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Impure Cinema: Intermedial and Intercultural Approaches to Film. Ed. Lucia Nagib and Anne Jerslev. London: I. B. Taurus 2013. P/bk 280 pp. ISBN 978-1-7807-65112. Price £17.99.

Taken from a series of papers written for the 'Mixed Cinema Network' and Conference (Leeds Art Gallery, December 2010), and written largely around Andre Bazin's seminal essay, "Pour un Cinema Impur: defense de l'Adaptation," this book is an attempt to marry dedicated film theory, and its past discursive politics, to more recent developments in and around World Cinema and Media and Cultural Studies. It is a timely and appropriate venture, both in view of a perceived contemporary crisis in the latter, and as a result of more recent approaches to the study of film that have placed an emphasis on the influence and dynamics of the transnational, the intercultural and the intermedial. In fact the perceived contemporary crisis in media and cultural studies can be seen partly as a result of a contemporary culture where both transnationalism, and the intermedial in particular, have arguably provided alternative approaches to the examination of contemporary processes, practices, and products related to cinema and film. These developments describe the breaking down and re-inscription of traditional hierarchies, boundaries, and cultural identities that in Postcolonial studies have been examined in terms such as 'otherness' and alterity. André Bazin's essay therefore provides an opportunity to revise not only what Bazin meant by the term "Cinema Impure," but in doing so whether the idea and veracity of a cinema that is essentially a meeting point of all other arts (non-pure), automatically provokes or entails an intercultural response and dynamic.

In these respects Nagib's introduction provides a convincing argument for Bazin's essay title - "Cinema Impure" - being mistranslated into English as "Mixed Cinema," and as a consequence, being misleading. This is an important point because Bazin's initial argument was aimed at rejecting the idea of a 'pure' cinema, beloved by early pioneering modernists, and the French New Wave respectively. Bazin argued that the idea of an essentialist or a 'pure' cinema was not only misguided, but a fallacy - a view that is quite credible when one considers that the early pioneers of a 'pure' cinema, be they Expressionists or Surrealists took much of their influence from the plastic arts. It is commendable therefore that Nagib manages to

steer the reader through what is a historically complex argument and also through a concise history of film theory in a way that not only illuminates the book's thrust and argument, but also Bazin's concept.

However, it is Philip Rosen's discussion on the shortcomings of a perceived technological essentialism in the making of a 'pure' cinema that really stands out. Short as this discussion is, it has the makings of a much larger examination, not just in relation to Bazin and cinema, but in relation to wider discussions on intermedial and intercultural dynamics in art and culture. For a long time, and through my own research into transnational narratives of identity across popular media, the temptation to follow down the path of Manuel Castells's and others hooked into the idea of a technologically-driven network culture, reified through global communications, has never been entirely convincing, because, as with Bazin, much more is at stake. Here, in his chapter 'From Historicity to Impurity' Rosen suggests that the depiction of new subjectivities should take pre-eminence in any discussion on the development of cinematic aesthetics and its politics, citing Dudley Andrew's claim that Bazin's 'cinema impure' should really be called the "evolution of content in cinema" (12). It is an entirely plausible argument to make for a cinema that has historically evolved through its interaction with and depiction of various new subjectivities that are essentially historical in that they refer to a cultural moment, producing an ongoing dialectic relationship. It is perhaps with these ideas of the political nature of content and aesthetics, or with the concept of new subjectivities, vernacular and multiple modernities, that world cinema and even studies in the transnational should focus upon. Most of the essays that follow in the book bear this out through chapters on 'Intertextual and Intercultural Dialogues' - of which Lee Broughton's study of 'A Turkish Film Adaptation of an Italian Western Comic Strip' is of particular interest; 'Literary Impurities', 'Border-Crossing Films', and finally, 'Post-Medium Films', are all illustrative of the book's focus. And whilst some of the individual contributions to this anthology demand and describe a variety of disparate and specialized subject areas - from New Zealand Maori films to contemporary Chinese cinema - that would test the most ardent cinephile, the overall aim of theorizing world cinema under one guiding principle or theory is both imaginative and innovative. Both Bazin and world cinema are reconsidered anew. In some respects, this project can be likened, in ambition though not in scope, to works such as Janet Wilson's (et al) *Re-Routing the*

Postcolonial (2009) in that it revisits theory, recognizing the impact and influence of Miriam Hansen's "vernacular modernity" (29), but also the need for new approaches.

Another key issue the book raises in relation to the intermedial and intercultural dynamics of cinema, and with regard to the implications of Bazin's 'cinema impure', is the significant element of audience. It is important that this book recognizes the role and function of audiences in the cinematic experience and how audience has similarly featured in the polemic between avant-garde and mass popular cinema. More so than at any other time in cinema history perhaps, the identity of contemporary audiences, and their 'knowingness' are represented and constructed by film, especially in view of the proliferation of Fan-fictions, crowd funding, and their often transnational and intercultural dimensions. Another further significant element to consider, as Nagib points out in her chapter "The Politics of Impurity," is that "modes of spectatorship have [...] shifted" (26), most obviously from the public to the private sphere, producing not only a culture marked by heterogeneity, but a "cross-media dynamic" (26). Similarly, Nagib is in no doubt that the potential intercultural and intermedial dimensions of Bazin's vision have been largely realised by "present-day amateur artist-cum-critics" permanently connected to the web (26), but cites Mette Hjôrt in also arguing that "transnational processes end up playing a strangely homogenizing role." (27). What this last argument reveals, however, is that the crisis in Media and Cultural Studies is largely about representation and related to what Ranciere (also included in this book) has described as 'Dissensus'. As Nagib points out, in the past, intermedial and intercultural genre-blurring and border crossing could have been interpreted as a metaphor for a classless society, and indeed it is here, in relation to the ethics of Realism, where Nagib recognises the political dynamics of Bazin's concept. The revision (and re-habilitation?) of Bazin's *Cinema Impure*, and the arguments put forward in this book reveal cinema and a contemporary culture of intercultural, intermedial transnational flows coming to terms with the idea of a 'third space' where the representation of cultural Otherness or difference has given way to depictions of multiple exchanges, relationships between these exchanges, and negotiations around boundaries and borders. As Bazin's essay alludes to, the future study and pedagogy of world cinema will largely be shaped by the evolution of content, the historical moment, and by new subjectivities. In these respects, this book provides

a timely revision of a key text in film theory and in doing so encapsulates and describes how the familiar, in Todd Stadtman's words, "gets refracted, refined, and/or re-imagined through the lenses of different film cultures" (114). Both Nagib's book, and Bazin's *Cinema Impure,* therefore prompts not only a re-examination of media specificity, but also cultural specificity in relation to cinema history.

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