especially since Gomery pays particular heed to movers and shakers like Sam Katz (of Balaban & Katz, then of the Publix theater chain) and Garth Drabinsky (co-founder of Cineplex Odeon). This part of Shared Pleasures also points toward several knotty questions that lie at or beyond the periphery of Gomery’s vision: the way theaters (especially in small towns and rural areas) could offer a “localized” experience of the movies; the extent to which theater design and management policies affected the reception of movies; and the degree of influence wielded by exhibitors on the production as well as the distribution of film in the United States.

Part II of Shared Pleasures re-views the history of movie presentation from a decidedly new and extremely important vantage point: specialized or “niche” theaters that by definition challenge the notion of a monolithic mass audience. X-rated houses and rural drive-ins are not covered here, but Gomery provides a good introduction to the range of ethnic and foreign language theaters that have prospered in the United States. He pays even more attention to the development and demise of art houses, suggesting, for example, that such theaters in New York City and elsewhere helped bring about changes in censorship policy. This section of Shared Pleasures, coupled with David Bordwell’s analysis of “art-cinema narration” in Narration in the Fiction Film, goes a long way toward making sense of the art film and its reception and influence in the United States.

Under the rubric of “alternative operations” also belongs, for Gomery, those theaters operated for (and sometimes by) African Americans. Jim Crow practices, desegregation efforts, and the possibility of a truly “alternative” moviegoing experience for African Americans are too often overlooked in textbook accounts of film exhibition. To Gomery’s credit, he brings these topics to the fore, though here, as throughout Shared Pleasures, there is very little that might be called ideological or cultural analysis of movie exhibition. He is satisfied with articulating a “historical overview” (xviii)—a legitimate goal and, it seems to me, an essential foundation for speculations focused more specifically on the ideological import of the movies and the experience of moviegoing.

Similarly, when Gomery moves to the third part of Shared Pleasures, which focuses on “technological transformations,” he examines the process of “invention, innovation, and diffusion” (xxi) without taking up the ideological/psychoanalytic significance of the basic cinematic apparatus and the aesthetic ramifications of technological changes. As would be expected, given Gomery’s previous research, Shared Pleasures includes particularly cogent discussions of sound, wide-screen processes, color, and the presentation of movies on television. One of his stated goals is to “blur the usual distinction made between film studies and television studies” (xxi)—not in terms of interpretive strategies but in terms of business history. And here, too, Gomery succeeds, offering a convincing case that “the major Hollywood companies were the big winners in the world of the new television technologies” (295). What this victory might mean socially, culturally, and aesthetically for movioers and moviemakers is another question. To Gomery’s credit, Shared Pleasures puts us in a position to be able to ask that and a host of other important questions about movie presentation in the United States.

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Stardom
Industry of Desire

Making Visible the Invisible
An Anthology of Original Essays on Film Acting

Traditionally a staple of fanzines and television talk shows, the discussion of movie acting and Hollywood stardom has begun to move into the realm of academic discourse. The subject has been given a new depth in Richard Dyer’s groundbreaking studies and in James Naremore’s recent Acting in the Cinema. The two collections under review here amply demonstrate that the topic of film performance and its cultural meanings lends itself to serious intellectual inquiry, but they also suggest some of the limitations currently holding back this provocative area of scholarship.

Stardom is weighted toward poststructuralist theory on the one hand and empirical sociological studies on the other, while many of the essays in Making Visible the Invisible rely on traditional New-Critical readings of performance, often using frame enlargements to good advantage as evidence. Both books include essays that explicate major theoretical issues which they apply to acting and stardom in illuminating ways. Especially note-
worthy examples in Gledhill include Jackie Stacey’s consideration of identification and the discussions of individualism by Richard Dyer and by Gledhill herself. Zucker’s volume offers Angela Dalle Vacche’s explication of Althusserian historiography, Bart Testa’s comments on point of view, Roberta Pearson’s application of semiotic theory to performance, and Thomas Waugh’s remarks on collaboration in documentary.

As part of her volume’s focus on empirical data, Gledhill has provided essays containing useful information on the phenomenon of stardom: Thomas Harris on the Hollywood publicity machine, Charles Eckert, Charlotte Herzog, and Jane Gaines on techniques of linking stars to consumer goods, and Janet Staiger and Richard deCordova on the circumstances surrounding the emergence of movie stars as a cultural phenomenon in the early years of the century. Gledhill is also careful to include material on minority issues and on television performance.

Each collection betrays telling weaknesses as well as strengths. Zucker’s volume repeatedly raises the problem of defining authorship. All films are, more or less, group endeavors, and the contributions of actors as opposed to directors, writers, cinematographers, costumers, makeup people, coaches, and the rest are notoriously difficult to isolate. Many of the pieces Zucker includes (for example, Falsetto, Tomlinson, Testa, Zucker, and Larue) come out of the auteur tradition and focus their arguments around inconclusive efforts to disentangle acting from directing in the filmic texts they explore. Predictably, the directors usually come out ahead.

The essays in the Gledhill volume, informed for the most part by a poststructuralist skepticism about the validity of concepts of subjectivity and agency, tend to deal with stardom as a phenomenon related to issues of spectatorship rather than authorship. Spectatorship raises its own problems, which are just beginning to be explored in cinema studies. Departing from the universalized Mulveyan psychoanalytic paradigm, many of these essays attempt to render more particularized portraits of audiences and their relation to works. To this end Jackie Stacey discusses fan letters she has solicited, Tessa Perkins relies on reviews from the popular press, Andrea Weiss draws on oral histories, and Karen Alexander turns to autobiographical reminiscences. These studies pose a number of questions. Who or what does such evidence represent? And how is it to be interpreted? None of these essays is able to provide wholly satisfactory resolutions to these issues. Most disappointingly, this kind of approach tends to produce readings of star texts and their audiences which are comparatively simple, even self-evident. To be sure, this charge is commonly leveled by humanities scholars against all empirically based social-science analy-

sis, and the social scientists respond that dullness is the price of certainty. But cinema scholars are accustomed to more complexity in their encounters with textual interpretation than the sociological method may be able to deliver.

What is most disturbing in both of these anthologies, however, is not their inability to position performers as authors or to present a compelling depiction of engagement of specific audiences with the movies they watch; rather it is their failure to make themselves part of an ongoing scholarly enterprise. Neither editor supplies the kind of substantial introduction which could locate the essays she has selected within a history of the subject and past treatments of it. Zucker even neglects to include a bibliography. Individual essays not only do not refer to one another, they rarely allude to other work in the field (admirable exceptions include Barry King’s “Articulating Stardom” and Thomas Waugh’s piece on documentary). Balázs, Pudovkin, and Morin have produced acknowledged classics in this area, yet these works still await thoughtful published commentary. Many contributors to both of these new volumes also systematically ignore significant published work dealing with the stars, directors, or specific issues they treat. One senses a special difficulty with the Zucker anthology, which has all the signs of a collection delayed somewhere for many years. Nineteen eighty-five is the most recent date cited in most of the essays; some deal with even older sources, with 1981 the most recent citation for Jerome Delameter, 1980 for Mario Falsetto, and 1977 for Noël Carroll. In a volume that purports to contain original essays rather than reprints, such signs of age nullify any claim it may have to be a showcase for cutting-edge thinking. If scholarship is concerned with building a body of knowledge, many of the essays in both of these volumes would be better considered as journalism, some of them out-of-date journalism at that. To bring the discussion of acting and stardom out of the realm of fanzine culture, we need to do better than this.

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