

Recent Cinema Studies - December 2020

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Film and Cinephilia in Pakistan : Beyond Life and Death / Ali Nobil Ahmad and Ali Khan

Oxford Univeristy Press, Karachi, Pakistan 2020

xviii, 266p.

Includes Index ; Bibliography

9780190701321

\$ 35.00 / null

300 gm.

This volume is a carefully curated selection of recently published academic research, critical essays, translations, and interviews on Pakistani cinema. Indispensable for film enthusiasts, students, and scholars of cinema in Pakistan and beyond, it brings cutting edge works previously trapped behind paywalls together with neglected writings by figures such as Manto, Faiz Ahmed Faiz, and Muhammad Hasan Askari. Certain to become a classic in the burgeoning field of South Asian film and media studies, its scope encompasses past and present complexities of filmmaking, distribution, and cinephilia in a country whose rich cinematic heritage is just beginning to be appreciated.

<https://www.marymartin.com/web?pid=744530>

Mysteries of Cinema / Martin, Adrian

UWA Publishing , Australia 2020

432 pages

9781760801298

\$ 29.99 / null

615 gm.

The major essays of the distinguished and prolific Australian-born film critic Adrian Martin have long been difficult to access, so this anthology, which collects highlights of his work in one volume, will be welcomed throughout film studies. Martin offers in-depth analysis of many genres of films while providing a broad understanding of the history of cinema and the history of film criticism and culture. These vibrant, highly personal essays, written between 1982 and 2016, balance breadth across cinema theory with almost encyclopedic detail, ranging between aesthetics, cinephilia, film genre, criticism, philosophy, and cultural politics.

Mysteries of Cinema circumscribes a special cultural period that began with the dream of critique as a form of poetic writing, and today arrives at collaborative experiments in audiovisual essays. Throughout these essays, Martin pursues a particular vision of what cinema has been, what it is, and what it still could be.

<https://www.marymartin.com/web?pid=691169>

The Face of Urban Poverty in the Cinema of Brocka / Veronica L. Isla

The University of the Philippines Press, Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines 2020

xvi, 172p.

Includes Index ; Bibliography

9789715429283

\$ 25.00 / null

350 gm.

To cinematically represent a social reality as complex as poverty is no easy task. Mediated by Brocka's own temperament, background, experiences, worldview, response to specific sociopolitical circumstances, and exposure to or association with certain institutions, personalities, and artistic works, some aspects of it are inevitably excluded in the representation. His depiction of the urban poor in *Maynila: Sa mga Kuko ng Liwanag*, *Insiang*, *Jaguar*, *Bona*, and *Bayan Ko: Kapit sa Patalim*, which is part of a larger discourse and competes with other discourses, has provoked varied and even contradictory reactions. Undoubtedly, his discourse on poverty has both strengths and weaknesses. On one hand, he has been praised for drawing upon real-life situations, for being sensitive to historical contexts, for using cinema as a vehicle for social commentary, and for emboldening other filmmakers to carry out the risky undertaking of offering political critiques. On the other hand, he has been accused of failing to be truly revolutionary and progressive because larger social issues are obscured by his melodramatic strategy of focusing on the personal and individual struggles of deeply flawed characters that fail to bring about positive change through political action. However, if larger social issues are eclipsed or obscured, how could his films be a critique of society, be a vehicle for social commentary, or raise the social consciousness of viewers? The key to understanding this paradox is a closer and more exhaustive investigation of the extratextual factors that shaped his representation. By unlocking the hows and whys of his representation, this paradox will be better understood. —from the Introduction

<https://www.marymartin.com/web?pid=743379>

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Ekranisasi Awal : Bringing Novels to the Silver Screen in the Dutch East Indies / Christopher A. Woodrich (Ed) Novie

Gadjah Mada University Press, Yogyakarta, Indonesia 2017

x, 118p. ; 15,5x23cm.

Includes Index ; Bibliography

9786023862627

\$ 30.00 / null

240 gm.

