

Martin-Jones, David. *Cinema Against Doublethink. Ethical Encounters with the Lost Past of World History*. Remapping World Cinema Series. Routledge, 2019. 242 pp.

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*Doublethink*, a word borrowed from George Orwell's *1984*, names the deliberate bureaucratic project of disappearing the (true) past to reduce history to only one (false) official narrative. How can we counter doublethink? For David Martin-Jones, the answer is cinema. If we imagine that history was guarded inside a box in a gallery –this is the example the reader finds in the book's preface—the artistic interventions of filmmakers open holes in that box, offering glimpses of counterhegemonic pasts. With this metaphor, Martin-Jones attempts to explain the power of cinema to inspire doubt, or in his words, to induce a state of “hesitation.” He writes, “a world of cinemas asks us to rethink something we may believe we already know about history –or rather, Eurocentric world history” (xvi). That *ethics of hesitation* unleashed by cinema is the suggestive premise of *Cinema Against Doublethink*, a book that excels as a valuable contribution to the project of challenging the misleading category of world cinema and its peripheral position within film history.

In this new book, David Martin-Jones takes on the field of Film Studies for its generalized disengagement with decolonial thought and its lack of understanding about how the precepts of colonial modernity condition film analysis. *Cinema Against Doublethink* is the latest in a series of works applying Deleuzian theory to films from different countries; previous works include *Deleuze, Cinema and National Identity: Narrative Time in National Contexts* (2006) and *Deleuze and World Cinemas* (2011). What is new in the author's ongoing project is his engagement with non-Eurocentric philosophy—specifically, Enrique Dussel's concepts of *colonial modernity* and *transmodern ethics*. Through this framework, Martin-Jones seeks to transcend the boundaries of Film Studies and appeal to a wider readership interested in decolonial theory. Scholars researching the peripheral cultural production of the Luso-Hispanic world will find in this book insightful analyses of compelling Latin American films, such as *The Embrace of the Serpent*, *Nostalgia for the Light*, *How Tasty Was My Little Frenchman*, *Even the Rain*, *At the Foot of the White Tree*, and *Carancho*.

Martin-Jones's newfound attention to non-European philosophy necessarily complicates his use of Deleuzian theory. In *Cinema Against Doublethink*, the author attempts to filter Deleuzian thought

of its Eurocentric inclinations, most significantly by challenging his notion that the *time-image* originates in the European post-war period. Instead, Martin-Jones attributes the cinematic interest in pure duration to other regions of the world and their respective ideas about temporality. In this way, Deleuze's *time-image* becomes a tool of decolonial analysis, one which reveals a kaleidoscope of layered histories. Ultimately, the book argues that the accumulation of temporalities within the *time-image* destabilizes colonial modernity, and "make[s] us hesitate about the veracity of the present" (5).

Transnationality is the third pillar, alongside the decolonial and the Deleuzian, of the book's theoretical edifice. The films selected vary widely in terms of their politics and geographic and historical contexts. However, the cumulative result of this exercise of *assemblage* is to compose a general critique of colonial modernity narrated through film. Not surprisingly, most of the films included in the book are international co-productions that address local issues while also presenting global critiques of colonization. With these particular transnational stories, David Martin-Jones wants to reconstruct a collective "world memory" against colonial and neocolonial narratives of otherness and erasure, shifting the focus "towards the recognition of coevalness, towards equality with others within the world we inhabit" (58). The author cautions us against reading his account as an "official" counter-official history. Readers are encouraged instead to open their eyes to other transnational stories that produce their own cinema against doublethink.

*Cinema Against Doublethink* follows important texts before it that opened pathways for the introduction of postcolonial, decolonial, and transnational approaches in film studies, such as Shohat and Stam's classic *Unthinking Eurocentrism*, the works of Laura Marks, Marcia Landy, and Lúcia Nagib, and the anthologies *Global Neorealism: The Transnational History of a Film Style* and *Rethinking Third Cinema*. In the Latin American context, Martin-Jones's work can be put into conversation with the film analyses of Marie-Eve Monette, Amanda Alfaro, and Maria Chiara D'Argenio, to provide just a few lesser-known references.

*Cinema Against Doublethink* is divided into six chapters, preceded by a preface and an introduction and followed by a conclusion. The chapters are, in turn, grouped into three sections: *Decolonizing entrances to the past* (chapters 1 and 2), *Encounters with the past that is/is not preserved* (chapter 3 and 4), and *Encounters with the present that passes* (chapters 5 and 6). While the first part lays out the warp and woof of the theoretical apparatus, the subsequent sections deal more directly with film analyses. Following a very legible structure, chapters three to six are organized around different temporal scales that together tell the story of interconnected phases of colonial modernity. Each chapter features two movies pertaining to the same temporal arc, but from two different regions. Chapter three refers to

the age of the Earth and the universe: 4.54 and 13.7 billion years, respectively. Chapter four marks the time of the conquest of America and the inception of the first World System: 500 years. Chapter five tackles the 70 years of a Cold War that did not finish with the touted “end of history,” but instead entered a process of dissimilar decomposition in different parts of the world. Lastly, chapter six corresponds to current processes of neoliberal subjectivation within different institutions. To make sense of human relations within this temporal structure, Martin-Jones uses contract philosophy theory—more specifically, the natural contract between humans and the Earth, the racial contract that justified modern colonization, the (suspended) social contract characteristic of the episodes of political persecution in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and the individual contract imposed by the rationality of neoliberalism.

This complicated structure undergirds a decolonial project whose planetary scale and all-encompassing temporality certainly surpass the typical scope of film studies. The profusion of references contained in this book might be seen as one of its main weaknesses, since it demands a very engaged reader to follow the author throughout the corners of his conceptual map. Martin-Jones tries to solve this seeming difficulty by providing abundant clarifications and theoretical ritornellos. The author is likewise keen on integrating film commentary into every brushstroke of his theoretical explanations, including the introduction and the conclusion.

From a decolonial standpoint, the film corpus works well with the theory; however, it is true that practically all the movies are well-known masterpieces of internationally consolidated authors. This selection seems to be a missed opportunity to shed light on more independent and self-produced movies made by those multiply oppressed by colonial modernity. In this respect, the general argument would have benefited from other time-images from indigenous peoples, transfeminist collectives, refugees, or ethnic minorities within countries of the West. As some of the scholarly literature on Latin American film has proved, these types of media give us a better platform for unthinking Eurocentrism, since they seek inspiration within more than five hundred years of resistance to colonial modernity.

Another important absence in Martin-Jones's book is the gender perspective, given that patriarchy is such a constitutional feature of colonial modernity, as decolonial feminists Rita Segato and María Lugones have demonstrated. This inclusion would have productively complicated the politics of the chosen film texts. Finally, as with any argument that relies on a dichotomy between official and counter-official narratives, *Cinema Against Doublethink* could be faulted for not offering examples of official history, and thus unwittingly reifying the bad object it seeks to challenge.

Despite these lacunas, this book provides us with new important arguments for analyzing world cinema and its relation to colonial modernity. After concluding the book, the reader will be left yearning for more—more commentaries on movies from other time periods and regions, more connections to current critiques of colonial modernity. In short, more points of entry to obliterated pasts. David Martin-Jones shows us that there is an intrinsic open-endedness in the task of remapping and repurposing the value of world cinema. It is important to conduct this task collectively, not competing to coin new terms in order to carve new niches in academia, but building upon the work that has already been done and facilitating access to the voices and images that have been historically suppressed.