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African Film: Re-Imagining a Continent

Josef Gugler

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African Film: Re-Imagining a Continent Josef Gugler
The directors and films studied here set out to re-image Africa - and offer Western viewers the opportunity to re-imagine the continent and its people. Two additional, very successful films on Africa, one from Hollywood, the other from apartheid South Africa, serve to highlight African directors' altogether different perspectives. The interpretation considers the financial and technical difficulties of African film production, the intended audiences, the constraints on distribution, and critical reception. The films featured cover a wide range of topics, from new perspectives on Africa prior to the intrusion of the West, to the struggle against colonialism and white minority rule, to post-colonial issues of authoritarian rule, neo-colonialism, corruption, inequality and the condition of the peasantry, with the position of women a recurrent theme. The discussions are accompanied by reproductions of posters, of photos of the directors during the shooting, and film frames illustrating key elements in the analysis. Introductions to the thematic topics provide the historical, cultural, political, and economic context of the films. Four of the films are based on novels, two more on a play or an epic, and the transformation involved in bringing the written page, or the griot's recitation, to the screen receives special attention. Throughout, the discussion extends to other African films and literary works. North America: Indiana U Press

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