



Introduction

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Source: *eSharp*, Special Issue: New Waves and New Cinemas (2009), pp. 1-3

URL: <http://www.gla.ac.uk/esharp>

ISSN: 1742-4542

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New Waves and New Cinemas

Introduction

Dr Chris Homewood

The first of its kind in the country, the Centre for World Cinemas at the University of Leeds takes a positive, inclusive and democratic approach to film studies. Rather than ratifying the usual division between the centre (Hollywood) and the periphery (the rest of the world), it defines world cinema as a polycentric phenomenon with (often overlapping) peaks of creation in different places and periods. As part of the AHRC Research Training Network in Modern Foreign Languages, the Centre held the first of two student-run conferences in July 2006: 'New Waves and New Cinemas' brought together both modern foreign language postgraduates studying film and established scholars in the field to discuss 'waves' in world cinema.

The event was headed by Professor Geoffrey Nowell-Smith whose plenary lecture – 'What is a New Wave?' – established a historical perspective through which to examine any emerging films or film movements. The conference started from a historical point of departure since offered by Nowell-Smith in his study *Making Waves*, that is:

by treating under the rubric 'new cinemas' those films and film movements which had the label attached to them, formally or informally, at the time of their emergence, any time from the late 1950s onwards. Thus, obviously, the French New Wave or Nouvelle Vague. Brazil's Cinema Novo, the Czechoslovak New Wave. Germany's Young German Cinema (Junges deutsches Kino), and, at the end of the period, New German Cinema (Neues deutsches Kino) (2008: 1).

There are, of course, more besides, from the cinema that emerged in the wake of Italian neo-realism to developments in Japan, all of which embodied an aesthetic, if not also political, rebellion against that which had gone before.

Above all, the delegates were shown that ‘waves’ in filmmaking are not isolated cases but part of an international network: the new cinemas which came into being during the 1960s and 1970s transcended national borders, even when in many cases their original aim was to reaffirm (cinematic) identity at the level of the national. Indeed, the example of new waves and new cinemas of this period speaks to Lúcia Nagib’s inclusive view of world cinema by demonstrating that influential ‘peaks of production, popularity and artistic input are attained in different times and places across the globe’, many of which have since gone on to become part of the bedrock of film history (2006: 33).

The event was not, however, limited to an exploration of cinemas past with papers establishing and reflecting on a historical bridge between recent cinematic developments, and the ‘new waves’ of the 1960s. Delegates from across the UK reflected on political and aesthetic changes in a wide range of cinemas, with papers on the demise of the Serbian political liberalism (Dušan Radunović, University of Sheffield) to a new wave of South-African cinema (Lizelle Bisschoff, University of Stirling).¹ Three papers from the event are included in this volume. In the first, Paul Castro considers a dialogue between the Brazilian Cinema Novo and the 1990s renaissance of cinema in Brazil, focusing on Walter Salles and Daniela Thomas’s *Foreign Land* (1996) and its examination of a rootless society. Anthony De Mello’s essay explores António da Cunha Telles’s role as producer within the Portuguese Cinema

¹ For a full list of papers see the conference report:
www.german.leeds.ac.uk/update/NewWavespostscript.htm

Novo with particular focus on the transnationalism of 1960s new waves mentioned above. In the final essay, Karolina Ziolo considers the as yet unheard role of the censors in bringing *Man of Marble* (1977) by Andrzej Wajda (one of the most iconic directors associated with what has been termed the ‘Polish School’) to the screen. I would like to thank the contributors and other editors for their hard work and patience in bringing this issue of *eSharp* together.

Bibliography

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