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Marion Schmid, *Intermedial Dialogues: The French New Wave and the Other Arts*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019. ix + 228 pp. Figures, notes, bibliography, and index. \$100.00 U.S. (cl). ISBN 978-1-4744-1063-2; \$25.00 U.S. (pb). ISBN 978-1-4744-8137-3.

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More books have been written on the French New Wave than on any other period in French film history, and the tendency of New Wave directors to reference other works of art has been recognized, in the case of most New Wave films, since the time of release. Nevertheless, critical attention to the issue of engagement with other art forms in New Wave films has been limited, and studies of intertextuality in the films have focused on interfilmic, rather than intermedial, references. For that reason, relatively little attention has been given to the ways other art forms influenced New Wave filmmaking, or to the roles played by such art forms in New Wave films. Marion Schmid's book *Intermedial Dialogues: The New Wave and Other Arts* sets about changing that. Schmid argues that this cross-fertilization between cinema and other art forms is central to understanding the New Wave; so central, in fact, that no complete understanding of the New Wave is possible without it. To emphasize the centrality of these intermedial relationships to New Wave films, Schmid organizes the book not by individual films, but by art form, reading their engagement with multiple films through each specific form.

Chapter one, "Celluloid and Paper," for example, explores the relationship of New Wave filmmaking to literature. This chapter begins by examining the tensions and convergences that characterized the relationship between film and literature in the silent era, when cinema often borrowed from literature and did so specifically to enhance its own status. From here, Schmid jumps to the New Wave concepts of the *auteur* and *cinécriture*, both of which set cinema up as an equivalent to, or rival of, literature. The focus of the chapter, however, is the relationship between the New Wave and the Tradition of Quality that preceded it, and the different ways in which these two bodies of filmic work engage the literary tradition. The Tradition of Quality, Schmid argues, sought to replicate, in cinema, the characteristics of other high art forms; it was often overtly literary, and literary adaptation was one of its principal modes. The New Wave, which is often regarded as a rejection of the Tradition of Quality, also engaged the literary tradition. But it did so, Schmid argues, in completely different ways. As evidence, Schmid points out that the New Wave did not "turn its back on adaptation" as some critics have argued (p. 20). As she notes, both Alain Resnais's *Hiroshima, mon amour* (*Hiroshima, My Love*, 1959) and Jacques Rivette's *La Religieuse* (*The Nun*, 1966) were literary adaptations. Moreover, Resnais's *L'Année dernière à Marienbad* (*Last Year at Marienbad*, 1961), while not derived from a literary text, is literary in nature, and was made in collaboration with acclaimed new novelist Alain Robbe-Grillet.

Moreover, even François Truffaut, who was highly critical of the Traditional of Quality, was inspired, in his filmmaking, by literature, and he derived *Tirez sur le pianist* (*Shoot the Piano Player*, 1960) and *Jules et Jim* (1962) from literary sources, and famously included an homage to Balzac in *Les Quatre cent coups* (*The 400 Blows*, 1959). Jean-Luc Godard, Schmid asserts, was also heavily influenced by literature. Although he never directly adapted a literary work to the screen, his films are nonetheless filled with literary references ranging from Balzac to Baudelaire. All in all, Schmid argues, literature is foremost among the art forms in dialogue with New Wave film.

The second chapter of the book, entitled “The World as Spectacle: Cinematic Theatricalities,” examines the theater’s influence on the New Wave. As in the first chapter, Schmid refers us back to the longstanding influence of theater on the cinema in general, not only on the New Wave. Indeed, as she notes, not only was early cinema in many ways a direct imitation of theater, but the emergence of *film d’art*, in the silent era, led to film credits and film stars as well as legitimizing film as art form and not merely fairground attraction. In its golden age cinema was also heavily influenced by the theater, as directors such as Sacha Guitry and Marcel Pagnol, both of whom had strong ties to the theater, rose to prominence, thus reinforcing links between the two forms. Following from that, Schmid points out that at the same time as the New Wave was reinventing cinema, so was the Theater of the Absurd reinventing the theater. The parallel periods of innovation in film and theater provided terrain for cross-fertilization. Resnais, for example, experimented with theatrical form in cinema through such techniques as the inclusion of a play within a film in *L’Année dernière à Marienbad*. Later in his career, he engaged in direct adaptation with films such as *Mélo* (1986) and *Smoking/No Smoking* (1993). Other New Wave directors also experimented with theater. Jacques Rivette, for example, included the staging of a Shakespeare play in *Paris nous appartient* (*Paris Belongs to Us*, 1961), and Godard demonstrated Brechtian influence in *La Chinoise* (*The Chinese Girl*, 1967). Ultimately it is the theater, Schmid argues, that gives New Wave films their reflexivity as well as the radical poetics that transmit their revolutionary politics.

