

LATIN AMERICAN FILM

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- THIRD WORLD FILM MAKING AND THE WEST.* By Roy Armes. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987. Pp. 381. \$17.95.)
- CINEMA AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN LATIN AMERICA: CONVERSATIONS WITH FILMMAKERS.* By Julianne Burton. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986. Pp. 302. \$22.50 cloth, \$10.95 paper.)
- THE CUBAN IMAGE.* By Michael Chanan. (London: British Film Institute, 1985. Pp. 314.)
- MAGICAL REELS: A HISTORY OF CINEMA IN LATIN AMERICA.* By John King. (New York: Verso, 1990. Pp. 266. \$49.95 cloth, \$15.95 paper.)
- MEXICAN CINEMA: REFLECTIONS OF A SOCIETY, 1896-1988.* Revised edition. By Carl J. Mora. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989. Pp. 256. \$10.95 paper.)
- QUESTIONS OF THIRD CINEMA.* Edited by Jim Pines and Paul Willemen. (London: British Film Institute, 1989. Pp. 246.)
- SUBVERSIVE PLEASURES: BAKHTIN, CULTURAL CRITICISM, AND FILM.* By Robert Stam. (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989. Pp. 274. \$28.50.)

The centenary of the cinema as public entertainment is fast approaching, whether we count from Thomas Edison's twenty-second kineoscope film shown to members of the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences in 1893 or from the Lumière Brothers' screening of *The Arrival of a Train at the Ciotat Station* in 1895. Moving picture shows arrived in many Latin American countries within months of these first spectacles. The importance of cinema as entertainment, industry, and shaper of views of oneself and the world grew swiftly, as it did throughout the world. It is fitting then that recent years have witnessed the appearance of a number of important books on Latin American film. These texts mark both the end of one critical era and the beginning of a new series of perspectives on Brazilian and Hispanic cinema.¹

1. Several basic works in English on Latin American film appeared in the 1970s and early 1980s, key among them: Bradford Burns, *Latin American Cinema: Film and History* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1975); Michael Chanan, *Chilean Cinema* (London: British Film Institute, 1976); Randal Johnson and Robert Stam, *Brazilian Cinema*

One of the first impressions afforded by these books as a group is the basic difference that we summarily perceive between Latin American cinema and Hollywood or European film, or perhaps more exactly, between the contrasting ways in which scholars of Latin American film have become engaged in the field of cinema studies in the region as opposed to the better-known or "mainstream" world cinemas. Julianne Burton summarizes the reasons for this contrast in the opening sentences of her introduction to *Cinema and Social Change in Latin America*: "More, perhaps than in other regions of the world, culture in Latin America inhabits a politicized zone . . . , [and] over the past quarter century, no sector of artistic activity has been more explicit about its political dimension and goals than film" (p. ix). From Brazilian director Glauber Rocha's theories of a "cinema of hunger," through the politics of the Chilean New Cinema Movement of the Salvador Allende years, and the theories of Third Cinema born in Argentina with directors Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino, the practice of film in Latin America has been notable for several decades for its militant theoretical experimentalism. The major critical approaches to this film have therefore dealt in depth with the same questions that the newest and most creative Latin American filmmakers themselves were asking as they searched for ways to portray on film their countries' realities and to bring about social and political change.

Latin American filmmakers of the last decades have focused on two fundamental concerns in going about their labor. The first was the very practical need to solve the material and financial problems that arise in making cinema, taking into account the limited economic resources available in Latin American countries. The second was the concern with finding cinematic languages that could identify and portray a Latin American "reality" that filmmakers had felt was missing from earlier film culture. In both areas, a rapid overview of current literature indicates that much of the theorizing of Latin America's progressive young directors was set against the economic and cultural presence of Hollywood. From the standpoint of the cinematic marketplace, John King correctly points out in *Magic Reels* that "Latin America competed, on unequal terms, with the high-cost technological advances of cinema. . . . [A] great many of these [national] industries today work with annual funds equivalent to the budget of one Hollywood feature film." Time and again, King and other authors remind readers that it is not only in production but in distribution and exhibition that Latin American filmmakers have been fighting an

(New Jersey: Associated University Press, 1982); and Zuzana Pick, *Latin American Filmmakers and Third Cinema* (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1978). For further reading, consult Julianne Burton's useful volume, *The New Latin American Cinema: An Annotated Bibliography of Sources in English, Spanish, and Portuguese, 1960-1980* (New York: Smyrna, 1983), as well as the bibliographies of the books under review.

uphill battle in their own countries and continentwide. Far from being simply a matter of economics, Latin American filmmakers' lack of access to production and distribution in the film industry has also had broad ramifications in the cultural or ideological realm. As King explains, the resulting "dominant Hollywood model also universalized a 'correct' way of filming, a 'correct' way of seeing" (p. 246).

