Teen TV: Genre, Consumption & Identity

By Glyn Davies and Kay Dickinson (eds.)
London: BFI, 2000. ISBN 0-85170-999-0 (pbk), 0-85170-998-2 (hbk). 202pp. £15.99 (pbk), £50 (hbk)

A review by Ewan Kirkland, Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College, UK

As the editors of *Teen TV: Genre, Consumption and Identity* note, studies of teen culture emphasising confrontation, subversion and the *sub*-cultural have little time for the hegemonic pleasures of teen television. Glyn Davis and Kay Dickinson note "a reluctance amongst academics to entrench themselves in certain aspects of teen TV which lie outside our direct political and aesthetic priorities" (5), leading to the academic marginalisation of these popular teen texts. This collection seeks to address this oversight, and despite some limitations, successfully interrogates the genre from a healthy range of perspectives.

The teenager, Davis and Dickinson argue in their introduction, is a historically-produced demographic for whom television constitutes a central medium in the construction of identity through shared tastes and patterns of cultural consumption. The contradictions of adolescence, the liminal state between childhood and adulthood, the simultaneous experience of continued control and increased autonomy, are reflected in the contradictions within teen TV texts themselves. For example, Davis and Dickinson emphasise the adult authorship of shows like *Dawson's Creek*, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *Smallville*, the adult agendas and ideologies they consequently contain, while simultaneously striving to avoid the preachy tone which might jeopardise their popularity. The precarious cultural status of teen TV, marginalised, critically ignored, easily cancelled, mirrors the precarious status of the teenager. Similar parallels appear throughout this collection.

The first section explores the generic influences and elements of contemporary teen television, emphasising their hybrid nature and historical origins. Miranda J. Banks explores the extraterrestrial protagonists of *Roswell* and *Smallville*, as representing "a new hero for the teen male melodrama" (17), one who is beautiful, self-sacrificing, emotionally expressive and motivated by duty. Tracing teen male melodrama, through *Rebel Without a Cause* (Nicholas Ray, 1955) to *Beverly Hills 90210*, Banks highlights both continuities and departures including the displacement of the self-sacrificing mother by the martyred male teen and recurring moments where male protagonists remove their shirts, revealing them as traditionally masculine while simultaneously signifying physical and emotional vulnerability. Considering Australian teen sci-fi, Leonie Rutherford also explores the alien as "alienated youth", and the function of alien and off-world teens in revealing the hypocrisies of educational and familiar institutions. Neil Badmington's imaginative essay considers *Roswell High* in terms of "alien chic", a kitsch love of everything extraterrestrial which ultimately serves to reinforce principles of humanism and distinctions between us and "them". Citing Lyotard and Althusser, Badmington argues *Roswell High*'s school setting reflects the social role of educational establishments in producing fully cultured human individuals, reinforcing

hegemonic concepts of humanity, and keeping the "inhuman" at bay. Once more literalising teenage alien-ation, rebellion against school is rebellion against the culture of humanism.

In Part Two, 'Consumption', Bill Osgerby traces Teen TV to its roots in post-war America television and attempts to tap the growing youth consumer. Emphasising the significance of young women as market and audience, Osgerby's reading of Sally Fields' *Gidget* questions feminist critics' negative assessment of this period. While acknowledging the show's ideologies of heterosexuality and female domesticity, Osgerby emphasises the texts' tensions, contradictions and negotiations. Rather than passive agents of McRobbie's oppressive "code of romance", 1950s teen TV women were also independent and assertive, vibrant and rebellious. Osgerby suggests the celebrated post-feminist heroism of Buffy constitutes as much continuity as rupture with traditional TV teenage girls. Also writing on Buffy, Jenny Bavidge distinguishes her enquiry from other feminist commentaries on *BtVS* in focussing on the Slayer's girlhood. Bavidge argues the show interrogates what it means to be the "Anglo-American girl", an idealisation of female adolescence, characterised by intelligence, independence and playfulness, traceable in teenage girl books and school stories of the 19th and 20th centuries. Buffy draws upon, while simultaneously transforming and invigorating these character types. The Slayer figure, like Banks, Rutherford and Babmington's alien(ated) adolescents, is considered representative of young girls' ambiguous social position.

In an essay barely contained within twelve pages, Matt Hills considers the various processes by which *Dawson's Creek* appeals for cultural value and cult status. Regarding both "quality" and "cult" TV as discursive constructions, Hills outlines the show's sophisticated combination of two apparently conflicting models of heterosexual relationships as contributing to this process, together with the show's authorship and fanhood. Unified by the authoring presence of Kevin Williamson, Hills observes a fit between the constant self-analysing of *Dawson's Creek*'s reflexive, hyper-articulate teen characters, and the show's own textual self-reflexivity and intertextuality, serving to confer association of quality and value upon both show and writer. Identifying similarities between the show's fan cultures and recognized cult TV shows, Hills nevertheless observes a power struggle over "cult" cannons, inclusion frequently denied texts outside traditional cult genres or associated with female culture. In another lively essay Kay Dickinson discusses popular music in *My So Called Life* and *Dawson's Creek*. Dickinson's close textual analysis illustrates how diagetic and non-diagetic music variously signifies characters' mood, emphasises narrative themes, advertises compilation CDs, marginalises African diaspora, and non-mainstream musical tastes, proposes lifestyles and corresponding teen identities, pacifies America's Christian moral majority, maintains the cultural supremacy of contemporary baby boomers, and promotes the Protestant work ethic.

Of particular interest to film scholars is Valerie Wee's 'Selling Teen Culture: How American Multimedia Conglomeration Reshaped Teen Television in the 1990s' which situates trends in contemporary teen TV within the commercial, economic and industrial context of film, television and music corporate convergence. The unprecedented degree of "cross media collusive practices" (89) Wee observes, where teen stars appear in several different media derives from industrial attempts to attract crossover teen markets from cinema to television. Joining Melissa Joan Hart (*Sabrina the Teenage Witch*), Joshua Jackson (*Dawson's Creek*) and Sarah Michelle Gellar (*BtVS*), filmmakers like Williamson (*Scream*, 1996, *Dawson's Creek*), Joss Whedon (*Speed*, 1994, *Toy Story*, 1995, *BtVS*) move from big to small screen. The result, Wee argues, is increasing aesthetic and stylistic consistency in 1990s teen visual culture, post-modern collapse of boundaries between different texts and media, intertextual references, and self conscious, self reflexive discourses. *Dawson's Creek*'s allusions to

Scream, *The Blaire Witch Project* (Daniel Myrick & Eduardo Sánchez, 1999) and *The Perfect Storm* (Wolfgang Petersen, 2000) serve industry interests, dependent on the continued circulation of their back catalogues. Wee's conclusion is understandably pessimistic, observing the wide dissemination of teen culture dominated by Western, middle class capitalist values, primarily benefiting the culture industry and its advertisers.

In the third section, 'Identities', Davis assesses the representation and construction of queer characters in *My So-Called Life*, *Beverly Hills 90210*, *Party of Five* and *Buffy*. Despite the increased presence of gay figures, Davis criticises the continued emphasis on homosexuality as an "issue", and the narrative emphasis placed on coming out. Gay characters are represented according to what Davis calls the "liberal conservatism" of American television. Absorbed into the heterosexuality of the medium, queer issues are individualised, and sexuality represented as essential rather than constructed. Davis does acknowledge the "positive", if narrative, representation of gay characters, potentials for queer viewing strategies and the queer address of melodramatic shows featuring frequent (straight) male (chest) nudity. In a comparable piece, Sharon Ross focuses on the representation of Elena, a solitary African-American character in the "glaringly and paradoxically white" (141) show *Felicity*. As the show's overwhelmingly Caucasian melodramatic landscape contradicts its urban setting, Elena's predominant comic function excludes her from serious melodramatic storylines. This remains the exclusive preserve of white characters, in "a veritable segregation within the diagesis of the show" (143), leading to Elena's gradual erasure and eventual death.

