A History of the French New Wave Cinema

By Richard Neupert
Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2002. ISBN 0-299-18164-2. 78 illustrations, xxix + 342 pp. £20.50 (pbk)

A review by Raymond J. Haberski, Jr., Marian College, USA

In a recent article for the *New Yorker*, Louis Menand contends that the French New Wave saved Hollywood by inspiring a dramatic change in film style. Menand not surprisingly points to the influence of François Truffaut and Jean-Luc Godard as the busy bees who pollinated the flower of American film helping to create what has come to be known as "New Hollywood." The first blossom was the movie, *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967), an obvious homage to the French New Wave's frank, off-beat approach to sex, violence, and contemporary mores. While Menand identifies an exciting moment in film history, his article inadvertently advances a notion that Richard Neupert seeks to contain -- namely that the French New Wave can be reduced to the energy of the twin cine-rebels Truffaut and Godard. Rather, the *nouvelle vague* was a rich, expansive movement full of contradictions that responded as much to the past of French film history as to the immediate culture surrounding filmgoers. Neupert's book, of course, is not a rejoinder to Menand's article; though it does serve as an excellent antidote to the frequent reduction of the New Wave to Truffaut and Godard. For that reason alone, Neupert's work is worth reading and consulting.

Neupert situates the familiar aspects of New Wave within the context of an era that I suspect few cinephiles really understand. In fact, Neupert devotes nearly half his book to subjects other than the usual suspects. Thus, readers get a briskly discussed account of post-World War II France, its political climate, literary rebellions, economic fluctuations, crises of national confidence, and the rise of a "culture of complaint" that gave birth to the logic adopted by the purveyors of a new French cinema. "The reason that a 'wave' rather than simply a new cohort of directors came upon the scene around 1960 is not just a matter of strong personalities," Neupert argues. "It is the result of an unusual set of circumstances that enabled a dynamic group of young director to exploit a wide range of conditions that opened up incredible opportunities for inexpensive filmmaking in Paris" (xxvi). As Neupert suggests, a myriad of trends existed before Truffaut and Godard wrote a review or shot a film that helped create the atmosphere for an alternative vision to filmmaking, including, as he writes, "a real sense of urgency to rebuild every facet of French life, from constructing more electric power plants to exporting more perfume" (5). The sense that France was both falling apart and being created anew made the early postwar period a time of anxiety and opportunity. As typically happens in such situations, the younger generation made leaps not possible in more conservative times. A cartoon Neupert includes in his book nicely illustrates the impending clash between generations: a pregnant woman is pictured with her baby inside her belly kicking an elderly gentleman who stands in her way. He explains: "it was a combination of new, less expensive filming techniques, stories set in the streets that could appeal to young audiences, and new portable production equipment that allowed the New Wave to take off" (39).

Even when Neupert turns to discussing directors he resists beginning with the critics at *Cahiers du cinéma* who turned criticism into a manifesto for producing new pictures. Instead he introduces filmmakers -- Alexandre Astruc, Agnès Varda, Jean-Pierre Melville, Roger Vadim, and Louis Malle -- who clearly influenced and prepared the way for the New Wave directors. This is a smart decision because Neupert is able to illustrate the significance of directors and their movies that typically get a few pages rather than chapters and, moreover, by the time we come upon the New Wave it is clear that it did not emerge out of the blue. Neupert provides lively and insightful readings of significant films that we might expect in a study of the New Wave. But he also goes to suitable lengths to explain how the movies were received at the time, rather than how a film scholar views them forty years hence. Neupert also places well-known details in new light. For example, we get a new interpretation of Truffaut's famous manifesto, "A Certain Tendency of the French Cinema" -- it was unusual for *Cahiers* to publish such a head-on attack of films and filmmakers. And when he does move on to discussing the big names of the New Wave his analysis of films and their significance are quite expert without being dry and academic.

He concludes with a brief but straight-forward affirmation of the traditional view of the New Wave. After reviewing the emergence of the New Wave within the rich intellectual and cinematic context of the era, Neupert admits that he is convinced that the big three -- Claude Charbol, Truffaut, and Godard -- best represent what was most essential to the New Wave. "Their critical audacity, avowed debt to great auteurs from both distant and recent film history, their marketing savvy, technical innovation, and narrative experimentation all seemed to set these fellows apart from their peers of 1960" (300). And yet, as satisfying as that conclusion might seem, I was left thinking that the New Wave was less unique and pivotal because of what I had learned from Neupert's book about other directors who had, perhaps to a lesser degree, introduced new techniques and filmmaking themes that the New Wave would later advance. And while the New Wave undoubtedly dominated the public face of French cinema, there is also much to be said regarding similar trends in other national cinemas. Thus, if there is a weakness in Neupert's book it is the slightly too brief conclusion. But, as Louis Menand shows, work is being done on assessing the legacy of the French New Wave. To Neupert's credit he has made certain that the roots of the New Wave will not be overlooked.

Aftershocks: The End of Style Culture

By Steve Beard
London: Wallflower Press, 2002. ISBN 1-903364-24-8. xviii + 180 pp. £10.99 (pbk)

A review by Neil Schiller, Liverpool Hope University College, UK

Steve Beard is a journalist and, judging by the foreword to this volume by his friend Paul Dave, a self-styled "intellectual". What this work comprises is essentially a selection of the pieces written by Beard throughout the nineties for style magazines such as *i-D*, *Sight and Sound* and *Arena* as well as segments of an aborted thesis and other cultural hypotheses. The fractured vision of an informed cultural commentator perhaps, or the frantic notes of an essayist adrift on a vast sea of popular culture and grasping at pieces of debris that float by.

The range of the essays in *Aftershocks* is relatively impressive: from interviews with David Cronenberg to Brian Eno; from the common movie Zombie as a metaphor of creeping consumerism in post-Ford America to the middle-class aesthetic in English literature. And in sections the work is astoundingly insightful. In an essay entitled "Moral Panics", for instance, Beard is at pains to stress the tenable link between drug phobias and more deeply rooted social anxieties -- the emergence of different subcultures and the threat they seem to pose to the social majority. He stakes out and supports his theory of a rational programme of "objectification, vilification, legislation" (37) in American and English politics right through from the nineteenth century, with the promoted association of Chinese immigrants to opium during "the economic downturn of the 1870s" (37) and the scapegoating of black jazz musicians for spreading marijuana usage into white sections of society. In essence the drugs become emblematic of a much more deeply seated paranoia, sometimes racial but always revolving around the retention of civil order in line with existing power structures. So real anxieties about the competition for work between white and Chinese labour, or the fusion of black and white culture taking place in metropolitan centres during the fifties, or the alternative social vision of the student population in the sixties. Drugs, Beard argues, are not the real issue in any of these instances but rather the tagline for a vague uneasiness about those who refuse to conform to the conservative social majorities who retain and wield power. Also interesting to note in this instance is the fact that the essay was intended for *Observer Life* magazine in 1994 and was killed before publication. Presumably this was more a result of the article's controversial argument than its rather tepid ending: "The drugs debate isn't over yet" (40).

Other highlights, as indicated, include an interview with James Kelman from 1991 where the Scottish author decries the middle-class dominance of English literature and implies that the way out of this dearth is to "interfere…with standard English literary form", to utilise narrative in a "political" manner and break down the old stifling conventions (31). So too Beard's assertion that "Romero's zombies" are indicative of a "surplus human capacity processed through the system as grotesque 'social waste'" (76). He even makes a convincing argument about the death of the Internet in an article from *Arena* in 1996. "The Information Superhighway", he claims, "is being built over the old trackways of the Internet. Federal

agents, corporate bagmen and suburban homesteaders are moving in" (55). The new frontier, the vast abundance of opportunity for hackers and liberators of data for the masses is giving way to constant surveillance and online shopping. The "electronic outlaws" are either switching sides or being tracked down and Romero's zombies are moving in with their asinine searches for holiday destinations and porn sites.

The main problem with *Aftershocks* is that these pearls of cultural wisdom, these defiant soundbites are too few and far between. Vast tracts of the book are taken up by rather oblique interviews or abstract articles that fail to stand up outside of the context of their original publications as substantial cultural critiques. The closing section of the book, the last forty pages almost, is taken up by sections of Beard's aborted thesis on "Video Zombies, Carnival Clowns, Demobilizing the Masses". Again, not only is this an unfinished fragment, not only does it not stand up as a self-contained piece of theory, but it is also concerned with so specialised a subject as to alienate the casual reader immediately. The first section, for instance, descends into a detailed discussion of the meaning of postmodernism and the different stances taken by Foucalt and Baudrillard which, whilst probably quite appropriate material for a thesis, really jars here with the style and content of the other pieces. And that's essentially what prevents this collection from being a substantial work on Beard's part. The articles as a whole retain the isolation in which they were commissioned and written for their respective publications. There is no cohesion of theme or concept and whilst the soundbite approach is an interesting one, *Aftershocks* is less like an absorbing cultural montage and more a pirate political broadcast interrupted by static.

Ambient Television: Visual Culture and Public Space

By Anna McCarthy
Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001. ISBN 0-8223-2692-2. 316 pp. $19.95 (pbk)

A review by Daniel Chamberlain, University of Southern California, USA

Anna McCarthy's *Ambient Television* analyzes television's integration into our public surroundings -- that is, in bars, malls, waiting rooms, laundromats, and other sites of daily activity. In exploring television's impact on "the sociological terrains of everyday life," McCarthy combines a theoretical analysis of television spectatorship outside of the home with a close reading of specific locations. The result is an insightful account of the cultural implications of television in public spaces as well as an illumination of how non-domestic video monitors address their subjects as consumers. As McCarthy has done a fine job of bringing together her research with the work of industry journalists, media theorists, and cultural studies scholars, this book will be of interest to anyone concerned with the social impacts of television or with the construction of the public sphere in our media-saturated era.

McCarthy begins by dismissing the uncritical thinking that characterizes most "journalistic jeremiads" on the pervasiveness of television, suggesting that a more nuanced and rigorous approach is necessary to appreciate the various ways in which television adapts and integrates itself into our daily lives. She then explodes any conception of early television as a singularity, illustrating how it had very different intentions and impacts depending on where it was found. Not only were television monitors prevalent in 1940s taverns and department stores, but programmers and advertisers tailored their messages to the assumed class and gender compositions of the viewers in each site. While these ground-clearing arguments draw on extensive research into newspaper accounts, merchandising and television trade journals, and photographs of particular locations, *Ambient Television* is livelier when McCarthy personally reads particular spaces in the 1990s. Accompanied by her own photographs and associated sketches, she takes the reader on a tour of the contemporary televisual landscape, including visits to Jersey City bars, Indian restaurants in Manhattan, a NikeTown store in Chicago, and a food court in Bethesda, Maryland. In this focus on everyday public spaces, *Ambient Television* can be thought of as a companion to Lynn Spigel's *Make Room for TV*; just as Spigel explored the impact of television on the domestic realm, McCarthy's book investigates the cultural effects of television in other locations.

These contemporary accounts reveal the explicitly commercial aspects of non-domestic television. As in the earlier era, but with an emphasis on narrower targeting, location drives the perception of audience identity -- the CNN airport network is aimed exclusively toward business travellers, doctors' waiting rooms pitch health products, and postpartum hospital rooms are tuned to the "newborn channel" and its ads for parenting-related gear. The new idea here is not that companies are targeting their advertising (as geographic concerns have long been a staple of demographic marketing) but that this marketing takes place outside of

the home, based on a subject's location in a specific "place." Although this type of place-based advertising exists in the form of billboards and other outdoor elements, the television, because of its privileged position *inside* so many of our daily spaces, holds a greater knowledge for the advertiser. At the same time, our domestic familiarity with television inures us to the heightened commerciality of its public manifestations. In other sections McCarthy provides a similar analysis of the political economy at work in the product demonstration screens at a Bed, Bath, and Beyond store, the promotional programming outside of the Planet Hollywood merchandise store, and the racially-coded advertising in a mall athletic-shoe store.

Delving into the cultural implications of non-domestic television also reveals some interesting social side-effects. For example, watching television in waiting rooms can be understood as a "legitimizing" of an activity normally associated with wasting time. On-screen quizzes are actively "facilitating social interaction while promoting consumption." And familiar screens on planes and in dental offices provide a comforting companion in a potentially traumatic environment. McCarthy is insightful in her readings of these spaces, as she is attentive to the specific spatial arrangements of every location she visits. Although the book's last chapter, with its exploration of the possibility for art and activism in public spaces, feels somewhat tacked on, the overall thrust of the book makes a compelling case for the appreciation of television's powerful impact in our daily environment. With its rigorous approach and detailed arguments *Ambient Television* convincingly makes the case that location matters when considering television: "when television enters a place, whether public or private, whether the home or the sales floor, the bar, or the waiting area, it simultaneously enters the webs of signification and material practice that define each as an environment."

Career Movies: American Business and the Success Mystique

By Jack Boozer
Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2002. ISBN 0-292-70912-9. 292 pp. £14.25 (pbk)

A review by Erica Arthur, University of Nottingham, UK

Career Movies: American Business and the Success Mystique is Jack Boozer's attempt to classify and critique the "business career film" as a specific cinematic genre in its own right. A preliminary exploratory step in filling a gap in film and cultural studies, the purpose of his study, to provide a historical overview of the genre's longevity and its variations between 1945 and 2001, is important even if his findings are not that unexpected. In essence, Boozer argues that the business career film does not offer social solutions to the problems of success but reflects them. The primary dilemma in most of the business films discussed involves a struggle to maintain personal integrity and a meaningful occupational identity in defiance of exploitative corporate capitalism. Boozer identifies two typical conclusions to which these films generally conform: Most common is a negative business outcome despite the protagonist's real commitment to the American success dream; as an alternative, career success fails to bring expected fulfilment.

Defining the parameters of his study/genre, Boozer's stated belief that, in filmic terms, business represents "the dominant career category in its overall cultural and ideological significance," (10) complements his opening announcement that *Career Movies* concerns "American corporate and entrepreneurial business films" (1). Movies about labour or the professions are identified as "subcategories" that will necessarily be excluded in the process of tracing generic boundaries, both because scholars have already attended to them and because they generally "do not demonstrate the same issues found in white-collar business films" (10).

The representative characteristics of the white-collar business film are identified at the outset. Typically, a small business entrepreneur or corporate figure, usually with managerial status, who spends considerable time in offices or business locations, is engaged in a struggle for upward job mobility. Boozer is explicit that it is "the protagonist's endeavour predominantly in the business workplace [that] most often provides this genre's defining characteristic" (11). The first chapter on 1950s "Classical Corporate Executive Film", covering *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit*, *Executive Suite*, *A Woman's World* and *Patterns*, adheres to this criteria as these films can be seen as archetypal examples of the genre and of the reader's expectation of what qualifies as a white-collar business career film. Having set this precedent however, Boozer's chief defining characteristic is surprisingly absent by the end of the book which offers extended analysis of *Pleasantville*, *Wag the Dog* and *The Truman Show* as examples of "televirtuality." With technological developments in mind, a consideration of the recent cycle of Silicon Valley career films (*Antitrust*, *The Pirates of Silicon Valley*, *The First Twenty Million is Always the Hardest*) would surely have been more apposite.

The inclusion of these unexpected films is symptomatic of an approach that is ultimately predicated on a very broad conception of the business film. While imposing generic limits in the introduction and conclusion, Boozer nevertheless breaks with his definition to adapt the genre whenever it suits his purposes. The initial definition is variously overlooked, expanded and contradicted in the intervening sections. This is most pronounced in the chapter on Career Women in which the definition is stretched to include singers (*Annie Hall*), astronauts (*Alien*) and con-artists (*The Grifters*). More spurious still is the inclusion of *Serial Mom* and *The Texas Cheerleading Murdering Mom* in which the "rabid one-upmanship" of these housewife-protagonists seemingly qualifies them for assessment despite the fact that neither actually hold a position in the workforce (79). Given Boozer's claim that since 1944 there has been "approximately as many business films about female as about male entrepreneurs" one wonders why is it necessary to delve into science fiction and suburban satires (50). If the book had been a study of careers in general this would be all very well, but given his genre building objectives the inclusion of these contestable examples, that seem so marginal to the concept of a business career, only serve to compromise the conception of an identifiable genre.

Boozer's consideration of the way that characters in Hollywood business films define themselves and their career success within their given social ideological contexts imbues the detailed and insightful film analyses that compose the book with wider applicability and interest. Through interchanging sociological, psychoanalytical and post-modern critical perspectives he considers class desire, gender and racial identity and the role of communications media, drawing on theorists ranging from Peter Biskind and C. Wright Mills to Raymond Williams and Christopher Lasch to Paul duGray and Jean Baudrillard to assist him. On the whole this makes for a critically well informed account and one that is noteworthy for what it relays about social and economic history as well as film analysis.

Boozer's contextual approach runs into problems in the chapter on 1950s executive dramas, however, as it seemingly leads him to conclude that these films' "insular preoccupation with intracompany rivalry and intrafamily manoeuvring provides a skewed mirroring of actual corporate concerns, but an otherwise accurate facsimile of the blind careerism expected of corporate executives generally" (38). Given his follow up claim that "internal information on corporate operations was not readily accessible to the American public" and, indeed, the notable absence of any such primary evidence in Boozer's own assessment, how is this claim to accuracy legitimated? This suggests that Boozer reads the movies as illustrative of sociological critique. It is true that these films do comply with the presentations depicted by William Whyte and David Riesman but that does not in itself render them an accurate portrait of the corporate organisation, especially as Boozer doesn't question the sociological perspectives he utilises. If the films are being measured against a sociological yardstick of accuracy then Boozer's claim that these films "for the most part glorified the new business hierarchies and their leaders" is problematised still further as Riesman and Whyte offer largely negative accounts. Boozer himself contradicts himself with his later claim in "Huckster Foreplay" (a particularly good chapter) that *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* "reinforces a rather negative perception of the bureaucratic corporate domain and the role of promotions as a reflection of it" (158).

Elsewhere, similar problems occur as Boozer's reading of female career movies as morality tales that reinforce social conventions prompts the conclusion that "the business and career film genre … indicates that women workers in particular have not escaped the burden of being viewed as potentially mothers first, and as long-term committed employees second"

(242). Unfortunately, they do not escape such a burden in Boozer's analysis either. Career is subordinate to motherhood throughout the chapter on career women as Boozer often gets off the point to discuss the demonisation of single mothers' writ large. Whilst his assessment of working mothers is problematic, Boozer is nevertheless to be applauded for keeping gender concerns to the fore. He considers female identity in a variety of career configurations from the entrepreneurial femme fatale to the corporate wife. Equally commendable is his interrogation of family business stories from the often overlooked perspective of immigrant, ethnic and racial minorities. If the book inclines to be too sweeping in its selection of films typifying the business career genre, its inclusiveness in this regard is one of its greatest strengths.

