Fischer, Lucy (ed.). *Imitation of Life: Douglas Sirk, director*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1991. $37.00 cloth; $14.00 paper. Another entry in the Rutgers Films in Print series of continuity scripts. The series does not publish the “shooting” scripts but instead an accurate description of the completed film. Though I don’t understand why Rutgers doesn’t publish the historically more interesting record of the actual script—we do, after all, have the film itself as a record of what was shot—there is little else to fault in these 346 pages of rich material. Editor Lucy Fischer offers a fine introductory essay, a biographical sketch of Sirk, and a variety of reviews: there are classic essays on Sirk by Jon Haliday, Fassbinder, Fred Camper, and Paul Willemen as well as newer essays by Marina Heung and Sandy Flitterman-Lewis. Essays by Richard Dyer and Charles Affron on star acting add a great deal to the collection. (Dyer’s 1977 *Movie* article, “Four Films by Lana Turner,” is especially valuable for its explanation of the peculiar appeal of that icy cold star.) But the real coup of the book is Fischer’s inclusion of several segments of Fannie Hurst’s 1933 novel on which both films were based and two short essays, one by Fannie Hurst about Zora Neale Hurston, and one by Hurston about Hurst. Though the lively Hurston was no model for the long-suffering character of the black maid Annie, she was once Hurst’s secretary and chauffeur. The brief glimpse into the dynamics of the friendship between the fashionable, wealthy, older white woman writer and her eccentric, poor, young black employee, who we know by now to have been the much more interesting writer, is fascinating. I wish I could see that movie!

LINDA WILLIAMS

Furmanek, Bob, and Ron Palumbo. *Abbott & Costello in Hollywood*. New York: Perigee Books, 1991. $16.95. At this writer’s count, we have here the fifth book devoted to Abbott and Costello. It is also the definitive study. This film-by-film account of the duo’s work includes, for each film, background information on the script and production, capsule bios on the principal supporting players, deletions and additions that occurred prior to release, contemporary reviews from several sources, and a postscript which adds still more new information not published in any of the previous studies. Problems? Only the fact that the many wonderful photos used to illustrate *Abbott & Costello in Hollywood* are reduced to postage-stamp size, which emphasizes the text but makes it hard to see such interesting pix as Bud and Lou attending the premiere of *Abbott and Costello Meet The Invisible Man* with Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis (Lewis also writes the book’s Introduction). The text was given the cooperation and full approval of the Abbott and Costello children (who were reportedly dismayed by most of the previous studies).

JAMES L. NEIBAUR

Gomery, Douglas. *Movie History: A Survey*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1990. $33.75. Generally a textbook for an introductory college-level film course, this study is significant in that it is divided into chronological sections so that students can better understand film’s evolutionary process. The 14 chapters—beginning with the early experiments of Edison and Lumière and concluding with an epilogue examining contemporary film history—are presented in three sections: The Silent Cinema (1895–1927), The Hollywood Studio Era (1928–1950), and The Television Era (1951–1975). While there is an emphasis on the American cinema, important European films are examined as alternatives to Hollywood in the pre-W.W. II, post-W.W. II, and contemporary eras. This book eschews the overly academic prose that causes so many potentially good film texts to appear stilted, but there are aspects of the cinema that seemed glossed over. For instance, when discussing film genres during the golden age of moviemaking, each genre is given an average of about three pages, with no films being adequately analyzed. But on the plus side, the author is among the few to examine the business end of Hollywood, with much detail on the studio system, film distribution, and the impact television had on the movies.

J. L. N.