In the early 20th century, the Dutch East Indies was a colony in flux. Greater access to education meant an increasingly literate financial elite and, thus, a burgeoning literary industry. The lower class, meanwhile, found its entertainment in stage performances—oral literature often loosely adapted from famous novels. The film industry itself was attempting to find a successful formula, and in its early years faced heavy competition from the theatre. Educated women called for women's rights and protection of women's welfare as the economy began to transform from one based on the production of raw goods to one based in manufacturing.

In this turbulent background, the social act of adapting films from novels emerged. This phenomenon began in 1927 with the adaptation of *Eulis Atjih* by G. Krugers and ended in 1942—before the Japanese occupation—with the adaptation of *Siti Noerbaja* by Lie Tek Swie. A total of eleven films were adapted from eight novels in the Indies. Only one author had multiple works adapted, and two novels were adapted more than once. The nine producers and directors involved in adapting novels came from a variety of ethnicities. The works adapted, meanwhile, were generally popular in wide society—though often best known through stage performances and adaptations.

The adaptation process from this period has been little understood, yet important for understanding the history of screen adaptations, which are quickly becoming the most lucrative type of film in Indonesia. This exciting new contribution sheds light on the obscure history of film adaptation in Indonesia and lays the groundwork for further research.

<https://www.marymartin.com/web?pid=739790>

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The Authorship of Place : A Cultural Geography of the New Chinese Cinemas / Dennis Lo

Hong Kong University Press, Hong Kong 2020

224p.

9789888528516

\$ 65.00 / HB

The Authorship of Place is the first monograph dedicated to the study of the politics, history, aesthetics, and practices of location shooting for Taiwanese, Mainland Chinese, and coproduced art cinemas shot in rural communities since the late 1970s. Dennis Lo argues that rural location shooting, beyond serving aesthetic and technical needs, constitutes practices of cultural survival in a region beset with disruptive and disorienting social changes, including rapid urbanization, geopolitical shifts, and ecological crises. In response to these social changes, auteurs like Hou Xiaoxian, Jia Zhangke, Chen Kaige, and Li Xing engaged in location shooting to transform sites of film production into symbolically meaningful places of collective memories and aspirations. These production practices ultimately enabled auteurs to experiment with imagining Taiwanese, Mainland Chinese, and cross-strait communities in novel and contentious ways.

Deftly guiding readers on a cross-strait tour of prominent shooting locations for the New Chinese Cinemas, this book shows how auteurs sought out their disappearing cultural heritage by reenacting lived experiences of nation building, homecoming, and cultural salvage while shooting on-location. This was an especially daunting task when auteurs encountered the shooting locations as spaces of unresolved historical, social, and geopolitical contestations, tensions which were only intensified by the impact of filmmaking on rural communities. This book demonstrates how these complex circumstances surrounding location shooting were pivotal in shaping both representations of the rural on-screen, as well as the production communities, institutions, and industries off-screen. Informed by cutting-edge perspectives in cultural geography and media anthropology, The Authorship of Place both revises Chinese-language film history and theorizes groundbreaking approaches for investigating the cultural politics of film authorship and production.

<https://www.marymartin.com/web?pid=743019>

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Love, War and Other Longings : Essays on Cinema in Pakistan / Vazira Zamindar and Asad Ali

Oxford University Press, Karachi, Pakistan 2020

276p.

Includes Index ; Bibliography

9780190701857

\$ 30.00 / null

520 gm.

Has there been a 'revival' of Pakistani cinema? Or can the very question be put to scrutiny? Can we think beyond a national cinema, and instead simply think with films to explore the fraught politics and aspirations of our times? Love, War & Other Longings brings together historians, anthropologists, artists, and film-makers to offer new lines of enquiry that probe the tensions between cinema's past and present, absences and the archive, seduction and respectability, class and consumption, as well as genre and censorship. At times experimental in form, the essays seek to draw readers into conversations that engage political theory and postcolonial history, and become part of ongoing writing, thinking, and the making of films in Pakistan and the global south more broadly.

