is both thrilling and frustrating to learn about hundreds upon hundreds of obscure films that are impossible to see outside Japan, or even within. In guiding our attention beyond the canon, both books are valuable, if imperfect, tools for research into Japanese cinema.

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**Book Notes**

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Barnard, Timothy, and Peter Rist, eds. *South American Cinema: A Critical Filmography, 1915-1994*. New York: Garland, 1996. $64.00. In this collection of highly synthetic essays on individual films made in the Southern Hemisphere, Canadian Tim Barnard and British-born Peter Rist, with the assistance of 19 additional contributors from across the Americas, reconfigure the "genre" of filmography to constitute an "imaginary cinematheque" that includes several "treasures [that] cannot be seen on celluloid." This inclusion of long-lost works suggests that the historical impulse is as important as the critical one in this ambitious, original, and eminently readable, if idiosyncratic, reference work. Emphasis lies on recent production: 108 out of 139 titles were produced after 1955. With 49 titles, the Brazilian selection is the largest, followed by Argentina (33 titles), Venezuela (13 titles), Chile and Colombia (11 titles each), Peru (10 titles), Bolivia (8 titles), and Ecuador and Paraguay (2 titles each). Both commercial and oppositional works are included, the occasional documentary or animated feature alongside the predominantly fictional majority, the occasional silent alongside a majority of "talkies," the occasional Super-8 production alongside a majority of works shot in 35 millimeter. The volume is organized alphabetically by country and chronologically within each section. Most of the essays situate the film under discussion in its specific production context, within its director's career trajectory, and in terms of national events as well as national film history. Most comment perceptively on cinematic style; some incorporate comments from the director.

Julianne Burton-Carvajal

Palmer, Bill, Karen Palmer, and Ric Meyers, eds. *The Encyclopedia of Martial Arts Movies*. Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1995. $69.95. As a result of developing interest in Hong Kong Cinema and the migration of directors such as John Woo and Ringo Lam to Hollywood, reference works providing reliable information for investigating historical and contemporary films are urgently needed. Unfortunately, this over-priced book is a huge disappointment. The editors list some 3,281 films from Hong Kong, America, and Japan. They have decided to cover a very broad field according to what they understand as martial arts films. Diligent readers may excavate some interesting information to conduct further investigations from the index alone—assuming it is correct. But the flawed construction and execution of this book raise grave doubts. It is full of numerous errors, omissions, and dubious methodology. Indeed, the editors do not appear to have any logical methodology whatsoever. Although they attempt an over-comprehensive listing of martial arts movies, they include many films which have no connection with the genre whatsoever. Peculiar entries include Melville's *Le Samourai*, the boxing movie *Diggstown, Riverbend*, and the classic Kurosawa films such as *Rashomon*, *Throne of Blood*, *Red Beard, Ran*, and *The Shadow Warrior*. Frank Sinatra's "karate" prowess in *The Manchurian Candidate* leads to that film's inclusion as well. And readers will be surprised to learn that John Woo is a Korean immigrant (21) who directed *Hard Boiled* in 1983 (405) as well as *Once a Thief* 2 (257), for instance, and that Leslie Cheung (according to the *Aces Go Places* synopsis) is female. Reader beware—approach with caution!

Tony Williams

Shindler, Colin. *Hollywood in Crisis: Cinema and American Society 1929-1939*. London: Routledge, 1996. $75.00 cloth; $24.99 paper. In the opening of this latest entry in Routledge's Cinema and Society series, Colin Shindler explains that "the basic research for this book was originally conducted as part of a doctoral thesis awarded by the University of Cambridge in 1974" (x). The history of the project, then, is precisely its major problem; *Hollywood in Crisis* reads like a book that might have been written 25 years ago, before the work of Sklar, Jowett, Balio, and others helped turn film history into a serious discipline that posed important methodological questions about the relations between the cinema and other institutions. Shindler attempts to construct a "context" for Depression-era films, and then looks for "reflections" of that context in the films themselves. He tells his history of the 1930s through a scattershot of citations from materials from the period (trade magazines and anti-Roosevelt tracts, for example), but never explains how this sheds light on the De-