

car radio and we hear music from the fiesta before the video cuts to it a few frames later. *Transnational Fiesta* resides in the conceptual space of "cultural borderland" mentioned by Gelles that blurs difference and sameness, and therefore ethnic identity and assimilation.

As Latino immigrants struggle for legitimate citizenship and identity, it will be interesting to see how viewers read this montage and define difference-sameness and the resulting multicultural messages. Martinez's important work on students' reception of ethnographic films shows the extent to which ethnographic films may unintentionally reinforce students' stereotypes and corresponds to the film's modes of address (Martinez 1992). Using montage as narrative form, Martinez and Gelles provide an 'open' text about which viewers actively and reflexively co-produce new meanings, yet they strategically place 'closed' texts of intertitles and voice-overs to incorporate important contextual information, including themselves. For scholars and teachers concerned with cultural politics, this video has many uses for studying representations of difference and the exchanges between words and images and theory and ethnographic description.

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Fields of Vision: Essays in Film Studies, Visual Anthropology, and Photography.
Leslie Devereaux and Roger Hillman, eds.
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We desperately need a sophisticated dialogue between the combination of textual analysis and empirical history that is offered by screen studies, and anthropology's amalgam of cross-cultural theory with participant observation. Coming as I do from cultural studies, which seeks to blend the humanities and the social sciences in its take on culture, I am all too aware of how awkward this conversation can be both to set up and continue. The bizarre mix of anthropology-hate with audience-love found in my own area is some index of the difficulties.

Specifically, I wonder what is to be done at the intersection of visual anthropology and film studies. As both Edward Said (1990, 1991) and Stephen Muecke (1992) have amply demonstrated, anthropologists, postcolonial countries, and their diasporic vocalists frequently try to persuade themselves and others that hermetically sealed cultures existed prior to colonialism and that these can be resuscitated; but this is a fiction. Every kind of obstacle and conduit has been placed between most colonized peoples and their past, such that it is no longer pure and knowable. This process has implications for the human sciences under discussion. Anthropology's object developed as a transcendental conception of humanness. Even as the human figure was being disassembled by a huge array of knowledge, carved into contradictory segments, it was to be magically restored to wholeness in the figure of "man." For its part, film studies has sought, via textual criticism, to reconcile this divided subject when it appeared, fractured and lamented, in various technologies and techniques of image and sound. In each case, we routinely observe an originary dependence on completeness and a metaphysics of presence serving as an alibi for embarking on analytic maneuvers. These maneuvers slice up the alibi, desiccating it as an integral part of their work, then reestablishing their singularity and legitimacy by an appeal to the experiential, the solid-state reason of the researcher or critic. Schiller

lives via links to Romanticism and an obsession with the fireside experience of difference and secondary ethnocentrism, where the anthropologist or screen studies writer becomes attached to "the other." The discourse of First Peoples is rendered quaint and exotic in this resetting of narratives, as if they were in the world of the children's story. In place of such idealist insatiations of "experience" as a magical agent reconciling the dialectical separation of truth from naming, all academic accounts must be juxtaposed with their conditions of enunciation: but not by an appeal to a particular category of discourse as prior and superior, and with a careful eye to the imbrication of the discourse of modernity in both the promise and the travail of the postcolonial condition.

I welcome the subtitled project of *Fields of Vision*, not least for an interdisciplinarity that can address some of these concerns. There are some outstanding essays here that borrow from a wide array of knowledges to produce extremely subtle and sophisticated analyses of very diverse texts and institutions. We can see brave attempts to breach the space between the different human sciences in five chapters of the book. Anne-Marie Willis' paper on the exhibitionary complex of historical reenactment at the Sovereign Hill theme park is an impressive piece of theorization and original research that works carefully with relevant scholarly and political traditions. Bernd Hüppauf's account of war and photography looks at the way in which the content of anti-war images often contradicts their animating moral message: for although the technology of surveillance and devastation is frequently borrowed to work against itself, an indexical tie to origins bedevils such revisionism. Gaylyn Studlar's investigation of female spectators and the male Hollywood star of the 1920s and 1930s is carefully anchored in material history as well as contemporary speculation. We are also well-served by authors known to the field of visual anthropology, via a beautiful summary essay by David MacDougall on subjectivity in ethnographic film and a comprehensive account of Australian indigenous media from Faye Ginsburg. All of these papers show some awareness of the necessity for a match of modesty and ambition in theorizing/detailing the screen and what we might call its distributional poetics: how texts are made and remade in discourse as they move through space and time (See Ruthrof (1992) and McHoul and O'Regan (1992) on this point).