<https://www.marymartin.com/web?pid=701275>

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Reading the Muslim of Celluloid : Bollywood,Representation and Politics / Roshni Sengupta

Primus Books, New Delhi 2020

xiii,326p.;24cm.

Includes Index, Bibliography

9789389850871

\$ 31.50 / HB

620 gm.

While Bollywood continues to be part of the psyche of Indians and South Asians the world over, the complex question of how religious and sectarian identities are represented has emerged as crucial. The cinematic representation of identities, particularly of the Muslim as a cultural category, also contains within ideas about visualities and their impact. As identities are redefined in the context of extremist ideologies, the advent of religious nationalism aids and abets such redefinitions. The contribution of cinema to ideological milieus is immense. Hindi cinema—through its romantic narratives and culture of myth - making as well as the capital-intensive, industrial nature of production—has tended to be one of the most powerful tools of political communication and propaganda. This book aims to bring cinematic narratives under the analytical lens and contextualize the representation of the Muslim in popular Hindi cinema. It also argues in favor of a noticeable transformation in the representation of Muslims in films through the 1990s and 2000s, culminating in the emergence of a secularized portrayal which is far from unproblematic. Can one discern an attempt to construct a visual binary where the Muslims can be categorized as 'good' and 'bad'? Does Hindi cinema perceive the Muslim only through a simplified worldview of loyalty and nationalism? This book seeks to answer such questions.

<https://www.marymartin.com/web?pid=703000>

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Thai Cinema Uncensored / Matthew Hunt  
Silkworm Books, Chiang Mai, Thailand 2020  
xii, 300p. ; 14 x 21 cm.  
Includes Bibliography & Filmography  
9786162151699  
\$ 35.00 / null  
400 gm.

Thai Cinema Uncensored is the first full-length study of Thai film censorship. Informed by access to rare and controversial films, the author provides a history of film censorship in Thailand from its beginnings when films were censored by the police for ideological reasons, to the present when issues such as politics, religion and sex are the main reasons for Thai films being banned. Although a rating system was finally introduced in 2008, film censorship remains bureaucratic, opaque, and conservative. The book also examines how Thai filmmakers approach culturally sensitive subjects, and how their films have been censored as a result. It contains interviews with ten leading directors, including candid and extended conversations with Thai New Wave veterans Apichatpong Weerasethakul and Pen-ek Ratanaruang. The directors all discuss their most controversial films, which range from mainstream studio movies to independent arthouse releases, and explain their responses to censorship: some took the censors to court, while others withdrew their films from Thailand altogether.

<https://www.marymartin.com/web?pid=730668>

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Legacies of the Drunken Master : Politics of the Body in Hong Kong Kung Fu  
Comedy Films / Luke White (Series Ed) Allison Alexy  
University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, Hawaii, USA 2020  
xii, 242p. ; 26 b&w illustrations.  
Includes Index ; Bibliography  
9780824881573  
\$ 68.00 / HB  
510 gm.

In 1978 the films *Snake in the Eagle's Shadow* and *Drunken Master*, both starring a young Jackie Chan, caused a stir in the Hong Kong cinema industry and changed the landscape of martial arts cinema. Mixing virtuoso displays of acrobatic kung fu with knockabout humor to huge box office success, they broke the mold of the tragic and heroic martial arts film and sparked not only a wave of imitations, but also a much longer trend for kung fu comedies that continues to the present day.

*Legacies of the Drunken Master*—the first book-length analysis of kung fu comedy—interrogates the politics of the films and their representations of the performing body. It draws on an interdisciplinary engagement with popular culture and an interrogation of the critical literature on Hong Kong and martial arts cinema to offer original readings of key films. These readings pursue the genre in terms of its carnival aesthetic, the utopias of the body it envisions, its highly stylized depictions of violence, its images of masculinity, and the registers of its “hysterical” laughter.