The varied attempts to come to grips with this situation are perhaps most clearly articulated in Julianne Burton's *Cinema and Social Change in Latin America*. In a series of interviews with the major Latin American directors, actors, cinematographers, and script writers of the 1960s and 1970s, Burton provides the words of those involved most directly in developing the new theories and in hands-on filmmaking. Following her introduction to the general concepts of what has come to be called the New Latin American Cinema movement, Burton presents a series of interviews spanning the approximately thirty years marking New Film's trajectory.² Her study presents biographical sketches and personal accounts of artistic development. Certain issues arise repeatedly, and the interviews can be read as a kind of dialogue among the many voices that echo involvement in the militant New Cinema.

Burton divides her book into three sections. The first two, "The Documentary Impulse" and "Fictional Filmmaking," reflect what in Hollywood are taken as opposing modes of cinematic creation. But in these interviews, the lines drawn between "documentary" and "fiction film" are surprisingly fuzzy because these New Cinema filmmakers are so intent on showing "reality." In fact, many of their films have been fiction produced in a documentary mode or documentary recreations with elements of fiction. Also striking is the sense of militant social commitment cited by nearly every interviewee. The first, Fernando Birri, explains, "What I wanted to do was to discover the face of an invisible Argentina" (p. 4), while the last, Alfonso Gumucio Dagrón, states, "What matters most to me in film is its capacity to salvage popular memory and to rewrite history in visual images from the perspective of the marginalized classes in struggle" (p. 277). In moving through the book, the reader slowly becomes aware of the human cost of the New Cinema movement. Exile seems the common lot of nearly all militant directors, while cases of imprisonment and death of individuals involved in militant filmmaking have been frequent. *Cinema and Social Change in Latin America* deals not only with an aesthetic question but with a dramatic account of a generation's political commitment as seen through its work in film.

2. The collection of interviews will be especially useful in conjunction with Zuzana Pick's *Latin American Filmmakers and Third Cinema*, in which many of the major manifestos and the articles that influenced the development of the movement are translated and combined in one volume.

Burton lists a series of issues that recur throughout this collection: colonization and decolonization, constraints that are either ideological or technical in nature, questions of form and aesthetics, social relations in film production itself, transformation of conventional forms of distribution and exhibition, the impact of new technologies, the role of class, gender, and ethnic differences in film, and exile. Moreover, the interviews cumulatively make readers aware of an internationalizing tendency in film as a production process in that so many of those involved were trained in countries other than their own, have spent large portions of their careers in other countries, and work with film crews often made up of individuals from various countries. Finally, Burton's study is one of the few that supplies any specific information on women in Latin American filmmaking. She includes interviews with Marta Rodríguez (Colombia), Helena Solberg-Ladd (Brazil and the United States), and Marcela Fernández (Mexico). True to its title, *Cinema and Social Change in Latin America* affords a resource for understanding the cinematic practices of the mostly youthful and generally Marxist filmmakers at work in the New Cinema movement in the 1960s and 1970s.

Nowhere was this marriage of militant theory and practice as important as in the development of the postrevolutionary Cuban film industry. Michael Chanan's *The Cuban Image* presents an in-depth study of the films and cinematic institutions of Cuba in the 1960s and 1970s and the cultural and social history that gave birth to and inspired Cuban cinema. An unabashed admirer of Fidel Castro's Cuba, Chanan undertakes to reveal Cuban cinema as a historical process that is directly related to Cuban society and its institutions. The primary institution to which he refers is the ICAIC (Instituto Cubano de Arte e Industria Cinematográficos), founded less than three months after the entry of the rebel army into Havana on 1 January 1959. The ICAIC was created to respond to precisely the economic and technical disadvantages of non-Hollywood film production just described. It has served as a production house but also as a distributor and exhibitor of films, and for a long time following the revolution, the ICAIC was extremely successful in stimulating technically creative and ideologically innovative films and reaching a wide public with its products.