Finally Clare Birchall explores the "nostalgia strategies" employed by *Dawson's Creek*, a show resonant with teen cinema history, from early teen-exploitation movies to John Hughs to the 1999s teen pics *Cruel Intentions* (Roger Kumble), *She's All That* (Robert Iscove) and *Ten Things I Hate About You* (Gil Junger). Referencing its sources involves "a tension between rejection and repetition" (178), acknowledges the show's generic and historical roots while marking its superiority to previous teen texts. The nostalgia of *Dawson's Creek*, Birchall argues, is itself generic and non-particular, divorced from specific periods or memories, but evident through characters, narratives, ideologies and *mise en scène*, evoking both the rural, provincial, Rockwellian America, and 1980s "Brat Pack" teen movies, foregrounded through references to *ET* (Steven Spielberg, 1982) and Peter Panism, family values and *The Breakfast Club* (John Hughes, 1985), *The Graduate* (Mike Nichols, 1967) and home video aesthetics.

Despite the wide range of approaches and perspectives represented, this collection is not without its limitations, most notable being an overwhelming emphasis on American teen TV and teen drama. Australian television is considered by both Rutherford and Kate Douglas and Kelly McWilliam's original piece on the multicultural *Heartbreak High*. But British television is rarely mentioned and fails to provide the central subject of a single essay. Richard K Olsen's piece on the "exclusive teen-culture phenomenon" of MTV's *Total Request Live* is also unusual in focussing on music teen TV, rather than drama. This emphasis ensures predominant coverage of the "quality" end of youth TV. *Buffy*, *Dawson's Creek* and *My So-Called Life* receive frequent attention, possible evidence of the adult academic entrenchment Davis & Dickinson mention in their introduction. And while the emphasis on American shows is maybe understandable given the teenager's historic association with transatlantic culture, the issue of largely British academics discussing American TV shows is left unquestioned.

Nevertheless, this collection represents a useful addition to the growing work on contemporary American television, a rich and varied anthology of insightful studies, and a valuable contribution to the analysis of popular youth culture.

Law and Popular Culture: A Course Book

By Michael Asimow and Shannon Mader
New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2004 . ISBN 0-8204-5815-5. 273 pp. £17.50
The Celluloid Courtroom: A History of Legal Cinema By Ross D. Levi & Law and Justice as seen on TV By Elayne Rapping

The Celluloid Courtroom: A History of Legal Cinema

By Ross D. Levi

Westport: Praeger, 2005. ISBN 0-275-98233-5. 168 pp. £22.99

Law and Justice as seen on TV

By Elayne Rapping

New York: New York University Press, 2003. ISBN 0-8147-7561-6. 288pp. £14.50

A review by Shulamit Almog, Haifa University, Faculty of Law, Israel

The research focused on the inter-relationship between law and film seems flourishing. The three works reviewed here are part of a rapidly growing crop of articles and books dealing with various aspects of law and film. Many law schools offer courses on law and film (though such interdisciplinary discourse seems less widespread within cinematic studies), and symposiums and conferences focused on law and film are frequent. Accordingly, the observations of Ross D. Levi, author of *The Celluloid Courtroom*, to the "conspicuous absence of the legal film from our culture's cinematic consciousness" (XI) and to the "pervasive lack of legal cinema visibility, as compared to, say, the horror film, musical or western…" (XII) seem overstated.

Scholarly inter-disciplinary discourse of law and film is very much present, and is hardly surprising as law and cinema are both intricate social practices that construct social meaning. It is accepted now that film is far more than an aesthetic or merely entertaining object, that law is much more than a practical mechanism for resolving conflicts and coercing order, and that both practices influence and are influenced by each other.

The specific manifestations of relations between law and film deserve particular attention especially in light of the rapid rise of television and the Internet, media that largely share the imagistic vocabulary and narrative conventions of film.

Given the prominence of the language of film in constituting our world view, an examination of the interaction between law and film is a precondition to delving into analysis of contemporaneous perceptions of justice in the digital age. Even when advanced technologies are replacing the conventional practices of film-making and new digital products make the term "film" sound somewhat obsolete, the cultural impact of those novel ways of production and products could be better interpreted and analyzed when perceived as evolving from epistemological framework that was shaped by conventional films. Thus, realization of the resonance between legal and cinematic expression can be used to develop innovative critical thinking about the intersection between new visual representations and the perceptions of law and justice.

The primary, perhaps most obvious link between law and film is the depiction of law's various dimensions in films. Those depictions continuously proliferate into the legal system itself. In order to produce effective, authoritative representations of "justice being done", the legal system must employ strategies and signifiers drawn from wide cultural contexts. In the previous century, film produced a huge wealth of audio and visual images that influenced the collective perceptions of justice. One perhaps can refer to a certain cinematization of our thinking about justice. As the recent most popular artistic medium, films emerged as an especially influential generator of meaning. Just as films have come to influence our beliefs, aesthetics and politics, it has come to contour our thinking about the practice of law. The scholarly interest in law and film is, therefore, called for. The books reviewed here represent three different avenues of that interest.

Asimow and Mader's course book derives from acknowledgement of the major part popular culture plays in legal life: "popular culture both *constructs* our perceptions of the law and *changes* the way that the players in the legal system behave" (XXII). The book focuses upon providing a variety of material on the study of popular culture at large, and of the American legal system. Each chapter is based on a particular film, and includes general comments on the film, its background and sources, filmic analysis, evaluation of the genre, discussions of the legal themes, and suggested review questions. For instance, the third chapter, dealing with the perhaps most classic exemplar of the law and film genre, Robert Mulligan's *To Kill A Mockingbird* (1962) includes references to Harper Lee's book, to the Scottsboro boys events, to the genre of melodrama, to the theme of lawyers as heroes and to the trial strategy of the perhaps ultimate heroic lawyer, Atticus Finch. Other chapters deal with Sidney Lummet's *The Verdict* (1982), William Wyler's *Counselor of Law* (1933), Franklin Schaffner's *12 Angry Men* (1957) and Robert Benton's *Kramer vs. Kramer* (1979) and many more.

Law and Popular Culture addresses current developments and needs in legal as well as in film studies and answers an overgrowing need for law and film educational materials, and since it is "written in plain English, without theoretical jargon" (XXIII), a declaration the authors start with and adamantly carry out, it seems the text, that originated as a law school course, will indeed "suggest a model that will work in a wide range of undergraduate or graduate programs" (XXIII).

Ross D. Levi's *The Celluloid Courtroom* is another work that may serve the same end, even if inadvertently. Ross, an avid admirer of "legal cinema", devotes his book to detailed description of dozens of films, starting from Michael Curtiz's *Angels with Dirty Faces* (1938) and concluding with Peter Howitt's *Laws of Attraction* (2004). This book portrays a vast collection of cinematic lawyers, clients, criminals, and juries that might be useful to those looking for a compilation of American films that deal with distinct legal themes. In light of

the vast display offered in the book, (XXIII) Ross's conclusion, that legal cinema shows us that "law is everywhere" (127), while reflecting the ambivalence of American society towards it own adversarial system of justice, is hardly surprising.

The first two books focused on presenting an array of eclectic legally themed films. Elayne Rapping's *Law and Justice as seen on TV* is another kind of endeavour. It is a comprehensive, extensively elaborated scholarly look on the influence of law-related television on the way American public perceives justice, criminals, courts and the law in general.

