

Barraza, Vania and Carl Fischer (editors). *Chilean Cinema in the Twenty-First-Century World*. Wayne State University Press, 2020. 372 pp.

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From the time of the military coup in 1973 until the final year of Augusto Pinochet's dictatorship in 1989, a total of two national feature-length films premiered in Chile (Barraza and Fischer 2). From 1990 to 1999, production increased to 27 national films (7). Since 2010, the number has climbed to an estimated annual average of 24 films (2), with a current premiere rate of approximately 40 per year (34). Vania Barraza and Carl Fischer's edited volume on Chilean cinema hinges on these numbers to support the primary argument of their book: "Chilean film has taken on a global reach, and so criticism of it should do so as well" (20). Thanks to the research of fourteen scholars based in the United States and Chile, this collection delves into a variety of factors, both local and global, that contributed to the remarkable jump from a mere two films over the course of 16 years to an average of nearly 40 per year as the 21st-century moves into its third decade. The volume achieves its goal of creating a reference book for those relatively unfamiliar with Chilean film history and the diversity of the country's film production. It also succeeds in asking a series of pressing questions about "contradictory currents between the national and the transnational" (15). Where it truly shines, though, are the close readings of remarkable films whose significance may not have reached an Anglophone audience.

Barraza and Fischer's introduction serves as a sort of establishing shot for this volume. Here they offer a brief but comprehensive overview of Chilean cinematic history, touching on key events from the Santiago premiere of the Lumière brothers' films in 1896 to the social uprising of 2019. They also outline four major trends of Chilean cinema since the 1990s: (a) genre films, (b) the work of filmmakers known collectively as the *Novísimo* Generation, (c) a noticeable shift to politicized films that tell local stories and "packag[e] them for international audiences" (10), and (d) highly political—yet also highly personal—documentary storytelling (8). While the collection's first section devotes itself to contextualizing the Chilean cinema industry at large, the four trends that Barraza and Fischer identify in the introduction receive considerable attention in the second, third, fourth, and fifth sections of the book.

The first section, "Mapping Theories of Chilean Cinema in the World," comprises three chapters that focus on the distribution and consumption of Chilean film in national and international

contexts alike. In chapter one, María Paz Peirano's extensive market research elucidates multiple factors that have led to the creation of a cohesive "Chilean cinema brand" that has become both recognizable and recognized on the global film circuit (35). In the second chapter, Carolina Urrutia Neno revisits her concept of *centrifugal cinema* and the complexities that have developed since she coined the term in 2013, and in the third, Paola Lagos Labbé expounds on the transformation of Chilean documentary from the mid-20th century to the present. This portion of the volume will be of particular interest to scholars who track statistics and follow trends of the international film festival circuit and/or want to understand the logistics that enable Chilean cinema to flourish within a global industry.

Genre and gender are the focus of the second and fourth sections, both of which contain two chapters each. In the second section, "On the Margins of Hollywood: Chilean Genre Flicks," readers immerse themselves in two niche genres that have evolved quickly in recent years. Jonathan Risner introduces us to Chilean horror films, arguing that this nascent national genre "provides a corpus of films through which to broach the dynamics of visibilization and omission of Chileanness, including its historical and contemporary crises" (108). Moisés Park probes the career of Arab-Chilean martial arts star Marko Zaror in order to examine a unique mix of masculinity and racial fluidity that has paved the way for Zaror's transnational acting career. In the fourth section, "Migrations of Gender and Genre," Mónica Ramón Ríos and Carl Fischer explore questions of gender identity in films that have not received the same level of critical attention as the Oscar-winning *Una mujer fantástica* (Sebastián Lelio, 2017), specifically, Camila José Donoso's *Casa Rosbell* (2017), and *Naomi Campbell* (co-directed with Nicolás Videla, 2013).

As a film scholar originally trained in literary and cultural studies, I was especially drawn to section three, "Other Texts and Other Lands: Intermediality and Adaptation beyond Chile (a Cinema)." In a style similar to sections two and four, the three chapters included here engage in careful analysis of films likely to be new to cinephiles whose knowledge of Chilean film is limited to the critical darlings of international festivals. Both María Angélica Franken and Vania Barraza offer insightful, richly defended readings of Alicia Scherson's oeuvre, focusing on *Il Futuro* (2013) and *Vida de familia* (co-directed with Cristián Jiménez, 2017) respectively. Arturo Márquez-Gómez, on the other hand, plumbs the depths of singer-songwriter Alex Anwandter's music video production in order to approach his first feature film, *Nunca vas a estar solo* (2016). Collectively, section three brings much-needed attention to films that cross borders—national, linguistic, sociocultural—, in addition to crossing genres, aesthetics, and cinematic registers.

Chilean Cinema's final section, titled “Politicized Intimacies, Transnational Affects: Debating (Post)memory and History,” consists of four chapters that examine on-screen representations of personal and collective memory. Perhaps the crown jewel of the entire collection is Camilo Trumper’s essay on Sergio Castilla’s *Gringuito* (1998), and not just for its compelling argument to read Castilla’s film as “a story of childhood as a political category . . . at once defined by both violence and exile” (314). Trumper’s musings on his own relationship with his grandmother—ranging chronologically from his childhood in Canada to his parents’ return to Chile to his grandmother’s death at the time of writing the chapter—underscore the deeply personal nature of film and its affective power on us as viewers. María Helena Rueda’s chapter on films that center loss and mourning is another that should not be missed. Rueda argues that fiction and documentary films alike have the capacity to communicate distinctly Chilean concerns to a global audience, noting that “Attention to loss and mourning gives ostensibly political films a distinct personal dimension and the ostensibly personal films a strong political one” (353).

Barraza and Fischer were finalizing their volume shortly after the social uprising that exploded in late 2019, and they astutely acknowledge that “The act of looking, so central to cinema, has been at the center of the so-called *estallido social*” (17). I began this review prior to my first-ever visit to Santiago, my initial act of looking at so many of the sites I had only seen on screen, and I finish in the wake of Manuela Martelli’s wildly successful *1976* (2022). Martelli’s directorial feature debut—also known as *Chile '76* on the international circuit—has received accolades at various festivals worldwide, including a nomination for the *Caméra d’Or* at the Cannes Film Festival in 2022. Given the proliferation of films that have garnered attention in the short time since this collection was published, it is evident that significant research remains to be done to make the innovative production of Chilean filmmakers accessible to an English-speaking audience. Thanks to the groundwork laid by Barraza, Fischer, and their contributors, scholars unfamiliar with the intricacies of Chilean cinema have a starting point from which to explore the history and development of the nation’s film industry; its place in and relationship to the international market; and some key films that illustrate trends in genre, gender, memory, and social/political activism. I look forward to a subsequent volume that addresses the impacts being made by rising filmmakers like Martelli—such as Maite Alberdi, Francisca Alegría, Gaspar Antillo, Tomás Alzamora, María Paz González, Claudia Huaiquimilla, Ignacio Juricic, Marialy Rivas, Marcela Said, Dominga Sotomayor, Moisés Sepúlveda, just to name a few—who continue to shape Chile’s film industry locally and globally.