Until the mid-1970s, Cuba was a center of experimental, committed cinema. Chanan dedicates considerable space to describing films like *Lucía*, *Memorias del subdesarrollo*, and *El otro Francisco*, which were widely influential in Latin America and were also viewed by thousands of college students in the United States. By the middle to late 1970s, however, Cuban cinema seemed to have lost the vital impetus of the first years of the ICAIC. Recognizing this apparent move toward conformity, Chanan chose to not "bring the book up to date while revising it; the account presented here reaches the late 70s" (p. 3). He is perhaps justified in this decision by his observation that in 1985, too little time had passed and the

ICAIC had just acquired a new director, Julio García Espinosa. Yet critics of the Castro regime would not have hesitated to declare Cuba's revolutionary film process a total bust. Here again lies the greatest problem with Chanan's book: he at times bends over backward to justify or avoid difficult questions that would be addressed more effectively head-on.

Such is the case when Chanan attacks Nestor Almendros's and Orlando Jiménez-Leal's documentary on the Cuban repression of gay people, *Improper Conduct*. Chanan asserts, "the film-makers are either ingenuous, or else they set out to make a film intended to serve the forces of darkness which reign in the White House" (p. 5). One might have hoped that Chanan's understanding of the mythologizing and demonizing processes of Hollywood discourse might have immunized him from engaging in this kind of rhetoric. At any rate, it is unfortunate that he chose not to explore the period of possible decline in Cuban film creativity because that task may now be left to someone blind to the considerable successes of the ICAIC. Nevertheless, Chanan's major weakness in this book—his passionate involvement with revolutionary cinema—also proves to be his greatest strength in providing readers with an understanding of the cinematic process in Cuba.

Chanan gives readers an insider's review of the events and ideological debates that have surrounded film production in Cuba. For example, individual films are portrayed as they arise amidst the struggle between the Marxist ICAIC and the "liberal" group *Lunes de Revolución* in the first year of the revolution. The role of the ICAIC in producing the Cuban revolutionary poster (one of the most coveted art forms in European progressive circles during the 1960s) and the question of abstract art in socialism are shown to be related: "The ICAIC critique of socialist realism was not just that it constituted a culturally alien style, but that it resulted from inadequate conceptualization of the conditions of production in art" (p. 138). Chanan speaks as a defender of censorship when, for example, he discusses the short documentary *P.M.*, which the ICAIC decided to withhold from distribution because it portrayed a black and mulatto lumpenproletariat yet to be touched by the revolution. Chanan's lengthy discussion of this conflict, "which brought the whole cultural sector to boiling point," provides a vivid portrait of the intellectual effervescence and turmoil that enlivened Cuban cinema and much of its art (pp. 100–109).

Chanan adds to this insider's perspective a scholarly tendency toward "depth of field," to borrow a term from filmic language. *The Cuban Image* includes a chapter dedicated to "The Nineteenth-Century Heritage" in which he addresses the ideology of Romanticism and Modernism in Cuba. Subsequent chapters deal with the early years of Cuban cinema in which Chanan emphasizes the turn-of-the-century birth of cinema and the concomitant distortion of images of the Spanish-American War. In discussing the impact of Italian neorealism, French *nouvelle vague*, *cinéma*

vérite, and other European movements on the ICAIC, Chanan always provides an excellent synopsis of the original theories and conditions of the movements before studying their applicability to the social and technical situation of Cuba and its cinema. Chanan's book is thus successful in presenting Cuban film as the "living historical process" that he set out to portray. Unfortunately, however, Chanan does little to address the role of women in filmmaking. Cuban cinema has actively explored the situation of women in the revolutionary process, particularly in internationally famous films like *Lucía* and *Retrato de Teresa*. The ICAIC itself has thus placed women at the center of cinematic discourse, and related achievements or problems need to be addressed.