Painting is the subject of the book’s third chapter, “Painterly Hybridisations,” and here Schmid starts with Rohmer, who was explicit about the influence of painting on his films. She observes, for example, that painting’s influence on Rohmer’s work extends beyond his embedded references to specific paintings, to the more general influence of color and composition on particular scenes. Schmid also points to the inclusion of a sequence in the Louvre in Godard’s *Bande à part* (*Band of Outsiders*, 1963) and discusses the role Hans Baldung Grien’s paintings had on Agnès Varda’s *Cléo de 5 à 7* (*Cleo from 5 to 7*, 1962). Beyond these direct references, however, Schmid argues that painting had a much more profound impact than the mere referencing of certain paintings in particular films. In Varda’s case, Schmid argues that her entire cinematic sensibility is shaped by painting, which recurs as a motif in Varda’s work from beginning to end. In Godard’s case, Schmid finds that his work often juxtaposes the possibilities of painting with those of the cinema, as in the engagement with portraiture in the Oval Portrait scene in *Vivre sa vie* (*My Life to Live*, 1962). Moreover, she suggests that Godard’s work, in many ways, explores the limits and possibilities of different artistic forms, and painting is integral to this exploration. In the last part of the chapter, Schmid explores the relationship between painting and the films of Guy Gilles, who is not typically considered part of the New Wave. Gilles, she argues, was heavily influenced by the New Wave, as was his intertextual engagement with painting, evident in such films as *L’Amour à la mer* (*Love at Sea*, 1964) or *Le Clair de terre* (*Earth Light*, 1971). However, Schmid argues, whereas New Wave directors referenced paintings, Gilles, who had studied art, encoded

the aesthetics of painting into his films, structuring his films through vivid moving images that painted modern life.

The fourth chapter of the book, “Architecture of Apocalypse, City of Lights” explores the intersection of New Wave cinema and architecture. As with the other art forms she considers, Schmid notes that a relationship has existed since cinema’s early days. Her specific focus, in this chapter, is the representation of the cityscape, and particularly the representation of Paris in New Wave films. As Schmid notes, the period of the New Wave coincides with a period of urban modernization that is captured in films as diverse as Louis Malle’s *Ascenseur pour l’échafaud* (*Elevator to the Gallows*, 1958), Godard’s *A bout de souffle* (*Breathless*, 1960), Resnais’s *Muriel* (1963), and Chris Marker’s *Le Joli mai* (*The Lovely Month of May*, 1963). The focus on the modernity of the city and on elements of architecture specifically ranges, in New Wave films, from the space of the modern office building to that of the newly conceived HLM housing estates. However, in all cases, the transformation of the French urban landscape is, as Schmid notes, a leitmotif, in many, if not most, New Wave films. While Paris is the predominant focus of this exploration, other cities, such as Boulogne, are also featured. The changes in the Parisian landscape are reflective, as Schmid notes, of the mass migrations, both from the rural areas of France and from the colonies, whereas the rebuilding of cities like Boulogne points to repressed memories of the trauma of war (pp. 139-141). These landscapes function as diverse commentaries. Godard uses them to critique capitalism, whereas Truffaut and Varda use them as spaces in which characters who are otherwise constrained can demonstrate agency. In this way, the city as depicted in New Wave films embodies all of the contradictions of modernity itself.

The fifth and final chapter of the book, “Still/Moving: Photography and Cinematic Ontology,” explores the New Wave’s relationship to photography, the medium that is, on the surface, the closest to cinema. Referencing the writings of André Bazin, Schmid highlights the self-aware exploration of New Wave directors, and their mentor, on the play with movement and image that characterizes New Wave cinematography. From the famous freeze-frame at the end of Truffaut’s *Les Quatre cent coups* (*The 400 Blows*, 1959) to the incorporation of photographs from the Algerian War of Independence in Godard’s *Le Petit soldat* (1960), New Wave films, Schmid argues, are structured around a conscious play with the possibilities of both moving and still images. To emphasize this point, Schmid also explores the tension between cinema and photography in films by Varda and Marker. Ultimately, she concludes that the New Wave directors conceived of photography and cinema not as opposites, but as points along a spectrum, and, as a result, that they created films woven of images, breaking down perceived oppositions between the two forms.

On the whole, Schmid’s book provides a new angle of inquiry for analyzing New Wave films, and the strength of the book lies in its analysis of a large and diverse body of cinematic works as well as a review of existing scholarship. On the other hand, the body of work may be too large and too diverse, as many of the films discussed are not really part of the New Wave. Schmid’s inclusion of films by New Wave directors that lie well outside the New Wave period, as well as her inclusion of filmmakers, such as Guy Gilles, who may have been influenced by the New Wave, but who are not typically considered part of it, in fact, make her argument, which is otherwise sound, feel stretched. That criticism notwithstanding, the book is scholarly but readable, and offers a clear and comprehensive analysis of the ways in which New Wave directors built their revolutionary cinema through engagement with other revolutionary artists in media ranging from theater to architecture. This study expands understanding of the degree and nature of the

intertextuality exhibited by New Wave Films, and it supports a rethinking of the ways in which the New Wave positioned itself and the degree to which it did, or did not, break with earlier artistic forms.

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