Rapping refers to the history of courtroom drama on TV since the late 1940s, in order to describe a gradual shift from generally liberal towards a more conservative perspective, focusing on those who protect the middle class against all sorts of crimes and criminals. The first part of the book analyzes several popular series, such as *Law and Order, The Practice*, and *Cops* that marks, what Rapping perceives as, the shifts in television's dominant ideology about law, justice, crime and punishment. The second part focuses on non-fiction television programming, as Court TV and other discussion and documentary series, that have together widened "the criminalization of American life" (15). This "criminalization" of a vast part of public life, claims the book, leads towards transferring many issues traditionally perceived as social, cultural or political and thus best handled by extra-legal institutions, into issues that are primary legal and thus should be dealt exclusively by legal institutions. This process reflects a turn in social consciousness, and the growing "fear of 'criminals' and sympathy for the law enforcement officers and prosecutors who pursued, caught and imprisoned them" (4), parallel to a growing distrust of those who worked to free the "dangerous" (4).

The overwhelming dominance of references to crime in media fiction and non-fiction, claims Rapping, results in "lulling" the American public into an enticing and irresistible world-view where each and every public issue is solvable by the criminal justice system. Such a world-view, supported by mass-media genres, releases social, cultural or educational systems from responsibility and accountability, and also blurs the lines between the fictional and non fictional representations of legal issues, and the actual, "real" events.

Rapping's book is interesting and important, as the cultural products she describes are key elements of the social world, and is a representation of foundational ethical questions. The analysis offered in the book is sharp, serious and thought-provoking. However, I think that Rapping's description of the social *zeitgeist* is somewhat overstated. The "Law and Order" genre and its offspring are indeed ubiquitous, but within the wide cultural spheres, many voices, scholarly and others, that resist the over-legalization of society are being heard loud and clear. In addition, inter-disciplinary approaches that seek to juxtapose legal issues with economics, humanities, educational and many other fields and issues are everywhere. Albeit, Rapping's work is an important contribution to the investigation of links between law and widely televised visual images of law. It is enthusiastically written, lucid and engaging.

However, it begs the question -- why focus on television and not on films? Rapping, indeed, asks that question, and answers by suggesting two contentions. The first emphasizes the dominance of television: "It is television, rather than film, that has become the medium through which real discourse and debate have become dominant modes of presenting all social and political issues and conflict" (271). The second assumes a particularity in the focus of television: "movies are still primarily escapist, hero-centred, spectator sports. But

television creates a viewing community of active Americans, held together by a common sense of identity as 'real Americans' "(271).

Both contentions, it seems, are debatable. In a digital age, when the storm of simulacra engulfs us with an overwhelming flow of multi-sourced images, the dominance of a particular medium is no longer clear. The messages of television production must continuously compete with articulations by other cultural producers. The period of prominence of any articulation is temporary and short-lived, and so are its influences, if any, on collective or the individual state of mind. In this images-saturated environment, the capacity of television to dominantly shape public consciousness is doubtful. The other premise, in regard to the "escapist", "hero-centred" nature of films, may resonate some (not necessarily the large majority) of Hollywood's cinematic products, but disregards many alternate efforts that distinguish the present-day arena of filmmaking. Contemporary cinema has come to be characterized by a fluidity, variety and diversity that make it harder to claim that films in general represent a certain, distinct voice, tendency or orientation. It seems that Rapping's assumptions draw upon the American market, or even to a limited section of African production. Actually, this focus exclusively on American cultural products characterizes the two previous books as well. All three offer different perspectives to the links between law and moving images, but limit their scope to American films, the American legal system and American society. The huge range of alternative visual representations that do no take the conventions of classical cinema as normative is untouched, and neither are non-American legal issues or perspectives. Drawing from a non-American reservoir, however, could be interesting and highly beneficial even when critiquing American legal system or American society, especially when living in our so-called global era, where all kinds of borders seem to blur, and law and films, wherever originally practiced, or produced, can reach and do reach any destination and audience.

Purity and Provocation: Dogma 95

By Mette Hjort and Scott MacKenzie (eds.)
London: BFI, 2003. ISBN 0-85170-952-4. 19 Illustrations, xii + 237 pp. £15.99

A review by Jason Scott, Sheffield Hallam University, UK

This book aims to provide an academic exploration of the phenomena of Dogme 95, to improve upon the previously available journalistic accounts in books such as Richard Kelly's *The Name of this book is Dogme95* (Faber and Faber, 2000), Shari Roman's *Digital Babylon: Hollywood, Indiewood and Dogme95* (iFilm, 2001), and those by Jack Stevenson that precede and postdate it, *Lars von Trier* (BFI, 2002) and *Dogme Uncut: Lars von Trier, Thomas Vinterberg and the Gang That Took on Hollywood* (Santa Monica Press, 2003). Besides these, earlier publications which considered Dogme were predominantly limited to isolated papers, apart from an issue of *POV*, the English-language Danish film journal, devoted to Dogme, some of the authors of which are included. The authors of *Purity and Provocation* reference most of these, as well as several of the documentaries that consider Dogme, and associate all of them with a limited, albeit insightful, and anecdotal perspective upon Dogme. Instead, they set out to develop a detailed and deep analysis of Dogme as "a cinematic programme", a corpus of films, and "the interconnected discourses" surrounding these (14). The back cover suggests the book combines a number of disciplines, and addresses the key historical and conceptual issues necessary in understanding Dogme. As I shall discuss, it also states that contributions consider the Danish Dogme films, and the most significant non-Danish certified films, such as *Lovers* (Jean-Marc Barr, 1999), *julien donkey-boy* (1999) and *Fuckland* (Jose Luis Marques, 2000).

A lengthy introduction by the editors establishes a number of ways in which Dogme can be understood, as marketing device, publicity stunt, aesthetics of denial, or low-budget filmmaking (2). It also narrativizes the origins of Dogme, notably considering the interim between the initial declaration of the manifesto, in March 1995, and the screening of the first Dogme films, *Festen* (1998) and *The Idiots* (Lars von Trier, 1998), in competition at Cannes in 1998. Proceeding to consider the significance of Dogme, with critical and box office success, or as a "vehicle" enabling a Danish film like *Open Hearts* (2002) to gain international visibility (6), the authors stress the wider impact of the "Dogma concept's global circulation" (7). The authors maintain the common distinction between Danish and non-Danish Dogme films, and also conflate this with an opposition between the established Danish directors, and novice international directors. Citing Shari Roman, they suggest that Dogme has provided a "self-validating point of access" to independent film, and film festivals, for aspiring filmmakers (8). This disregards the fact that Thomas Vinterberg had not directed a feature film when he co-wrote the manifesto, albeit that *The Greatest Heroes* enjoyed critical and popular success in Denmark in 1996. Despite providing an engaging account, the authors fail to sufficiently develop certain claims about the wider impact of Dogme, due to reductive characterisations of other cinemas; for instance the "often hyper-kinetic visual style of American independent cinema" (10). They also discuss Dogme's role in legitimating a "hand-held aesthetic" (11) to the extent that this found its way into Hollywood production, without reference to the various hand-held aesthetics used in television, American independent film, or more widely in realist art cinema.

The introduction also incorporates brief reviews of several of the Dogme films, from North America and Europe, as well as the Argentinean *Fuckland* and Korean *Interview* (Hyuk Byun, 2000). It is not clear what the framework for these descriptions is, and how they contribute to the wider account. They illustrate the global spread of Dogme, but aside from providing a national cinematic context for each film, why not consider the way they interpret and manifest the rules? It is disappointing that this is the only place in the book where *Fuckland* is considered in any detail, contrary to the publisher's blurb. This might be due to changes to the book, during its pre-publication gestation period. I first became aware of *Purity and Provocation*, during the 'Questions of Dogme' panel at the SCS conference in 2001 (now SCMS). The panel included earlier versions of both editor's chapters, as well as an interesting paper by Catherine Grant, 'The Director Must Not Be Credited: Authorship, Auteurism and the Films of Dogme "95" ', which focussed upon *Fuckland*. Between this conference and publication, it seems the book changed, not just losing its original subtitle, 'Reflections on Dogma 95', but also some contributions. Presumably, more detailed discussion of *julien donkey-boy* was also omitted, despite the inclusion of an image from this film on the back cover.