Roy Armes's *Third World Film Making and the West* contributes to knowledge of the Latin American New Film movement in several ways. First and foremost, by considering Latin American film along with the national film industries of the Indian subcontinent, East and Southeast Asia, and the Middle East and Africa, Armes offers a global perspective. Contending that a different methodology is necessary for the study of "Third World" films and cinéastes, he seeks to explore numerous factors: the social structures shaped by tradition and colonialism; Western-educated elites as prime movers of cultural production; definition of the terms *nation* and *national culture*; the roles played by language, literature, and theater in bridging the gulf between two worlds; cinema as a technical product of Western capitalism; and the U.S.-dominated global system of film distribution. Armes then stresses that one must take into account "the often shattering and always dislocating impact of Western values and culture" to understand all Third World films (p. 8).

Armes's title advertises his use of *Third World*, a term that many of the authors reviewed here reject. Armes, in contrast, dedicates his first chapter to defining the "Third World" in terms of colonization and the postcolonial state. The second chapter, "Culture and National Identity," discusses concepts of Franz Fanon, among others. Thus the beginning of *Third World Film Making and the West* provides a broader perspective within which to evaluate Latin American film. The third chapter explores the problems facing cinema industries with limited resources when confronting the dominance of Hollywood. This familiar theme is now viewed from a perspective of "Third Worldism."

The following three chapters trace the history of the development of non-Western film production. As occurred in Latin America, within months of the first showing in Paris, film screenings followed in places like Bombay, Cairo, and Shanghai. Production in many places followed within a few short years. Armes documents the growth of locally successful commercial film industries, largely unknown to Western audiences and critics, in Turkey, the Philippines, Egypt, and Latin America. Armes also reviews the growing sense of national identity in the 1940s and 1950s

among filmmakers as geographically distanced as Leopoldo Torre Nilsson in Argentina and Lester James Peries in Sri Lanka. Another chapter details the growth of "Third Cinema," which Armes attributes throughout the nonaligned nations to "a sort of Third World euphoria" based on the belief that "an era of socialist revolution was dawning throughout the Third World" (p. 88). Such comments may not offer new details on Latin American cinema but do provide a larger framework within which to consider what is already known. Armes's book reinforces the general impression that while committed filmmakers in the 1960s and 1970s almost unanimously attempted to portray national realities of the underprivileged and politically powerless in seeking to bring about social change, they manifested great diversity in representational styles and techniques.

In the final section of *Third World Film Making and the West*, Armes dedicates chapters to a series of individual directors who respond in different ways to what Armes feels is Third World filmmakers' major problem as well as resource: their position as artists "astride two cultures" who must use Western technologies and often narrative structures from Western tradition while attempting to relate to their own national and often non-Western cultures. The Latin Americans he chose for analysis are Brazilian Glauber Rocha and Bolivian Jorge Sanjinés, perhaps the two who have combined theory with actual production most innovatively. Rocha, one of the real founders of the New Cinema movement with his "aesthetic of hunger," created a filmic language in which technical "poverty" became a metaphor for the violent conditions of desperate need in Brazilian society. Sanjinés, with the other members of the UKAMAU collective from Bolivia, created alternative ways of producing films in which the actual participants in certain historical events reenact scenes while collectively participating in the filming process as well. *Third World Film Making* ends with a short bibliography that provides ideas for further reading on the relationship among the film industries of different countries.

To a great extent, the books reviewed here are a response to movements in Latin American cinema that reached their peak in the 1960s and justly monopolized the attention of scholars of Latin American cinema for nearly two more decades. Each study in its own way reviews the concepts and products of New Cinema or Third Cinema, as well as the historical conditions in the film industry that led to these developments. At this point in time, it is appropriate to ask, what lasting influence has this period of militant film production had? Although it may well be too soon to give a definitive answer, another book under review here discusses the spreading impact of Latin American cinema theory and films in other parts of the world. On first perusing the list of contributions to *Questions of Third Cinema*, edited by Jim Pines and Paul Willemsen, Latin Americanists may be puzzled to note the total lack of articles by the Latin American filmmakers who created the Third Cinema movement. The reason can

be found in the preface, which explains that the volume was inspired by a conference held in Edinburgh in 1986 to explore the relevance of Third Cinema, especially in the “cinema of diasporic subjects living and working in the metropolitan centres of London, Paris, New York etc.” (p. vii). Editor Willeman explains that the dearth of theory relevant to these “marginal” cinéastes led to the idea of drawing attention to non-English approaches to cultural production.