Against that sophistication, other means of screen analysis exist that are familiar to us all: take an audiovisual text, beat it to anthropomorphic death with a blunt hermeneutic, and effortlessly extrapolate from this (unargued-for) selection of text and instrument, transforming both from one watcher's syntagmatic organization to an overarching theoretical and social contour and legitimacy. A little too much of this activity is in evidence elsewhere in *Fields of Vision*, along with some academic amnesia. Several chapters abjure modernity whilst embracing modernism; quite an achievement, really. Leslie Devereaux's three papers read like André Bazin and Harold Lasswell go boating with Mary Daly, with bizarre consequences. Devereaux seems to be saying that there is an ontology to the mechanically, and now electronically, reproduced image that inevitably attracts realist/reflectionist protocols of reading from audiences. The fractured narrative alone can produce appropriately complicated and varied responses from its readers. A similar point is made by George Marcus in his chapter. Frankly, after decades of work devoted to pointing out the difficulty of this position, it is surprising to read such shibboleths trotted out. The profound constructedness of this image, playfully noted in the form of metatextual music-video clips or native Brazilian screen production, and the wondrously perverse decodings and recordings of romance fiction and *Star Trek* zines by feminists, should have put this kind of observation into the nineteenth century, where it belongs. The fact is that the supposedly simple-minded output of popular culture receives a huge variety of readings, whereas the fluid, difficult modernist text is *conventionally* decoded: modernism is monumentally monological in this sense. *Everybody* hears the enunciating voice and nods knowingly at the fractured story-line's dissolution of language from its referent: yawn (on this point, see Felski 1989). Ironically, Devereaux's later contributions fetishize experience, while valorizing the films of Laura Mulvey and Gillian Leahy, important works precisely because they foreground the constitution and mediation of the personal via the load of theory and culture. Yet Devereaux sets up Manichean divides between the good (modernist but anti-modern, fluid, and female) and the ungood (non-modernist but modern, sharp, and male). After ten years of complex feminist and postcolonial theorizations and reappropriations of modernity, the human sciences, and rationality, this binary is unstable.

When Devereaux ventures into discussion of the need for cultural policy, she fails to engage, once more, with debates in the field from the last two decades, most notably in Australia via the emergence of cultural policy studies since 1987. And her attempt to stitch the varied contributions of the volume together under the rubric of Bakhtin fails, not only because his work has no relevance citationally or intellectually to most of what follows, but because she does not engage with key work already done under the sign of the carnivalesque, most notably Robert Stam's reworking of dialogism into a screen framework. Coeditor Roger Hillman's discussion of sound and narrative in cinema also appears unaware of a complex and subtle history of relevant writing inside cinema studies.

The editors' casual essayism is replicated in chapters by Paul Willemen and Susan Demody. Willemen's series of assertions about multiculturalism, the screen, and Australia could only come from a Northern Hemisphere visitor whose self-confidence was in inverse proportion to his knowledge. We are told, without any examples, about the deficiencies of a number of disciplines, including the supposed absence of any comparative cinema studies (where is his engagement with Australian work?), and a related 'cultural apartheid' generated by multicultural policies (none of which are named, investigated, or explained). In classic social-theory terms, Willemen is a primordialist on ethnicity, hearkening back to the happy, imagined world of pre-liberal knowledge (a world that no one goes back to once having escaped it). It's a tired line, and one rarely offered by anyone who is not European and white. He goes on to align the huge internal generic differences of national cinemas with the nation-binding cultural statements of governments, buying—without any argument of doing so—the universalist rhetoric of the state as a means of deciphering the diffuse products of a differentiated industry. Throughout, he does not refer to a single film or recognizable film theory. The Demody chapter is at pains to emphasize the subjectivity of its author, returning again and again to how dangerous this is supposed to be. Yet personalization is a well-established trope in academia, along with its generic claims to risk-taking. These moves are part of a long textual tradition of self-formation via writings and teachings that take the confessing model professor as their ethical anchor and exemplar (Hunter 1988). By tying every assertion to the character of the author, any disagreement becomes personal: the integrity of the

writer is questioned, not their ideas. It's a very practiced way of avoiding criticism by identifying with one's material. In both chapters, the *ethos* of the aesthetic critic is its own guarantor of relevance. The outcome is a mess.

