

Cortínez, Verónica, ed. *Fértil provincia y señalada: Raúl Ruiz y el campo del cine chileno*. Editorial Cuarto Propio, 2018. 265 pp.

This edited collection seeks to bring Raúl Ruiz's filmic work into conversation with the field of Chilean cinema. Ruiz (1941–2011), exiled to France since 1973 after Pinochet's military coup, is a towering presence in the field of global cinema, his importance attested by numerous scholarly works dedicated to his prolific and multifaceted artistic production, as well as by captivating cinephiles and inspiring independent filmmakers around the world. In fact, the Prologue to the collection states that the critical attention received by Ruiz threatens to eclipse other Chilean independent films. Indeed, it is a worthwhile effort to both consider Ruiz's work in the context of Chilean independent film production and to pay attention to other independent films produced in the past decades. The book is divided into two parts: "Raúl Ruiz: un chileno en el mundo" is comprised of four chapters on Ruiz while "Fértil provincia: el mundo chileno en el cine" features another four chapters on several Chilean-made independent films.

The first chapter, "El cine chileno en el contexto mundial: Raúl Ruiz en Locarno," by Manfred Engelbert, offers a necessary corrective to the dominant claim that European cinema shaped Latin American cinema, and seeks to demonstrate how Ruiz's original films were an integral part of a world phenomenon of new filmmaking and provided an important reference for the development of European cinema. The second essay, "Las funciones del plano según Raúl Ruiz," by Cortínez, discusses Ruiz's work as a film theorist, tracing the trajectory of his ideas on the relative autonomy of the shot through several books, interviews, and films. Ruiz's practice anticipates its theorization; it is a way to conceptualize his own filmic praxis. In the third essay, "Cuatro guiños para Ruiz," Roberto Castillo Sandoval develops the theme of death—or, more accurately, the constant interaction among the living and the dead—as a constant feature throughout Ruiz's work, as a means to express a certain way of being in the world, allowing him to move with facility from the experimental realm to the popular culture realm. The last piece in this section, "La amistad es un misterio insondable," is provided by filmmaker Miguel Littín, who recounts memories from his longstanding friendship with Ruiz, defined by early activism and a shared iconoclastic filmic style during the New Latin American Cinema, exile, and ultimately death.

This first part offers a variety of texts developing specific aspects of Ruiz's work; however, the overreliance on *Tres tristes tigres* (1968) in the first two essays undercuts the more expansive claims and this first section as a whole does not cohere into a unified thesis. Unfortunately, the second part suffers from similar problems as well as new issues. Providing an abrupt departure from Ruiz, it is dedicated to a number of independent Chilean films made several decades apart from each other. The loose theme that unites them is an implied sense of "Chileanness," mainly based on the evocation of the countryside and rural popular culture.

Two scholarly essays in the second part provide valuable analyses of two intriguing documentaries. The first, "*Mimbre*: Sergio Bravo y Violeta Parra" by Claudio Guerrero y Alekos Vuskovic, highlights the 1957 legendary collaboration

of Bravo and Parra, two foundational figures of the Nuevo Cine Chileno and the Nueva Canción Chilena. The 10-minute documentary is an ethnographic and aesthetic study of Manzanito, a wicker-weaving master representative of a newly found appreciation for popular art by urban intellectuals and artists at the time. Even though the problematic potential of this fascination with popular art is not examined, the essay analyzes and highlights the impressive merits of this early experiment in filmic montage and musical improvisation. Hernán Delgado's piece, "Luchando por el derecho de un suelo para vivir: Cine documental regional y memoria histórica," discusses the 2010 documentary *Ni toda la lluvia del sur* by Paulo Vargas Almonacid, focusing on the construction of historic memory of the events surrounding the 1969 massacre of Pampa Irigoín in Puerto Montt when state police opened fire onto scores of campesinos resisting eviction from occupied lands. The essay highlights the importance of "documentary regionalism" as counterhegemonic discourse and of cinema's role in generating a sense of shared social responsibility.

