

to the European theoretical debate which in different ages involved, among others, Arnheim, Kracauer, Bazin, Antonioni, Balázs, Dreyer and Ejšenštein.

With regards to the choice of the case studies, the volume – unfortunately without pictures – encompasses both cult and minor movies, with a special care for the Italian highbrow and lowbrow production (“diva film,” comedy, musical melodrama). With its anti-deterministic intersection of technology, industry and aesthetic theory, this historical inquiry on cinematic colour style undermines the leadership of “masters” and “masterpieces” allowing, instead, a reappraisal of the collective and nameless contributions to chromatic practices. Colour was actually often designed and processed by laboratory technicians, who supported a codified and convenient array of aesthetic options untied from the director’s will (this happened, for example, with the coloured copies of *Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari*, Robert Wiene, 1920, which we were used to think exclusively in black and white).

Aaron Delwiche, Jennifer Jacobs Henderson (eds.), *The Participatory Cultures Handbook*, Routledge, London-New York 2012, pp. 313.

In recent years the term participation has become the watchword for a broad range of studies on media and communication processes in the digital realm. Its fortune is essentially linked to the need to mark the distance from the interpretative models developed between the end of the nineties and the beginning of the new millennium, with their store of categories and labels. In particular the concept of participation has progressively replaced the concept of interactivity, to illustrate – as Nico Carpentier effectively set out in an essay from a few years ago⁴ – a more complex experience, which is not limited to changing the interface or the single media environment, but extends its range of action to the entire system and consequently society. In simple terms we can say that participation is part of the debate around web 3.0, as interactivity was part of the debate on web 2.0. The importance of the concept of participation in the current reflection on the media has triggered a wealth of contributions. The book edited by Aaron Delwiche

Ultimately, one of the brightest goals of this volume – as well as Yumibe’s – is the emergence of a historical paradigm based on continuity: social processes and cultural values change very slowly and, beyond crisis and turning points, the transformations – both theoretical and practical – flow gradually and without sudden breaks. According to Yumibe and Pierotti, the history of chromatic cinema itself did not start in 1895, but well before that year, thanks to pre-existing techniques and psychological attitudes toward colour images. Therefore new colour technologies do not merely replace old ones in a one-directional and irreversible way, but they keep on coexisting and circulating, though in a minor mode. Significantly, this idea of continuity is still valid and useful to approach the current techniques of digital colouring, which enable to recreate all the previous colour styles and looks, from hand painting onwards, in a genealogy that is more and more complex and multilayered.

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and Jennifer Jacobs Henderson, *The Participatory Cultures Handbook* is therefore not remarkable in terms of the originality of the topic. But it differs from the numerous reflections on participation in at least three ways. The first is the structure of the work: the book is a collection of twenty eight essays, divided in eight sections, that cover the main aspects of the debate on participation: fan cultures, co-creative processes, building cultures of knowledge, civic cultures, activism, education and media literacy, as well as the introduction and conclusion that provide an interesting definition of the issue. It is therefore an extremely versatile text, providing both a global view of the issue as well as examining its individual aspects in depth. The strength of Delwiche and Henderson’s book lies in the selection of the authors, which includes media theoreticians, communication professionals and young researchers. The multiplication of the points of view and the debate – literally in the question and answer essay between Suzanne Scott and Henry Jenkins – between different ways of intending and criticising participation allows for a rich and detailed reconstruction of the phenomenon. Last, but not least, *The Participatory Cultures*

Handbook distinguishes itself for the analytical perspective that it employs and that can be traced back to four fundamental principles.

The first is opting for an historical reading of the participation phenomena. The idea running through many of the essays collected in the book is that the form that participation is taking today must be interpreted through broad and temporally extended processes. The history of participation suggested by Delwiche and Henderson in the introductory essay and in Delwiche's subsequent reconstruction of the antecedents to the contemporary participatory cultures; the markedly autobiographical essay by Howard Rheingold on the emergence of social media or the excursus on the history of blogs by Alexander Halavais, allow the reader to free the reflection on participation from a synchronic and punctual perspective (tied to individual events or limited environments – a website, a community, etc...) and to identify the 'profound' reasons of the forms, effectiveness and limits of contemporary participatory practices (the double root of the participation phenomena that originate in the jamming cultures of the sixties and seventies and in fandom explains, for example, the variety of manifestations and practices and the profound difference in the motivations and characteristics of the participative initiatives).

