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Briefly Noted

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Garth Jowett and James M. Linton. *Movies as Mass Communication. Volume 4, The Sage CommText Series.* Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1980. 149 pp. \$14.00 (paper).

New textbooks are often touted with the claim that they contain a fresh perspective and/or fill a pressing need. Here, for once, is a textbook for which the claim would be fully justified. In its attempt to extend to movies the approaches of mass communications scholarship, the book is certainly a novelty, and there can be no doubt that our understanding both of movies and of mass communications had been hampered by the lack, up to now, of this kind of attempt. Within the broad framework of a mass communications approach, the book offers a synthesis of findings and ideas about several aspects of the relationship between movies, their audiences, and the broader society. There is excellent coverage of such topics as the economics and organization of the film industry, the characteristics of the movie audience, the psychology of viewing, the social effects and cultural role of movies, and the future of the medium. On each of these (and several other) topics, the authors provide comprehensive and well-organized summaries of existing knowledge, but they also contribute many valuable new ideas of their own. For these reasons and for the exceptional clarity of the authors' writing style, the book is admirably suited to classroom use. More generally, through this book Jowett and Linton have made an outstanding contribution to the study of the relationship between a visual medium and its social context.

Marc Gaede, photographer, and Marnie Gaede, ed. *Camera, Spade, and Pen: An Inside View of Southwestern Archaeology.* Tucson: The University of Arizona Press. 160 pp., ill. \$25.00.

A series of photographs of the major archaeological sites in the Southwest taken by Marc Gaede, with texts by leading archaeologists describing the sites and their importance.

W. J. T. Mitchell, ed. *The Language of Images.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980. 307 pp. \$6.95 (paper).

This useful collection of fourteen essays, most of which appeared originally in *Critical Inquiry*, is loosely organized around the subject of the relationship between language and images. A few of the essays, as well as the author's excellent introduction, offer general theoretical perspectives on this subject. Most of them, however, are more specific in their focus, dealing either with painting, film, etc., as languages or with verbal language as a vehicle for imagery. There are several worthwhile contributions here, among them a previously unpublished piece by Gombrich and a superb essay by Leo Steinberg.

Judith Trojan. *American Family Life Films.* Metuchen, N.J.: The Scarecrow Press, Inc. 508 pp., ill. \$25.00.

An annotated filmography of over 2000 films dealing with the family. A good source book for film programmers, teachers, and scholars.

Gerald Mast, ed. *The Movies in Our Midst.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982. 766 pp. \$37.50.

Subtitled "Documents in the Cultural History of Film in America," this massive collection covers the years 1882-1977, although not always with equal attention (the last 25 years receive about 100 pages, but so do the 1930s, and the years 1900-1927 cover about 200 pages). The selections focus primarily on technical, economic, social, and cultural rather than aesthetic issues. Major themes highlighted in the documents are the economics of the film industry, film censorship, film content as social propaganda, and the influence of film content and Hollywood mythology on American culture. The book contains many important primary documents (the Hollywood Production Code, Supreme Court decisions, and congressional hearings testimony) as well as descriptive and analytic work from each decade. While no collection, even of this length, can ever be exhaustive, Mast can be thanked for an impressive and valuable achievement (if on the expensive side).