Class Struggle in Hollywood, 1930-1950: Moguls, Mobsters, Stars, Reds, and Trade Unionists

By Gerald Horne
Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2001. ISBN 0-2927-3138-8. 336pp. £14.29 (pbk)

A review by George Lewis, University of Leicester, UK

The end of the Cold War has prompted a number of historians to re-examine the full ramifications of hostilities between the Soviet Union and the United States, both in global and domestic terms. Increasingly, it is becoming apparent that, whilst the vast majority of Americans supported anti-communism as a matter of principle and ideology in foreign policy terms, the domestic Cold War consensus was far more brittle. In what is one of the most telling contributions to this view, Gerald Horne reassesses the treatment of alleged communists, suspected communists, and associated radicals in the heartland of the US film industry.

What Horne convincingly argues is that pervasive Cold War tensions provided an atmosphere in which Red Scare politics were used by Hollywood studio bosses to mask what was, in essence, no more than a labour dispute. What began as a small-scale strike by the Conference of Studio Unions [CSU] in 1945, however, fundamentally changed the way in which films were produced on America's West Coast. The studios retaliated against the CSU by locking out their members, and by casting them as communists. As befitted the atmosphere of the immediate post-war years, a mini Red Scare resulted. What Horne ably demonstrates in this compelling book is that the studio moguls used that Red Scare to mask a wider campaign to crush union strength in their industry, and to seize control of the film production process for themselves. As the author explains, the Hollywood Red Scare was not about communists; rather, it was about labour management, and the neutering of previously powerful union interests.

One of the many ironies pinpointed by Horne is that the Communist Party of the USA [CPUSA] was far from successful in Hollywood, especially among lower paid workers. It was not the carpenters, truck drivers and electricians represented by the CSU who were most likely to harbour communist interests, but the more ephemeral talents of the industry's screenwriters, such as John Howard Lawson. Certainly, CSU leader Herb Sorrell was militantly anti-Soviet. When asked by an investigating committee whether or not he knew of the known communist Lawson, Sorrell answered in characteristically abrasive fashion, "All I know is that he has a great big nose." Sorrell's racism, too, frequently brought him into conflict with the CPUSA, who, since the mid-1920s, had been one of the very few political organisations in the United States to come out publicly in favour of African American equality. Although often painted as a Red by interested parties with links to the studios, including the Los Angeles Police Department's "Red Squad", Horne provides a wealth of

information from interviews with contemporaries, official documents, and from Sorrell's own past, to conclude that he was definitely a militant, but categorically was not a communist.

Once the CSU found itself in dispute with union bosses, moreover, and once its members had been locked out from studio production, a vacuum formed, which was quickly filled by the CSU's most well established competitor, the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees [IATSE]. IATSE's leaders welcomed the help that the studio executives had inadvertently handed them with the CSU lock out, and set about establishing themselves as Hollywood's primary union force. Whereas the studio bosses tried to propagate the myth that the CSU answered to the shady, underhand forces of the Soviet Union, it was clear to many observers that IATSE answered to the equally Machiavellian forces of organised crime. In 1941, two IATSE leaders, Willie Bioff and George Browne, had been convicted of extortion in a case that also led to a prison term for the head of Twentieth Century Fox, Joseph Schenk. Despite the warnings of CSU leaders, the lockout of 1946 smoothed the way for a strong mob presence in Hollywood and the entertainment industry.

A number of interesting anecdotes provide lighter relief from the intricate politics of labour disputes, which, even if tangential, are never irrelevant. Between 1945 and 1947, for example, Horne traces Ronald Reagan's journey from a man clearly dismissive of anticommunist claims to a fully committed red-baiter. Already President of the Screen Actors Guild by the end of the war, Reagan was in a position to at least cushion the blows raining down on the CSU; instead, he came to believe the much repeated myth that the union was a Communist Party front, and became a central figure in the struggle to get workers across CSU picket lines. The 1945 strike, America's future president believed, was no more than a "Soviet effort to gain control over Hollywood and the content of its films." It was a fear of Soviet-domination of such a powerful propaganda tool as film, remembered Reagan, which led him into politics in the first place.

Horne bases his reappraisal of labour politics in Hollywood on a wealth of primary sources, from oral histories, to contemporary newspapers, the personal papers of interested parties, and the official documentation of the unions themselves. What emerges is a painstakingly researched book, but one that is never inaccessible. One of the author's many achievements here is to explain why, when the more famous Hollywood blacklist came into force in 1947, it was geared towards what Horne refers to as the "talent" guilds of Hollywood -- actors, writers and directors. As this book has now convincingly explained, by that time Hollywood's blue-collar workers had already been purged of any militancy and had been rendered effectively powerless.

Colonial Cinema and Imperial France, 1919-1939: White Blind Spots, Male Fantasies, Settler Myths

By David Henry Slavin
Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001. ISBN 0-8018-6616-2. 10 illustrations, 300 pp. £31.50 (hbk)

A review by Sarah Leahy, Northumbria University, UK

This book is a welcome addition to a small but growing body of work in English on the subject of colonialism and cinema in the context of France and its former empire. Slavin's book develops some of the arguments set out in this work (such as the comparison with the Hollywood Western), and is the first study in English to cover the entire inter-war period in such detail. It sets itself an ambitious aim and one which it does not entirely achieve: to examine colonial cinema both as a mirror of inter-war society in France and in the colonies, and as a "fully independent shaper of consciousness" (14).

The book's strengths lie in its detailed and informative contextualization of French colonial cinema, especially those films made in or about the Maghreb, and in its ability to reveal general trends and "blind spots" that characterise these films. For example, Slavin makes links between two forms of anti-Semitism, "anti-Judaism and anti-Arabo-Berberism" (12), especially interesting in these decades preceding the Vichy regime, when North African colonial rulers actively attempted (but largely failed) to set Muslim against Jew in a divide and rule policy. Slavin's book also offers perceptive insights into the way that the cinematic representation of women was a key way of differentiating France from the colonies, and makes clear why such a differentiation was necessary and not entirely successful in the context of a colonial power that did not allow its women the right to vote or own property throughout most of this period.

In many ways, this is a frustrating book, revealing intriguing "blind spots" of French colonial cinema but frequently stopping short of probing these areas of investigation any further. It must, though, be seen as an initial foray into this territory, and as such, it offers an extremely detailed and informative discussion of the historical and production contexts of key films. Although the book is not without errors, these are mostly linguistic (French words are frequently spelt wrongly and some of the translations into English are awkward to say the least). The wealth of information the book does provide off-sets its occasional glossing over of details such as names of actors and directors. In keeping with its historical and cultural studies emphasis, textual analyses of key films -- including *L'Atlantide* (Feyder, 1921 and Pabst, 1932), *Itto* (Benoit-Lévy and Marie Epstein, 1934), *La Maison du Maltais* (Fescourt, 1926 and Chenal, 1938), *La Bandera* (Duvivier, 1935) and *Pépé le Moko* (Duvivier, 1937) -- privilege discussion of narrative themes and production details over aesthetic concerns such as *mise-en-scène* or performance. All too often, though, discussions of films fail to pursue interesting points that are raised, leaving the reader with a feeling of anti-climax. The

discussion of the Berber myth is an example of this: although Slavin exposes it as being without foundation, he does not really examine how the myth functioned in cinema in terms of colonial discourse and in the construction of French national identity at this time. This is one area where an approach encompassing theories of colonial and national discourses (such as those of Homi K. Bhabha -- astonishingly absent from the bibliography) could have led to a more incisive argument. The book seems to have its own blind spot in its reluctance to engage with film theory, meaning that ultimately, Slavin is unable to go beyond his sometimes rather disappointing conclusions about the representation of the colonies and their people, in order to really explore these films as both mirroring and shaping society, as he aims to do.

That said, the book gives an extremely comprehensive discussion of French colonial cinema in North Africa, considering a wide range of film genres, from documentaries to adventures (although his main emphasis is on feature length fiction films). Slavin looks at the historical context in both North Africa and Europe in order to explain the shift he perceives in colonial discourse away from the paternalism and assimiliationist ideals of the 1920s associated with Marshal Lyautey, towards a more racist attitude regarding the indigenous populations of the colonies in the 1930s, and to a corresponding change in their representation in films. He illustrates this shift through his perceptive discussions of successful films of the 1920s that were then remade as sound films, for example *L'Atlantide*, arguing that the remakes demonstrate an increased pessimism and a more trenchant racism than the earlier films which focus more on the redemptive possibilities of life in the colonies. Slavin relates this change to the context of a nation living in dread of another war with Germany.

This book makes a crucial contribution to work on French cinema of this period, which all too frequently focuses on 1920s avant-garde cinema or 1930s Poetic Realism, without considering the colonial context of the Third Republic. Although the number of colonial films was very small in comparison to the total output, their popularity means that they merit further study. Slavin's book shows how these films were one important way that France could construct itself (however erroneously) as a modern, imperial power to be reckoned with and as such, it provides an extremely useful starting point.

Critical Cultural Policy Studies: A Reader

By Edited by Justin Lewis and Toby Miller
Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2002. ISBN 0-631-22299-5. 357 pp. £17.99 (pbk)

A review by Jennifer Holt, University of California, Los Angeles, USA

The arrival of a hefty anthology is usually one indication that its subject has also arrived… at least in the academic sense. With the publication of *Critical Cultural Policy Studies* edited by Justin Lewis and Toby Miller, perhaps cultural policy -- critical or otherwise -- will finally begin carving out some more substantial territory in the established canons of media studies methodology and curricula. While the editors explain that the term (and as a result, its field of study) has been around for over thirty years, it has certainly been a long road to widespread institutional acceptance and recognition.

Part of this is due to the fact that cultural policy itself has been an elusive discipline to define and is even defined by the editors in numerous ways, including "a site for the production of cultural citizens" (1). Ultimately, it is also an interdisciplinary outgrowth of cultural studies that has moved beyond the concerns of textual analysis, issues of media control/ownership and audience-oriented criticism into the realm of political economy by way of blending cultural studies with various combinations of economics, industrial history, sociology, political theory, government regulation and policy, and even anthropology. As a result, it has operated (quite productively) as an analytical framework to understand functions of power in arenas of cultural negotiation while also remaining a site of struggle itself.

Consequently, this anthology and analysis of cultural policy as a term and a discipline is an overdue but welcome addition to the critical literature in the field. The volume consists mainly of previously published material (1984-2000) and brings together twenty six essays by scholars working in subject matters that span far beyond the usual mass-media suspects; the articles and approaches navigate a vast terrain from film, radio and television to the internet, museums, shopping malls and sports. There are also two sections that focus on urban planning and international organizations/national cultures, which seem to be divergent and/or overlapping categories when compared to the others, contributing to the vague sense of disorientation that often accompanies forays into such a multi-faceted field.

Ranging from the markedly theoretical to the doggedly practical, the articles give an impression of the field as an interdisciplinary endeavor to analyze the means and ends of cultural production that is part Birmingham School-inspired cultural studies, part policy analysis and part post-structuralist/post-modern criticism. In the introduction, Stuart Cunningham helps to clarify the various "sides" in the cultural policy debate with his 1991 essay, "Cultural Studies from the Viewpoint of Cultural Policy." Along with the editors and Jim McGuigan, who offers a very insightful and thorough historical analysis of the discipline via Foucault and Habermas, Cunningham addresses the field's inherent complexities upfront and, intentionally or not, does little to insist upon a more strictly focused interpretation or unified approach to defining the subject. Instead, the first section works to problematize any

dogmatic notion of what cultural policy is or does, throwing the door wide open for the intellectual buffet that follows.

There is a common thread among the various authors, however, which is evident in the consistently Marxist approach to cultural analysis that views its object of study as political and politicized. Most of the essays also draw heavily on the work of Foucault, a trend which begins with the editors' introduction when they explain cultural policies as "a means of governance, of formatting public collective subjectivity…"(2) and continues in the privileging of discourses on power that propel many of the essays. The ideas of Gramsci and Althusser are also well represented, as media and identity are repeatedly discussed in terms of how people and institutions are inscribed into hierarchies of power, often through the process of participating in/engaging with culture industries. Of course, resistance in these camps comes from knowledge and awareness, which is precisely the core prescription of the book whether it is addressing state music policy in Canada (Shuker), the political rationality of the museum (Bennett), the "Disneyfication" of Times Square (Comella) or indigenous media in Australia (Ginsburg).

The editors position the book as a project which intends to present theoretical analyses of cultural policies while also providing alternatives to the status quo, or as they explain by way of Angela McRobbie, "a program for change in addition to a distanced critique"(5). In so doing, Miller maintains a similar mission as that of his recently co-authored work *Global Hollywood*, which aimed (and succeeded in many regards) to "thicken existing theories of global Hollywood's power, and modify current thinking about cultural policies that both enable and resist it." With *Critical Cultural Policy Studies*, he and Lewis extend this enterprise to address a wider variety of cultural institutions and practices beyond mainstream American cinema, surfing the boundaries and tensions between the local and global, public and private, culture and politics. As a result, the reader is left with a rich and practical look at the policies, discourses and practices that create and sustain the nature of our relationships with culture and the arts.

The Cultural Industries

By David Hesmondhalgh
London: Sage Publications, 2002. ISBN 0-7619-5453-8. xiv + 290 pp. £15.50 (pbk)

A review by Eithne Quinn, University of Manchester, UK

A great deal has been written about the dramatic changes that have taken place in the cultural industries since 1980, changes characterized by the rapid growth of media conglomerates, by the "globalization of culture", by digitalisation and the rise of new media, and so on. In *The Cultural Industries*, David Hesmondhalgh carefully describes, evaluates and explains these complex processes, with a view to gauging change and continuity in the core cultural industries (television, film, the internet, music, advertising, print and electronic publishing, computer games). To do this, he takes a longer view, appropriating Raymond Williams' terms to describe eras of cultural production: from "patronage" (until the nineteenth century); to "market professional" (until the early twentieth century); and onto his main focus "corporate professional" (since the 1950s). The latter, which Hesmondhalgh renames "complex professional," refers to particular social relations between creative personnel and businesses, but also describes a whole set of historical conditions to do with company ownership and structure, cultural policy, and communication technologies that came to the fore in the fifties. The author asks whether we are still in the complex professional phase, and one of the central revelations of this fascinating book is that --despite many genuinely novel features of today's cultural industries, and despite the many sensational and exaggerated claims made about radical upheaval -- the answer is yes. After unpacking and explaining "the very tangled and contradictory dynamics" (263) of cultural production, Hesmondhalgh concludes that there is "sufficient continuity to undermine the suggestion that we have entered a new era" (260). Though the overarching argument thus tends towards long-term continuities -- most trends are, he demonstrates, extensions of developments already observable in the mid-twentieth century -- the book devotes a great deal of time to changes.

The Cultural Industries serves as both an indispensable introductory textbook and a sophisticated intervention into scholarly debates. The author offers clear and convincing appraisals of political economic and cultural studies approaches (among others), expressing frustration at the well-documented hostilities between camps, while stressing common concerns and the insights that each can readily gain from the other. One gets a clear sense that, rather than trying to score critical points or make rhetorical moves for their own sake, the author is simply concerned with arriving at the most useful and instructive approach. What he comes up with is an "eclectic methodology", amounting to "a particular type of political economy approach, informed by certain aspects of empirical sociology of culture, communication studies and cultural studies" (47). This approach best forwards his agenda of "[re-emphasising] the centrality of the relationship between symbolic artefacts and the financing and organization of their production" (264). Since the author ambitiously attempts not only to argue for but also to illustrate his "eclectic methodology" within the confines of a textbook, there are moments when coverage is necessarily a bit cursory (for example, the final chapter on "texts"). Still, by the end of the book, this reader was thoroughly convinced by Hesmondhalgh's case.

The book is packed full of useful terms and definitions, clearly expressed and illustrated. These include "marketization" (his term for the impact of policy changes since the 1980s, built on the assumption that "the production and exchange of cultural goods and services for profit is the best way to achieve efficiency and fairness in production and consumption of texts" (109)); "internationalization" (favoured over the loaded and less accurate term "globalization"); and "neo-liberalism" (from laissez-faire economics, not to be confused with American politically centrist meanings of liberalism).

There is a great deal to admire in this influential study: the lucid grasp of complex processes; the engaging and accessible prose; the careful and systematic organization; the historical and geographic range; the unpretentious and sympathetic tone. In my view, this book should be required reading on all media and cultural studies courses. Hesmondhalgh's study exemplifies new departures in politically engaged scholarship, avoiding sweeping celebrations or jeremiads about cultural production and content, to explore their complex social relations. Most admirable of all may be the study's grounding in questions that all those interested in social justice should be asking -- ethical and political questions about the influence of the cultural industries on people's lives, as creators, consumers, and citizens. Who has creative, organizational and financial control? Have conditions for creative personnel ("symbol creators") improved since the 1970s (the author rightly highlights the shortfall in serious studies in this area)? Have shifts in cultural production led to more or less diversity and quality in cultural texts? Whose interests are pursued in different cultural industries, and how can these be broken down? To what extent do the new "marketized" conditions of production shape people as consumers rather than citizens? *The Cultural Industries* not only asks these crucial questions, it provides synthesized frameworks to help us -- as students and scholars -- to answer them too.

Dracula

By Peter Hutchings
London, New York: I.B. Tauris, 2003. ISBN 1-86064-748-0. 9 illustrations, 99 pp. £12.95 (pbk)

A review by Rebecca Janicker, University of Nottingham, UK

This text seeks to make a case for the Hammer Dracula adaptation of 1958 as a "good" film, primarily by working methodically through a descriptive account of the narrative. It is argued that there is value in considering a film in this way, particularly as "films themselves are not wholly defined by the various contexts of their reception; they are also objects that are moulded by the context of their production" (4). Such forms of analysis have fallen into disfavour since auteurism disguised the industrial aspect of film-making and studies based on audience reception became ever more popular. Hutchings argues that all work on film typically carries latent evaluation anyway, and it is better to make such judgments explicit for more comprehensive discussion. Other factors considered here include the input of key personnel apart from director Terence Fisher, structure, techniques, *mise-en-scène* and the film's relation to both British cinema and the horror genre in its entirety.

