
Currie K. Thompson. *Picturing Argentina: Myths, Movies, and the Peronist Vision*. Amherst, New York: Cambria, 2014. 250p.

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Currie Thompson explores the relationship between what is imaginary versus what is real in *Picturing Argentina*. Thompson, a professor of Spanish at Ghettyburg College, reflects on the perception of realistic or fictional images considered norm within Argentine film. The time period focuses on movies made during *primer peronismo*, which includes Juan Domingo Perón's governing junta (1943-1945) through his first two terms as Argentine President (1946-1955).

Thompson employs Roland Barthes's 'prism of *myth*' theory, which stresses that communication builds on previous chains of meaning depicted through visual means such as photography, *cinema*, sport, and publicity. Myths portrayed as inherent, natural ways of behavior teach the public/audience social mores of comportment.

Argentine cinema created during *primer peronismo* characterizes the clash between evolution, stasis, change, and continuity. *Picturing Argentina* provides examples regarding treatment of gender in which some gender myths are subverted through humor and staging of admirable strong women in traditionally male professions. The gender issue is further developed in movies about maternity, revealing the sacrifices of mothers for their children. Constructs of masculinity analyze the role of the father as well as the formation of boys into men, thus equating masculinity with competition whether through sports or soldiering.

Additionally Thompson addresses stereotypical (non)understanding of race, ethnicity, immigration, and adaptation of 'the other' into Argentine life. He posits culpability and innocence in police/detective films which also praise the regime and thus Perón's governance. Finally, he mentions filmmaker's critiques of Argentine society which try to debunk Argentina as myth and present a realistic picture of Argentina.

E. R. Truitt. *Medieval Robots: Mechanism, Magic, Nature, and Art*. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 2015. 255p.

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We commonly assume that robots and similar mechanical gadgets are the products of the modern world and represent the latest technology. However, already in antiquity and throughout the Middle Ages, poets and writers report a variety of mechanical devices that appear to be very similar to modern robots, as E. R. Truitt discusses in her monograph, taking us on a *tour de force* of automata, either produced by particularly gifted craftsmen in Europe or imported from the Middle East as valuable gifts for high-ranking individuals. But we know of references to such automata already in Greek antiquity and have the famous Attikythera Mechanism (ca. 80 B.C.E.) discovered at the beginning of the twentieth century. In the early ninth century Harun al-Rashid, the caliph of Baghdad, sent an elaborate water clock to Charlemagne as a most precious gift, and later centuries witnessed similar gadgets, reported in a wide variety of texts. As much as those robots and instruments seem rather outlandish, we can agree with Truitt