The conference’s starting point was clearly Latin America. *Questions of Third Cinema* first presents an intelligent summary of the New Cinema movement in Latin America, pointing out the elements that made it attractive to other change-oriented filmmakers: the stressing of the need for a “cinema of lucidity”; the refusal to “prescribe an aesthetics” or, the recognition “of the historic variability of the necessary aesthetic strategies to be adopted”; and the advocacy of a practice of cinema that would underscore the relation between “signification and the social” (pp. 9, 6–9). Following this introduction, a series of authors from countries like India, Ethiopia, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam discuss a wide variety of applications of the theory of Third Cinema to their cultural needs. The frequency with which they quote or acknowledge Glauber Rocha, Fernando Solanas, Octavio Getino, Miguel Littin, and others from Latin America testifies to the continuing influence of the ideas of Third Cinema in today’s non- or counter-Hollywood film industry. This collection is also useful for the novel ways in which various authors combine these theories with those of Michel Foucault, Christian Metz, and (in the case of Willeman) Mikhail Bakhtin.

While New Cinema or Third Cinema will certainly continue to interest scholars, it should be emphasized at this juncture in history that the tenor and many of the concepts expressed by these filmmakers sound either strident or excessively naive to most filmgoers. Indeed, many of the filmmakers have moved on in a variety of different directions, expanding on the aesthetic options in current filmmaking and video. Similarly, many studies of film have also begun to move beyond these somewhat exclusive militant approaches to include the rich variety of cinematic forms that have existed in Latin America outside the New Film movement.

For the reader seeking a well-written and inclusive introduction to Latin American film that explores New Cinema but also deals with commercial film and earlier experiments in filmmaking, I would recommend John King’s *Magical Reels: A History of Cinema in Latin America*. King recognizes the difficulties inherent in trying to survey nearly a century of cinematic production spanning the hemisphere. His stated intention is to trace the “main contours of the field of investigation” (p. 1), and it is noteworthy that King’s book is perhaps the richest in suggesting further areas of research. In mentioning topics like the relationships among film, the tango, and prostitution in Argentina’s silent cinema or the portrayal of

revolutionary nationalism that evolves in Mexican cinema, King makes the reader aware of the wealth of perspectives on Latin American film that remain to be explored.

King has chosen to follow his more general study of trends from the silent film era to the New Cinema movement with a country-by-country analysis. Like the other authors reviewed, King is mainly concerned with the relationship between film and Latin American "reality," and he is vividly aware of the ambiguities involved in drawing such a comparison. For instance, what was the relation between historic reality and the cinema when Mexico's Pancho Villa signed a contract with Mutual Films Corporation of Hollywood allowing film crews to accompany the troops and promising to fight during daylight hours whenever possible? King's study is also a good source of information on the relationship between political and social history and the cinema industry, and more specifically on the role of state intervention in the film industries of different American countries. *Magical Reels* is also the only work reviewed to deal with the nascent film and video movement in Central America and the Caribbean other than Cuba.

Carl Mora's *Mexican Cinema: Reflections of a Society, 1896–1988* recognizes the importance of the New Cinema movement in Mexico but tends to relegate it to the background in attempting to provide a wider survey of Mexican film. This work begins with the first films exhibited and produced in Mexico and continues on through (in this revised edition) a description of the problems of the film industry up to the election in 1988 of Carlos Salinas de Gortari. Mora gives the reader an overview of the types of cinema produced in Mexico, along with some of the basic issues confronting this cinema.

From his first chapter on the era of silent film, Mora intertwines the history of Mexico with the story of the development of cinema. By the dawn of the twentieth century, the nation was both importing from Pathé Film Distributors in Paris and producing its own films on patriotic or cultural subjects like *Don Juan Tenorio* (1898) and *El grito de Dolores* (1908). The rapidity with which film became both commercially and socially significant is made clear by Mora's report that hundreds of individuals carrying rented projectors took their mobile theaters to even the tiniest villages throughout Mexico. The revolution increased the demand for films, which were used for propaganda purposes. They often elicited jeers and applause, and in some cases, disorder and gunfire. Mora also indicates that the concern for a "true image" of Mexico surfaced almost immediately. An anonymous reviewer of *El Pueblo* was disturbed by some cinematic party guests "dressed in Louis XV style" and thought that the film's beautiful Mimí would be better "clad in the typical Mexican dress, tracing out the steps of a daring and gay *jarabe*" (p. 20).