In chapter one, Mette Hjort effectively considers the significance of the particular, rather than arbitrary, constraints of the Vow of Chastity, as well as the (non-) aesthetic intentions behind the manifesto. This culminates in relating Dogme to the rejection and privileging of specific art regards. She also discusses Dogme as a (political) response to globalisation, distinguishing Dogme as motivating artistic internationalism, rather than the localist vocabularies and national cultural expression of 'quality' cinema, including heritage films.

MacKenzie's chapter, 'Manifest Destinies', is useful on considering the innovative combination of irony and solemnity within the Dogme manifesto, and its significant address to aesthetics and publicity, a successful parallel to Free Cinema. However, he does not really address the widespread circulation and currency of the manifesto, and Vow of Chastity, following the success of *Festen* and controversies around *The Idiots*.

Chapters by Peter Schepelern and Ib Bondebjerg valuably contextualise Danish Dogme films in relation to Lars von Trier, and Danish cinema, respectively. Schepelern considers the little known, but only partially salient *Dimension* and *Psychomobile #1: The World Clock* performance art project. Bondebjerg discusses two tendencies in New Danish cinema; the fast, stylised genre film, and new realism of improvised narratives, that both inform the Danish Dogme directors, in particular addressing *Italian for Beginners* (2000), *Kira's Reason* (2001) and *Truly Human* (2001). These complete the first and most useable part of the book.

Part two encompasses further perspectives upon specific Dogme films, including philosophical approaches. Berys Gaut attempts to explicate the manifesto, particularly the sections condemning the "individual film" and "film of illusion." He suggests avoiding the former is a "subordinate goal" to combating the latter, but does not fully substantiate this (92). Similarly, his reflexive reading of the first two Dogme films, as being *about* the rules is based on a loose analogy around "rules". Paisley Livingston also explores self-reflexivity in *The King is Alive* (2000) and *Strass* (Vincent Lannoo, 2001). He suggests both films function in relation to Dogme's critique of cinematic fantasy, but again this notion of fantasy is not adequately related to the manifesto. Murray Smith addresses *The Idiots* in terms of its narrative structure and the "response it wants from us". In particular, he relates the group's pranks and the manifesto to a stance on avant-gardism (111). This narrative analysis produces interesting insights, about the shifts around the characters' behaviours, especially their

"spassing". However, Smith assumes certain audience responses, if only at being dupes (112) or having "our concerns" expressed by Karen (118). Ginette Vincendeau contextualises *Lovers* in relation to the French New Wave, other "lovers in Paris" films, and various other genres. She concludes that the film is inconsistent, with its "Dogme-style" *mise-en-scene* not sufficiently articulating the character's feelings; but surely this confuses the goal of forcing "the truth out of my characters and settings" (from the manifesto) with the techniques of art cinema.

Part three addresses the wider impact(s) of Dogme. Hjort considers the globalisation of Dogme, as a metaculture; "practices that make discourses about, or reflections on the cinematic work for which an audience is sought, an integral part of the product's appeal." (134). Considering the circulation of Dogme as a concept, she also addresses the wider elaborations of Dogme in parodic discourses, imitation manifestos in other spheres, and the wider mobilisation of the term "Dogme" in Danish political debates. She also conceives the reception of *The Idiots*, in a limited, albeit telling, account. Chapters on Dogma Dance and Dogumentary expand upon this, yet neither is made particularly relevant beyond the spheres of Dance Film and documentary respectively. Finally, Mads Egmont Christensen develops some of the ideas from his 'Dogma and Marketing', published in the Dogme issue of *POV*. He considers the marketing impact of Dogme, but his notion of the "vertically integrated principle of marketing (from concept to audience)" (194), and the "marketable" concept of the manifesto (192) do not entirely explain the success of Dogme. Unfortunately, this part of the book does not fully engage with the reception of Dogme, both critical reception and the wider impact of individual films and the manifesto, for instance in the way the term Dogme or Dogme-like gained critical currency to describe other films.

An appendix assembles manifestoes inspired by Dogme, as well as the Dogme manifesto, but unforgivably omits the "film of illusion" section of this. Alongside other minor errors or confusions, such as describing *D-Dag* as a Dogme film (65), this detracts from the value of the text. *Purity and Provocation* nonetheless currently constitutes an essential, but flawed, source for anyone intending to further explore Dogme. However, I would suggest that it is used with care, and the value of earlier accounts not so easily dismissed.

Devotional Cinema

By Nathaniel Dorsky
Berkeley: Tuumba Press, 2003. ISBN 1-931157-05-7. 52pp. £5.61 (pbk)

A review by Anton Karl Kozlovic, Flinders University, Adelaide, Australia

The emerging interdisciplinary field of religion-and-film (aka cinematic theology, celluloid religion, theo-film, film-faith dialogue) has quickly become a growth industry, even if repeatedly overlooked within many introductory textbooks, genre guides and film courses, especially within secular institutions. Yet, the range of books published in the field to date is impressive. For example, *Biblical Epics: Sacred Narrative in the Hollywood Cinema* (Manchester University Press, 1993), *Visions of the Maid: Joan of Arc in American Film and Culture* (University of Virginia Press, 2001), *Celluloid Saints: Images of Sanctity in Film* (Mercer University Press, 2002), *The Devil on Screen: Feature Films Worldwide, 1913 through 2000* (McFarland & Company, 2002), *Imaging the Divine: Jesus and Christ-figures in Film* (Sheed & Ward Ltd, 1997), *Hollywood and the Catholic Church: The Image of Roman Catholicism in American Movies* (Loyola Press, 1984), *The Jewish Image in American Film* (Citadel Press, 1987), *Drums of Terror: Voodoo in the Cinema* (Midnight Marquee, 1998), *Explorations in Theology and Film: Movies and Meaning* (Blackwell Publishers, 1997) and *Screening Scripture: Intertextual Connections between Scripture and Film* (Continuum International Publishing, 2002). However, few authors have attempted to explore how film can trigger religious experiences, possess spiritual qualities, or be a material aide to meditative practices. Nathaniel Dorsky, gay man, avant-garde artist, and professional film editor, is a brave soul attempting to explore how "film is the spirit or experience of religion" and how "devotion…might manifest as cinema" (15) because "viewing a film has tremendous mystical implications" (25).

Devotional Cinema resulted from the John Sacret Young Lecture that Dorsky gave at Princeton University for their 30 March 2001 'Conference on Religion and Cinema.' His exposition ("argument" is too strong a word) is laid out in ten sections (15-48), namely: (1) a non-labelled Introduction, (2) The Formal Situation, (3) The Post-Film Experience, (4) Alchemy, (5) The Illuminated Room, (6) Intermittence, (7) Time, (8) Self-Symbol, (9) Shots and Cuts, and (10) a non-labelled Conclusion. Rather than a closely reasoned argument focusing tightly upon a chosen director, genre, period, national cinema, or religious tradition, Dorsky's manifesto is eclectic, episodic and histrionic as he claims to speak "openly from my heart" (15). This makes for interesting reading but poor exposition as it contains many irrelevant asides, poor explanations, and non-existent definitions that make it difficult to comprehend, let alone understand and apply in practice. His monograph ultimately belongs to the school: "if you can't understand it, then it *must* be deep and meaningful."