The first chapter, "Dracula Lives!", concerns itself with the promotion for the release of the film, which played on the familiarity of the vampire's name, the introduction of fangs and of colour. It considers the relationship between Dracula as cultural myth and Dracula as popular fiction. Stoker's original text has often been hugely changed when used as the basis for film and the Hammer production is no exception to this. Since the Universal 1931 version of *Dracula* starring Bela Lugosi, the image of the vampire has widely been acknowledged as having deviated from the novel and been moulded chiefly by screen representations. Hutchings considers American science fiction and horror films made in that era, noting parallels in style and narrative. An interesting account is made of the industrial background to Hammer's production. A number of industrial and legislative changes impacted upon American film production, leading to a rise in the number of independent producers. One of these, Robert Lippert, made a deal with a small independent British film company called Hammer. This involved supplying American stars to appear in the support films made by Hammer, enhancing their popularity both in America and in Britain. This company had continuity of studio-based resources and personnel that was lacking in some American studios (31). When the company decided to make *Dracula*, Universal Studios finally gave Hammer the right to remake its horror film as a result of the fragmentation of the American film industry and growing uncertainty as to what an increasingly teen-aged audience wanted (33). This helps to contextualise how and why the 1953 remake of *Dracula* was allowed to come into existence.

Chapter Two, "I'm Dracula", commences with the assertion that "it seems clear that the Hammer film-makers were in the business of producing not just marketable films but also 'good' films" on the basis of a brief argument stating that the studios showed greater care in production than did others (35). As this followed the claim that Hammer's *Dracula* had a

short production period and had been made purely as a commercial enterprise, this wasn't a particularly well-explained or convincing opening. However, Hutchings continued to elaborate this claim by arguing that the film would be evaluated in terms of a culmination of the film-maker's skills and creative drives and energy. For him, this represents a departure from auteur-based, genre-based or production-based analysis. We are talked through the film, our attention being focused on camera techniques for maximising the restrictions imposed by a small budget and cramped surroundings, and Hammer's distinctive use of vivid colour.

He then proceeds with detailed accounts of the film's narrative, moving through the scenes with Jonathan Harker, Lucy and Mina Holmwood. Comparisons are drawn between this film, where Dracula is notable by his absence for some time, and earlier productions such as the 1931 Universal production and 1921's *Nosferatu*. Continuing with a description of Van Helsing's entry in to the film, it is explained that there are parallels between this character and that of Dracula himself, with some reference to the actors (Peter Cushing and Christopher Lee respectively) playing them. It also touches on suggestions of the novel's references to the potential for male-to-male seduction and domination, displaced onto Dracula's exclusively female victims, noting that Harker experiences only the female vampire's (visibly eroticised) bite (58). However, these ideas are not explored further, as the author asserted from the outset that the "meaning" of the film would not be considered.

Chapter Three, "The Mark of the Hammer *Dracula*", opens with a summary of the diverse reactions of critics to the production, with Hutchings noting that "the shifting critical fortunes of *Dracula* can be seen as an index of changes going on elsewhere, changes in attitude towards culture, British cinema and Britishness itself" (79). He argues that negative reviews largely showed that many critics distanced themselves from it on the basis of their own superiority: "Either critics see the film … from a safe distance or it is altogether too close for comfort and consequently becomes a dangerous and disgusting subject" (84).

In conclusion, Hutchings claims that "at the end of the day we still need to commit ourselves to an evaluative position" (99). It would appear however that this is simply an expression of his personal admiration for the film; he acknowledges that others do not agree that it is "good" but offers no explanation for why a value judgment needs to be made. Arguing often that evaluations are vital in such analysis, he ultimately fails to clarify the reason for this. Whilst the text gives a thorough account of the film, too much emphasis is placed upon description of the events and too little placed upon reasons for the film's enduring popularity.

Early American Cinema in Transition: Story, Style, and Filmmaking, 1907-1913

By Charlie Keil
Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2002. ISBN 0-299-17364-X. 117 illustrations, xii + 306 pp. £14.70 (pbk)

A review by David Mayer, University of Manchester, UK

Charlie Keil has re-imagined the possibilities of writing film history and has, in so doing, produced a feat of considerable scholarship. His plan, ignoring much current historiographic practice, which usually attempts to account for stasis or change or development in terms of contemporary events or pressures or modes of perception or thought -- and which, consequently, must deal with individual films and specific historical and cultural instances -- is to describe changes in film structure, technique, and technology across the entire film business in the years between 1907 and 1913. This six-year period Keil labels the "transitional period" and identifies it as the point at which the Motion Pictures Patent Company and other techno-commercial developments, as well as the presence of a growing-but-otherwise-stable audience for film, together create the American motion picture industry and the prototype of the studio system. Driven by economic needs, studios must increase diversity and quality to meet expanding markets. They must develop industrial practices and further technologies which foster these objectives. But, above all, filmmakers, to find and hold audiences, must abandon the production of brief one-reel (or less) films, often non-narrative and even non-anecdotal, and transform their studios' output into narrative films of greater and greater length and greater visual complexity until, eventually, films routinely exceed an hour or hour and a half's duration and offer a multiplicity of camera possibilities and editorial strategies. By 1913, cinema-going, increasingly a middle-class recreation, is on the point of deserting the nickelodeon and flea-pit for the purpose-built picture palace.

Keil's early chapters set out his stall: he is not going to explain the "why" of change but to adopt a "formalist" stance, meaning by this term his concern to demonstrate that, year-by-year, changes in the structure and method of film narrative, in camera technique, and in editing praxis are visible across the entire industry. Films, though often the creations of individuals, will change as a group, and audiences will accept and welcome these changes. Studio heads and directors (D.W. Griffith is an obvious example) may lead in developing a style of film, but their singularity is to be deliberately ignored in favour of effective generalisations. Later, when change is recognised by the reader and when the feature film is developed and successfully marketed, Keil will explore individual films typical or atypical of their year, and note their narrative tactics.

The heart of Keil's study is a chapter dealing with the development of cinema narrative. If one recalls the over-familiar devices of pre-1907 cinema -- rail journeys, processions and the visits of dignitaries, unintelligible football matches, children feeding barnyard fowl, the myriad stultifying banalities of the Lumières and Mitchell & Kenyon -- then the gardener tricked by a prankish boy into squirting himself, then taking revenge and soaking the boy, or

the greedy tramps who steal food and bathers' clothing, promise relief from more of the tedium of actualités by offering the merest germ of plot. Plot is everything. Even the Edison-Porter films of 1903 are somewhat diminished by being (correctly) categorised as "chase" narratives. Keil looks at the absence of the basic elements of narrative action: plot, character, and motivation, and shows how these elements are increasingly recognised by America's studios. What begins as mere anecdote and motivation which is difficult, if not impossible, to decipher, becomes, by 1913, complete drama, not simply with Aristotelian beginnings, middles, and endings, but with plots which hang together and which are peopled by plausible (and sometimes multi-dimensional) characters whose behaviour follows from understandable and thoroughly plausible motives. All this in a mere six years.

Keil follows this with further chapters that deal, respectively, with camera-work and with editing. He shows that increased understanding of the possibilities of the camera as more than a recording instrument enables more interesting narratives. Recognition that the camera needn't be static, but might severally locate the viewer in the position of various characters within the narrative or might move closer to or further from the characters as they enacted their passions, or might view from aloft, from corners, or from low-down, is to privilege the spectator as a witness to the event. The camera becomes mobile and actually travels with characters, animals, and vehicles and involves the spectator in movement and speed, eliciting further empathy with characters and plot. Keil also shows that editing was to enable industry-wide acceptance that narratives might display concurrent action, saying "meanwhile" as well as "here and now". He likewise offers evidence of how the intertitle was to affect the structure of transitional film, making the photoplay -- now verbal -- able to convey dialogue and equally capable of narrative exposition. Keil acknowledges that studios didn't accept these changes *en bloc*, but moved individually, some more conservative than others for a variety of reasons.

Because Keil has generalised, he concludes his argument by turning from the general to the specific and offering a final chapter that anatomises six "transitional" films. These analyses are technical in that they relate how the film was made and what narrational elements are to be found. The films are wholly divorced from the circumstances that called them into being or the receptions they received. Keil also offers shot-by-shot descriptions of these films, thus again demonstrating differences of structure and method.

Keil's writing is direct and spare, offering clear explanations of the theories and principles which guide his thinking, and he is equally clear in explaining method and result. The consequence of his method is a solid and reliable work that makes a valuable companion to those studies of individual creators and studios. It depicts a slice of the film world without artists or heroes, but it is a world we need to recognise and acknowledge.

Exhibition: The Film Reader

By Edited by Ina Rae Hark
London: Routledge, 2001. ISBN 0-4152-3517-0. 1 illustration, vii + 192 pp. £13.99 (pbk)
American Audiences on Movies and Moviegoing By Tom Stempel & An Everyday Magic: Cinema and Cultural Memory By Annette Kuhn

American Audiences on Movies and Moviegoing

By Tom Stempel

Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2001. ISBN 0-8131-2183-3. xv + 280 pp. £17.26 (hbk)

An Everyday Magic: Cinema and Cultural Memory

By Annette Kuhn

London: I B Tauris, 2002. ISBN 1-8606-4791-X. 39 illustrations, xii + 273 pp. £39.50 (hbk), £14.95 (pbk)

A review by Martin Barker, University of Wales, Aberystwyth, UK

Here are three books, each in its own very different way valuable, addressing from quite different angles the very under-explored area of the ways in which film has penetrated and permeated everyday life. Between them, they point up directions that film studies should be taking.

Ina Rae Hark's volume in the Routledge series of Film Readers brings together a valuable series of essays and extracts dealing with issues around film exhibition. In effect, the book shows some of the best of what has been attempted up to this point. And some of it is very good indeed. The essays -- limited to the American experience, but of relevance far beyond that -- range across the gamut from the political economy of exhibition sites, the design and operation of particular kinds of cinema, to the meanings and pleasures associated with particular venues or kinds of moviegoing.

In this volume you will find one or two pieces which have already been anthologised elsewhere -- in particular, many are likely to know William Paul's "The K-Mart Audience at the Mall Movies". But even some already known pieces are usefully contextualised by Hark's introductory essays, and, in the case of the extract from Douglas Gomery's *Shared Pleasures*, by an interesting postscript by the author. What the latter reveals, is worth pausing on. There has long been a strand in American film studies which is content effectively to celebrate the

wonders of the achievements of the industry. Whilst undoubtedly doing some excellent empirical, archival research, Gomery's account of the cinema-building operations of Barney Balaban and Sam Katz in Chicago does indeed press us to reconsider the balance of importance of the exhibition side as against the production side of the film industry. But I couldn't escape a sense that what Gomery wanted us to do was simply to add them to a pantheon of heroes. What, no connections at all to the corrupt world of Chicago politics? No issues about their part in the racial politics of the city? And so on.

I found Hark's collection particularly interesting and useful for the way it recovers older pieces of work, although it would have been interesting to know a little more about the contexts of their production. For example, she reprints a 1953 essay by Anthony Downs from the *Journal of Property Management*. The essay clearly belongs to another world, and is advising its original readers on the likely investment opportunities. It would have been very interesting to know whether this essay was a lone consideration of the cinema field in such a magazine, and what wider discourses about the place of cinema in American business culture are associated with it.

The essays in this book generally give us a valuable skeleton of a history of how exhibition has been an issue for film academics and others. Hark's own essay (originally in *Film History*) on the gendered discourses of theatre managers is a good example. It explores with great care the handling of the problematic relations between emphasising the masculinity of cinema-operations, and the emphasis on cleanliness, tidiness and good presentation -- a tension resolved through the figure of the "Girl in the Box Office", who had to be attractive without being sexualised, a personification of the virtues and attractions of the cinema itself. What is so good about this essay is the way that Hark not only explores the general presence of this discourse, but investigates the one major exception: E V Richards, who ran a string of theatres across the mid-South of America in the post-war period, and who had a declared policy of promoting women to managerial positions. There is a richness and specificity about this kind of research which should inspire us. The one disappointment to me is the Dudley Andrew essay which may pose large questions (cinema as a site of "public rituals"), but rarely gets beyond anecdotes and speculation.

Tom Stempel's volume is an odd and unusual one, and won't be to everyone's taste. I should have found it irritating, given his tendency to have a go at "left wing" film critics (among whom I willingly count myself). But to tell the truth, this didn't bother me, because of the book's strange virtues. Stempel tells a story of how films have been responded to and taken up into people's everyday lives, across fifty years. This draws on a combination of 158 questionnaires, which asked very simple questions about such things as people's recollections of seeing a range of significant films (from *The Ten Commandments*, to *Shaft*, *Star Wars*, *The Rocky Horror Show*, and the gamut of Clint Eastwood films whom Stempel uses for a case-study); his own research into box office successes and failures; and a rather quirky, anecdotal film history. In one important respect, the book is interesting for just giving voice and pattern to a lot of ordinary views about films. But what is it we can learn from this book, beyond the (obviously not to be forgotten) truth that for every person who has loved a film, it's not difficult to find another who was bored by, or loathed it -- and that is true for all the "Greats" as well as all the pot-boilers? What do we get more than the (still useful) demonstration that there just aren't (m)any "cultural dupes" out there?

In some ways this is a (slightly unconventional) film history, touching on films that have failed, or found their feet later, or look better (or worse) in retrospect. In another, more

ambitious way, it is an attempt at a history of cinemagoing manners. Stempel is at his best when he pays attention to the impact of different ways of watching films. For instance with *Star Wars*, he is good on the way this "bedded in" to our culture, as it were, through people choosing to rewatch it -- they learned to repeat lines, and absorbed an expression such as "may the Force be with you" into their lives. And of course that is a gateway to the fact that the film has been a site of debate about the politics of defence, of the future of myths, and so on. Stempel becomes most interesting when, in a way, he outruns his quotes, and starts offering some generalisations -- which he can do because in a way he has listened closely to the *tone* of people's answers to his questions. So he writes: "One reason audiences continue to be drawn towards [the *Godfather* trilogy] is their seriousness, typical of the early seventies. If the films of the late sixties, such as *Bonnie and Clyde* and *Easy Rider*, struck nerves in the audience -- especially the younger audiences -- the films of the early seventies went deeper and became more complex and *found* an audience. As we have seen, it was a smaller audience than in the preceding decades, but it was also a more *intense* audience" (88). This seems to me an interesting direction -- though its very plural perception of audiences sits very uneasily with his tendencies in other places to talk (in the singular) of "the American audience".

What I found most puzzling but indicative, simultaneously, about Stempel's book, was his way of talking about film education. He has a chapter devoted to how "old" films are responded to in classes he has taught. The recurrent use of assertions that particular films "hold up well", or "still work", or "don't play well" with contemporary students associates film education with a kind of cultural instruction -- that by putting students in touch with a good range of past films (and there is no pretentiousness about his lists) we can help to induct them into a sense of their own past. They can expand their capacity to respond. There is no sense in here of analysing or evaluating the cultural repertoires of present-day students. When he writes (131) that a film "will make some connections with them", it doesn't seem to matter *what* those connections are, as long as they are made. Teaching film becomes a form of cultural civics. And that seems a disappointingly thin ground for our subject field.

Annette Kuhn's book is an account of her very substantial research project into the memories of cinema-going in Britain in the 1930s. Based on questionnaires and interviews with now-elderly people, she gives a truly fascinating account of the role of cinema in their lives. Methodologically astute (there are good discussions of the issues raised by memory-work, for instance), in one sense no enormous surprises emerge from her work. We hear in people's own words about the ordinary importance of cinema-going, their engagement with particular stars, the excitements of the Picture Palace. But the delight is in the detail. Kuhn, for instance, has one chapter that just mainly explores how her respondents placed the cinemas of their youth within mental geographies. And she portrays through carefully-assembled quotations the ways in which cinema as a whole was a *presence* in people's lives: guiding them through streets, mapping their areas for them. Cinema was powerfully *local* even as it was a portal to a magical world.

In the same manner, Kuhn takes us through people's relations with stars. She nicely captures the interweaving of the marvellous attraction of stars' lives, their looks, their fashions, and people's awareness of the material constraints of their own lives -- the "make-do" attitude, for instance, that states that the nearest a woman will get to that fabulous costume will be a home-made copy of it, using cheap fabrics and a pattern cribbed from a fan magazine.

Just occasionally in this book it is possible to glimpse (that word may come back to haunt me…) a collision between the warm ethnographies of this study and Kuhn's wider feminist theoretical concerns. In a chapter on cinema's romantic and sexual opportunities, she quotes at length one man who took, and has retained, real pleasure in the way films showed parts of women's bodies which were hidden from him in his daily life. "Mr Houlston" has a substantial collection of the kinds of glamour shots that emphasised "the point at which exposed flesh meets clothing" (158). Kuhn's commentary on this man becomes an excursion into another domain. This is the "play of concealment and revelation around the object of desire." This is "fetishism". This is, finally, "wanting to look to see if she has a penis." Hmm… unlike most of the book, this is interviewing in the service of a pre-established belief.

At several points, her discussion of her interviews bursts through into analysis of a favourite film, most notably (186-192) around *Top Hat* (1935). In this case, it seems to me that her conclusions are more respectful of the capacities of her interviewees. Following one man's long recalled description of the film, Kuhn comments just how accurately he has remembered it, and moves through a shot-by-shot analysis of it, in particular looking at its shifts of diegetic space. She closes with this comment:

> In this elegant and apparently seamless combination of kinesis and heterotopia lies the ultimate dance fantasy: the everyday, the local, the rooted, the communal -- for the adolescent of the 1930s, the crowds in the dance hall -- all fade from consciousness as, along with the dancers on the screen, you are carried into the space of the imagination, that other space where you are utterly graceful and where the dance of courtship proceeds, with never a false step, towards its climax. The sensation imbues your body, and carries you out of your local picture house onto the familiar streets of your neighbourhood, and you are moved to dance along the pavement all the way home (193).

This more embedded view of fantasy seems to me more persuasive and useable than the residual Freudianism.

Just occasionally, and particularly right at the end, Kuhn seems to me to indulge herself in the very "nostalgia" that she is otherwise generally superseding. She closes with a quotation from a woman who repeats, over and again, that it was all "wonderful". There is nothing wrong in such enthusiasm, or in observing it -- but then audience or ethnographic research is not about finding people right or wrong. But there is a sense, every now and then, of a rather "cleaned-up" mode of recall. Some of the films, surely, were awful. Sometimes the smokiness of the cinemas must have been unpleasant. Etc. Etc. This is to leave aside the way such discourses of the "wonderfulness" of past cinema becomes a rejection of contemporary cinema.

These gibes aside, this is a very valuable book. It complements, but maybe will also shift our perception of, existing valuable work on 1930s cinema, such as Jeffrey Richards and Dorothy Sheridan's work.