I found myself troubled as I read these sections of the book. For a volume born at the deep privilege of the Australian National University, it is startling to see anthropologists and humanities people "discovering" the screen, while academics at less powerful Australian colleges have been producing influential articles and books on the topics for a decade and a half. Perhaps the most surprising weakness of the collection is its failure to attend to the wealth of astringent, theoretically informed, politically powerful work of Australian screen and cultural studies. Just for the record, I append a list naming a handful of relevant authors, lest this book be regarded as, in some bizarre way, representative of the field in that country (or anywhere else).¹

All that said, as a first attempt at a task worth doing, *Fields of Vision* is ultimately worth it, thanks to five or six contributions that carefully trace the careers of texts and institutions, drawing from a varied sewing-kit of theory and history to do so. For any edited collection, that's not a bad proportion. I learnt much from it: about the subject matter of some important topics, but also about the need for screen cultural studies to stand up and shout louder about our academic standing and achievement to this point. I'm happy to send the ANU library system a reading list.

NOTES

1. A small checklist that could be made by anybody who had opened a screen studies or cultural theory journal or scanned bookshelves at some point in the last fifteen years would include: Ina Bertrand, Geoffrey Batchen, Leslie Stern, John Tulloch, Zoë Sofoulis, Mudrooroo Nyoongah, Bob Hodge, Gunther Kress, Noel King, Albert Moran, Tom O'Regan, Elizabeth Jacka, Jon Stratton, Stuart Cunningham, Ien Ang, Ross Gibson, Meaghan Morris, John Hartley, and countless others.

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Hollywood: Mecca of the Movies

Blaise Cendrars

Translated and with an introduction
by Garrett White. Berkeley: University of
California Press, 1995. liv + 197 pp.

No One Knows Their Names:

Screenwriters in Hollywood

Jorja Prover

Bowling Green (Ohio): Bowling Green State
University Popular Press, 1994. 170 pp.

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In February 1936, Blaise Cendrars spent two weeks in Hollywood, collecting material for a series of articles which appeared in *Paris-Soir*. Reworked as a book, *Hollywood, La Mecque du Cinéma* has been translated by Garrett White, and it now appears in this handsome edition, embellished with drawings by Jean Guérin, Cendrars' Hollywood friend ("in whose company I drank day and night" [p. 2]).

Cendrars' status as a celebrity journalist grew out of his legendary career as a world roamer, poet and novelist. Acclaimed by Apollinaire, John Dos Passos and Henry Miller, widely published and translated, Cendrars was a perennial outsider. Swiss by birth, he was constantly leaving Paris, his adopted city, for Russia, China, New York, Brazil, or the South of France. Knocking about the world, Cendrars devoted himself to discovery, of the world at large and of himself. Thus, according to his biographer, Jay Bohner, the common notion of Cendrars as the world's greatest liar, or as the sort of adventurer against whom Lévi-Strauss lashed out in *Tristes Tropiques*, is insufficient. It may even be possible that in *Hollywood: Mecca of the Movies* we have an early work of postmodernism, in which Cendrars attempted to capture "a vision of the mind" without taking notes or photographs. For "writing is neither a lie, nor a dream, but reality, and perhaps all we may ever know of the real" (pp. 64-65).

As White recounts in his introduction, Cendrars was present at the creation of avant-garde cinema. For the "Return of the Dead" sequence of Abel Gance's *J'Accuse*, Cendrars recruited a cast of wounded veterans, and appeared alongside them with bandages trailing from his stump; he had in fact lost his right arm in