

Cynthia Tompkins. *Experimental Latin American Cinema*. Austin: U of Texas P, 2013. x+ 294 pp.

Writing about Latin American Cinema can be a daunting task given the diversity of forms of film production, distribution, and the local traditions and factors that influence filmmakers in each country. With the exception of Keith Richards's *Themes in Latin American Cinema: A Critical Survey* (2011) and Laura Podalsky's *The Politics of Affect and Emotion in Contemporary Latin American Cinema* (2011), there have been few studies that offer a view of Latin America filmmaking in recent years. Thus, Tompkins's study is a welcome contribution as it deals with films from Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, Mexico, Paraguay and Peru shot between 1988 and 2010. All these films are characterized as experimental, given that they have been shaped by the two avant gardes: one in the late 1920s and early 1930s and the most recent one of the 1960s and 1970s. Relying on Gilles Deleuze's concept of the interval and Umberto Eco's notion of experimental, Tompkins examines the portrayal of time, characters' reactions to witnessing events, and plot differences from the classical Hollywood narrative.

Experimental Latin American Cinema is composed of an introduction and five parts. In the introduction, Tompkins provides a historical overview of filmmaking from the early twentieth century to the present in each of the six countries whose films are explored. She also goes on to define some key terms, such as montage, and devotes attention to the documentary as a way to transition to the characteristics of neorealism, paying particular attention to the development of aesthetics that espoused social change, especially in Argentina and Brazil in the 1960s and 1970s. The author's hypothesis is that neorealist practices are also found in representative works of the Brazilian Retomada and New Argentine Cinema. To support this statement, Tompkins relies on Deleuzian concepts of time, movement and the interval.

Part one focuses on films that "subvert the generic conventions of noir films" (37) and is composed of three chapters devoted to Fabián Bielinsky's *El aura*, Jorge Furtado's *O homem que copiava*, and Heitor Dhalia's *O cheiro do ralo*. These chapters provide in depth film analyses as Tompkins proposes that *El aura* is a type of neo-noir which lends itself to be examined according to Deleuze's notions of the movement-image, while *O homem que copiava* and *O cheiro do ralo* are explored as examples of the deployment of action-image. Part two, also composed of three chapters, is dedicated to examining three different road movies that have had different forms of production and distribution. In her analysis of *Central do Brasil*, Tompkins points to the mixing of documentary with neorealism and the use of Deleuze's time-image. The next chapter focuses on Carlos Sorín's *El camino de San Diego* which also blends documentary and fiction. The final chapter of part II is devoted to the examination of María Victoria Menis's *El cielito* which, similarly to the other road movies of this section, reacts against neoliberalism.

Part three revolves around the drama, and the two films analyzed are *Como pasan las horas* (Inés Oliveira César), a film where the depiction of time is central to the plot, and Josué Méndez's *Días de Santiago*, which uses experimental techniques to portray the reinsertion of a war veteran affected by post-traumatic stress syndrome into civilian life. The fourth part is comprised of analysis of Carlos Reygadas's *Japón* and *Batalla en el cielo* as examples of experimental auterism that depict personal and social crises, respectively. Here Tompkins focuses on the Mexican director's use of feelings and state of mind made possible by original handling of the camera, dream sequences, and the Kuleshov effect.

The fifth part encompasses four chapters devoted to the examination of Carlos Reygadas's *Stelle licht*, Inés de Oliveira César's *Extranjera* and *El recuento de los daños* and Fernando Pérez Valdés's *Madrigal* under the common denominator of experimental auterism and inter-textuality. Therefore, the author explores Reygadas's transmutation of Carl Theodor Dreyer's *Order* (1954) in his film that blends fiction and documentary, Oliveira César's adaptation of Euripides's *Iphigenia in Aulis* that follows the five characteristics of the postwar new image in *Extranjera*, and of Oedipus Rex in *El recuento de los daños*, highlighting the director's preference for shooting on location and stresses her role in the development of experimental cinema. This part closes with an analysis of *Madrigal*, in which inter-textuality refers to two texts and is represented through oneiric sequences. The final part corresponds to the experimental pseudo-documentary and the works analyzed here are *Suite Habana* by Fernando Pérez Valdés and *Hamaca paraguaya* by Paz Encina.

In sum, this is an ambitious and well-written volume that offers readings of numerous films examining their avant-garde aesthetic techniques, particularly commenting on Latin American social development. The meticulous analysis of Deleuzian theory allows Tompkins to explore the diverse films chosen for this timely study.

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