Most surprisingly, Dorsky does *not* root his sometimes simplistic, sometimes dense, sometimes obvious, sometimes obtuse exposition from his own professional area of expertise, namely, the American independent, avant-garde cinema, but rather, from narrative feature films from different national cinemas, historical periods and film styles. For example, he

referred to *The Passion of Joan of Arc* (Carl Theodor Dreyer, 1928), *The Only Son* (Yasujiro Ozu, 1936), *Day of Wrath* (Carl Theodor Dreyer, 1943), *Late Spring* (Yasujiro Ozu, 1949), *Story of a Love Affair* (Michelangelo Antonioni, 1950), *Voyage to Italy* (Roberto Rossellini, 1953), *Ordet* (Carl Theodor Dreyer, 1955), *La Notte* (Michelangelo Antonioni, 1960), *Contempt* (Jean-Luc Godard, 1963), and to John Ford but without any film examples (46-47). Even more puzzling, Dorsky's lecture was an academic prelude to screening his three silent, non-narrative films *Variations* (1992-1998), *Alaya* (1976-1987) and *Arbor Vitae* (2000), yet, these films were *not* even mentioned in his exposition, let alone used to illustrate his various contentions about devotional cinema. If these films had *no* relevance to his lecture, then why bother screening them in a religion-and-film conference, and if they *were* relevant to his lecture, then why totally ignore them during his supposedly heart-felt explication on the subject? Nor is there any mention of him using excerpts from his nominated feature films during his lecture or in full thereafter (7), and so one is forced to ponder the underlying point (if any) of the disjointed programme when neither component informed the other?

Temporarily overlooking these annoying discontinuities, Dorsky's work suffers greatly by not offering any definition or explanation of what he meant by "religion," "spirit," "experience of religion" whether objectively or subjectively, from an insider or outsider point of view, especially from a devotee of devotional cinema. He bandies these terms around as if they were well known and commonly understood, which is a serious mistake because these same words mean different things to different people in different religion traditions at different historical times and places. Nor is there any indication of what belief system Dorsky personally adhered to or championed, or whether he was formally trained in religion (or not), and thus vital clues to his potential religious meaning, dogmatic agenda, or spiritual intent (whether overtly or covertly, textually or sub-textually crafted).

Equally unhelpful, Dorsky mixes various religious traditions and analytical methodologies with un-explicated references to the psyche (48), alchemy (17, 22-23), heart-related pseudo-mysticism (16), and the theological concepts of "nowness" (31) and "grace" (13). That is, he moves freely between Catholic Christianity, Buddhism, psychology, medievalism and mysticism as if they were supposedly related, interconnected, or interchangeable in some significant way. Such undisciplined eclecticism only serves to confuse an already obtuse exposition in a discipline notoriously difficult for the public to understand. Instead of rational discourse on the topic of religion and the cinema, Dorsky's lecture is more the musings of an amateur theologian who has apparently fallen victim to an old cinema studies canard. Namely, "exploring a language intrinsic to film" (15-16), but this time rooted in human metabolism as both "metaphor" (16) and quotidian physical reality, especially "film's ability to mirror and realign our metabolism" (22). If Dorsky had limited himself to this basic premise and marshalled his evidence to buttress his contentions then the work would have been a superior product. Instead, he adopts a shotgun approach by indulging in a bewildering array of distracting historical, religious and artistic asides. For example, relating to his childhood and adolescence experiences (18-22), temple sleep (22), devotional cave art (22), Egyptian sculpture (22-23, 31), French religious stone carving (23), stained glass windows (23, 24), the Cathedral of Notre-Dame at Chartres (24), Bach's organ chorale preludes (23), and the music of Mozart (23).

Reading *Devotional Cinema* leaves one feeling that Dorsky is a nostalgic romantic pondering troubling childhood experiences and now suffering philosophical-cum-spiritual angst, especially when he asked: "do any of us know *who* we actually are?" (28).This important philosophical question was subsequently tinged with an occult twist when he claims: "My

own instinct is that the poles of existence and non-existence alternate at an extremely fast speed" (28-29), and yet characteristically without any evidence, rationalisation or explication of his terms or its relevance to his contentions about devotional cinema. It appears as if Dorsky has scanned the vast lexicon of religious concepts across ancient, medieval, renaissance and modern times in a supermarket fashion. Then he takes these concepts out of their unique historical and socio-cultural context to make the very general point that there is some sort of connection between religion, film and audiences, but he certainly does not *prove* this linkage in any clear, plausible, sustained or focused fashion.

Sometimes his contentions are obtuse, contradictory or puzzling. For example, although Dorsky says: "film is the spirit or experience of religion" (15), he subsequently claims that his primary concept of "devotion" "need not refer to the embodiment of a specific religious form" (16). Rather, he refers to the quasi-mystical concept of "the opening or the interruption that allows us to experience what is hidden and to accept with our hearts our given situation" (16). Yet, what sort of religious experience is not associated with a religious form, and for that matter, what does he mean by religious form anyway? At other times, Dorsky confuses the dramatic representation of a thing with the thing itself. For example, he refers to the dysfunctional relationship between the protagonists in *Voyage to Italy* and claims that: "It is not a film about a subject, rather it *is* the subject" (20), which apparently causes "renunciation and connects us to devotion" (20), but only God knows why or how. Dorsky argues that film "may serve as a corrective mirror that realigns our psyches and opens us to appreciation and humility" (48) and that "devotion is not an idea or a sentiment. It is born out of…darkness, behind all light, this vastness abides in nowness" (48). However, such psychologically flavoured, Zen-like comments are only philosophical speculations or poor psychology at best, nor are they designed to elicit clarification or inform pragmatic filmmaking practice. It would be interesting to know exactly what Dorsky defines as "normal" and what devotional cinema was supposedly designed to correct, and once we know this, would we still want our psyches realigned in this way?

Furthermore, how can this religious/spiritual/mystical/devotional event (that can lead to a transcendent experience via mindful viewing) be ontologically different from a "normal" film experience when it gives one greater insight into the world and ourselves in such an absorbing manner that we lose track of time? Maybe Dorsky is just restating this desirable but mundane physical reality by repackaging it in a mystical wrapper. For example, his disturbing, childhood experience of feeling "eerie" like a "giant hole that had opened up in the middle of my head" after watching films for six and a half hours straight may only be psychophysical disorientation caused by vigilance fatigue affecting his young body coming from a dark theatre into the late afternoon light (18-9), and *not* divinity at work. Even Dorsky admits to the possibility of film-watching leaving "one feeling unhealthy and disorientated" (21). Besides, being enlightened or even transformed by a film is not automatically a religious experience *per se* and thus worthy of devotion in the pious sense. Nor is it the criterion by which one might use to propose a canon of devotional films that trigger religious experiences for, or in, others.

If Dorsky were suggesting that films could be a conduit for religious experience, one would suggest that this is a possibility because, for Christians, God is everywhere and has already used a burning bush (Exod. 3:1-4 KJV) and Balaam's ass (Num. 22:28-30 KJV) as his preferred communication medium. If Dorsky were suggesting that film physically possess spiritual qualities, one would suggest that this is not the case. A film (whether celluloid strips, magnetic tape or micro-metal coating) is no more holy than a piece of wood carved into a

cross is intrinsically holy (as opposed to being symbolic of the holy and treated with respect because of it). Unless of course the secular is sacred and so film *is* holy, but then so is everything else. If Dorsky were suggesting that film can be an aide to meditative practice where one may encounter the divine, then this is also a possibility, just like focusing upon prayer beads can help one meditate upon the divine. However, film *per se* cannot evoke divinity reliably, repeatedly, or automatically because that holy potential is a product of the film shown, the knowledge, readiness and preparedness of the viewer, and other (unknown) factors that the divine component of the equation requires for a religious effect to occur. To suggest otherwise, or expect it on demand, is only wishful thinking, however desirous, intriguing or delightful.

