

GABRIELA COPERTARI AND CAROLINA SITNISKY, eds.
El estado de las cosas: Cine Latinoamericano en el nuevo milenio.
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Though film culture in Latin America has been, to a degree, transnational in nature since its inception, many countries' state-led protectionist policies throughout most of the twentieth century fostered a strong tradition of nationally oriented cinemas. Neoliberal policies of the 1990s, however, drastically reduced or eliminated such protections as state subsidies and a quota of screens dedicated to local films. In response, modes of production in the new millennium changed significantly, particularly through dependence on co-production or the use of private and transnational capital. Taking these new conditions as its point of departure, this volume responds to debates about whether and how to continue talking about national cinemas in Latin America.

The introduction and essays that comprise this text affirm that—despite pronounced changes in modes of production and circulation—Latin American cinemas are still best understood in the context of national cultural traditions and dialogues. In the best tradition of cultural studies, each chapter provides an overview of the current state of affairs in a selected country, summarizing past and present laws and practices related to the filmmaking industry, as well as cinema-going norms. The chapters then focus on one or two exemplary films in a given tendency, be they commercial, feminist, memory, political, or border films. The cinematic texts are always discussed in conjunction with their conditions of production and consumption, encompassing the training of the directors, sources of public and private funding, relevant laws and support institutions of the State, and the films' participation and reception in major film festivals. The analyses account for how given examples negotiate national concerns and the expectations of international producers, festivals, and ultimately audiences.

The essays of the first section, “Cine comercial y representación del presente,” analyze the way commercially successful films channel collective desires to reinforce the status quo, which is generally linked to the centrality of an often-benevolent upper classes in a strategic alliance with the middle class at the expense of workers and the poor. In the Argentine film *El secreto de sus ojos*, Gabriela Copertari identifies such an alliance through the romance of the protagonists,

which effectively eliminates workers—so central to the politics of Peronismo and Kitchnerismo—and privatizes themes of crime and justice. Likewise, Ignacio Sánchez Prado uses the emblematic Mexican film *Niñas malas* to illustrate how commercially successful films tend to reinforce the dominant class structure. His essay includes a persuasive justification for studying commercial film and a discussion of the limitations of literary and subalternist cultural studies approaches to account for the ideological and aesthetic features of cinema. Elizabeth Rivero's discussion of Ecuadorian film centers on *El nombre de la hija* to illustrate how the attempt to appeal to international audiences and festival juries causes its references to the local conflict between Catholicism and communism to become so generalized that its Ecuadorian setting loses its coherence. Carolina Sitnisky examines the Bolivian film *Zona Sur* to show that even though it draws from a national tradition of formal experimentation in Third Cinema and includes Aymara characters, it lacks the pro-indigenous message and political activism of its Third Cinema precursors. Rather, it represents a closed world that insulates the oligarchy from the social changes taking place under Evo Morales's presidency.

The second section, "Cine de los márgenes," contains four essays on films that represent different forms of marginality. Constanza Burucúa's analyzes formal film conventions and the representation of women and the institution of the family in the Venezuelan films *Macu*, *la mujer del policía*, and *Maroa, una niña de la calle*, which span two decades, to trace director Solveig Hoogenstein's changing position on gender. Vitelia Cisneros places the Peruvian, and specifically, *limeño* film *La teta asustada* in the context of films produced in the Andes about the years of State and terrorist violence, as well as of a new generation of directors who are flourishing despite a lack of State support. Elizabeth Rivero examines how the Uruguayan film *El baño del Papa* artfully negotiates between local and international expectations regarding the representation of marginality on the Uruguay-Brazil border. Pedro Adrián Zuluaga reads *El vuelco del cangrejo* as contributing to greater inclusion in Colombian national identity through its treatment of the community of African descent.

"Cine y crisis de la política" reflects on cinema's engagement with politics and society in Brazil, Chile, and Cuba. Adriana Michèle Johnson Campos asserts that *Tropa de Elite* successfully uses non-representational strategies to respond to the aesthetic shortcomings

of the earlier film *Ônibus 174*. Both reflect upon the relationship between media representations and the relationship between the police and society, but the latter effectively subverts the violent discourse of the police by provoking rejection in the viewer. Leah Kemp examines the figure of the criminal that serves to explore the concept of citizenship in Chilean film. She posits that *Tony Manero*, set during the Pinochet dictatorship and which also relies upon the viewer's rejection of the protagonist's violence, revises the past to condemn a lack of participation in collective life. Finally, Jorge Marturano analyzes the innovative use of documentary conventions to problematize the gaze and to address the politics of representation in the Cuban film *¿Quién diablos es Juliette?*.

El estado de las cosas is an exceptional volume that condenses a remarkable amount of information about the forms, content, and conditions of production that bear on contemporary Latin American cinema. This volume proves an invaluable resource for film scholars and students alike.

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