As happened around the world, the advent of sound brought seri-

ous problems to the Mexican film industry because the new technologies also greatly increased the costs of production. Mexico's film industry faltered but eventually flourished, first with sound and then with color. Mora attributes the development of a sophisticated film industry in Mexico to a series of factors. First, the energies of the Mexican Revolution found a political and social outlet in cinema, while an exciting new economic realm was opening up for some members of the new entrepreneurial class in the cinema industry. Second, Mexico's artists and filmmakers were influenced by the intellectual ferment of interwar Europe. Finally, Hollywood's short-term attempts at this time to make "Hispanic" films for the Spanish-speaking market provided training in techniques and styles for Hispanic directors, producers, and performers who eventually went on to work in Mexico.

World War II witnessed further growth in the Mexican film industry as it expanded to fill the gap in entertainment features left by Hollywood's dedication to the Allied war effort. Mora's third chapter presents in broad strokes a vision of this period, when many of the genres and stars appeared that were to become characteristic of Mexican film. Some of the best-known films were made during this period, including *María Candelaria*, *Doña Bárbara*, and *Flor silvestre*. Actors like Mario Moreno (Cantinflas), Sara García, María Félix, Pedro Armendáriz, and Dolores del Río began to shine in the developing Mexican star system, which did much to stimulate the commercial film industry. Mora briefly discusses some of the basic formulas that also became popular with Latin American audiences: the historic-patriotic epic exemplified by films like *Simón Bolívar*, the Cantinflas comedies, family melodramas based on traditional values, and the *comedia ranchera* featuring superstar Jorge Negrete and later Pedro Infante.

Mexican Cinema holds its readers' interest well because Mora provides information on precisely those films and stars that many viewers identify as Mexican cinema. Another strength of the study is its detailing of the industry itself, given that Mexican cinema has been, above all else, a commercial enterprise. The third chapter develops a major theme, the role of the Mexican government in the business of making films. The Banco Cinematográfico was founded in 1942 as a credit institution designed for national production and distribution. The Banco stimulated the industry so much that in the following year, seventy films were produced, and another seventy-five in 1944. Mora merely mentions the growing incursions of the U.S. film industry, however, in noting RKO's involvement in movie production in Mexico since the late 1930s (p. 68). The Mexican film industry has had the reputation of being under the thumb of U.S. studios, an area that Mora leaves largely unexplored.

The "golden age" of Mexican cinema during the presidency of Miguel Alemán (1946–1952) and the subsequent "retrenchment" are, according to Mora, the result of relying on the genre film and the star sys-

tem. Their proven commercial success finally led to a closed system in which only formula movies could find financial backing. Much of the rest of *Mexican Cinema* deals with the uneven fits and starts of the Mexican film industry as different presidential administrations intervened in or pulled out of film institutions and financial affairs. In approaching the 1990s, Mora offers little hope in his pessimistic chapter "To Rebuild a Ruined Cinema in a Ruined Country." A particularly disturbing conclusion is his suggestion that the successes of early Mexican cinema may have been due to an explosion of creative talents blossoming out of the fratricidal violence of the revolution, whereas more modern Mexican filmmakers may find it difficult to be inspired by "just the experience of a nation seeking to modernize while coping with the burdens of the past: poverty, exploitation and ignorance" (p. 185). *Mexican Cinema* ends with two appendixes, a selected filmography of eight of Mexico's better-known directors and a possibly useful list of addresses of studios, the *Cineteca*, and other institutions in Mexico that deal with film production or diffusion.

The last work under review has more to say about the future of Latin American film studies. Robert Stam's *Subversive Pleasures: Bakhtin, Cultural Criticism, and Film* contains much that is not directly related to cinema in Latin America, given its goal of clarifying a Bakhtinian methodology that would apply broadly to the literature and mass media of all cultures. Another of Stam's intentions is clearly to decolonialize Latin American film studies. He succeeds in part simply by intermingling in his analyses films from Europe and Hollywood with films from Latin America, thus eliminating the tacit distinction between films "good for cinematic analysis" and films "good for the analysis of Latin American culture."