Given Dorsky's avant-garde preference for making silent films shown at "sacred speed" (that is, 18fps not the 24fps of "secular speed"), and his emphasis upon the visual, he can be justly criticised for under-rating the non-visual sensory elements of the film experience. He also denies himself another powerful aspect of devotional cinema, namely, the filmic equivalent of sacred words of power such as petitionary prayer, divine chanting, and esoteric sound effects. Another limitation of *Devotional Cinema* is that Dorsky writes from the point of view of a filmmaker, which does little to explicate the audiences' viewing experience in this supposedly mystical process. Academically speaking, next to no effort was expended to review or integrate into his work any of the critical literature in the field, such as *Transcendental Style in Film: Ozu, Bresson, Dryer* (University California Press, 1972) or *Robert Bresson: A Spiritual Style in Film* (Continuum International Publishing, 2003). The bulk of his comments are highly personal and subjective, which is both a strength and a weakness that makes great autobiography but poor scholarship. One also wonders why Dorsky ignored feature films from 1970s onwards in his already eclectic survey of world cinema, although he did admit that he could not cover everything (15). Production-wise, it is disappointing to discover that *Devotional Cinema* is not scholar-friendly. It doesn't have a filmography, a reference or further reading section, web addresses or links, an index, a table of contents or relevant illustrations. Although the front cover depicts a pair of open hands from Dorsky's *Variations* (4), this image was *not* referred to within his exposition. Therefore, what was its relevance other than as an advert for Dorsky's poetic cinema, or possibly as a very obtuse visual reference to his comment: "one's hand is a devotional object" (36), albeit, un-explicated?

Overall, Nathaniel Dorsky should be congratulated for tackling the task, for his passionate, if meandering, insights into the field, and for publicly contributing to scholarly debate in this most promising of genres. However, if the religion-and-film field is to mature and become more acceptable to ecclesiastical, educational and other academic institutions, what is needed is clear, penetrating light, not warm, fuzzy heat, especially in a knowledge domain that many consider increasing irrelevant in the 21st century. On the other hand, the idea that a secular, mundane medium can facilitate sacred religious experiences by touching the depths of one's soul with nuances beyond colours, words and structured thought is a seductively intoxicating notion worthy of further research in this undeniable age of Hollywood, especially one targeted at the proverbial children-of-the-media. However, one imagines that calling film directors priests, considering a theatre a sacred space, worshiping the silver screen as a holy icon, or consulting ones DVD collection for divine guidance, moral cleansing, or spiritual enhancement (as opposed to being physically excited, psychologically therapeutic and emotionally cathartic) is a very long way off into the future.

Disintegrating the Musical: Black Performance and American Musical Film

By Arthur Knight
Durham, London: Duke University Press, 2002. ISBN 0-8223-2963-8, 68 b&w illustrations, xii+325pp. £17.50 (pbk)
Appropriating Blackness: Performance and the Politics of Authenticity By E. Patrick Johnson

Appropriating Blackness: Performance and the Politics of Authenticity

By E. Patrick Johnson

Durham, London: Duke University Press, 2003. ISBN 0-8223-3191-8, 16 b&w illustrations, xiii+360pp. £22.95 (pbk)

A review by Ruth Doughty, University of Portsmouth, UK

Disintegrating the Musical and *Appropriating Blackness* are two recent studies that interrogate the construction of black identity. Interestingly, these separate accounts both draw on the practice of artistic and social performance as the key component of their investigations. Knight's book is concerned with the historical role of blackface minstrelsy, whereas Johnson's ethnographical approach applies performance as a methodology to question his own identity -- that of a "black, middle class, southern, gay, male, professor" (10). In spite of what may seem polarized processes, traditional text-based scholarly research versus a progressive approach informed by rehearsal and self-reflection, ultimately the two authors critique the notion of authenticity in black culture and also consider how white society has repeatedly and inappropriately appropriated blackness for their own means.

Knight intensively traces the roots of the all-black-cast musical from the early silent movies by such pioneering directors as Oscar Micheaux and Spencer Williams, through to the controversial production of *Porgy and Bess* (Otto Preminger, 1959) where Louis B. Mayer cajoled Poiter into performing the degrading title role of the happy cripple. Knight evaluates the importance of black culture in the genre of musical film by employing the term "integration" as a three-fold point of inquiry. Firstly, it is used to ask how black artists, both in front and behind the camera, were involved in or excluded from the practice of vertical integration within the film industry; to what extent black filmmakers were in control of production, distribution and exhibition. Secondly, the term "integration" is applied in a more conventional and historical sense as Knight reflects on the nature of Jim Crow and the Civil Rights struggle which acts as a backdrop to his work. The final reading of integration is reserved for the placement and occurrence of musical numbers within the chosen filmic sources. Knight considers whether the musical interludes are naturally integrated into the

narrative or instead cause rupture and how these moments of fragmentation are to be read as an insight into racial performance, be it black or white.

This focus on interpreting the divisive and schismatic nature of African American performance is successfully furthered through the central exploration of blackface. Knight exposes the complex predicament faced by black entertainers in adopting the mask of minstrelsy. Drawing on Paul Dunbar's poem *We Wear the Mask* (1896) and W.E.B. Du Bois' theory of double consciousness, Knight explains how blackface became a symbol of both liberation and constraint; it afforded African Americans admission into the world of entertainment yet reduced character development to stereotyping. Whereas there would be expectations in such a book to record the emergence of blackface performance, Knight chooses not to enter into this debate, instead he focuses on the black artists who consciously attempted and succeeded in manipulating the mask. Bert Williams, Flournoy Miller and Johnnie Lee are amongst the examples of those who negotiated blackface as a means of finding white audience acceptance yet, through comedic skill, ironically turned the joke on white preconceptions of black identity. Nevertheless, a considerable part of the study is fixated on, what Knight calls, white blackface. Here he looks at numerous examples of famous white film stars, including Judy Garland, Shirley Temple and Bing Crosby, to assess the fetishized appropriation of negritude. Knight, akin to the work of Michael Rogin, also considers the interaction between white Jewish actors and African American culture using Eddie Cantor as a case study.

Disintegrating the Musical covers many famous films including *Show Boat* (James Whale, 1936), *Stormy Weather* (Andrew L. Stone, 1943) and *The Jazz Singer* (Alan Crosland, 1927)*;* however Knight reaches deeper and discusses some of the lesser known examples such as *The Duke is Tops* (William L. Nolte, 1938) and *Jammin' the Blues* (Gjon Mili, 1944). The latter provides the author with a fascinating study into the filmic recording of African American musicianship. Following the bold statement that Bebop signalled the end of blackface performance (91), Knight examines the disjunctive correlation between sound and image in many films depicting swing and jazz. Although numerous big bands employed black musicians, when it came to filming the act these artists would not appear so as to not offend audiences in the Deep South. Knight points to specific examples where famous musicians are aurally present on the soundtrack of a film but are not physically seen as a member of the band. However *Jammin' the Blues* inverts the situation through the erasure of Barney Kessel, a white guitarist, performing alongside an all-black line-up.

The concluding chapter of the book jumps forward to the year 2000. Here Knight takes a comparative approach in assessing the Coen brothers' film *O' Brother Where Art Thou* and Spike Lee's controversial satire *Bamboozled*. Whereas *Bamboozled* is an overt example of black blackface, Knight argues that *O' Brother* can be thought of as a contemporary illustration of white blackface. His reading is centred on the black hitchhiking character Tommy Johnson, played by Chris Thomas King. Once more, Knight introduces the notion of integration as a way of analysing the idyllic interrelationship between black and white musical performance in the film. However, he correctly points out that despite the literal and metaphorical harmony when making music, ultimately the film concludes with black and white travelling in different directions. In his final case study, Knight uses *Bamboozled* as a means of justifying the entirety of his investigation into blackface minstrelsy. However, he fails to comment on the ironic placement of the Gershwin ballad 'Summertime' employed throughout the film. This is surprising as the author's previous work includes an article in the book *Soundtrack Available: Essays on Film and Popular Music* (Wojcik & Knight, 2001)

which examines how African American artists have re-appropriated the white composers' material in order to comment on racial stereotyping and Spike Lee furthers this practice. Nevertheless, *Bamboozled* assists in leaving the argument without any real sense of conclusion; in fact Knight goes as far as to call the film "maddeningly equivocal -- unequivocally equivocal," (248) therefore he simply suggests that black musical performance in film will always be problematic. Aside from this, Knight's detailed inquiry is certainly a rich academic addition to the field.

