Eisler sur la musique chorale dans ces mêmes années, repris partiellement dans *Composing for The Films* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947) où l'on peut aussi repérer le lieu du différend avec Adorno.

SELECTED BY: FRANCESCO CASETTI AND MARIAGRAZIA FANCHI

Annette Kuhn, *An Everyday Magic. Cinema and Cultural Memory* (London-NY: I.B. Tauris Publisher, 2002)

In the past few years, the topic of the spectator and his viewing experience has acquired a new weight in cinema studies. Due to the attention given to moviegoing by historical approaches and to the spectator's interest in fields of research other than semiotics and psychoanalysis, the debate has increased greatly, and not only from the numerical point of view. The recognition of spectatorship as an independent field of research, within which different perspectives act and confront each other, has generated a more critical and conscious attitude towards both the reference theories and the adopted methodologies.

Annette Kuhn's text exemplifies this new and more mature season of research on spectatorship, showing the main lines of development and the themes around which the reflection and the issues, which are still problematic, possess close coherence.

The volume reconstructs the forms of the movie viewing experience in the Thirties through an integrated methodology that compares different source dialogues with one another. These include paratexts (the popular press, the specialistic press, publications about cinema); the spectators' memories (collected through an ethnographic survey carried out with the help of in-depth interviews and questionnaires) and a sample of representative films of the period (selected on the grounds of their significance in the literature and in the spectators' memories, and read again with the instruments of narratological analysis). After a theoretical-methodological introduction, the text develops through eight chapters that provide in-depth study of several aspects, the most salient being spectator-

ship in the Thirties. These aspects encompass moviegoing and the reappropriation of urban space (“The Scenes of Cinema Memory”); the socialized nature of the viewing experience and the films’ role in shaping this sort of experience (“Jam Jars and Cliffhangers”); cinema as an emancipation space and as an assertion of independence for young spectators and therefore as a resource that contributes to the forming of both generational identity and gender identity (“When The Child Looks” and “Growing Up With Cinema”); cinema’s capability of modelling behaviours and collective rites, for example seduction, and of modifying the common sense of decency (“This Loving Darkness”); the relationship between cinema and other experiences, like dancing, and their mutual influences (“An Invitation to Dance”); the star system phenomena, and the modes through which cinema concurs in stimulating a palingenesis of life patterns (“All My Life, and Beyond...”); and finally the cinema’s escapist function and its abilities to place itself as a boundary space between reality and desire (“Oh! Dreamland!”).

Although the discussion on these subjects adopts a predominantly phenomenological and descriptive approach (giving ample space to the direct quotation of the sources), this is often to the detriment of the interpretative moment, a direction towards which it emerges that the study of spectatorship has been very clearly moving in both its focus of attention and the theoretical and methodological points of view taken. From this perspective, Kuhn’s volume is an excellent reference book for those who are studying spectatorship today. Taking the cue from her work, and taking into consideration the background of current field research which has also blossomed in Italy in the last few years¹, it seems proper to focus attention on some of the issues.

The first is the idea of *situated vision*, a complex event that not only deals with the filmic text and the spectator, but also from the beginning brings into play the close and

widened context in which the vision takes place. In other words, spectatorship includes both the symbolic processes that develop on the film-spectator axis, and the social and cultural processes that are produced by the relation with the environment. In this framework, the topic of the relationship between what takes place inside and outside the movie theatre and the capacity of the exhibition places to function as liminal spaces that mediate the meeting between the symbolic and the social – and between the event of vision and everyday life – becomes salient.