The issue of exhibition is becoming more important to film studies, and rightly so. These three books are all valuable contributions to an underdeveloped field. If I enter one note of caution about the three of them together, it is that in different ways, each of them seems to me to share one assumption: that the present-day multiplex is an inferior mode of exhibition. Gary Edgerton's contribution in Hark's volume talks of multiplex designers, owners and

managers "soothing compliant customers" -- with the apparent aim only of selling them popcorn -- and when wasn't that the case? Stempel talks of the multiplex as "an instrument of brute commerce" (209) -- as opposed to? Kuhn does not speak directly on this, because her research is focused on the 1930s. But almost without exception, her respondents give voice to a story of decline and loss from the "loveliness" of their films and cinema. The danger should be evident. We are at risk of putting film studies on the side of one kind of experience, and not exploring the genuine pleasures that people do get from the multiplex experience.

Film Comedy

By Geoff King
London: Wallflower Press, 2002. ISBN 1-903364-35-3. 22 photographs, 230 pp. £13.99 (pbk)

A review by Hsiao-Pin Chang, University of Nottingham, UK

Comedy is a genre that not only provides huge entertainment but also containment. Its jokes and slapsticks can be treated as an approach to deliver entertainment to audiences and its innuendoes have undeniable links to the present historical and social contexts. Film comedy can be discussed from various perspectives, from psychology, gender, class and history. There are a lot of books about the history of Hollywood film comedy, famous comedians, and introductions on comedy theories. Since there are so many books particularly about comedy, what makes Geoff King's book *Film Comedy* special?

The interesting thing about *Film Comedy* is that it does not copy other books on the history of Hollywood comedy or great comedians such as Chaplin or Keaton. King tries to use different perspectives to talk about film comedy, he chooses to start from a discussion of film comedy itself, and then uses simple terms to explain and articulate his argument -- which is great for people who only have a vague idea of what comedy is. In the "Introduction," King claims that "comedy is a mode -- a manner of presentation -- in which a variety of different materials can be approached, rather than any relatively more fixed or localised quantity"(2). He considers that it is shallow to just think about comedy as a genre, comic moments exist in different genres. This argument not only raises readers' interest but also brings the discourses of film comedy into a new light.

In this book, King clarifies a lot of ambiguities about the issues of comedy. For example, in "Chapter Two: Transgressions and Regressions and "Chapter Three: Satire and Parody", King uses simple terms to explain the distinction of comic transgressions and regressions and satire and parody to readers. King considers that the function of comic transgressions is to break the norms that are the reflections of human fantasy, whether they are social, cultural or moral. Regressions go back to the norms and reality, to be normal and acceptable again. For the distinction between satire and parody King chooses to create a general dichotomy to help readers understand more easily: "Satire is comedy with an edge and target, usually social and political in some way" (93); "The target of parody tends to be formal and aesthetic" (107). This is a typical example of King articulating and laying out his points in the book, it is simple, general, and still has great value in being an academic research work.

One of the reasons why this book is easy to read is that King uses a lot of films as examples to bring out the discussions and back up his points. Particularly in the final chapter of the book, "Comedy beyond Comedy", his approach of structuring the chapter is by reviewing many films to suggest that comedy not only can "penetrate" different genres, but also can be experimental, unintentional, and potential. Instead of repeating this argument throughout the whole book, King chooses this interesting way to address and emphasise the chapter. Besides,

it can also encourage readers to watch some of the films he mentioned in the book, and appreciate the whole variety of film comedy titles.

Although it is easy to read, *Film Comedy* still covers most of the key issues of film comedy, and King does a good job to explain the complexity of (film) comedy. "Chapter One: Comedy and Narrative" is a general introduction to the different forms of comedy. From early slapstick to discussions of comedians and romantic comedies, there is a brief and clear introduction of the significant and important discourses in the chapter. In "Chapter Two: Transgressions and Regressions", King uses psychoanalysis and Bakhtin's research on carnivals in the Middle Ages to discuss the meaning of comedy being transgressive and regressive. In Chapter Three, King applies several scholars' arguments on satire and parody, such as Andrew Horton, Henry Jenkins and Northrop Frye, to differentiate satire and parody. Chapter Four contains issues of gender, ethnicity and nationality, and at the end, there is also a small discussion of British comedy. *Film Comedy* is not an ambitious book which tries to include all the information and discourses around film comedy. However, it is an informative and well-structured tool book for readers who would like to know something about comedy but don't know where to start.

In the introduction to the book, King claims "comedy, by definition, is not usually taken entirely seriously, a fact that sometimes gives it license to tread in areas that might otherwise be off-limits" (2). After reading it, it is easy to understand what King tries to do throughout. The message he wants to deliver is comedy is not as simple and comedic as it seems to be. Each joke and gag has its hidden agenda that may be relevant to the society or political climate. Just remember, after laughing out loud, it is important to appreciate that there is seriousness and value in film comedy.

Film Music: Critical Approaches

By Edited by K. J. Donnelly
Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2001. ISBN 0748612882. vii + 214 pp. £16.95 (pbk)
Music and Cinema Edited by James Buhler, Caryl Flynn and David Neumeyer

Music and Cinema

Edited by James Buhler, Caryl Flynn and David Neumeyer

Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 2000. ISBN 0819564109. viii + 397 pp. £15.95 (pbk)

A review by Ian Brookes, University of Nottingham, UK

In one of the deconstructive jokes in Mel Brooks' parodic western *Blazing Saddles* (1974), the sheriff is seen riding through a western landscape to the accompaniment of an orchestral soundtrack when he casually encounters the orchestra itself, playing on a bandstand surrealistically located in the western terrain. In revealing what is ostensibly the issuing source of the music, the scene confounds the narrative code which has been theorised in terms of a dichotomy between a *diegetic* source (music originating, apparently, from within the narrative world of the film) and *non-diegetic*, "background" music (which comes from "outside" it). This polarisation model dominates film-music theory: but beyond indicating from which source the music is coming, it doesn't account for the complex relation between the two of them, nor what they *do* in the narrative. Although music has always played a significant role in film narrative, it has never been a straightforward task to determine what that role has been. The subject of film music has failed to attract much academic interest and film-music scholarship has been structured by theorising tendencies which have in themselves contributed towards the subject's marginal and subsidiary status. Film music is often seen in terms of a putative "invisibility" or "inaudibility", as evidenced in Claudia Gorbman's influential study, *Unheard Melodies: Narrative Film Music* (1987) and Laurence MacDonald's historical survey, *The Invisible Art of Film Music* (1998). Ultimately, the status of the subject is encapsulated in the title of Roy Prendergast's book, *Film Music: A Neglected Art* (1977).

From the inception of "silent" cinema in the 1890s until the advent of synchronised sound in the late 1920s, film exhibition was invariably accompanied by live music of various kinds (cinema was never *silent* as such). Early forms of musical accompaniment didn't necessarily bear much relation to the screen narrative. Exhibitors in larger theatres hired orchestras which, irrespective of what was happening on the screen, played the music they had brought with them and left the theatre when they had finished. In smaller theatres, accompaniment was provided by a pianist whose playing as a soloist could be more spontaneous and improvisatory and, thus, more responsive to the screen action. Such accompaniments often

comprised musical imitations of screen action ("mickey-mousing") in addition to a miscellany of well-known orchestral pieces and popular tunes.

Musical accompaniment became more systematically adapted to screen narrative with the increasing availability of catalogues of "descriptive" music, classified according to style and mood, for the use of theatre orchestras and pianists. With the publication of catalogues such as Giuseppe Becce's *Kinobibliothek* in Berlin in 1919, theatre musicians had recourse to off-the-rack "mood" categories like "night: sinister", "heroic combat" and "impending doom". In America, a similar service was provided by Max Winkler at Universal. With increasing demand for "matching mood" music, Winkler produced a compendium of "bastardised" versions of classical pieces which could be adapted to any narrative requirement. For example, while both Mendelssohn's "Wedding March" and Wagner's "Bridal Chorus" were routinely used for marriage scenes, they could also be readily adapted for divorce scenes by being played out of tune ("souring up the aisle"). These catalogues often contained encyclopaedic entries for virtually every type of narrative situation, indexed to the emotional responses they were intended to elicit. The more opulent theatres maintained extensive libraries of such catalogues: Loew's theatres held fifty thousand volumes.

The "silent" period entered a new phase with D.W. Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation* (1915), featuring a specially commissioned score by Joseph Carl Breil. Although the score was largely a compilation of excerpted nineteenth-century classical pieces and traditional American tunes, these were integrated with original thematic material in a score designed by Breil to be "cued" to the screen action. With developing interest in the principle of a more conceptually unified score to form a more integral part of the narrative, the period saw instances of specially composed film music by "named" composers, particularly in European cinema: Saint-Sa'ns for *L'Assassinat du Duc de Guise* (1908); Satie, for Clair's *Entr'acte* (1924); Milhaud, for *L'Inhumaine* (1925); Hindemith, for *Krazy Kat at the Circus* (1927); Honegger for Abel Gance's *Napoleon* (1927) and Shostakovich for Kozintsev's *New Babylon* (1929). These prestigious commissions were, however, untypical: smaller theatres could neither afford nor accommodate the large-scale orchestras necessary for their performance. Nevertheless, the late "silent" period began to see a shift away from the illustrative or decorative role of "background" music and, with it, an acknowledgement that film music was capable of a more fundamental function within the narrative system. This potential was exploited by Edmund Meisel's scores for Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin* (1925) and *October* (1928), films produced with an unprecedented degree of collaboration between composer and director, with Meisel's scoring conceptualised as intrinsic to the filmic system of the Eisensteinian "sound-film".

The advent of synchronised sound saw the emergence and consolidation of industry practices in non-diegetic film music which, by the mid-1930s, had become standardised in Hollywood productions. Following Max Steiner's influential scoring for *Symphony for Six Million* (1932), *King Kong* (1933) and *The Informer* (1935), Hollywood adopted as standard practice the inclusion of an original music soundtrack designed for each individual film, patterned predominantly on "classical" orchestral scoring. The production of film music became integrated within the industry's organisational system as the studios established their own music departments, each with its own composers, orchestrators and musicians. The music department was assigned to a film only after the completion of shooting when the film was "spotted", the process of selecting particular sections of film for music. The music was then written, orchestrated, arranged, recorded and edited into the film. These scores typically exploited the opportunities of close synchronisation, matching "classical" tropes to scenes,

and often deploying such devices as the "stinger" (usually a *sforzando*, a "forced" and often dissonant chord with sudden dramatic emphasis) together with traditional "mickey-mousing".

In the early 1930s, film scores were produced not by a named composer but by departmental staff. Following Steiner, however, an influx of European *Émigré* composers such as Erich Korngold, Franz Waxman, and Dimitri Tiomkin together with Alfred Newman and others established an orchestral scoring paradigm for the industry. Drawing on the stylistic conventions of late nineteenth-century Romanticism and, particularly, its symphonic tradition, their scoring practices coalesced in the musico-dramatic idiom characteristic of "classical" Hollywood.

As these composers consolidated the quasi-symphonic orchestral style as the "classical" norm, this "Hollywood-Romantic" idiom was being produced at an intersection between entertainment and art. By drawing on European Romanticism as a "high" cultural form, Hollywood might claim by association a comparable degree of cultural legitimacy. But, to its critics, the idiom was a corrupt, ersatz version of the "wrong end" of the Romantic canon, exemplified by "Rachmaninoffed" show tunes manufactured in Tin Pan Alley, itself part of a "culture industry" characterised by the same kind of industrial mass production as Hollywood. The figure of Rachmaninoff, which loomed large in "classical" discourse, was critically disdained for being anachronistic, conservative and sentimental, a figure who symbolised the commercialised "schmaltz" of "Hollywood-Romantic".

Although "classical" film music was derived from the "classical" tradition, its commercial *raison d'étre* -- as "product" rather than "art" -- meant that it was often seen as imitative, formulaic and, even worse, "middlebrow", factors which placed it outside the "classical" canonical tradition. Since the "silent" era, when select composers participated in self-consciously artistic or *avant-garde* productions, there were various attempts to raise the cultural status of film through approaches to composers who might bring to the "mass entertainment" industries the cultural cachet of the concert hall. Conversely, however, an association with Hollywood could sully the reputations of those who were seen to have compromised their artistic integrity for commercial gain. Korngold, for example, was disparaged for working in Hollywood and his reputation as a "serious" composer declined in consequence. Leopold Stokowski was also seen in conservatory circles to have jeopardised his standing through an association with Disney in *Fantasia* (1940). In contrast, Schoenberg and Stravinsky, in failing to negotiate studio contracts, kept their reputations "pure" as progenitors of twentieth-century modernism.

Although "Hollywood-Romantic" would continue to remain an influential model, the 1950s saw the increasing use of other musical idioms with alternative kinds of "art" value, like jazz, notably in the scores by Alex North for Kazan's *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1951), Elmer Bernstein for Preminger's *The Man With the Golden Arm* (1955) and Duke Ellington for Preminger's *Anatomy of a Murder* (1959). At the same time, some composers began to draw on the influences of twentieth-century modernism, such as Leonard Rosenman for Kazan's *East of Eden* (1955) and Bernard Herrmann for Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960). An alternative development involved the use of pre-existing recordings, a resource strongly associated with European "art" film. Stanley Kubrick, for example, drew on an eclectic range of classical and modernist recordings by composers including Bartok, Beethoven, Berio, Elgar, Ligeti, Penderecki, Purcell, Rossini, Shostakovich, Johann Strauss and Richard Strauss in such films as *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1969), *A Clockwork Orange* (1971), *Barry Lyndon* (1975), *The Shining* (1980) and *Eyes Wide Shut* (1999). Since *The Graduate* (1967) and *Easy Rider*

(1969), filmmakers also utilised an increasing quantity of pre-existing pop records and, in Quentin Tarantino's *Pulp Fiction* (1994) and *Jackie Brown* (1997), the musical soundtracks are exclusively back-catalogue compilations.

The prospects for increasing interest in these different kinds of non-diegetic film music are hardly improved by the continuing insistence in both critical and popular discourse on its situation as "background" music, a term which defines its function as inconspicuous and inconsequential. This implies that even if it is heard, it isn't listened to (like Muzak). Moreover, "background", like "underscoring", is a spatial metaphor, a visual concept which applies awkwardly to an aural form. The use of such terms, however, is hardly surprising: the study of film music has been constrained by the general view that cinema is essentially a visual medium and, consequently, that music is subordinate to image. The terms of reference we habitually use to define cinema -- moving pictures, movies, flicks, "cinema" itself -- all denote the medium's visual dynamics. Audiences (despite the term's etymological emphasis on *hearing*) are understood to be spectatorial: after all, we see films. This distinction in value between sound and image can be seen as part of the legacy of nineteenth-century Romantic thought which made a connection between music and subjectivity (emotion and irrationality) against vision, which was equated with objectivity (logic and rationality). Hence, there seem to be any number of reasons for relegating film music to a "secondary" status category.

The "neglected" condition of film music can be at least partly attributed to a disciplinary divide between film studies and music caused by a polarisation of their respective interests, methodologies and expertise. Film scholarship, as Donnelly suggests in his Introduction to *Film Music*, "has largely ignored film music as a problem it would rather not face" (1). This is very largely true. In most historical overviews of the cinema, for example, the subject is scarcely mentioned or altogether ignored. Even with the musical, the genre which most obviously demands *musical* attention, this neglect is apparent and, although there is no shortage of studies of the musical, the music itself is invariably disregarded. One of the obstacles to music-specific analysis arises from film studies' approaches (informed by cultural studies) which hold to the view that textual meaning and significance cannot be elicited from the formal features of the text *per se*, but require contextualising strategies. Such an approach is adopted in Ken Garner's "'Would You Like to Hear Some Music?' Music in-and-out-of-control in the Films of Quentin Tarantino" in *Film Music* (188-205). Garner's discussion of The Delfonics' "Didn't I (Blow Your Mind This Time)" in *Jackie Brown* identifies no fewer than four "signifying functions" of the song (189-90), but offers nothing about its *musical* significance. While Garner shouldn't be criticised for not doing what he didn't intend to, the absence of musical specificity highlights a critical shortfall in the analytic capabilities of disciplinary approaches which may deal effectively with socio-cultural contexts, but not the music text itself.

Almost by definition, cultural studies is concerned with popular culture and, for many of its proponents, popular culture is defined (and championed) in opposition to what is seen as the elitism of "high" culture. Music scholarship, on the other hand, has largely disdained film music as a form which isn't readily accommodated within its own principal sphere of study, what it likes to call "pure" or "absolute" music. Musicology, in academic practice, has largely come to mean the study of the western classical tradition and, specifically, its "great-man" canon, with methodologies governed by stylistic and aesthetic concerns. The notion of "absolute" music derives from a Romantic conception of the transcendent capabilities of certain "pure" forms of instrumental music (notably the Beethovian symphony and sonata) in contradistinction to stage works (like opera and operetta) and "programme music" (which

"depicts" a scene or "tells" a story). It is with these less exalted forms that film music is more usually compared (in opera, the orchestra is concealed, situated outside the "diegetic" frame of the stage and, thus, its music comes from an "invisible" source like the extra-diegetic music in film). Moreover, the metalanguage of musicology is drawn predominantly from "Schenkerian" modes of notation-based analysis which focus primarily on the formal properties of the music, a form of musicological positivism which privileges the written score as text. Unsurprisingly, musicology is often seen as "old", ideologically conservative, fixated on a "dead-white-male" canon, and tied to methodologies liable to criticism for their reductive formalism and esoteric elitism.

When musicology does attend to film music, it inevitably deploys its "elite" criteria. In its writings on "classical" film music, for example, Wagner is persistently invoked as an exemplary model of theory and practice. Wagnerian concepts such as the *Gesamtkunstwerk* (total art work) and *Leitmotiv* are routinely applied to film music. For "classical" apologists, the Wagnerian association represents a criterion of "art" value to legitimate a downgraded medium; conversely, for its detractors, Wagnerian models provide the standard to measure the artistic shortfall of "classical" practices. Two essays in *Music and Cinema* address the uses and misuses of Wagnerian models. In "Richard Wagner and the Fantasy of Cinematic Unity" (58-84), Scott Paulin points out in his rigorous cross-examination of the use-value of "Wagner" how the discourse which reifies "Wagner" as "a coherent, stable sign" (59) is frequently at odds with what Wagner wrote. In "*Star Wars*, Music and Myth", James Buhler addresses similar concerns in a reassessment of the music (by John Williams) in the *Star Wars* series, arguing that claims for its "Wagnerian" status are undermined by a misappropriated deployment of *Leitmotiv* which fails to fulfil the narratives' intended mythologising function (33-57). Ultimately, for both Paulin and Buhler, there is a crucial disjuncture between Wagner's *Leitmotiv* and Hollywood's *leitmotiv*. It is particularly noteworthy that Paulin, himself a musicologist, so admirably demonstrates here how well musicology *can* address the problems of its traditional disciplinary tendencies.