The second text under consideration in this review is E. Patrick Johnson's *Appropriating Blackness: Performance and the Politics of Authenticity*. This book is a personal account into the meaning of blackness when used as a signifier of identity. Johnson's unique sociological project examines six diverse topics in order to question the notion of authentic blackness. Johnson's interest is to discover whether blackness is a wholly biological trait or conversely whether white society can assume blackness via performance. The inquiry also considers the role of class, gender and sexuality in determining the essence of black identity. The six case studies all hold personal significance for Johnson and, as a result of this particular investment, he acknowledges that the work may include numerous short comings and limitations. This may be the case but it does not detract in anyway from the captivating nature of the work.

Three of the chapters interrogate the issue of homosexuality within black society. Johnson claims that African Americans are often openly homophobic as ideas of blackness are often tied up with misogynistic masculinity. In exploring this, Johnson points to the writing of Amiri Baraka and Eldridge Cleaver and also the comedic routines of Eddie Murphy. He states that amid the homophobic stance there are moments of slippage where the seemingly bigoted scholars/comic construct a very physical almost erotic style of prose or poise when denouncing famous gay icons. Johnson also explores the gay communities' adoption and subversion of terminology typically associated with the normative nuclear family. Once more he feels that due to the hierarchical focus on masculinity within black society that homosexuals are often rejected by their biological family and this has lead to the emergence of "houses" within the black gay community where the orphaned can find refuge. Johnson also looks at homosexuality via the documentaries made by the late film director Marlon Riggs. Riggs provides an interesting insight into the impact of AIDS on black gay culture. Here Johnson problematises Riggs' work by questioning the director's desire to associate the black body with disease.

As the title of the book suggests, Johnson's work is also concerned with how blackness is appropriated by others. In order to assess this first-hand, Johnson involves himself with an Australian gospel choir. This fascinating ethnographical field study results in much condemnation by the author who suggests that their musical performance was devoid of spirituality, audience interaction and physical movement. In numerous transcribed interviews the singers claim that they can relate to the plight of black America as they were treated unfairly by the English. Johnson challenges this affiliation by looking at the history of the aboriginal people of Australia. However, when reflecting on how the gospel singers fared when they visited the US and performed with black Americans he was not so judgmental as a small number of the singers underwent a transformation suggesting that enlightenment can occur and blackness can be experienced. Likewise, Johnson communicates how, through his university teaching of performance studies, he has witnessed white students grasp black authenticity whilst undertaking certain roles.

The highlight of *Appropriating Blackness* is Johnson's approach to deconstructing the mammy stereotype. Here he includes the emotive memoirs of his grandmother who served as a live-in domestic for a white family; the full fifty-three page transcript is included as an appendage to the book. It is here that Knight's *Disintegrating the Musical* and Johnson's work overlap. In the same way that Knight unveiled how certain blackface actors manipulated the mask in order to gain entrance into the world of entertainment, Johnson's grandmother, despite her menial subservient position, emits trickster characteristics. This enthralling oral history delves into the past and challenges the caricature of the happy matriarch. It is this constant questioning of authentic black performance, both on the stage and off, that renders the work of both Knight and Johnson an invaluable addition to the discipline of black cultural studies.

Italian Cinema: Gender and Genre

By Maggie Günsberg
Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave, Macmillan. ISBN 0-333-75115-9. 10 illustrations, 243 pp. £45

A review by Clodagh Brook, University of Birmingham, UK

Maggie Günsberg's book is an excellent and most welcome analysis of genre cinema in Italy, a form that has historically tended to be overlooked by Anglo-American criticism, which tendentially focuses on Italian auteur cinema and neorealism rather than on popular forms. As the first book written in English to bring together an extended analysis of gender and genre in Italian cinema, it will be a vital tool for researchers and students alike, providing a new slant, rather than simply an introductory overview, to Italian cinema. The provision of quotations in English, together with analysis of the Italian social context, make this research accessible to those who are interested in the issues addressed, but who may lack a knowledge of the Italian language and context.

The study is delimited both geographically and chronologically. In geographical terms, the focus is firmly Italian, and, although it draws some comparisons with Hollywood, links to genre cinema in the rest of Europe (or elsewhere in the world) are almost entirely absent. Günsberg's approach nevertheless has the advantage of allowing her to contextualize the genres and their use of gender within a specific socio-economic and artistic context. In chronological terms, the focus is not as broad as the title of the book might suggest, limiting its analysis to the height of genre production from the late 1940s to the early 1970s and excluding any in-depth exploration of both early silent genres and the current (domestic) success of popular comedic and dramatic genres. This is a sign of a general tendency towards a schematic approach, which on the negative side can lead towards a rather narrow classification which belies complexity (does *commedia all'italiana* really simply end in 1964 as she suggests?), but has the advantage of providing clarity and definition of classification. The genres chosen are those which best lend themselves to genre analysis: melodrama (1949-55); *commedia all'italiana* (1958-64); the *peplum* (1957-65); the horror film (1956-66); the spaghetti western (1964-early 1970s).

Günsberg's approach is informed by theory, especially the feminist theories of Irigaray and Butler, the psychoanalysis of Freud and Lacan, some Marxism (particularly Baudrillard), and contemporary film theory (Richard Dyer, Laura Mulvey, Steve Neale). The outcome is research which seems effortlessly to draw together psychoanalytical, socioeconomic, and gender theories in order to explore "the interface between ideology and cultural production" (1), especially with relation to patriarchy. Her approach also considers the socio-economic background for the decades in question (especially the rise of the women's movement in Italy), the relevant commercial aspects of film production, and the formal properties of film such as narrative, iconography, and soundtrack.

The chapters are divided according to genre, and fall broadly into an overlapping chronological framework. This structure reinforces the idea that these genres possess a self-contained and highly delimited nature. Each chapter deals with a representative sample of films, without relying solely on those films canonized by Anglo-American criticism (there is, for instance, analysis of *Divorzio all'italiana*, and Leone's spaghetti westerns, but she also discusses many lesser-known films, and the filmography for the book runs to almost 170 titles).

The introduction delimits the ground for research and sets the context for a study of genre cinema in Italy. Drawing on Wagstaff and Forgacs, Günsberg examines the Italian market context (competition with Hollywood, the composition of the domestic market in terms of its size, class, geography and gender), and the nature of genre films, especially in terms of the repetition and variation of their narrative, iconography and soundtrack. She concludes the chapter with a defence of popular genre cinema against the critical trend to privilege art-house auteurs within Italian cinema.

In Chapter One ('Domestic Bliss: Desire and the Family in Melodrama'), Günsberg explores the ways in which melodramas, especially those of Matarazzo, ultimately divert female desire (both sexual and economic) into procreation and economic dependence within the domestic sphere. She argues that in this genre, desire is not presented directly, but only obliquely, through the *mise en scène*, the soundtrack and narrative, which means that the female herself does not speak: her voice is muted. Female desire is denied within this patriarchal world, and is punished repeatedly within the films' narratives. Günsberg's argument revolves around two central motifs: the *mater dolorosa*, who emerges in the films as asexual, although fertile, and who lives under the surveillance of the patriarchal heads of the family; the family unit as a whole, with its dynamics of desire (the oedipal triad and the mother-daughter dyad). In the context of the discussion of on-screen female desire, spectator desire is also assessed.

Chapter Two ('Commodifying Passions: Gender and Consumerism in *Commedia all'italiana*') is dedicated to the *commedia all'italiana,* and especially the relationship between sex and materialism. The Italian social context is brought into play here, with a discussion of the increased commodification of Italian social relations during the boom years (which coincided with the peak of the *commedia*). It begins by looking at consumerism and commodity fetishism within a theoretical framework marked by psychoanalysis (Freud, Lacan) and Marxism (Baudrillard) and then explores how one commodity (the car) functions in a number of films, and the effect on gender relationships of the commodification of relations. It also examines the commodification of the female body (through its sexuality) and of the male body (through its labour power). The films which provide the focus for this chapter are Germi's *Divorzio all'italiana*, De Sica's *Matrimonio all'italiana*, and others, such as *Audace colpo dei soliti ignoti*.