The second principle adopted by *The Participatory Cultures Handbook* is an analytical perspective that is not limited to providing a catalogue of the various expressions of participation – from activism to forms of co-creation, from participatory budgeting to fandom cultures – but it attempts to provide an account of the complexity of the phenomenon, also within the same range of action. Christopher Kelty, for example, reminds us of the need to introduce a distinction between participatory practices, not only to achieve a more accurate mapping of these processes, but also to achieve a more adequate assessment, and therefore promotional, criteria. In particular Kelty suggests a differentiation between forms of participation promoted by institutions and those promoted by users; and between participation initiatives where all the phases of the process are shared, including the definition of the objectives, from initiatives that involve participants to fulfil a series of preset tasks that have not been discussed collectively. One of the

contexts in which the analytical perspective promoted by the work has focused on with greater attention, and even painstaking accuracy, is naturally civic practices and the forms of participatory democracy. They are exemplarily and analytically discussed by, amongst others, Dieter Fuchs.

The third aspect that characterises the approach of Delwiche and Henderson's book is the attention paid to grasp all the implications of the phenomena of participation. That is, the effort to go beyond the exclusively positive vision that characterised the first stage of the debate, in order to examine the complexity and also the ambiguity of participatory practices. This third aspect emerges in the individual essays (Paul Taylor returns to the doubts raised by Žižek at the end of the nineties, on the actual degree of freedom afforded by the web 2.0 and that the author summarises in the question "interactivity or interpassivity?," which is also the title of the essay), and in the composition of the work that brings together essays that set out the capacity of participative practices to generate resources (the phylogenesis of the collective intelligence proposed by Pierre Lévy is exemplary, or the analysis of the forms of creativity that participative environments promote by Thomas Swiss and Helen Burgess or the appreciation of the playful video experience as an opportunity to mature civic skills by Benjamin Stokes), to the condemnation of the conditioning and ideological restrictions that the participative initiatives are subject to (Scott, for example, considers the phenomenon of the fan boy authors as a form of institutional participation that is heavily promoted by the media as a mouthpiece for their own contents or even as a free incubator of creativity).

Finally the originality of the book lies in the markedly ecological perspective used to moderate the expectations, principles, values, costumes and methods of operation of all the subjects involved in the processes of participation. The choice of using the term "culture" in the plural in the book's title expresses what is perhaps the most important contribution of the text: promoting the processes of participation cannot fail to acknowledge all instances of participation, from the institutional to the ones expressed by individuals. This challenge demands attention on all levels: from research that is called upon to exam-

ine in the most balanced way possible all the forms that participation is assuming, avoiding enthusiasms and demonizations; from politics that is called upon to promote on a productive, economic and juridical level the new cultural models that enhance the wealth of skills and infrastructures of institutions and at the same time the requests and proposals of

the users; finally on the ethical level by promoting respect and full reciprocity. It is no accident that the final essay in the volume is called: "Toward an Ethical Framework for Online Participatory Culture".

[Mariagrazia Fanchi - Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milano]

- 1 In the 1990s Jacques Aumont gave a significant contribution in this field. Cfr. Jacques Aumont, *Introduction à la couleur: des discours aux images*, Armand Colin, Paris 1994 and Jacques Aumont (ed.), *La couleur en cinéma*, Cinémathèque française, Musée du cinéma – Fondazione Mazzotta, Paris-Milano 1995.
- 2 See, for example, Angela Dalle Vacche, Brian Price (eds.), *Color. The Film Reader*, Routledge, New York 2006; Wendy Everett (ed.), *Questions of Colour in Cinema. From Paintbrush to Pixel*, Lang, Oxford-Bern 2007; Scott Higgins, *Harnessing the Technicolor Rainbow. Color Design in the 1930s*, University of Texas Press, Austin 2007; *Film History, Early Colour*, vol. 21, no. 1-2, 2009; Simon Brown, Sarah Street, Liz Watkins (eds.), *Color and the Moving Image. History, Theory, Aesthetics, Archive*, Routledge, New York-London 2013.
- 3 Two previous Italian works on the same subject are Monica Dall'Asta, Guglielmo Pescatore, *Fotogenia. Storie e teorie del cinema, Il colore nel cinema*, no. 1, Clueb, Bologna 1994 and Luca Venzi, *Il colore e la composizione filmica*, ETS, Pisa 2006.
- 4 Nico Carpentier, "Contextualising Author-Audience Convergences", in *Cultural Studies*, vol. 25, no. 4-5, 2011, pp. 517-533.