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Brian Neve, *Elia Kazan: The Cinema of an American Outsider* (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2009, \$42.00). Pp. xi + 252. ISBN 978 845 11 560 9.

In many ways, Elia Kazan remains a controversial figure in American cinema. His undoubted filmic legacy was tarred, for many, by his decision to ‘name names’ before the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) during the McCarthyite period. The award of a Life Achievement Award at the Academy Awards in 1999 and his death in 2003 refocussed attention on this aspect of his career. In light of this, Brian Neve’s new study of the nineteen feature films of Elia Kazan spanning 1945 to 1975, and located in their industrial, political and cultural contexts, is welcome. Neve takes an inductive approach, exploring Kazan’s role as part of the changing process of filmmaking, in particular the transition in the studio system of the 1940s and 1950s. In doing so, he observes Kazan’s films as part of American and European cinema practice and reception. Naturally, Kazan’s films also become a useful lens through which to view US culture and society during that same period.

Divided into nine chapters, the book is biographical and chronological. It begins with Kazan’s time at Twentieth Century Fox, devoting subsequent chapters to *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1951) and *Viva Zapata!* (1952), HUAC, *On the Waterfront* (1954), *East of Eden* (1955), *Baby Doll* (1956), journeys in the American South, *Splendor in the Grass* (1961), *America America* (1963), *The Arrangement* (1969) and *The Last Tycoon* (1976). In doing so, Neve has mined a wide range of archives in the United States, using Kazan’s notebooks, personal papers, letters and scripts, as well as interviewing key figures such as Budd Schulberg. Rich in detail, the book is refreshingly historical, avoiding some of the theoretical (specifically psychoanalytical) *longueurs* that can so often blight film writing. At the same time, Neve is able to integrate his cultural-political-historical analysis with relevant film language, addressing the formal properties of Kazan’s films.

What I felt was missing, however, was where Kazan stands in American film history. It would have been useful, in this respect, to have a chapter considering Kazan’s impact and where he stands within the development of American cinema. What was his influence on other iconic directors – for example, why did Martin Scorsese lead Kazan out at the Academy Award ceremony as well as include Terry Malloy (Marlon Brando)’s “I could have been a contender” speech in his own *Raging Bull* (1980)? What did the other greats feel about Kazan’s work, such as Stanley Kubrick? A better index would have helped here, too. I have some other minor quibbles. While I would like to have seen more on his Oscar-winning film *Gentleman’s Agreement* (1948), especially its importance in broaching the subject of US anti-Semitism after the Second World War, the brief treatment here is understandable given that it has already been the focus of much attention. The chapter on Kazan’s appearance before HUAC is frustratingly short (just over fifteen pages). Finally, I was surprised to see so little mention of Arthur Miller’s *View from the Bridge* (1955), written in direct response to *On the Waterfront* (1954) and, as its title suggests, purporting to take a more dispassionate view of the subject of informing than Kazan did.

Nonetheless, these trivial complaints do not detract from the overall value of the book which will be of interest to scholars and students alike of American studies and film studies and adds to I. B. Tauris's growing profile in film publishing.

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