The second issue is the idea of *pathway of life*, of going to the cinema as an experience that is defined in the background of the subject’s story, and is an experience whose growing and lines of development not only reflect the evolution of the medium (of the languages, the technologies, the exhibition conditions), but also reflect the changes that affect the subject’s life, his turning points, his crises, the definition and re-definition of his biographical projects. In this picture, we can again try to read the classical question on the relationship between cinema and identity in both a dynamic and complex perspective, in which the viewing experience is one of the many fields within which the subject constructs and gives consistency to his own social identity, in a game of crossroads and exchanges, of passages and mutual interferences, whose stake is the elaboration of a self-centred discourse, an image that can be spent and ratified in the context and in the historical circumstances in which the spectator lives. From this notion, different research directions can be opened. One of the most promising seems to be that of studies on memory, which are striving to reconstruct and to settle the plan (texture) of relations – that act between the vision experience and the other experiences of the subject’s life – and in particular, that new trend of research that examines how films’ discursive structures contribute to defining the pictures of forming social experience and one’s own life story.

The third issue is the idea of *vision as a process of negotiation*, mediating the different instances that coexist in the situated vision and control their conversion into resources to be invested in everyday life and in self-construction.² The concept of negotiation has the merit of underlining the interactive and process-oriented character of filmic communication, bringing out the contribution that spectator, film and environment give to the definition of situation of vision and exhibiting the multiplicity of places and forms where the vision processes intersect life pathways. Around the notion of negotiation, and the system of categories and concepts that this notion has produced (those of articulation and suture, quoting two concepts the writers have been reflecting upon), is a series of hypotheses and perspectives of research, that seem to have the power of putting the studies about spectatorship into the field of discourse again and of offering an arrangement and a theoretical and methodological support able to stand comparison with the new and changeable forms that are assumed today by the vision. Above all, these three notions together have the power of moving the studies on spectatorship and forms of vision from an essentially phenomenological approach to an approach that is capable of pushing in-depth into the interpretation of the phenomena, reconsidering, in a viewpoint that seems more heuristic, more traditional questions as well, such as the question of relations that are established between the film and the spectator or the dialectic between the personal dimension and the institutional dimension in the experience of vision.

1 Besides a rich trend of research that reconstructs the social value of cinema, using films as circumstantial documents of processes and tendencies crossing the historical and cultural context. Among the most recent and exemplary works are: R. Eugeni, *Film, sapere e società*

(Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 1999) and R. De Berti, *Dallo schermo alla carta* (Milano, Vita e Pensiero, 2000), contributions, that systematically act creating tension in the study of texts, in the reconstruction of contexts and in the analysis of the viewing experience, are emerging. On this subject, to be noted the book *Spettatori*, a series of studies about spectatorship in the Thirties and Fifties in Italy (Roma-Venezia: Edizioni di Bianco & Nero, 2002).

2 The idea of communication as process of negotiation is developed and studied in-depth by Francesco Casetti in *Communicative Negotiation in Cinema and Television* (Milano: Quaderni dello Stars/Vita e Pensiero, 2002).

SELECTED BY: LORENZO CUCCU

Sandro Bernardi, *Il paesaggio nel cinema italiano* (Venezia: Marsilio, 2002)

In questo brillante e stimolante lavoro, Bernardi sviluppa il suo studio sul paesaggio nel cinema italiano muovendo dalla convinzione che il paesaggio – nella sua correlazione con i concetti di natura, da una parte, e di “sguardo”, dall’altra – sia una delle forme simboliche più significative e pregnanti della cultura occidentale, oggetto di una riflessione il cui ripercorrimiento è la premessa necessaria di ogni discorso. E dunque, la definizione del ruolo del paesaggio nel cinema italiano deve essere collocata nella più generale prospettiva che ha visto succedersi la concezione della natura come *kaos* e come *kosmos*, poi, husserlianamente, come “l’ambito complessivo dell’esperienza possibile”, fino alla concezione più moderna, nella quale paesaggio e natura sono investiti dalla rottura della centralità del soggetto, inteso come centro della visione, dalla moltiplicazione dei punti di vista e delle forme possibili di rapporto con il mondo. In questa prospettiva filosofica e antropologica Bernardi colloca l’evoluzione del ruolo del