Stam's introduction and first several chapters present the theories of Russian critic of literature and popular culture Mikhail Bakhtin, who has recently become influential in literary and cultural scholarship, particularly in what might now be termed a postmodern emphasis. Other chapters focus on Woody Allen's film *Zelig* and on cinematic eroticism. Bakhtin's concepts such as the chronotope, dialogism, heteroglossia, carnival, and further hypotheses lie outside the realm of this review, but they nonetheless bear exploring by anyone interested in developing further tools for studying culture, particularly popular or mass media.

Stam's third and fourth chapters deal with applying Bakhtin's theories of the carnivalesque, the discussion most pertinent to this review of Latin American cinema studies. Stam first traces the notion of carnival in the theories of Bakhtin, Friedrich Nietzsche, Humberto Eco, and others and then discusses real-life carnivals, and carnivalesque manifestations in Alfred Jarry's *Ubu Roi*, Luis Buñuel's *L'Age d'or*, and the films of Charlie Chaplin, Monty Python, and a host of others. In the chapter entitled "Of Cannibals and Carnivals," Stam applies Bakhtin's theories to Brazilian carnival. He perceives Latin American society as bicultural or even tri-

cultural, a world in which artists and intellectuals “inhabit a peculiar realm of irony where words and images are seldom taken at face value, whence the paradigmatic importance of parody and carnivalization as ‘ambivalent’ solutions within a situation of cultural asymmetry” (p. 123). Stam also discusses the cultural importance of carnival as a decentralizing force that negates or struggles against official power and ideology. He illustrates the theories presented in this chapter with such texts as the lyrics to Chico Buarque’s 1984 samba “Vai Passar,” the Brazilian classic *Macunaíma*, and popular Brazilian parodies like *A Banana Mecânica* (*A Clockwork Banana*) or *Bacalhau* (*Codfish*, a parody of *Jaws*).

Clearly, Stam’s *Subversive Pleasures* is not a book for the novice seeking an introduction to Latin American cinema. The language itself will require previous experience with poststructuralist criticism. To cite only one example, “The hybridization of incompatible materials [in Brazilian avant-garde films] produces a textual heterotopia in which antagonistic generic strands mutually critique and relativize one another” (p. 155). It is nevertheless a highly suggestive volume for specialists in cinema or scholars of popular culture. Last of all, Stam’s study reflects a valuable reversal in critical language in that he employs his specialist’s knowledge of Latin American and particularly Brazilian cinema to construct a theoretical model with possibilities reaching far beyond the context of what some authors still like to call “the Third World.” Stam has thus placed Latin American film at the center of critical discourse, divesting it of the sense of marginality with which it (along with Indian, African, and Asian film) has been invested.

The focusing of critical and historical attention on Latin American film has been a relatively recent phenomenon. Most studies have been concerned with filmmakers involved in the New Cinema movement, whose strident new theories led to innovative films in the 1960s and 1970s. In a sense, the two studies by Burton and Chanan serve to bring to a close this era, which now begs for fresh and expanded approaches that will benefit from the wealth of material in their books. Pines and Willemen’s collection of essays on Third Cinema gives an idea of where the theories of New Cinema may be going in other cultures struggling against marginalization. Armes, King, and Mora all present surveys that recognize the importance in film of the links among finance, government, ideology, and cinematic art. Their volumes suggest possibilities for a great deal of further exploration. Finally, Stam’s monograph offers an innovative model for studying a specific but noteworthy aspect of film—carnavalesque reversals—and expands on it via the relevant role of carnival in Brazilian culture. Stam further hints at the diversity of approaches that the riches of a century of continentwide film production will require.

Nearly a century of cinematic art in Latin America has produced a rich variety of films and filmic styles that we are only now beginning to

appreciate fully. We have also just begun to fathom the impact that Latin America's highly active producers of theory as well as images may now have on film production throughout the world. Because Western culture seems to become ever more visually oriented, studies of this extensive and fascinating body of cinema art and ideas should be increasingly central.