Traditional musicological analysis often focuses on music *from* film rather than *in* film: that is, where the music is detached from the film's narrative context and studied as a discrete music text. Because the music is taken out of the filmic narrative system, any question of what it does there and how it does it becomes foreclosed. Clearly, musicological analysis alone can hardly be expected to account for the inextricable place of music in film narrative, especially insofar as it relies on a methodology which extricates the music from the narrative text. Conversely, in treating film music as of secondary narrative importance and, as it were, pushing it into the "background", film studies has shown that it lacks the theoretical and critical means necessary to deal with music as text rather than context. Here, as Buhler and his co-editors rightly point out, "the study of film music is likely to remain always marginal because its irreducible interdisciplinarity alienates it from the one discipline or the other" (2). They also rightly suggest the need for "a team approach" (which they have themselves adopted here) and, for them, "the value of an interdisciplinary forum goes without saying" (8). Indeed it does.

But we should also go further and call into question the implications of institutional research practices which impede the more collaborative approaches of interdisciplinary scholarship necessary for the development of film-music studies. Firstly, academia needs to address the institutional structures in which the individual scholar works largely as a "soloist", typically situated within constrictive departmental boundaries. Secondly, it needs to consider the pedagogic implications of a research culture with little demonstrable commitment to the

effective cross-disciplinary dissemination of its work. It is one of the curiosities of film studies scholarship that its work should be conducted more or less exclusively through the medium of print, that is, through a medium so particularly unsuited to the subject of its study. The study of film music would surely be better served by scholarship undertaken with more imaginative use of the electronic audio-visual technology now commonly available. By these means, film and music scholars could begin speaking to each other in a common language, to help each other with the elucidation and explication of their respective disciplines, and to develop the interdisciplinary strategies necessary for finding new ways of talking about film music.

Heartbreak and Vine: The Fate of Hardboiled Writers in Hollywood

By Woody Haut
London: Serpent's Tail, 2002. ISBN 1-85242-678-0, vii + 312pp. £12.00 (pbk)
The Devil Himself: Villainy in Detective Fiction and Film Edited by Stacy Gillis and Philippa Gates

The Devil Himself: Villainy in Detective Fiction and Film

Edited by Stacy Gillis and Philippa Gates

Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2002. ISBN 0-313-31655-4, ix + 217pp. $64.95 (hbk)

A review by Andrew Pepper, Queen's University Belfast, Northern Ireland, UK

Woody Haut's *Heartbreak and Vine* and Stacy Gillis' and Philippa Gates' *The Devil Himself* constitute two related but nonetheless distinctive strands in the criticism of popular/crime fiction forms. Addressing crime fiction *and* film, the first focuses on the dynamic tension between commercial pressures and artistic ambitions and the status of fiction and filmmaking as overlapping and yet diverging cultural practices. The second examines the interaction between hegemonic and counter-hegemonic tendencies exhibited at the level of form and content. At best, the former strand, like Robert Warshaw's exemplary essay "The Gangster as Tragic Hero", unravels the complex processes by which popular forms unsettle attempts to fix high culture/low culture boundaries; at worst it ends up fixing this same boundary even more securely. At best, meanwhile, the latter strand explores the structuring tension at the heart of much crime fiction and film -- between hegemonic and counter-hegemonic ambitions -- and examines how writers and filmmakers open up and exploit this tension for their own ends; at worst this type of criticism arrives at the essentially bland conclusion that popular forms, to quote Eve Sedgewick, are only ever "sort of transgressive and sort of hegemonic." Both Haut's and Gillis' and Gates' books are examples of the best and worst tendencies of these two strands of criticism.

Covering some of the critical ground staked out by his two earlier books, *Pulp Culture* and *Neon Noir*, Haut's *Heartbreak and Vine* tells the familiar and unfamiliar story of the fate of hardboiled writers in Hollywood. The image of the talented artist working under factory-like conditions and being slowly reduced by drink and studio interference to ruin has long been part of our shared cultural assumptions about the writer's fate in Hollywood. So explains the demise of writers as talented and diverse as Clifford Odetts, William Faulkner, F. Scott Fitzgerald and, of course, Raymond Chandler. But Haut's story is also an unfamiliar one because, while the fate of so-called "literary" writers in the imprisoning Dream factories of

Hollywood has been told many times, much less is known about the fate of "noirists" whose cultural and artistic sensibilities were arguably to be found somewhere between elitist and mass cultural tastes. Thus Haut's focus not just on noir's usual suspects -- Hammett, Chandler, McCoy, James M. Cain, Woolrich, Goodis and Thompson -- but also on less well-known figures like W. R. Burnett, Paul Cain, A. I. Bezzerides, Daniel Mainwaring, Jonathan Latimer and Leigh Bracket is very welcome. In addition, Haut has brought the story up to date by interviewing a number of contemporary crime novelists and/or screenwriters -- Edward Bunker, James Ellroy, Elmore Leonard, Gerald Petievich, James Crumley, James Lee Burke, Barry Gifford, James Hall, Dennis Lehane, George Pelacanos, Joseph Wambaugh and Donald Westlake -- about their experiences of adapting their own work for the screen and/or having others adapt their work.

Haut's main arguments throw up few surprises. Summarised briefly these are as follows. Firstly, that Hollywood can make or break writers: "Some hardboilers have been able to adapt to the strictures of script-writing and the Hollywood lifestyle, while others have been destroyed by it" (2). Secondly, that writing fiction for publication and for the screen are very different exercises and require different skills. As Crumley puts it, "The screen-play is an entirely different form" (248) or Donald Westlake: "When I write a novel, I'm God. When I write a screenplay, I'm cupbearer to the gods" (263). Thirdly, that most noirists are ultimately destroyed by their experiences of writing for Hollywood: "[It] was more of a prison sentence than a way of freeing them from the exigencies that the obsession of writing demands" (155). Fourthly, in dystopic version of Thomas Schatz's "genius of the system" thesis, that noirists writing in and for Hollywood occasionally produce great individual and collaborative works; that is to say, aspire to and achieve "art": "If some writers were able to produce their best work under such conditions, perhaps there is something to be said for the exigencies of corporate power, and those tarnished enough to flourish in the mean streets of Tinseltown" (101). Finally, that contemporary noir writers simultaneously are flirting with pastiche in their efforts to reanimate the genre and are becoming increasingly and self-consciously astute in their dealings with Hollywood: "it is their ability to navigate the culture, their knowledge of the genre in which they work, their depiction of those on the margins of the culture, and the authenticity of their vision that makes their work interesting and offers a degree of hope regarding the future of noir fiction and film" (267).

The strength of Haut's book, undoubtedly, is both the clarity and persuasiveness of his own critical voice when assessing particular novels, films and cultural trends, and his ability to map the tensions and contradictions produced by sometimes antagonistic, sometimes enabling artistic and commercial influences. In some cases these two skills are related. That is, this mapping process necessitates Haut's own intervention as critic. In other cases, it is Haut's careful sourcing of biographical materials which expose such tensions or bring them into relief. Thus stories of Horace McCoy, the author of some of the blackest, most coruscating critiques of capitalist America, and particularly Hollywood, "schmoozing on the golf course or networking between sets of tennis" (51-52) with studio executives are countered by equally fascinating ones of, say, Chandler attempting to throw his weight around in order to elicit additional money and prestige and being simultaneously feted and despised for doing so, feting and despising himself, feelings that would mutate into his writing. Haut's writing is accessible and the often compelling material is clearly presented but as a book aimed somewhere between *Time Out/TLS* readers and an academic audience, it doesn't quite satisfy the requirements of either constituency. The latter's desire for a lively, provocative critical voice to guide them through the work (as best exemplified by John Williams's dissection of contemporary American crime fiction, *Into the Badlands*) is met in

part but such a voice is inexplicably muted in the second half of the book, to allow the writers to speak for themselves, without sufficient critical intervention. As a critical guide for students and lecturers, moreover, it fails to situate debates and questions about the contingencies of power and commodifcation of culture in an appropriately rigorous analytical/theoretical framework. So whereas Mike Davis's *City of Quartz* or Jim Neilson's *Warring Fictions*, for example, manage to demonstrate, in a lucid, accessible, theoretically engaged manner (combining the best of cultural studies and political economy), how society and culture have been shaped by a range of political, economic and historical determinants, *Heartbreak and Vine* alludes to, but without properly examining, the impact on cultural forms of the rapidly changing political economies of film-making and book publishing, and fails to identify when and why it rubs up against particular theoretical arguments.

Gillis' and Gates' edited collection, *The Devil Himself*, attunes itself, quite self-consciously, to addressing such concerns and excavating the tension between hegemonic and counter-hegemonic tendencies in crime fiction and films, and that it succeeds and fails to do so, as is always the case with edited collections, depends on the varying qualities of the individual essays. Aside from the highly problematic conflation of fiction and film, and British and American texts, as undistinguished cultural forms, the fault lies not with the editors, Gillis and Gates, who in their introduction and organisation make an excellent job of staking out and mapping an underdeveloped area of critical enquiry -- how, to quote William Everson in the introduction "the activities of the bad guys tell us far more about the changing mores and morals of our times than a similar study of the good guys ever do" (1) -- but rather with the inevitably varied individual contributions. The organisation and structure of the book, moving from examinations of villainy and detection in nineteenth century and early twentieth century British fiction to related explorations into contemporary representations, is clear and well-thought out, usefully combining a focus on canonical (i.e. Collins, Doyle, Dickens) and non-canonical writers (i.e. Braddon, Ellis, Rohmer). Essays on Bond villains, British women's crime fiction of the Second World War, and Hitchcock's *Shadow of a Doubt* bridge the chronological gap. The only jarring presence in the collection are the final two essays focusing on contemporary American film: the essays themselves are both fine but the idea that the differences between films and novels (in the context of their political economies, for example) can be elided on the grounds that they are only representations needs to be resisted.

The critical focus of the book is usefully outlined in the introduction, so that a Foucauldian interest in situating crime fiction in relation to disciplinary techniques linked to the emergence of capitalist practices -- crime fiction as enmeshed in networks of power relations that both collude with and unsettle dominant cultural and ideological formations -- is augmented by foregrounding the work of Jim Collins and Scott McCracken, both of whom draw attention to the ways in which practices of "reading" and interpreting crime novels and films are subject to the contingencies of taste, class, gender and so forth. As Collins reminds us, "Detective fiction is often characterised as mass culture at its most oppressive and reactionary. It can also be seen as one of the first and surest signs that what constitutes 'reading'…has changed fundamentally" (2). The essays that particularly stand out in the collection -- ones by Jan-Melissa Schramm, Catherine Wynne and, best of all, Susan Rowland -- successfully manage to situate their subjects (Dickens and nineteenth century fiction, Doyle, and James and Rendell respectively) in a rich social and cultural context while remaining critically attuned to the ambiguities, tensions and contradictions at the heart of the genre and thus to the multiple interpretative possibilities open to readers and critics. The less successful ones tend to be overly descriptive, critically blinkered or apparently unaware of their relationship either to the other essays or more importantly to their corresponding social,

cultural and political contexts. In the end, it is a collection that will be more useful for those interested in crime fictions than crime films and as always, its value depends on the willingness of the reader to ferret out the "good stuff" for him or herself.

Horror: The Film Reader

By Edited by Mark Jancovich
London: Routledge, 2002. ISBN 0-415-23562-6. 188 pp. £13.99 (pbk)

A review by Patricia M. Allmer, Loughborough University, UK

Mark Jancovich, author of one of the first thorough critical engagements with horror films, *Horror* (1992), offers in *Horror: The Film Reader* some meticulous editorial work. Jancovich makes, through clear, careful and sustained signposting, (from the book's cover to the introductions to the individual essays) the essays and debates accessible. The editorial work on the essays manages to condense them sufficiently, yet at the same time keeps them flowing, highlighting their key arguments.

This *Reader* fulfils an array of aims. It presents a range of essays, both classic and more recent, on horror films from 1986 to 2000, introducing key figures in the tradition of writing on horror, such as Robin Wood, Barbara Creed and Linda Williams. The essays are categorised into four parts. The first part is concerned with attempting to define the genre and account for the appeal of horror films and the second offers theorisations of gender and sexuality in horror films. The third section focuses on the production of horror films and investigates the relation of horror to low culture and avant-garde cinema, while the last part approaches the reception of horror.

The introduction is marked by careful signposting and the attempt to offer a holistic picture of the history of academic approaches to the horror genre. Jancovich, whilst offering a history of academic approaches to horror, does not forget to account for an underlying horror film history which influences these approaches. An eminent feature of this book is its refusal to pin down assertions, instead opening up discussion and disclosing the complexity at the core of horror. Jancovich makes this fully clear in providing *a* history rather than *the* history of horror films. He argues: "There remains little consensus over the shape of this history amongst academics -- each account emphasises some features and ignores others -- and I was therefore forced to steer a course between deeply opposed and contradictory constructions of the field" (3). The reader is led from this assertion into a detailed and complex discussion of horror as a genre which engages with the various pros and cons of a range of approaches, offering stimulating discussion and also disturbing the reader's preconceived ideas of what the genre includes and what a genre may be. The essays are selected in order to allow opposing and contradictory views to play out against each other, as for example in the first two essays. There Wood provides a psychoanalytic reading of horror films as "returns of the repressed;" this is followed by Noël Carroll's "Why Horror" which uses cognitive psychology as analytic framework, arguing that psychoanalysis cannot accommodate the "interest in horrific beings whose imagery do not seem straightforwardly, or even circuitously, rooted in such things as repression" (41). The essays don't seek canonical agreement, but do point out the complexity involved in any attempt to account for horror films.

While the editorial work is excellent, and the essays collected together here are important in offering a sense of the academic research done into horror films and the arguments surrounding them, the essays themselves are sometimes rather disappointing. They too frequently display the failure of not pushing far enough in intellectual terms, and some of the shortcomings of academic attempts to try to deal with these films are often evident. So, for example, Wood asserts that the horror film has a subversive potential -- but it could equally be argued that the horror film is rather establishing and enforcing the importance of social norms, pointing out the deadly hazards of transgressing these norms. In addition, the problems of moving away from a textual reading of films become apparent. The focus moves away from the films *per se*, repeatedly trying to find an explanation of why people go to see horror films, as Andrew Tudor asks: "Are they sick? Are they disturbed people indulging nasty, perverse desires?" (47) These theorisations seem to involve themselves increasingly with obscure psychological and sociological approaches, most apparent in the case of the last essay by Brigid Cherry. Here the reader is informed that "Seventy-two percent of the respondents watched a horror video at least monthly, while 56 per cent watched several times a month," (170) which is followed by the ten most frequently listed favourite horror films which are tabulated in terms of numbers of viewers.

In no other strand of art in general and visual art in particular, is such an approach encountered -- people are not asked or listed why they prefer Van Gogh to Michaelangelo, nor is it argued that Romanticism could be defined as a genre through the opinions of viewers or readers of Romantic material. These approaches suggest that horror, or whatever is termed as horror, needs justification outside of itself being a film, and therefore art. These audience-centred readings also seem to have the effect, while trying to establish the horror film as a legitimate genre, of also constructing it as a "strange" genre.

However, these are the key articles on horror films and therefore important to everybody who wants to engage in the debates in and around the horror genre. Alongside its excellent signposting, this book is truly informative and wide ranging, offering a thorough grounding in the history of and arguments about horror, most importantly making the reader critically aware of the problems underlying any definition of what constitutes a horror film, and, perhaps, of what constitutes the study of such a film.

Imperial Projections: Ancient Rome in Modern Popular Culture

By Edited by Sandra R. Joshel, Margaret Malamud, and Donald T. McGuire, Jr.
Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001. ISBN 0-8010-6742-8. 28 illustrations, x + 299 pp. $45.00 (hbk)
The Ancient World in the Cinema (Revised and Expanded Edition) By Jon Solomon

The Ancient World in the Cinema (Revised and Expanded Edition)

By Jon Solomon

New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001. ISBN 0-3000-8337-8. 205 illustrations, xx + 368pp. $22.50 (pbk)

A review by Karen Fang, University of Houston, USA

When Ridley Scott's Roman warrior movie *Gladiator* appeared in 2000, the film's classical setting seemed doubly anachronistic among the other summer action fare, as it contrasted not only with the sci-fi plotlines or futuristic weaponry of usual auctioneers but also seemed further outdated because that genre of movies set in ancient Rome had seen its heyday nearly a half-century earlier, in the era of *Ben-Hur* (1959), *Spartacus* (1960), and *Cleopatra* (1963). In the following year, two studies addressing these cinematic representations of the classical past were published. *The Ancient World in the Cinema* is a revised and expanded edition of a popular study, by Jon Solomon, that was first published in 1978. Now advertised as "one of the best books about film ever written, according to… *The Signet Book of Movie Lists*," the volume spans films made in America, Britain, and Europe throughout the twentieth century, in an expansive compass which includes Greek and Roman history, mythology and tragedy, Christian and orientalist tales, or anything of a narrative or setting that might loosely be categorized as "ancient." *Imperial Projections*, by contrast, is a collection of new essays by different scholars that focuses primarily on the great Hollywood epics about Rome in particular. Both books offer valuable reflections on the relation between contemporary popular culture and the ancient past that has also been explored by Maria Wyke in *Projecting the Past: Ancient Rome, Cinema, and History* (1997) -- but with the additional advantage of their more recent temporal moment, in which contemporary movies such as *Gladiator*, a digitally-enhanced film, add a different and expressly modern aspect to the historical interest that the films had always presumed.

Imperial Projections is an excellent example of what might be called the allegorical mode of cinematic interpretation, in which movies are understood as texts about the cultures that make and consume them. Despite accompanying essays on non-cinematic subjects, film is the

leading focus of the volume: essays by William Fitzgerald, Martin M. Winkler, and Alison Futrell delineate the visual and narrative conventions of cinematic Rome -- which include themes of oppression and excess, Christian conversion, scenes of sexual perversity, and a marked use of British and American accents -- while later essays by Nicholas J. Cull and Maria Wyke, which examine an English satire and the revisionary queer film *Sebastiane* (Derek Jarman, 1976), respectively, explore re-workings of the genre which corroborate, in their deliberate opposition to those conventions, the motifs and their implications as adduced in the previous essays. The authors find that the cinematic subgenre frequently is the site of nationalist identification and Cold War ideology, and liken the Roman movies of the 1940's-1960's to the rhetorical and pictorial tropes of wartime propaganda and pro- and anti-Communist activism, as well as general popular culture. Noting that it is imperial rather than republican Rome that is usually the setting of these popular representations, the author's divine themes of manifest destiny in the movies that clearly resonated with Britain, the U.S., and Hollywood -- the three pre-eminent empires of the era. This insight reveals the presentness within these apparently antique gazes, accounting for their popularity in their historical moment as well as demonstrating why these movies ought to be of interest to non-classicists.

