



national film industry is to document national reality," founded the first Latin American school of documentary film in Santa Fe. The school produced several films. They won prizes abroad, embarrassed the government at home, and paved the way for what would be called the 'New Latin American Cinema' movement.

In the '60s Octavio Getino and Fernando Solanas co-founded the Cine Liberación film collective and co-directed *The Hour of the Furnaces*. Drawing from those experiences they introduced the influential concept of 'Third Cinema' which is a cinema characterized by "collective productions, parallel distribution (which emphasized audience discussion) and direct confrontation of political events."

These events crop up in different sections of the book. But the editor has successfully ordered the articles so that, despite disparate subjects and styles, they give the impression of being part of a single narrative.

Barnard's *Popular Cinema and Populist Politics*, the first essay in the book, is a survey of Argentine history, the history of Argentine cinema, and the different ways in which national and international politics have influenced Argentine film. Barnard's excellent synthesis clearly and concisely conveys the various fortunes of a volatile industry and gives a good account of the development of the film culture. We are not only introduced to the intellectual and political context that made possible the various Argentine film genres (the gaucho film, the tango film, the social folkloric film), but also to some of the best examples and exponents of each genre. This section is the foundation upon which our understanding of the book lies, and it is solid.

The last piece in the book, also by Barnard, is a chronology of the development of Argentine cinema which recaps the major events and fills in the gaps.

The articles in between, all properly

introduced by the editor, have a narrower scope. Some focus on particular aspects of Argentine cinema (Alfonso Gumucio Dragon on film censorship up to the late '70s; a report by the Argentine film workers' union on the state of their cinema from '83-'85). Others spotlight individuals (Julianne Burton interviews Fernando Birri; Julio Cortazar remembers Jorge Cedron). The structure of the book thus creates a synergistic relationship between the more general articles and the personal testimonies. For example, Octavio Getino's *Some Notes on the Concept of a 'Third Cinema'* gains depth when read in the context previously provided by Barnard while Getino's account of how and why he went from guerrilla filmmaker to head of the censor board dramatically imbues the otherwise faint and abstract political and intellectual agendas of '66-'73 with vivid immediacy.

The weakest chapters are those on and by Jorge Luis Borges. Edgardo Cozarinsky's *Partial Enchantments of Narrative: Borges in / and / on Film* is a rumination on the influence of film on Borges' writing which has only a tangential relation to Argentine Film. *Borges on Film* consists of four of Borges' film reviews. They are elegant, witty, and informed. But, again, we end up learning more about Borges than about the cinema. We get the impression it was included only because it was written by Argentina's most famous writer. Considering Barnard claims he was operating under space limitations, the space these articles take up could have been put to better use.

The Canadian film industry has never enjoyed the popularity, influence or financial rewards once enjoyed by Argentina's. The vagaries of politics have never resulted in our film talent being exiled or murdered, in the destruction of entire generations of filmmakers. Yet when I read that cultural colonization results in "subjection of a cultural medium to the goal of multinationals striving to sell their goods" and to a "deculturation process that turns us into spectators and consumers of life, instead of being its protagonists", I feel I'm reading *Cinema Canada* instead of a report by the Argentine film workers' union.

There are similarities between the two industries. Part of what made reading *Argentine Cinema* so interesting to me was the sense of *déjà vu* in reading about the Motion Picture Association of America's power in Argentina and about their industry's distribution problems. Part of what made *Argentine Cinema* valuable was that it made me realize that cultural colonization of countries that are not superpowers is the norm. The difference between ours and Argentine's is merely a matter of degree.

Argentine Cinema leaves us with a desire to know more, and especially, with a desire to see the films. It far surpasses its modest aspirations and is a happy intrusion onto academic turf. I hope Canadian writers and publishers will continue producing this kind of work.

JACK THOMPSON

Dadoun Thompson Associates Ltd.

Insurance Specialists
for the
Entertainment Industry

- professional
- personal
- service

Your Complete Insurance
Broker

Call :
Jack Thompson
100 Drumlin Circle, Suite 204
(Steeles & Keele)
Concord, Ont. L4K 2T9
(416) 669-6400

Bookshelf

GEORGE L. GEORGE

Eighty years of motion picture progress come to life in *The New York Times Encyclopedia of Film*, a large-format 13-volume set containing, in photographic reproduction, over 5,500 articles published between 1898 and 1979 in the pages of that estimable daily.

Knowledgeably edited by Gene Brown, it offers an overview and appraisal of the industrial, social, economic, political and cultural issues that marked the worldwide course of cinema. Written in journalistic rather than didactic style, it imparts a topical flavor to events and personalities of the movies' historic past. Future volumes will update the set. (Garland, NYC, \$2000/set, for a limited time, \$995/set).

Bruce Petri's perceptive study, *A Theory of American Film*, probes George Stevens' career from his beginnings as cameraman and gag writer for Hal Roach to director of such highly praised classics as *Shane* and *Giant*. The book discusses fully the story line of each Stevens film, its social implications, the cast's performance and the director's contribution. In a lengthy interview with Petri, Stevens provides discerning insights into his craft. (Garland, NYC, \$65).

As Vince Waldron asserts in *Classic Sitcoms*, his informative and engrossing survey, "Prime time television has not been the most hospitable breeding ground for classic film comedy." *All in the Family*, *I Love Lucy* and *Honeymooners* were all at first rejected by the networks that financed them. The broadcasting history of 10 among these series is vividly told with a wealth of documentation about production, ratings, awards, and a complete guide to their episodes. (Macmillan, NYC, \$27.50/14.95).

In *The Best Science Fiction TV*, John Javna stresses the international origin of such shows, with Great Britain and Japan significantly supplementing the American product. Javna's poll of critics, writers and fans finds *Star Trek*, *The Twilight Zone* and *Outer Limits* in the three top spots. His survey analyzes the 15 best and 10 worst series, quoting critics' comments and offering a perspective on the genre's place in the television galaxy. (Crown/Harmony, NYC, \$8.95).

A hilarious and perfectly aimed putdown of over 35 of TV's most outrageously trashy or artistically obnoxious programs is delivered by Kevin Allman in *TV Turkeys*. It points a selective finger at such single-season flops as *Supertrain* and *Amerika*, longtime hits like *Let's Make A Deal*, and Steve Allen's embarrassingly pretentious brainchild, *Meeting of Minds*. You may even find your favorite show in the book. (Putnam/Perigee, NYC, \$9.95).

Critical analysis of film structure is examined in two significant volumes. Joyce E. Jesionowski's study of D. W. Griffith's Biograph films, *Thinking in Pictures*, reveals the innovative method Griffith used to blend the various elements - plots, performance, action - into a cohesive entity. In *The Prophetic Soul*, Leo Stover evaluates the structural design of H. G. Welles' 1936 film, *Things to Come*, based on its treatment and shooting script, both included in the book. (U. of California Press, Berkeley, \$27.50; McFarland, Box 611, Jefferson, NYC, \$39.95).