

## *Book Reviews*



Ewa Mazierska and Lars Kristensen, eds.: *Third Cinema, World Cinema and Marxism*.  
New York & London: Bloomsbury Academic. 2020. 292 pages.

In their edited collection, Ewa Mazierska and Lars Kristensen have put together a thought-provoking, substantial and multifaceted collection of chapters with the ambition of expanding on, rethinking and updating the politically motivated form of filmmaking that since the late 1960s has been discussed in terms of ‘Third Cinema’. The critical and Marxist perspectives used in this volume cover aspects of decolonisation, critique of class hierarchies and capitalism and different issues of social and economic inequality in a wide array of fiction and documentary films from different film cultures produced between the 1960s–2010s.

Third Cinema, a term coined by Argentinean filmmakers Octavio Getino and Fernando Solanas, is both a theoretical concept and a type of filmmaking that has been connected to non-Western film cultures, primarily Latin American and African revolutionary cinema produced in the 1960s and 1970s. As such, Third Cinema is, according to Mazierska and Kristensen, important to contrast and distinguish in relation to the overarching label of World Cinema. Returning to the concept of Third Cinema, which has been dormant in global (Western) film studies for approximately the last three decades (with a few notable exceptions), is to a certain extent a recapitulation of the possible relevance for discussing individual films as well as the medium of cinema itself as a call to action for social and political change. The question that the reader encounters is if it still is relevant to try to inspire audiences in different contexts to political action with the support of films and how should these films communicate and be produced?

The volume is structured into three parts that engage with the concept of Third Cinema from different perspectives. In the first part, “Revisiting films”, films that previously have not been regarded as Third Cinema are analysed, both to put the validity of the concept to test and potentially to expand the frame of reference. Andrei Rogatchevski problematises transnational

co-productions and encounters between different ideological strands of Marxism by focusing on *Soy Cuba* (*I Am Cuba*, Mikhail Kalatozov, Soviet Union/Cuba, 1964). Meanwhile, Bruce Williams turns his attention to two Brazilian films from the 1960s, *Noite Vazia* (*Night Games*, Walter Hugo Khouri, Brazil, 1964), and *O desafio* (*The Dare*, Paulo César Saraceni, Brazil, 1965), depicting city life to highlight a tension between Second and Third Cinema. Koel Banerjee discusses political implications of filmic realism in two Indian films (*The Adversary*, India, 1970, and *Interview*, India, 1971) by the famous auteurs Satyajit Ray and Mrinal Sen. In the final chapter of this section, Isabel Seguí questions the canonisation of a set number of films as Latin American Third Cinema, criticising a too strong focus on certain formal elements and the dominance of Westernised film critical perspectives.

In the second part, “Comparative readings”, Mariano Paz compares the ‘original’ film source for the development of the Third Cinema manifesto by Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino, *La hora de los hornos* (*The Hour of the Furnaces*, Argentina, 1966–68), with contemporary, less experimental but still politically motivated documentaries by Solanas and discusses an ongoing tension between Marxism and Peronism. Paulina Aroch Fugellie and André Dorcé compare the first part of another of the foundational documentary films of Latin American Third Cinema, *La batalla de Chile: La insurrección de la burguesía* (*The Battle of Chile: The Insurrection of the Bourgeoisie*, Chile, 1975) by Patricio Guzmán, with his later documentary *Salvador Allende* (Belgium/Chile/France/Germany/Spain/Mexico, 2004), reflecting on melodramatic aspects of documentary narration for social change in different historical eras. Lucian Tion both discusses films from different film cultures (Cuba, China, Romania) and problematises the often too simplistic and ahistorical comparative perspectives used in film studies by clarifying clear intertextual connections between socialist realist and post-socialist depictions of feminist emancipation.

In the third and final part, “Third Cinema versus World Cinema”, the focus is turned towards contemporary Third Cinema films: David Archibald and Finn Daniels-Yeomans structure their discussion as a scholarly dialogue to emphasise the dialogical aspect of Third Cinema by turning their attention to the previously shelved documentary *Save the Children Film Fund* (Ken Loach, UK, 1971) and the experimental documentary *Metalepsis in Black* (Aryan Kaganof, South Africa, 2016) about student uprisings at universities in South Africa in response to tuition fee increases. Andrej Šprah introduces the productions of the Slovenian “Newsreel Front” as contemporary Third Cinema inspired by the manifesto by Solanas and Getino. William Brown problematises the tension between Third Cinema and World Cinema in relation to the films by Abderrahmane Sissako while Ewa Mazierska follows up on this issue in her

critical analysis of the wildly acclaimed *Roma* (Alfonso Cuarón, Mexico, 2018). The final chapter by Enrique Uribe-Jongbloed and Toby Miller takes a different stance and instead of analysing individual films questions the political economy in relation to production of Third Cinema. This chapter works as a form of conclusion by expanding the discussion to issues of labour, exploitation and inequality in film production in different parts of the world.

Reading the different chapters together as a collection creates an experience of exciting glimpses into different local contexts and film analysis that provide stimulating input for the reader on how Third Cinema can potentially be re-conceptualised in contemporary film studies supported by updated Marxist perspectives. In several of the chapters, but most clearly visible in the chapters by Tion and Brown, the Eurocentrism that is permeating Western film studies is productively criticised. One of the most tangible strengths of the collection is how it opens Third Cinema theorisation up for further exploration. The work uplifts Third Cinema as a concept that is impossible to freeze in time or to capture within a specific well-defined framework – as a politically motivated practical and analytical concept it changes with time and with the critical/analytical vantage point. A common denominator established in the introduction and included in most of the chapters is the tension between Third Cinema and World Cinema, framed as a conflict between local (national) geopolitical contexts and ambitions of a universal neoliberal turn of film history and film production. The local/national subversive Third Cinema has accordingly been consumed by the idea of World Cinema and thereby lost its critical edge as it is subsumed in a Western-influenced, ‘transnational’ and Eurocentric understanding of film dominating contemporary film studies. The dismissal of World Cinema as an analytical category without a critical political edge does provoke the reader to further and deeper thinking on the concepts and their relation. Regardless if one finds the editors’ position as too categorical of World Cinema, not taking its inherent ambivalence into consideration, being forced to think further is a very high grade of any collection of academic texts and makes the work highly recommended.

*Andreas Jacobsson* | ORCID: 0000-0003-1167-3174

Department of language, literature and intercultural studies,

Karlstad University, Karlstad, Sweden

*andreas.jacobsson@kau.se*