The Ancient World in the Cinema nicely complements *Imperial Projections* by offering an extensive survey of a more general category, examining anything that might be considered classical -- including even the "muscleman" pulp films whose relevance would seem to be limited to their revealing costumes and heroic exploits. As an updated and expanded volume, the new edition features commentary on recent releases such as *Gladiator*, and over two hundred film stills, production photos, and images of antique artefacts, which interestingly track the accuracy and embellishments of these cinematic representations. The most valuable feature of the volume, however, was already present in the original volume and is the reason why the book has been a standard reference on the subject. This is the tremendous number of films that the book reviews, beginning with silents at the start of the cinema era, and encompassing obscure releases from continental studios and art filmmakers as well as countless cable series and made-for-TV movies. Only such comprehensiveness can reveal the extraordinary prevalence of the genre, calling attention to the pervasiveness of the phenomena that the Hollywood-centered and exclusive focus on Rome in *Imperial Projections* does not allow. For example, in his volume Solomon repeatedly notes the special importance classical settings and stories have occupied in Italian film in particular, a national cinema whose relationship to the ancient past must be inflected with a unique sense of cultural continuity. This observation highlights a local importance to the Roman subject in *Imperial Projections* that the ostensibly Roman-focused volume overlooks.

The breadth of Soloman's discussion in *The Ancient World in the Cinema*, however, necessarily requires that substantiative discussion of individual films is not possible. Readers seeking sustained and specialized analysis of specific movies will be better served by *Imperial Projections*, with its detailed historical and critical discussion of a select group of films. Moreover, despite its revisions, *The Ancient World in the Cinema* remains very much of its original, late-1970's format, and thus contains awkward discussion of film as an art and the value of popular culture for scholarly discussion -- ideas which are already intrinsic to the more contemporary critical approaches in *Imperial Projections*. The more recent approach in *Imperial Projections* is, by the same token, however, not without its own oversights. For example, the volume's focus on film versus the other, non-visual, media it discusses, runs the risk of discounting the most original contributions in the volume. Most studies of the popularity of classical settings in cinema show the attraction to be the visual stimulation of

splendor, spectacle, and excess; it is for this reason that so many films exist. By contrast, a couple of essays in *Imperial Projections* -- which study potboiler novels and the continuing inspiration to comedians and dramatists of the Roman writer Plautus -- reveal alternative lines of classical inspiration instead of the primarily visual appeal that the Roman empire holds over Hollywood. These subjects bear further discussion precisely because they deviate from the ideas outlined in *Imperial Projections*, suggesting a cultural-aesthetic legacy from the classical era that does not participate in the subjection of audiences that Roman spectacle asserts in the movies.

More to the point, although both volumes emphasize visual splendor to be the primary reason for the cinema's frequent reference to classical history, neither work addresses the implications of this apparent connection between the ancient past and the filmic medium itself. This oversight is particularly apparent by the minimal discussion in both books of *Gladiator*, the film with which the volumes so propitiously coincided. The issue at question is why classical antiquity should be such a frequent inspiration to filmic innovation when, by its very historical remoteness, the subject of these films appears within a sort of temporal antithesis to the modern technologies used to portray them. *Gladiator* is the key text in this line of inquiry, as the movie made use of computer-generated images to create the vast panoramas of urban splendor intrinsic to the genre. Vivian Sobchack previously outlined this relationship between historical settings and moving-image entertainment in a 1990 essay on epic film ("'Surge and Splendour': A Phenomenology of the Hollywood Historical Epic," *Representations* 29 [1990]: 24-49). According to Sobchack, the shift of the epic subject from movie to television miniseries that occurred in the 1970's -- or after the last of Hollywood's great Roman spectacles -- is a technological outcome of the replacement of celluloid projection by electronic transmission. Her thesis pertains to *Gladiator* because it anticipates the trend in cinematic invention that would culminate, exactly a decade later and at the turn of the millennium, in digitally-enhanced films such as *Gladiator*. Scott's film thus is part of the larger genre of movies than those studied in *Imperial Projections* and *The Ancient World in the Cinema*, in which the digitally-produced visual spectacle is metonymically connected to the plot -- such as in *Jurassic Park* (1993), *Forrest Gump* (1994), and *Titanic* (1997) -- so that the feature entertainment is not genre (Roman epic; creature film; historical romance; disaster movie) but the fact of digital spectacle itself.

For those readers primarily concerned with exploring the theoretical implications of this yoking of digital invention to historical films, there is yet another book from 2001 that bears more profoundly on this subject. Philip Rosen's *Change Mummified: Cinema, Historicity, Theory* resurrects the metaphors of antiquity in André Bazin's famous reference to film as "change mummified," in order to illustrate the primacy of film as a form of modern historical experience. In his discussion of the new media in particular, Rosen reveals how the various media that comprise "cinema" enable the artistic creation of historical continuity while also memorializing -- in the classical tradition of monumentalization -- the very modern innovations that make that gesture possible. In conjunction with the more specific and popular studies cited here, Rosen's book is an important theoretical endeavour that substantiates and elaborates the insights of the other volumes. As three books on similar subjects that simultaneously appeared at a provocative historical moment, all three works suggest that the simultaneous flowering of digital technology and historical film at the millennial moment was not coincidental but a watershed event whose reliance upon historical representation was -- like the rise of Christianity that is a frequent metaphor in the Roman films for the modernity of the movies' audiences -- a metaphor for the emergence of a new era of moving-image entertainment.

Key Film Texts

By Graham Roberts and Heather Wallis
London: Arnold, 2002. ISBN 03340-76227-6. 8 Illustrations, 256 pp. £13.99 (pbk)

A review by Brian Caldwell, University College, Northampton, UK

This textbook sits uneasily within contemporary debates about film analysis/film studies. Indeed there is a quaintness about the editors' concern with producing a canon (1), their revealing reference to "our television-faded expectations" (76) and the distinction drawn between those who claim "to know anything about the history and the theory of cinema", those who do know (2) and presumably a third class who apparently know nothing. The intention is to guide our thinking (71) on a range of key film texts which are readily available on video/DVD, although it becomes clear that a high percentage of the films chosen are award/Oscar winners. This populist element is evident elsewhere, for example in the willingness to avoid controversy about the representation of sex, sexuality and violence in film, and the number of references to *Star Wars* (1977) (which is used as a template for a reading of *Casablanca* (1942).) The criteria for selection marginalises both women directors and international cinema, a situation readily accepted by the editors who fatuously offer "heartfelt apologies" (2) to those omitted.

The quality of the accounts of those films which are included is uneven. Thus the considerations of *Stagecoach* (1939), *A bout de Souffle* (*Breathless)* (1959) and *Annie Hall* (1977) are informative and do have coherence whereas at the other end of the scale little of value is said about *Sunset Boulevard* (1950) or *Titanic* (1997). The recurrent mode of review is a mixture of the descriptive and the assertive, offering plot details/summaries and/or lists of related films (already catered for in the section advising further viewing) combined with questionable but unquestioned statements such as that performances [in the *Gold Rush* (1925)] "are complex for such a genre" (25), that before *Stagecoach* westerns "were made quickly and cheaply for a largely male audience" (48,) or that in *Otto e mezzo* (*Eight and a Half*, 1963) Fellini is "clearly exploring his own troubles" (109). The problem is not so much that such statements are made, but that little evidence is offered to substantiate them nor are they evaluated or discussed. There is greater emphasis on accumulating materials and acquiring knowledge than on promoting enquiry and debate, a more logistical than an intellectual process. The lack of specificity in the questions posed at the end of each account compounds this problem and the reading lists lack consistent value, indeed these are omitted for more than a third of the films reviewed. The lack of precision in the language used is at times also a problem; the recurrent use of "scary" eg. in relation to *Nosferatu* (1922) (17) is unhelpful as is the description of Susan Vance (Katherine Hepburn) in *Bringing up Baby* (1938) as "this one-woman Exocet missile" (1938), and quaintness returns when we are asked to define the major obstacle preventing Gene and Debbie (*Singing in the Rain*, 1952) "getting it together" (77). Above all the lack of emphasis on the visual elements in film is galling; although the visual is mentioned, too often it is as if it is a book rather than a film which is under consideration.

That said there is a cumulative effect here; to read all of the accounts enables recurrent consideration of concerns related to documentary film, to film and history, to auteurship and genre, less often to realism, stardom, narrative (but not in any detail, editing), and briefly to production and reception. However it is not clear how the editors intend this book to be used. They advise reading this text alongside their own *Introducing Film* (2001), but apparently assume that it will be shelved under reference; the index does not facilitate a reading across concerns with for example auteurship or genre. It is also not clear for whom this text is intended. The readership is presumably the uninitiated, perhaps as a stimulus to discover the editors' self-defined list of key texts in order to lay a base of evidence for the study of film, but whether the target reader is the prospective student or the committed amateur is not declared. Either way, money would be better invested in a subscription to *Sight and Sound*; at least here the visual images are produced with care and the criteria for the selection of film texts are manifest.

Masculinity: Bodies, Movies, Culture

By Edited by Peter Lehman
London: Routledge, 2001. ISBN 0-415-92324-7. 318 pp. £14.99 (pbk)

A review by Kirsty Fairclough, University of Salford, UK

Masculinity as an academic discourse has gained much attention during recent years and many books published focus upon the changes that the area has undergone as a result of the feminist movement and the subsequent emergent discussion of the range of masculine identities. This collection of essays attempts to provide the reader with "a better understanding of the complex and shifting category of masculinity in both film and everyday life." Lehman gathers a diverse group of writers together from film scholars to performance artists each discussing the many ways of screening the male body.

Lehman is quick to acknowledge that while there have been many books published on the subject in recent years, there are still a number of central issues that remain key to understanding the discussion of male sexuality and identity. Thus Lehman has chosen a collection of essays which focus upon familiar issues within the study of male identities including representations of masculinity in Hollywood, new queer cinema, masculinity and stardom as well as a few more disparate topics including a discussion of lynching photography.

The essays are not grouped into categories, which appears initially as an odd approach, but as Lehman points out "the implication may be that the essays are easily contained in those groupings". The book therefore focuses upon the interconnectedness of the issues at the heart of many of the essays. There is a diverse range of work here from the analysis of representations of white masculinity in Hollywood with Krin Gabbard's discussion of Mel Gibson in *Ransom* (1996), to Amy Louise Wood's rather surprising and disturbing analysis of lynching photographs taken by white Southerners of their black victims. Lehman himself points out the need to focus upon the related areas of photography and performance perhaps pre-empting the surprise of such an inclusion in a collection of essays which focus, in the main, upon screen representations of masculinity.

Lehman himself contributes an interesting article on the "melodramatic penis" where he discusses the relationship between the penis on film and melodrama. In this essay Lehman discusses the representation of the penis on screen in relation to what he terms "extreme melodrama". He focuses upon films including *The Crying Game* (1992)and *M. Butterfly* (1993) where the penis is neither an impressive spectacle nor the focus of scornful humour. Lehman argues that there is a third category in which melodrama is the method by which the penis is presented, which despite being a positive step, still posits that the penis is of "excessive dramatic importance."

Justin Wyatt's consideration of identity, queerness and homo-social bonding provides an insightful and discerning account of "new queer cinema". He argues that seemingly straight films such as *Swingers* (1996) depict a model of male bonding, which is on the surface, a

portrayal of a group of straight, male friends, but demonstrates the espousal of gay male friendship. Similarly, Amy Aronson and Michael Kimmel's account of the representation of gay men in contemporary Hollywood as saviours of the heterosexual romance is particularly interesting and provides one of the highlights of the collection.

The collection concludes with a tender and heartfelt account by performance artist Tim Miller. The inclusion of this essay which chronicles his experiences leading workshops for men is pertinent and has a resonance which frames the whole collection. Miller is a performance artist whose work blurs the boundaries between art and social activism. The aim of much of Millers work is to discover "a more authentic and individualised way of being present within our deeply problematised men's bodies." His account of working with a group of predominantly gay men in Birmingham, UK is a tender exploration of the complexities surrounding how men perceive their own and others bodies and the anxieties and joys of being male.

Lehman notes in the introductory section that "masculinity remains a disturbingly complex and shifting category that the essays in this book help us to better understand." Miller's article captures this sentiment and provides a welcome burst of reality from the majority of the academic essays within the collection. However, many of the essays are covering issues and debates which have been discussed elsewhere and as such remain resolutely familiar, but engaging nonetheless.

To conclude, the collection of essays here is diverse which collectively offers a sense of transition and shifting cultural agendas. This is not a major contribution to the field, but it is an interesting and engaging book which, as its introduction claims, will go some way to providing "a better understanding of the complex and shifting category of masculinity in both film and everyday life." It is an interesting collection which will no doubt contribute to the myriad ways in which masculine identity is thought of and written about.

Monsters, Mushroom Clouds, and the Cold War: American Science Fiction and the Roots of Postmodernism, 1946-1964

By M. Keith Booker
Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001. ISBN 0-313-31873-5. 232 pp. £42.75 (pbk)
Atomic Bomb Cinema: The Apocalyptic Imagination on Film By Jerome F. Shapiro

Atomic Bomb Cinema: The Apocalyptic Imagination on Film

By Jerome F. Shapiro

London: Routledge, 2002. ISBN 0-415-93660-8. ix + 379 pp. £16.99 (pbk)

A review by Elizabeth Rosen, University College London, UK

Monsters, Mushroom Clouds, and the Cold War: American Science Fiction and the Roots of Postmodernism, 1946-1964 is M. Keith Booker's latest addition to his numerous surveys of literature and film. It claims to give a "more sophisticated -- and more political -- reading of the science fiction of the 1950's than has generally been attempted" (3). While it certainly gives a political reading of that decade's science fiction, it does not necessarily give a more sophisticated or even more original reading of the body of work in question. No scholar would question the suggestion that many of that era's creative works directly and indirectly engaged with the paranoia which resulted in the Communist hunts, as well as with other socio-political issues of the day. Booker's stated thesis -- "that the science fiction of the long 1950s, in both novel and film, closely parallels the social criticism of the decade in the terms of its critique of American society" -- is mostly taken for granted now (16). Students of the early genre will already be familiar with the idea that science fiction addressed such cultural concerns of the time as nuclear anxiety and Communism when other genres could not because of fear of HUAC and McCarthyism.

Far from being an idyllic Cleaver-esque time, the 1950s were a fearful, intellectually tumultuous decade when Soviet Communism was often perceived as an imminent shadow over the land. But, as Booker notes, there were other fears ratcheting up the public too, such as a burgeoning mass culture and the loss of individualism within the growing power of the corporate world. The standardization and homogenization of the populace was of concern to many observers of the culture, as was the sense of alienation that seemed to be a result of the increasingly mechanized, regimented, modern American work world. And, of course, nuclear

anxiety grew as details of Hiroshima and Nagasaki became publicized. Booker looks at how most of these fears make their way into the science fiction of the time.

Where *Monsters, Mushroom Clouds, and the Cold War* does add something to the scholarship on the science fiction of the 1950s is when it begins to look at these works as products of late capitalism. Booker's interests lean toward the intellectual works of the Left. This newest book traces many of the decade's science fiction works to their political roots, many of them Leftist, and the author does a fine job of analyzing how cultural critiques of rampant capitalism infiltrated a genre one would not necessarily believe appropriate for economic debate.

After an initial analysis of how politics were played out in the science fiction of the decade, Booker divides his survey into three categories: Post-Holocaust novels and films, space exploration/alien invasion films, and monster films. The most interesting of these is the last, in which Booker briefly examines the issue of gender. Unfortunately for the reader, his suggestion that the "new breed" of women were often themselves portrayed as the Alien in films such as *It Came From Beneath The Sea* (1955) is not as extensively explored as it could have been. Booker is at his best when he points to cultural fears about the changing role of women and notes how these fears manifest themselves in some of the monster films of the day.

Monsters, Mushroom Clouds, and the Cold War purports from its title to deal with the issue of postmodernism in science fiction. In actuality, however, Booker doesn't follow up on this strand of his analysis after his initial introduction of the idea, a regretful turn of events since he claims that science fiction is both the forerunner of postmodernist writing and the quintessential example of it. It would have been most interesting if Booker had concentrated more on this element of his argument.

Still, this is a good introduction for the general reader. Even the review of well-trodden ground isn't too problematic, particularly if one accepts Booker's qualification that the book's topic of politics and science fiction is one which would be served best by another in-depth examination.

Jerome F. Shapiro's book, *Atomic Bomb Cinema: The Apocalyptic Imagination on Film*, on the other hand, moves toward the other extreme: rather than a highly generalized overview of a period's science fiction, Shapiro's work is a highly personalized study of a very specific genre: the atomic bomb movie. Shapiro has spent a large portion of his adult life in Japan where he now teaches at Hiroshima University, and this personal experience of Japanese culture, as a student and an ex-patriot, gives him a valuable perspective on this particular topic.

Atomic Bomb Cinema focuses on the relationship between atomic bomb films and apocalyptic imagination. In particular, since most bomb films concern themselves with "themes of survival and achieving individual and social rebirth in an oppressive environment,"(12) Shapiro makes the case that these films more frequently express the Jewish apocalyptic tradition of *Tikkun Olum*, "the restoration of a fractured world,"(6) than the Christian apocalyptic tradition of transcendence to a new heaven. He posits that atomic bomb cinema is a continuance of an ancient tradition of apocalyptic imagination and that many of the scholars who have attempted to analyze this body of film have done so without

acknowledging or even realizing that they themselves are influenced by apocalyptic imagination.

The author is scrupulous in pointing out that the apocalyptic imagination, whether Jewish or Christian, is a hopeful one, full of optimism about the future, and that atomic bomb cinema cannot be separated from this apocalyptic strain. Films that depict only the end of human history leave out a vital portion of the apocalyptic idea. Part of Shapiro's goal in this book is to correct what he considers to be a number of mistaken categorizations of films related to this fact. A classic atomic bomb film such as *On the Beach* (1959) would seem not to fit the definition since it depicts the end of human life with no hope of a future at all. Yet, the author points out, the presence of a camera to record the story implies a survivor and therefore a future, as well.

On the other hand, a film such as *Notorious* (1946) which seems to revolve around the bomb is not an atomic bomb film at all, he argues, but merely uses the bomb as what Hitchcock famously called a "Macguffin," a plot device to move the narrative along. Other films, such as the first two of the *Mad Max* movies, have been mistakenly categorized as atomic bomb movies but are not bomb movies at all. Shapiro notes that it is not until the third movie, *Mad Max Beyond the Thunderdome* (1985), that the hint of a nuclear war antecedent is even suggested. He explains the misinterpretation of the earlier films by noting that by the time the first *Mad Max* came out in 1979, audiences were familiar enough with the conventions associating apocalyptic scenarios with atomic bombs that they assumed that the setting could only be a result of a nuclear war.