The remaining two texts provide reflections by documentary filmmakers on their own filmic process. In "Religiosidad campesina en el Maule: La ceremonia del angelito," Patricio González Colville examines the rural tradition that honors the death of a child younger than seven, featured in his 2008 documentary *Penitentes*. He traces the history of the representation of this secret and intimate rite and explains the formal and practical decisions taken in its filming. The documentary ends with an interview of the deceased child's mother, in which she recounts dream images of her dead son's visits. The essay considers cinema's potential to generate new knowledge on what he calls "oneiric reality." Yet, the filmmaker verges on romanticizing the mother in describing her encounter with her dead son as "having seen again for a few short minutes the paradise from which her biblical ancestors had been expelled from" (190), thus drawing a clear line between the somewhat simple campesinos who seem to embody the essence of innocent and sincere Christian religiosity and the filmmaker who documents the woman's lived experience with a detached eye. The last essay, "CineSin: navegando en los márgenes," is authored by the filmmaking team composed of twin sisters Eugenia and Margarita Poseck Menz, whose ancestors belong to the wave of German immigrants to the south of Chile who were given land by the Chilean State as part of its strategy to control the region. They explain their filmmaking principles and creative process, based on collaboration and on Lav Diaz's concept of an "emancipated cinema" that seeks to free itself from the financial and aesthetic constraints of the cinema industry. Their films take water as a central theme and while they do approach the theme of water conservation, the self-indulgent and mildly condescending tone soon becomes vexing. For example, they mention a German family that protects the water and the forests, "together with their faithful servants" (238), displaying a puzzling obliviousness to class difference and to the fact that these "faithful servants" are likely the descendants of the original inhabitants of this same territory of which they were dispossessed and that was given to European families. Furthermore, there is a lack of engagement with vigorous and longstanding Mapuche activism on water rights.

In sum, this is an uneven collection of essays loosely related along the lines of cinematic representations of Chileanness. The two-part structure emphasizes the difference between “Ruiž” and “the others” and so does little to offer an integrative reading of Chilean cinema. While some of the essays make worthwhile contributions to the analysis of Chilean independent cinema, much needs to be done to counteract the acritical fetishization of the countryside and the discursive erasure of Indigenous peoples in this collection. Beginning with its title, a quote from Alonso de Ercilla’s famed Spanish epic poem characterized by the conquistador’s sympathetic portrayal of the region and its Indigenous inhabitants, but which ultimately reaffirms Spain’s colonial project, the collection fosters a number of unexamined attitudes on the idea of a Chile constructed as a colonialist enterprise, which idealizes the countryside at the same time as it is complicit in a process of visual and discursive marginalization of those who live in it.

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Dalton, David S. *Mestizo Modernity: Race, Technology, and the Body in Post-revolutionary Mexico*. Gainesville: U of Florida P, 2018. 236 pp.

In his study of race formation in the years following the Mexican Revolution, David Dalton’s *Mestizo Modernity* explores how state officials and the community at large shape and perceive distinctions between race and mestizaje and how these issues are represented, reinforced, and critiqued in Mexican cultural production. Building upon Joshua Lund’s description of the mestizo state as a political entity that conflates mixed-race identity and Western-style modernity, Dalton poses that the use of technology in the postrevolutionary period was an essential component of assimilation to modernity and thus to official mestizaje (1–2). Throughout the book, Dalton engages in a deliberately *avant la lettre* dialogue with cyborgian and posthuman theory to frame a nuanced critical reading of the representations of “technology as a means for modernizing and assimilating the masses” in officialist and state-sponsored art, film, narrative, and theater (3).

Mestizo Modernity is divided into four chapters that date from roughly 1920 to 1968. The first chapter addresses José Vasconcelos’s notions of racial utopia by reading his 1925 essay *La raza cósmica* alongside his lesser-known play *Prometeo vencedor* (c. 1916). Dalton proposes that the play offers greater insight into Vasconcelos’s understanding of race and eugenics and suggests that “Vasconcelos viewed science—when subordinated to aesthetics—as key to producing an improved humanity, or even posthumanity” (32). Although the technical demands of the play (characters appearing out of mid-air, etc.) would have rendered it unstageable, Dalton suggests that the medium of a scripted play encourages Vasconcelos’s audience to engage in their own mental staging of the events within. It is in this medium, and not in an essay, that Vasconcelos proposes a vision that goes beyond the already utopic concept of the cosmic race. By using science and technology to metaphysical ends, the mestizo *raza cósmica* is able to attain the ultimate evolution and redemption of humanity: “the erasure and the superation of the body” (44). Read in such a