The book's analyses are carried out amidst kung fu comedy's shifting historical contexts, including the aftermath of the 1960s radical youth movements, the rapidly globalizing colonial enclave of Hong Kong and the emerging consciousness of its 1997 handover to China, and the transnationalization of cinema audiences. It argues that through kung fu comedy's images of the body, the genre articulated in complex and often contradictory ways political realities relevant to late twentieth-century Hong Kong and the wider conditions of globalized capitalism. The kung fu comedy entwines us in a popular cultural history that stretches into the folk past and forward into utopian and dystopian possibilities. Theoretically rich and critical, *Legacies of the Drunken Master* aims to be at the forefront of scholarship on martial arts cinema. It also addresses readers with a broader interest in Hong Kong culture and politics during the 1970s and 1980s, postcolonialism in East Asia, and action and comedy films in a global context—as well as those fascinated with the performing body in the martial arts.

<https://www.marymartin.com/web?pid=701731>

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Philippine Cinematic Art / Andrea L. Peterson

Vibal Foundation, Inc., Quezon City, Philippines 2020

96p.

Includes Index ; Bibliography

9789719707202

\$ 30.00 / null

550 gm.

Cinema is considered an artistic medium, but is it an art? During cinema's burgeoning decades, Marxist critics argued that cinema cannot be art because it is first and foremost a commercial product. In their influential book, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer depicted cinema as an instrument of capitalist control that withered “imagination and spontaneity.” Yet great art often seeks to be architectonic, to embrace other arts. It is capacious; it crosses artistic boundaries; it engages mind, imagination, and heart; and it rewards multiple encounters. All this can be said of great cinema. *Philippine Cinematic Art* examines how movies have mediated wondrously between high and low culture by providing profound narratives that resonate with a wider and more diverse audience. In such encounters, its invisible spectators experience what the film critic David Thomson calls the “stealthy rapture” of cinema with its capacity to engage both heart and intellect and move audiences to a deeper appreciation of the human condition and toward a refinement of their sense of beauty.

<https://www.marymartin.com/web?pid=702697>

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Rendezvous with Hindi Cinema / Ophelie Wiel

Sage Publications India Pvt Ltd, New Delhi 2019

x, 324 p.; 22 cm.

9789353286552

\$ 15.00 / null

420 gm.

Indian cinema hasn't been as much talked about worldwide since probably the first works of Satyajit Ray which were shown at the Cannes Film Festival in the 1950s-1960s. Renewed interest for the biggest film industry in the world doesn't mean its complexity is well understood abroad or even inside India itself. Bollywood especially seems to have taken over all the other industries as if to become the only representative for Indian cinema.

<https://www.marymartin.com/web?pid=681341>

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Dark Fear, Eerie Cities: New Hindi Cinema in Neoliberal India / Sarunas Paunksnis  
Oxford University Press, New Delhi 2019

xx, 172 p.; 22 cm.

Bibliography Includes Index.

9780199493180

\$ 22.50 / HB

380 gm.

Dark Fear, Eerie Cities analyses a wide array of films made in the early 21st century to offer a philosophical and psychoanalytical critique of the transforming cinematic imaginary—from the pre-1990s feudal family ideal to the contemporary construction of the new middle class's subjectivities in the postcolonial context.

<https://www.marymartin.com/web?pid=681343>

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Mysteries of the Mundane: The Films of Girish Kasaravalli / John W. Hood

Orient Blackswan Pvt. Ltd, Hyderabad 2019

219 p.; 22 cm.

9789352878437

\$ 12.00 / null

300 gm.

With a career spanning three decades, Kannada director Girish Kasaravalli has long been recognised and respected as one of the foremost filmmakers of independent cinema in India. In *Mysteries of the Mundane*, John Hood presents an intensive discussion on Kasaravalli's work—including his diploma film, feature films and two documentaries. Kannada literature, cultural traditions and a love for folk-theatre have shaped Kasaravalli's storytelling and influenced his visual style. His films are firmly rooted in themes specific and local to Karnataka; however, their touching exploration of the commonplace shows that within the local, specific culture lie values, struggles, dreams and aspirations that are truly universal.

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