Shapiro examines bomb films as a subgenre of cinema, starting with what he considers to be its roots in films like *Metropolis* (1926), *A Trip to the Moon* (1914) and *Der Golem* (1920), and tracing it through films as recent as the 1998 American remake of *Godzilla*. He looks at both American and Japanese films in the genre and his explication of the differences in the handling of the topic benefits from his first-hand familiarity with Japanese culture. One of the more interesting arguments of his study is that the very notion of atomic bomb cinema has been "medicalized." That is, many critics have come to equate the energies devoted to exploring the bomb with certain pathologies. He points out that often their interpretations of this pathology contradict one another so that a film might be regarded as a cultural artefact of repressed guilt over the bomb in one instance and an example of obsessive violence and drive toward *thanatos* in the next.

Shapiro claims a neutral, apolitical attitude toward the nuclear issue, saying if he speaks "passionately against other scholars…it is not because [he thinks] they are evil or bad, nor even wholly wrong" but because he thinks "it is erroneous and dangerous to condemn entire societies as being pathological" (23). But perhaps the major shortcoming of this book is that it is laced with too much criticism of fellow academics which veers into analyzing personality and personal politics, rather than intellectual ideas. In particular, Shapiro seems to want to engage cultural historian Paul Boyer, whose *By the Bomb's Early Light* is considered seminal. Shapiro has a tendency to weave in personal anecdote and experience into his work, and the result is occasionally sentimental, but the real trouble is that the work risks the danger of being seen as a platform for personal *rather* than professional debate. It's a risk one wishes the author hadn't taken since *Atomic Bomb Cinema* is a needed and useful study on a group of films which has rarely before been considered as one body of work.

New Chinese Cinema: Challenging Representations

By Sheila Corneilius with Ian Hayden Smith
London: Wallflower Press, 2002. ISBN 1903364-13-2. x + 133 pp. £11.99 (pbk)
Seven Samurai By Joan Mellen

Seven Samurai

By Joan Mellen

London: BFI Publishing, 2002. ISBN 0-85170-915-X. iii + 79 pp. £8.99 (pbk)

A review by Rayna Denison, University of Nottingham, UK

Both of the series to which *New Chinese Cinema* and *Seven Samurai* belong are intended ostensibly as introductions, in the former case to a particular film-related topic and in the latter to a particular film text. As such, both perform admirably with elegant mixing of historical and extratextual information that helps to situate the authors' arguments regarding their chosen topics. However, both volumes fall prey to the exigencies involved in introductions and textual analysis, namely the need to cover a large amount of academic ground in relatively simple, if in Mellen's case detailed, ways. Both suffer somewhat from over-generalisation, which in some cases in terms of film analysis could be considered as opinion or interpretation offered up as fact.

This is not to say, however, that these books to not achieve their mandates, rather that they serve as good jumping off points for further research into the subjects in question. Joan Mellen in particular, given her high profile in the field of Japanese film studies, exudes a confidence in her interpretation of Akira Kurosawa's most famous film that belies its oft-times polemical stance (as in her section on Kurosawa and his critics). Shelia Cornelius in contrast attempts rather ambitiously to cover vast swathes of not only film analyses but also tries to provide concurrent historical, social and political commentaries. This at times leads her to either simply present information without explication while at others she falls victim to the necessity to be reductive with her contextualising materials.

New Chinese Cinema provides therefore a thorough introduction to a variety of important, perhaps even essential, issues within the world of Chinese filmmaking. Covering three generations of filmmakers in particular, from the fourth through to the sixth, Cornelius attempts to contextualise the study of Chinese film within what she terms "a social and political context" (1). Her chapters begin generally with broad introductions that focus down into specific case studies that she interpolates within the wider context of the chapter.

Particularly good is Chapter Two, in which she deals with the issue of censorship within Chinese cinema using Tian Zhuangzhuang's *The Blue Kite* (1993) to exemplify the precarious conditions of film production even in contemporary China.

Less convincing however is her insistence that these films be read in terms of Chinese culture. Cornelius's insistence on the primacy of Chinese cultural interpretations of these films means she does not discuss the varied reasons for their critical success outside of China. Nor does she account for the school of thought that would suggest there is no single "meaning" inherent in film to grant it authenticity. For example, she states that "a man in a barren landscape does not necessarily signify loneliness so much as a sense of purpose in nature -- a compositional feature that may be misread by a Western viewer" (56). This is the greatest weakness in her argument as Cornelius has here attempted to deal with the concept of authenticity in oblique ways, fostering a weak conclusion that resounds with the oft-heard death knell of "authentic" Chinese cinema.

Where Cornelius's book harbingers the end of Chinese cinema, Mellen's *Seven Samurai* celebrates one of the most influential films in Japanese film history. She begins by inserting the intriguing concept of *Seven Samurai* (1954) as an *Ofuna-cho* or family drama into scholarship that has generally viewed the film as a *jidai-geki* or period drama. She also provides minutely detailed considerations of Kurosawa's themes and techniques in relation to this case study, in which she finds reason to assert that "There may be no film in the history of cinema which illustrates so completely the power and potential of the medium" (30). Although contentious at times, Mellen's discussion of "Kurosawa and his Critics" (beginning at 58) provides some good insight into a complicated field within Japanese film studies as subsequent generations of filmmakers rebelled against the monolithic presence that Kurosawa had become.

As with Cornelius though, Mellen's provision of textual analysis often borders on the inscrutable. This is evidenced in Mellen's account of *Seven Samurai* by an occasional paucity in her referencing. For example, she posits that "Samurai for Kurosawa represent the best of Japanese tradition and integrity and their passing from the historical stage is nothing short of the loss of the unique Japanese identity" (20). There is no accompanying reference for the concept of a "unique" source of Japaneseness nor is there any evidence provided that supports this as Kurosawa's definitive opinion on the matter. In truth, Mellen is probably correct in her assertion, but the case could have been strengthened.

Equally evident in both cases is a sense of a highbrow preference for the artistic within national cinemas. In Mellen's case this comes through in a scathing appraisal of *The Magnificent Seven* (69-71). She seems to see this American remake of *Seven Samurai* as little more than a direct translation that fails because of the latter's reliance on the codes of the *bushi*, or samurai. She thus fails to interact with the film's significance outside of Japan in any positive way. Similarly Cornelius's focus on what she sees as "authentic" Chinese films leads her to ignore the links between the newer generations involvement in television. There is also a sense in her writing that the more beleaguered a production becomes the more authentic it becomes. Again here, some acknowledgement of the difficulties in defining authenticity might have elucidated her approach somewhat.

The New Media Book

By Edited by Dan Harries
London: BFI Publishing, 2002. ISBN 0-85170-925-7. 272 pp. £14.99 (pbk)

A review by Karen Orr Vered, Flinders University, Australia

Writing or editing a book about new media is a bit like counting stars. By the time the book appears on the shop shelf, what was once novel is now common, and what was once so promising has faded away. The task is made even more difficult because the objects of study do not reside neatly in any one discipline. Individually and as a collection, the essays in *The New Media Book* confront this challenge by addressing the ways in which established media are inflected by new media technologies and practices and by examining how new media operate as mediators in and of consumption.

Opening the book with a section on Technologies, Michele Hilmes' essay on cable, satellite, and other technologies for delivery and exhibition is an excellent overview of these technology-services. Anne Friedberg's succinctly written and titled essay, "CD and DVD", examines delivery format and the evolution of obsolescence, summarising twenty-plus years of home media. Jeremy Butler's contribution on the WWW and Internet challenges assumptions of a hardware/software binary by asking the reader to recognise software as fundamental infrastructure technology. The most polemic piece in this section is Sean Cubitt's contribution on special effects. Cubitt offers well-detailed descriptions and examples of digital special effects techniques in order to question fundamental assumptions about time, space, and story. As with many of the essays, this one could easily have been positioned elsewhere in the book because it refuses to disentangle technology from form.

John Caldwell's essay, on the industrial and economic structures of new media, opens the Production section and addresses the notable absence, to this point, of reference to the dot.com crash of 2000. Linking production and consumption rather than separating the two, P. David Marshall looks at how intertextual commodities are designed and marketed to capitalise on the activities and subjectivities of play. In the "Ethos of New Media," Douglas Thomas explains in plain language the fundamental issues at stake in the piracy and copyright debates. "Rounding out Production", Tom O'Regan and Ben Goldsmith offer much needed detail about what is meant by globalisation with respect to new technologies and the ways in which they impact established systems of production, distribution, exhibition, and consumption. Their perspective is noticeably international in a collection that feels very North American.

Section Three, Texts, begins with Michael Allen's analysis of the narrative outcomes of CGI use in film. While I do not doubt Allen's facts are verifiable, the essay would benefit from a description of the methods employed because it is a blend of empirical measurement, for instance, on screen effects time or camera mobility, and textual-narrative analysis. Marsha Kinder's contribution, "Narrative Equivocations between Movies and Games," is clearly written and accessible for an advanced undergraduate readership and also delights the new

media theorist by providing insightful analysis of key works by Murray and Manovich, establishing a synthetic approach, which is well supported with textual analysis of classics from the *nouvelle vague*. Scott Bukatman also historicises new media by mapping the practice of reading comics onto the on-line comic strip experience. Another gem is Peter Lunenfeld's examination of interactive cinema, a form that few have experienced, and which he argues has failed because the driving emphasis has been on interactivity *within* narrative. Lunenfeld proposes that the emphasis should be on hypercontexts in which communities use networked technologies and texts to "curate a series of shifting contexts." *The Blair Witch Project* is an example, for Lunenfeld, of a particularly successful work of interactive cinema, based in layered and linked contexts rather than notions of non-linear narrative.

Consumption opens with Henry Jenkins' contribution in which he argues that the nature of fan participation in new media culture is not unbounded but is shaped by "tools and technologies," DIY production, and the horizontal economies of scale that characterise media conglomerates. Dan Harries proposes that the present state of Internet content is fostering a new mode of spectatorship, "viewsing", which takes advantage of both narrative immersion and active participation. Harries' essay brings to mind the work of interactive artists' group, Blast Theory. In one of the more challenging essays in the collection, Tara McPherson argues that new media theory must maintain an awareness and explicit commitment to race lest we be seduced into colour-blindness by a-political theories, whether they be technological, cognitive, aesthetic, or otherwise inclined to erase race. Finally, Janet Wasko summarises a range of distribution options made possible, if not profitable, by digital delivery systems.

Concluding with Contexts, the final section offers four excellent essays that explicitly compare and contrast old and new media. Individually and as a group these essays take a macro view and each is in dialog with media history and theory broadly. The book is an excellent addition to my teaching resource library.

Reading Between Designs: Visual Imagery and the Generation of Meaning in The Avengers, The Prisoner, and Doctor Who

By Piers D. Britton and Simon J. Barker
Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2003. ISBN 0-292-70927-7. 66 illustrations, xiii+251pp. £15.49 (pbk)

A review by Lincoln Geraghty, University of Nottingham, UK

Reading Between Designs is a seminal piece of media studies scholarship: its authors have addressed a field that has often been overlooked and definitely needs more attention. This book analyses what makes TV shows look the way they do, how the design of the sets, costumes, and props contribute to the mood, image and style of a series and its characters. Along with Sarah Street's *Costume and Cinema: Dress Codes in Popular Film* (2001) (reviewed for *Scope* November 2003) this book is one of the first media texts to examine fashion and pop-culture trends and how they have influenced designers. Britton and Barker state in their afterword:

> Too often, scholars speak of "reading" television, rather as though watching were in some way a partial or deficient activity. Television does not offer the same pleasures as a written story, or even radio drama: it is spectacle -- unstable, capricious, mobile spectacle (207).

Taking this statement at face value then, one can assume that the spectacle of television is the main focus of *Reading Between Designs*. The three shows in question -- *The Avengers*, *The Prisoner*, *Doctor Who* -- are considered some of the most spectacular and visually appealing programmes ever to have been produced on British television. The authors concentrate on each series in three individual chapters following an introductory chapter on design in television which also looks at famous series such as *Star Trek* and *ER*. Amongst some of the primary material the authors used for each chapter are interviews with designers and artists who worked on *The Avengers* and *Doctor Who* as well as conceptual artwork for the original sets and costumes.

For enthusiasts of *The Avengers* the chapter "Agents Extraordinary: Stylishness and the Sense of Play in Design for the *The Avengers*" is a thoroughly engaging piece that looks in detail at Patrick Macnee and his alter-ego Steed. During the ten years of production the character of Steed went through many changes in design. From street gumshoe in a brown trench-coat to flamboyant fop in fine silk shirts the image of Steed evolved with much input from Macnee himself (46-47). Costume designers borrowed and created many styles that had become popular in the sixties in order to make Steed stand out as the hero; he was both a trend setter and a familiar fashion icon for the show. In fact, many of his early suits were made by Pierre Cardin. Britton and Barker assert that Steed's image created a sense of familiarity that we still

recognise today, an image that became very popular even with American audiences: "By the end of the series, Steed was not merely one toff among many but one eccentric toff among many. Once distinctive by virtue of his subtle traditionalism, Steed ended up being distinctive chiefly because of his familiarity" (55). This chapter also pays close attention to the changing set designs which reflected *The Avengers*' storyline transformation seen in the later wacky and far-out fantasy episodes.

The third chapter on *Doctor Who* was the most interesting as it had the most material to cover. The series lasted much longer than *The Avengers* or *The Prisoner* and underwent several physical as well as narrative changes: most importantly the central character changed six times during three decades of evolving fashion trends. The changing face of the Doctor gave costume designers plenty of work for their imagination as they had to create new designs for the different personalities that the actors brought to the role. Britton and Barker primarily focus on the development of the show between the first series in 1963 through to the fourth Doctor played by Tom Baker up until 1981. Of particular interest was the analysis of the female companions that accompanied the Doctor on many of his adventures. Most of them were dressed to merely titillate the audience, especially Leela for the dads (156-157), but Romana stood out on an equal level with the Doctor. She was a timelord and as such was dressed like the Doctor, with her own individual embellishments:

> Romana was given a feminized pastiche of Tom Baker's by-then famous outfit, entirely in pink and white, and in soft fabrics rather than Baker's harsh tweeds and knitted wool… The insistent, not to say calculatedly excessive use of pink suggested a teasing attitude to stereotypes of femininity (159).

It was perhaps too much to expect that this chapter would include material on all seven styles of the TV Doctor and the eighth's individual touch seen on the movie screen since that would have made it considerably longer than the previous chapters. However, I would have liked to have read a discussion of later design incarnations of the Doctor, as his personality and the narrative became much darker towards the end.

Without doubt there is still much to be written and discussed within the field of television and film design studies. However, *Reading Between Designs* has set the standard to which new scholars should aspire.

ScreenPlay: Cinema/Videogames/Interfaces

By Edited by Geoff King and Tanya Krzywinska
London: Wallflower Press, 2002. ISBN 1-903364-23-X. 18 illustrations, ix + 229 pp. £14.99 (pbk)

A review by Lorna Jowett, University College, Northampton, UK

The fairly extensive introduction to this collection offers a clear outline of the issues it raises, its terms, and its aims. Although various questions are posed at the beginning of the introduction, the most clearly articulated seems to be, "How might films and videogames offer their own distinct approaches and pleasures?" (1). Thus the primary aim emerges as a desire "to explore the relationship between cinema and videogames in the hope of increasing our understanding of points of both contact and divergence" (2), and indeed this is what most of the contributions focus on. The introduction pointedly includes some debate about the relative value, status and prestige of the two media it examines, and goes on to discuss the potential problems in mapping one set of theories onto a different media. Certainly the editors of this collection may already be known to readers for other publications in film studies, though of the sixteen contributors relatively few have specialised in film alone. It is notable that the focus of this collection is on "games-in-the-light-of-cinema, rather than vice-versa" (2), justified by the "relative underdevelopment of videogames as a field for close formal or textual analysis" though the editors do admit that this is now changing (2).

Although the focus is thus comparing videogames to film, the collection is made up of chapters covering technical aspects, narrative, and genre from contributors with a wide range of interests and backgrounds (one chapter comes from a specifically European perspective, another deals with music, another with martial arts, for example). The introduction offers some explanation for the arrangement of contributions, suggesting that they "move from the more general in focus to the more specific; from broad issues of the formal qualities of games/cinema to examinations of individual genres or titles" (29), but the anthology is not divided into sections. This will allow the uninformed reader to gain a general level of understanding and terminology before tackling more detailed analyses. Some overlap (the acknowledged reason for not dividing the text into sections) does allow a certain level of repetition, though this is probably inevitable and the different contributions largely complement each other. In any case, such repetition would not be apparent to readers using the text in part. The anthology as a whole consistently identifies key issues and/or problems in discussion, while references to previous scholarship indicate the figures and texts that researchers in this area deem important, essential or shaping.

As one might expect, the collection does not include a complete bibliography, instead including citations and notes at the end of each chapter. Perhaps surprisingly not many illustrations are used given the nature of what is discussed (only four out of fourteen chapters, plus the introduction contain illustrative material) but this may be partially explained as a desire to avoid valorising the visual rather than the interactive nature of videogames, and a wish to avoid using cinematic modes of analysis. (This reviewer notes that there is no list of

illustrations, and Fig. 18 seems to be missing). More significantly, no conclusion or afterword is offered. Of course, the introduction spent some time outlining aims, issues and scope, as well as sketching connections between or among the individual contributions and current debates. Granted, this may be the opening in a new discussion about the convergences and similarities between the two media, but an echoing inconclusiveness is evident in some of the chapters. Future developments in the media itself may be unclear (several chapters allude to new technological developments, for example), but even a short afterword could have served to draw together issues for future scholarship.

Despite its level of detail and theory, this collection is accessible to even the uninformed reader. Given the debates about the relative prestige and value of the two media in the introduction, it may not be surprising that the material demands or expects more familiarity with film/cinema and its study, than of videogames and related scholarship. The introduction notes that only games "that might, in various ways, be understood to some extent with reference to cinema" (3) are central to the discussions. It may help to have some knowledge of the more popular or influential games that are frequently referred to such as *Quake*, *Half Life* or *Tomb Raider* though it is not strictly necessary. The range of material and the balance between general, technical and specific could make this collection a useful resource for courses examining multimedia and games specifically. It should also be of more general interest to students and scholars in the fields of film, popular culture, and media since even a brief engagement with its ideas causes the reader to re-evaluate the way we think about the two media.

