

Teshome H. Gabriel. Third Cinema in the Third World: The Aesthetics of Liberation. UMI Research Press, 1982. 150 pages. Bibliography, Appendix. Hard-bound, \$39.95.

Like literature, philosophy and art in general, the book defines the author's critical and theoretical concept as being social in outreach. From the outset, the book sets out with an ideological scrutiny into filmic style leading to the creation of a filmic language. The vocabulary of this new language, comprising editing strategy, camera movement and use of sound gives the "nameless" [the poor folk of the Third World], not only a name, but also a voice and an identity to go with it.

The plan of the book divides into five main chapters, with the introduction and concluding chapters serving as brackets of ideas developed and analyzed in those chapters. Chapter two falls into two subdivisions dealing with a conceptual framework and a definition of ideology as it pertains to the Third World. A brief discussion of the theory of "point of view" derived from Louis Althusser's writings lead to an alternative Fanonian thesis where a new conceptualization in respect to "point of view" is adhered to in Third Cinema (p. 7). The shift in conceptualization is a logical sequel of this difference in point of view since the ideological impetus of Third Cinema is worlds apart from the ideological assumptions of conventional and commercial cinema. According to the author, because Third Cinema is anchored in its social and cultural basis, "point of view" is governed by political and ideological purpose and is, therefore, based not on an individual subject ["the legitimizing function of conventional cinema"], but on "a trans-individual or collective subject." (p.8)

The question of ideology which constitutes part two of the Theoretical Context is grounded within a Marxist tradition leading to a subsequent neo-Marxist or Fanonian thesis which the author suggests is the logical step forward in its application to the ideological and cultural needs of the Third World. The ideological component of this study stresses the view that Third World peoples' awareness of their plight is the antecedent for decolonization of culture and total liberation. This argument is further developed in Chapter three where the issue of class predominates. Here the accompaniments of a class society which constitute sub-plots in Third Cinema are analyzed. These include culture, religion, sexism and armed struggle as strictly class based.

Chapter four makes an attempt at a definition of a Revolutionary film following the theoretical framework advanced earlier in Chapter two. Qualifying in this conception are such films

as Lucia and Playa Giron (both from Cuba), The Promised Land (Chile), Emitai (Senegal), La Hora de Los Hornos (Argentina) and In Defense of the People (Iran). These films draw in the whole issue of Third World's "Point of View" as formulated by the Fanonian intellectual influence. (p. 39).

Style and Ideology is the subject of Chapter five. Here films with diametrically opposed points of view are analyzed on parallel lines to show how 'content' determines 'style' and vice versa. Such is the case with Bay of Pigs (USA) and Playa Giron (Cuba). Another example is Journey to the Sun and Last Grave at Dimbaza dealing with the South African situation; the former glorifying the system and the later depicting the harsh reality of it. This chapter succeeds in an initial understanding of the relationship of style to ideology, but the concrete application of "style" is magnificently captured in the last chapter of the book, chapter six, where "culture" as it manifests itself in film production is directly linked to "ideology", style being merely the filtering process. For the author, "culture" is the decoding device for understanding not only style but ideology itself and, therefore, serves as the launching pad for Third World films. By presenting various case studies in this chapter the author brings out the dilemma of cross-cultural communication in films. He succeeds in setting the stage for a "point of view" that is strictly Third World. It is appropriate, therefore, that chapter six concludes with an original study of folk narrative art in a film form. Taking Haile Gerima's Harvest: 3000 Years the author discusses oral narrative as the determining factor in the filmmaker's cultural sub-conscious. In this case the study serves as a model for the analysis of other Third World films. What Dr. Gabriel accomplishes in this last treatment is an interpretive process translating filmic conventions into oral narrative form in which an insignificant character, i.e., the servant acquires a name and an identity and becomes a cultural spokesperson for the "nameless."

This book is highly recommended to anybody interested in the political and cultural dynamics of the Third World of which this study is a logical consequence. It constitutes a bold step forward inasmuch as it breaks new criteria different and apart from "the traditional theoretical and critical canons" of cinema. (p. 14)

- K. M.

Moon-Bride and Sun-Bridegroom

