

## Review of the Master's Thesis

Gabriele Buffa:

A Night's Portrait: A Journey Through Night's Reproduction in Cinema

Gabriele Buffa has chosen for his thesis a complex topic: “how to capture and record night atmospheres,” as we can read in the abstract. He adopted a variety of approaches – we can find the observations from the position of a spectator (“[*Sin City*] looked very violent to me,” p. 33), of a DP (“[s]pecial care must be paid to the background,” p. 29), even of a possible teacher (“noir style could be a [...] good starting point to teach [...] lighting,” p. 25). I believe that this is exactly that complexity that is the main quality of his work. He attempted to do something almost impossible: to discuss the night as such in the whole history of cinema, spanning almost 125 years, in a severely limited amount of pages. On one hand, he did a research on how the night was conveyed on early “color” films (p. 10-11), on the other, he critically observes the film *Refuge* (2015) shot with the most recent technology using the moonlight only (p. 54-55). I assert that Gabriele succeeded in his attempt and that his thesis is a very decent overview of a variety of topic connected with the “night” as an element.

While the scope of Gabriele's thesis is broad, the structure of it is clear and logical. After the introduction into the “darkness,” he talks about differences in perception of day and night, using the findings he gained during his study at FAMU. Then he covers the differences between shooting on black and white and colour material, before he proceeds with the extensive discussion of film noir (“since [it] has night as [...] its main feature,” we read the explanation in the abstract), followed by four case studies of films that either *are* film noir (*The Big Combo*) or neo-noir (*Klute*) or were apparently inspired by them (*Shadows and Fog*, *Sin City*). This part (Chapter V and VI) can be understood as a core of Gabriele's thesis. He offers very detailed analysis of certain scenes or aspects of those four films that are partially based on his research, partially based on his own observations, using both – his knowledge of an experienced spectator and his expertise as being trained DP himself.

Even if we can find some formal inconsistencies in the thesis (e.g. the improper citation format, some faults in punctuation, switching between 1<sup>st</sup> person singular and plural), they are minor in comparison with the complexity of Gabriele's analysis. He poses a number of questions in the 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph of the introduction (p. 2) and he, indeed, found – or at least tried to find – the answers to all of them.

I believe the thesis fulfills all requirements and recommend it for the defense.

I suggest the thesis is assessed by the grade B.

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