Spanish National Cinema

By Núria Triana-Toribio
London: Routledge, 2003. ISBN 0-415-22060-2. 29 illustrations, xii + 210 pp. £14.99 (pbk)

A review by Camila Loew, University Pompeu Fabra, Spain

Drawing from Benedict Anderson's idea of the nation as an "imagined community", Núria Triana-Toribio bases her recent addition to the Routledge National Cinemas Series on the assumption that a nation is largely made up of the stories it tells about itself. The role of cinema -- "the most powerful narrative machine of the twentieth century" -- as one of the main narrative acts of the nation-building effort, is not a small one. This stated, Triana-Toribio's study focuses on the construction and inscription of changing notions of "Spanishness" in the full range of Spain's filmmaking history from the late 1890s to the present, although the author argues that prior to the 1940s there is no true consolidated national cinema; only after the Francoist victory of the Spanish Civil War did the state begin to make a conscious effort to create it.

The case of Spain is particularly relevant to this series on national cinemas; both during the Franco regime as well as once democracy was being consolidated in the 1980s, the different governments made it their responsibility to ensure that the film industry contributed the "appropriate" images of national identity each system wanted to convey and promote. Triana-Toribio not only explores these issues in the films themselves, but also attends to how films were praised and attacked in the discourse and practices -- both official and popular -- that surround the industry by making demands on it, promoting some values and denigrating others. The author thus chooses the case studies that are not only limited to films and directors, but includes a broad scope of other aspects that are relevant to the film industry and its products, such as "stars, journals, critics, bureaucrats, policy-making, funding, legislation, prize-giving, movements, censorship."

Due to the book's perspective, *Spanish National Cinema* could be read as complementary to Peter Evans' 1999 *Spanish Cinema: The Auteurist Tradition* (reviewed in the February 2003 edition of *Scope*). Whereas the 20 individual texts that compose Evans' book focus on the diversity of art cinema in Spain from the 1950s, Triana-Toribio purposely decides not to exclude the more popular genres and traditions (such as films dismissed as *españoladas*, or the comic heirs of *zarzuela* and *sainete*,), but rather to examine the context and circumstances of their favorable reception. Films like the *cuplé* musicals of Sara Montiel, or Pedro Masó's blockbuster comedies of the 1960s are normally not covered in histories of Spanish cinema, due to their lesser aesthetic value, and because critics argue that they did not represent a threat to the values of the regime, as did (however veiled) the lesser viewed films that fill pages of recent criticism. But it is precisely because they were so popular at the time of their release in Spain that the author sees the need to talk about these films. She argues that these popular productions make claims to the notion of "Spanishness" at stake, and are as much a part of Spanish national cinema as the auteurist "quality films" largely covered in previous studies on Spanish film. In this sense, Triana-Toribio's book is novel and, in this cultural and

historical dimension, is an important contribution not only to Spanish film studies, but also to cultural studies.

The book is arranged chronologically, according to important events in Spanish national history that accompanied changes in the history of its national film: the incipient national film before 1939, Franco's use of film as a vehicle for his myth of "Spanishness", the loosening up of censorship and the need for change in the projection of "Spanishness" in the 1960s, the new definition of national identity that the newfound democracy called for, and the discourse on diversity of the present. However, for the sake of clarity and conciseness, each chapter selects certain case studies that are dictated by the book's main focus -- the discussion of the "national" -- and also those that have not received extensive attention in critical works designed for the English-speaking audience. Some of these case studies are the National Interest prize created by the dictatorship for films that served the interest of the Francoist nation-building; *Primer Plano* (the right-wing Falange film magazine of the 1940s); Marisol (a successful young singer-actress in the 1960s), the polemic *ley Miró* of the 1980s (which concentrated a large amount of funds on a small number of "quality" films); and the "new vulgarities" of the 1990s. In each case, Triana-Toribio is keen on reassessing and challenging preconceived notions, from "national" or even "Spanish", to the films and directors "worthy" of being included in a history of Spanish film. She shows great critical awareness of the presence and absence of certain genres and traditions in academic narratives on Spanish national cinema. But Triana-Toribio doesn't go so far as to exclude important directors who have become the canonical auteurs of recent Spanish film, as the sections dedicated to Pedro Almodóvar or Julio Medem show.

Spanish National Cinema is an important book. In the tradition of Marsha Kinder's ground-breaking *Blood Cinema: The Reconstruction of National Identity in Spain* (1993), Triana-Toribio, through her shrewd, insightful analyses, helps the reader understand not only the particular complexities involved in the making of "Spanishness" for and through Spanish National Cinema, but also the complex historical and cultural processes involved in the creation of any national identity through a nation's film tradition. However, whereas Kinder focused her attention mainly on films that found success outside Spain, Triana-Toribio holds tight to the assumption that "to assess 'Spanish national cinema' nothing must be excluded." Her readers will thank her for it.

Terrestrial TV News in Britain: The Culture of Production

By Jackie Harrison
Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000. ISBN 0-7190-5590-3. 256 pp. £16.99 (pbk)

A review by Graham Barnfield, University of East London, UK

One of the main tensions in the age of vocationally oriented academia is between academics and practitioners. Often such conflicts are played out in clashes between the media industries and media studies; journalists can look bemused when finding out just what recent graduates have absorbed from higher education. It's one thing to have a critique of, say, BBC impartiality guidelines but bringing actual journalists around to that viewpoint is another matter entirely. Experience and common sense can be trump cards in arguments over the nature of broadcast news.

Jackie Harrison deserves praise for attempting to resolve these tensions of theory and practice. *Terrestrial TV News in Britain* opens with a brisk overview of theories of public service broadcasting and the role of the news within this institution. Cue a clear rehearsal of the Public Sphere as a category of analysis, and a consideration of how the concept can be applied to television news. Yet how do we fit broadcast journalists, stereotypically more at home in a public house, into this discussion? We have the big picture, set out in BBC policy documents and the findings of parliamentary committees, yet the experience of watching the nightly transmissions is so often a frustrating one. Why does so much terrestrial TV news fall so short of its potential? (Even on the rare occasions when something resembling a national debate occurs, it concerns the timing -- rather than the content -- of *News at Ten*, or whether *Five News* newsreaders standing in front of their desks will win over younger viewers.)

For Harrison, the key to understanding news is fieldwork. Interviews with BBC and ITN staff between 1994 and 1997 consolidate the findings of her placements and observation sessions in local and national newsrooms. From these she is able to establish a creative contrast between the official line -- that news provides a window on the world and access to significant events -- with the day-to-day rituals and procedures of news gatherers and their editors. Here we find what some of us always suspected -- that gallows humour, cynicism and eccentricity thrive as much in the newsroom as in any other workplace. An editor who favours stories with dogs in, a frustrated economics correspondent continually told his stories are too boring, the grim algebra of converting death tolls into newsworthiness: if not for *Drop the Dead Donkey*, much of Harrison's material could translate into a fine sitcom.

The author locates these trends within the "culture of production", in which national perspectives about the role and functions of broadcast news are mediated through a community of television reporters. In turn, this community is characterised by a degree of consensus as to what it is trying to achieve, yet this is fragmented according to the organisation, locality and even timeslot in which they are working. Harrison's work is

exemplary in being able to link the wider discussion of news values with specific practices. Her fieldwork took her into local newsrooms too, scrutinising how the often-banal output of *Calendar News* (Yorkshire-Tyne Tees) and *Look North* (BBC) is prepared. Taken together, these complex insights can counter simplistic accounts of how British television news actually works. For instance, readers see the reporting of the Waco siege and its grisly climax explained not just with theories of hegemony, but through the specifics of newsroom environments where lazy analogies save time.

The fieldwork also provides a rejoinder to broadcast news bosses like Richard Tait of ITN who present their work as the first draft of history. Whereas newspaper archives make it easy to hold print journalists to account for such claims, time and inconvenience ensure that when broadcasters report some event with breathy urgency, it is harder to issue a satirical reminder years later. (Keeping videos of each daily broadcast is only really an option for Glasgow University Media Group and the like). Harrison's volume reminds us of so many apocalyptic stories from the mid-1990s that soon disappeared from view -- who now feels threatened by the "flesh-eating bug" streptococcal necrotising faciitis?

Paradoxically, the ability of *Terrestrial TV News in Britain* to offer critical trips down memory lane is also indicative of its main weakness. Whereas the move from the general to the particular -- from mission statements to canteen culture -- is impressive, its move back to the big picture seems strangely dated. Dumbing down, "social inclusion", celebrity saturation, competition from 24-hour rolling news: all these and more strike this reviewer as having profoundly changed television news, yet they often are described by Harrison as marginal factors to be considered in future. She dislikes both the patrician sensibility of Lord Reith and the populism of Live TV's News Bunny, but rarely spells out her own alternative. This evasiveness mars an important and otherwise extremely useful book.

Women's Cinema: The Contested Screen

By Alison Butler
London: Wallflower, 2002. ISBN 1-903364-27-2. i + 134 pp. £10.57 (pbk)
Cinema and the Second Sex: Women's Filmmaking in France in the 1980s and 1990s By Carrie Tarr with Brigitte Rollet & Stars and Stardom in French Cinema By Ginette Vincendeau

Cinema and the Second Sex: Women's Filmmaking in France in the 1980s and 1990s

By Carrie Tarr with Brigitte Rollet

London: Continuum, 2001. ISBN 0-8264-4742-2. ix + 312pp. £18.62 (pbk)

Stars and Stardom in French Cinema

By Ginette Vincendeau

London: Continuum, 2000. ISBN 0-8264-4731-7. vi + 275 pp. £25.00 (pbk)

A review by Rebecca D. Feasey, Bath Spa University, UK

Although women have been involved in filmmaking since the invention of the cinema, the idea of a women's cinema is much more recent, dating from the late 1960s and early 1970s with the onset of the feminist movement. In *Women's Cinema: The Contested Screen*, Alison Butler examines some of the key feminist filmmakers and the canonical perspectives on women's cinema from Laura Mulvey and Claire Johnston to Teresa de Lauretis and Patricia Mellencamp in order to introduce readers to the critical debates around the concept of women's cinema in Anglophone film theory. The structure of the book reflects a number of considerations in women's cinema, examining notions of genre in mainstream Hollywood film, authorship in experimental cinema, and the politics of location in world cinema respectively.

Butler informs the reader that feminist film critics often talk about a special affinity between women filmmakers and experimental cinema. While Annette Kuhn suggests that "low investments in money and professionalism have meant that avant-garde cinema has historically been much more open than the film industry to women," (57) Cook notices "a coincidence between the avant-garde's concern with personal self-expression and feminist interest in the private sphere" (57). This relationship between women filmmakers and the experimental cinema, although significant in terms of the work of feminist filmmakers on the margins of the mainstream, fails to take into account those big-name directors such as Kathryn Bigelow and Mimi Leder who work within Hollywood. Such a distinction between

the avant-garde and the mainstream film industry has structured much modern cultural discourse, and the debate on women filmmakers and the experimental cinema can often be linked with the debate on high and low culture.

Butler appears to challenge existing debates on women's cinema and the debate on high and low culture as she examines the ways in which women filmmakers working in the low-budget independent sector expressed increasingly mainstream ambitions, and the ways in which mainstream directors crossed over from counter-cinema into Hollywood in the 1980s and 1990s. In this way, one might suggest that the author negotiates the mass culture debate by viewing women's independent filmmaking as an "apprenticeship for the mainstream," (43) rather than merely an oppositional practice.

Although Butler does examine the work of women's filmmakers from both Hollywood and the alternative avant-garde, those women filmmakers working in mainstream genre cinema are granted little real attention in the book. Moreover, when those directors working within the mainstream are cited, it is in such a way as to elevate them beyond what is seen as the restrictive conventions of Hollywood, and the formulaic mode of genre filmmaking. For example, in a section entitled "Girls Own Stories: Genre and Gender in Hollywood Cinema" we are told that "a new generation of women directors has learned to negotiate generic constraints, playing reflexively on the limits they impose and self-consciously invoking their cultural history" (43). With this in mind then, we are informed that the work of Kathryn Bigelow plays with the conventions of genre and gender as "the consciously experimental work of a woman director" (43).

According to Butler, women's cinema can be understood as "those films that might be made by, addressed to, or concerned with women" (1) and that this "plurality of forms, concerns and constituencies in contemporary women's filmmaking now exceeds even the most flexible definition of counter-cinema" (19). However, irrespective of the authors distinction between women's cinema and a counter-cinema, I would suggest that *Women's Cinema: The Contested Screen* might be more suitably entitled: *Women's Cinema: Counter-Cinema*. After all, Butler focuses mainly on the work of alternative, avant-garde and experimental directors, and seems unable to consider women's cinema without holding a text up to scrutiny against the "confrontational rhetoric of theorists of the 1970s" (55).

Alison Butler's work on *Women's Cinema: The Contested Screen* focuses on a handful of feminist filmmakers whose films have made important contributions to the history of women's filmmaking, with women's cinema being somehow synonymous with the experimental avant-garde. In contrast however, Carrie Tarr's *Cinema and the Second Sex: Women's Filmmaking in France in the 1980s and 1990s* looks at those female filmmakers in France who characteristically work within the mainstream and disclaim their gender as a significant factor in their work.

While Butler examines some of the key feminist filmmakers in order to position women's cinema as a minor cinema which exists inside other major cinematic traditions, Tarr avoids focusing on particular directors. Rather, Tarr employs in-depth textual analysis of the films themselves in order to provide information about those features, documentary and essay films directed by women in the 1980s and 1990s. In this way, the research allows the author to assess the extent to which women filmmakers, rather than just individual women have inflected French filmmaking during this period.

According to Tarr, women's filmmaking in France is a source of both delight and despair. We are told that whilst in 1949 Jacqueline Audry was the only woman director making feature films, in the three years up to 1999 over fifty women directors had a feature length film released (1). However, while the sheer presence of female directors working in the industry has been seen as a source of delight, the fact that these films lack a critical engagement with feminism and feminist film theory has been seen as a source of despair. From this perspective, *Cinema and the Second Sex* sets out to trace the evolution of the kinds of films that women have been making during a period of feminist backlash in politics, culture and the media (3).

The book is divided into two parts, the first of which offers a discussion of women's cinema through "personal" films which relate to key states in life such as growing up, the age of possibilities, couples, families, work, art and citizenship. The second part of the book looks at the ways in which contemporary women directors have appropriated male-orientated genres such as comedies, crime dramas, road movies and historical films and inserted a woman's awareness within these mainstream narratives.

Cinema and the Second Sex is an important contribution to the field of film and cultural studies and will be essential reading for academics, film students and those with an interest in issues of sexuality and gender in the cinema. The book is a fascinating account of women's filmmaking in France that combines thoughtful introductions to film stars and female directors, detailed synopsis' of films, close textual analysis, box-office and industry statistics and a socio-political context for the work. Whilst Tarr's analysis of women's filmmaking is situated within the academic framework, the author feels confident enough with her research to foreground her own opinions regarding these texts. For example, during a discussion of *Sac De Noeuds/All Mixed Up* (1985) as a road movie that provides its female protagonists with an imaginative space for exploring freedom, Tarr informs us that director Josiane Balasko's inventive film has not received the critical recognition that it deserves (232).

Tarr's enlightening topic and engaging writing style mean that as soon as you have read about the ways in which these French productions express women's otherwise unarticulated position as gender neutral directors, you immediately want to watch the films that inform her work and look to the bibliography for other useful texts in this illuminating area of study. Searching out such film texts is made easier by the author including the English translation of film titles in the book and adding an exhaustive filmography at the back of the text that details all those films directed by women from 1980 to 2000.

In *Cinema and the Second Sex: Women's Filmmaking in France in the 1980s and 1990s*, Carrie Tarr looks selectively at directors who were successful actresses before they made feature films. For example Nicole Garcia acted in films such as *Partenaires* (1984) and *Les Mots Pour le Dire* (1983) before making and starring in her first short *Quinze Août* (1985) and directing the feature length *Un Weekend Sue Deux* (1990) (239). While Tarr introduces such actors as a precursor to their work behind the camera, Ginette Vincendeau's research on the French cinema screen pays particular attention to the actors themselves.

In *Stars and Stardom in French Cinema*, Vincendeau examines the French star system and the ways in which that system has produced what she terms "the most substantial and historically continuous line of stars to achieve world fame in their national films"(vii). Although Vincendeau draws upon existing work in star studies from Richard Dyer's *Heavenly Bodies* (1987) to Jackie Stacey's *Star Gazing* (1994), her work goes towards filling

a gap in the field as she moves away from an analysis of Hollywood film stars and the American star system to an analysis of French film stars, the French film industry and French culture and society.

Although much work has been done on the emergence of the star system, it is routinely done so with reference to the emergence of the star system in America and the recognition of names such as Mary Pickford and Florence Lawrence as the original motion picture personalities. However, what Vincendeau offers here is a fascinating alternative to such work. We are told that at "about the same time that American producers began to publicise star actors in 1910, Pathé also introduced publicity photos confirming its star system, beginning with an advertisement expressing best wishes to the comedian, Max Linder after an appendectomy" (5). We are informed that while this illustrates one of the key definitions of stardom, namely the articulation of the professional with the private, "the timing of Linder's starification challenges the notion that film stardom originated with American stars" (5). In this way, the research negotiates what Vincendeau terms the "American bias of film historiography" (49).

Stardom in French Cinema provides in-depth and insightful studies of the popular stars of the French cinema including the well-known Brigitte Bardot, Gerard Depardieu and Juliette Binoche as well as lesser known performers such as Max Linder, Jean Gabin and Jeanne Moreau. Vincendeau looks at these stars in order to examine the ways in which the star system in France differs from the highly organised management of stars developed by the American studios in the classical period, paying particular attention to the ways in which French stars are distinguished by dual-track stardom in both the mainstream and auteur film (24). The chapter on Jean Gabin entitled "From Working Class Hero to Godfather" is particularly enlightening. We are informed that Jean Gabin starred in numerous poetic realist films in the Popular Front period from *Pépé Le Moko* (1936) to *Le Jour se Leve* (1939), and that from his performances in these films, the actor emerged as a strong, silent and often deeply human hero. Moreover, that this star persona is an intricate intertextual construction which radiates through not only the films that he appears in, but also an array of other texts such as memoirs and testimonies (his and others), fan magazines, newspaper reports, plays and music-hall shows (59-81).

Stardom in French Cinema looks at those institutions associated with Hollywood, such as academia, the film industry (including trade promotion, review journalism and star publicity) and the mass media in general in order to analyse the performances of the aforementioned stars, and to look at the importance of each star in relation to the wider cultural context. In this way, Vincendeau looks at the film texts themselves, but also looks beyond the text towards those meanings that circulated around and about the star. In this way, her research provides insights into broader cultural attitudes towards stars, the star system and notions of national identity during given historical periods. The book is an informative and interesting account of a relatively unknown star system in its social, cultural and national context, and as such, is a must read for anyone interested in star studies, reception studies and national cinema history.