The *peplum* is the focus of Chapter Three ('Heroic Bodies: The Cult of Masculinity in the *Peplum*'). After a description of the genre and its audience, the chapter moves on to a discussion of various gender issues (such as the difference between gender and sexuality), before focusing on the "heroic male body" (110). Günsberg argues that the muscular male hero of the *peplum* is marked by difference, in terms of other men (he's more muscular), other races (he's white), and women (he stands firmly against female domesticity). She also discusses the homosociality of the *peplum* films and shows how this stands in opposition to gynosociality, which it divides and destroys. The chapter looks specifically at the Hercules

and Maciste characters (who feature in many films in the genre), especially in relation to their gender relations.

Chapter Four ('Looking at Medusa: Investigating Femininity in the Horror Film') explores the horror film, a second fantasy genre. Unlike the *peplum*, which highlights the male body, the horror centres on the female. Reading the woman in the horror as threat to masculinity (as it also is in the *peplum*), Günsberg links the rise of the horror to its social context: the rise of feminism (a threat to patriarchy) within Italian society at the time. Using a psychoanalytical framework, she addresses issues related to fetishism, sadomasochism, the imaginary, the abject and oral sexuality. These films play out the "patriarchal nightmares of 'what if' scenarios" (172), which are usually, but not always, reassuringly resolved in the films' closure.

In the fifth chapter ('The Man with No Name: Masculinity as Style in the Spaghetti Western') masculinity is again seen defining itself in its rejection of the feminine, the domestic, the civilized. After introducing the genre and linking it to possible causes within the social context, the chapter focuses on masculinity as masquerade, exploring the idea of masculinity not in its biology but in the "accoutrements of gender performance" (186), which includes discussion of the accoutrement par excellence: the gun.

This book's tight and sophisticated argument succeeds in drawing five diverse genres together, and in tracing the filmic development of gender relations in a period of Italian history when -- extrafilmically -- these relations were undergoing rapid change. It is well-documented and researched, and its strong theoretical framework draws on Günsberg's expertise in issues of gender. It is clear from her account that patriarchy is alive and strong in these genres, despite changes in the social status of women at the time. It would be interesting to see whether there are significant transformations in the treatment of gender in Italy's cinema genres since the 1970s, but this, perhaps, would call for a further book.

The Films of Peter Weir, Second Edition

By Jonathan Rayner
London and New York: The Continuum International Publishing Inc., 2003. ISBN 0-826-153-0 (pbk), 0-824-1534-2 (hbk). 287pp. £14.99 (pbk), £55.00 (hbk)

A review by Serena Formica, University of Nottingham, UK

In the first edition of *The Films of Peter Weir* (1998) the author examined the director's body of work over three decades from his early short Australian films of the '70s (*Michael,* 1970, *Homesdal*e, 1971) to what was his last American film, *Fearless* (1993). Five years later, the author felt the necessity to update the volume, including the only film Peter Weir had directed before the publication of this second edition: *The Truman Show* (1998). The film happened to be released shortly after the publication of the book's first edition, and therefore was not included in the analysis. With an ironic repetition of events, as the author points out in the preface, this second edition was published in 2003, right before the release of Weir's latest film *Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World* (2003).

In *The Films of Peter Weir*, *Second Edition*, Jonathan Rayner maintains the structure of his previous work, presenting Peter Weir's films in chronological order and, at the same time, grouping them together according to criteria that vary from one chapter to the other. The main criteria of analysis (textual) and the author's position towards Peter Weir's production (the auteurist approach) are presented in the book's introduction and reiterated in the preface that has been added to the second edition.

Rayner is aware of the issues that the auteurist approach might raise considering that, even though it has been used by scholars and critics for more than fifty years, it remains "critically controversial now as then" (1); consequential to this approach is the method of analysis that groups the films according to their authorship. The author defends his approach recalling its importance with "filmgoers, academic and students" (1) and sustains that it is consonant with the study of Peter Weir films, considering the position of the director within the Hollywood establishment.

In the introduction, which is virtually similar to the first edition, Rayner presents the core of his analysis: the differentiation and opposition between American cinema, seen as commercial, and European cinema that is considered art cinema. This distinction goes further, since the author sustains that whereas within the American films it is possible to identify well-defined conventionalised genres (western, horror, science fiction), the European production, being auteur-driven, has as many genres as "author-directors" (4).

It can be briefly argued that not all the American films have a commercial connotation (Rayner does not mention the independent American productions) and that labelling a film as "commercial" does not exclude automatically an "art" connotation of the film itself. In other words, not all American films are purely commercial, and not all commercial movies are pure entertainment, some of them could be classified as both "art" and

"commercial/entertainment". *The Graduate* (Mike Nichols, 1967) and *O Brother, Where art Thou?* (Joel Coen, 2000) are two examples. Moreover, Rayner's implication that European films cannot be classified in codified genres -- surprisingly -- does not consider the different European genres such as Surrealism, German Expressionism of the '20s, or Italian Neorealism (Gian Piero Brunetta, *Storia del Cinema Mondiale*, Einaudi, 1999) that followed the Second World War, or the Italian comedy of the '60s, and so forth.

The first three of Weir's films that Rayner groups together are *Michael*, *Homesdale* and *The Cars That Ate Paris* (1974). This "trio" shows, according to the author, that Weir was in touch with contemporary social (the youth rebellion), artistic and political (the Vietnam War) movements and bears the influences of the foreign art cinema school. Rayner affirms that "the style of *Cars* combines tropes from European and American cinema suggesting the western in its setting and recent French cinema in its editing" (25). The author points out the stylistic similarities of these three films, significantly the use of music, a combination of horror music and classical music and even, in *Homesdale*, sacred music, and the framing composition, in which the main characters are constricted within the screen.

The subsequent *Picnic at Hanging Rock* is presented in a chapter entirely dedicated to it though Rayner does not omit to make a comparison between the original version of 1974 and the director's cut of 1998. Due to the date of the release of the DVD, this aspect was not included in the first edition of Rayner's book and represents a new element of this second edition. The author points out all the changes that Weir made in the film, underlining the original scenes that had been shortened -- like the celebration dinner at the vigil of St. Valentine's 1900 or cut -- the scene showing Mrs. Appleyard hiding the evidence of Sara's suicide, rendering the mystery yet more obscure -- and the new scenes that had been added -- like a scene after the Church sequence, that "consists of six shots showing a photographer attempting to get pictures of the girls outside the College and being chased away by the headmistress" (84). Rayner notes the peculiar approach to this new edition of *Picnic*:

The subsequent reediting of the movie is also unusual, inasmuch that the running time of the new version is nearly identical to that of the original. […] The 1998 version of *Picnic* appears as an alternative to rather than a restoration (except in terms of image and sound quality) or expansion of the original release (83).

Rayner justifies the fact that *Picnic at Hanging Rock* is examined alone since it is a unique film in Peter Weir's work -- even though it assumes the look and style of a European art film it does not subvert an American genre model (56). *Picnic at Hanging Rock,* in other words, combines in one feature all the (seemingly) divergent characteristics that oppose, in Rayner's view, the American from the European films.

In the third chapter Rayner examines *The Last Wave* (1977) and *The Plumber* (1979), united "despite their differences in setting" by "a depiction of an uncanny subversion of bourgeois values, which is accompanied and articulated by the eschewal of conventional narrative construction" (89).

The forth chapter is dedicated to the study of the last two films by Weir in Australia (*Gallipoli,* 1981, and *The Year of Living Dangerously,* 1982). Rayner observes that the films foresee the later American productions, particularly in the way they were financed. The first, indeed, was partially founded by Robert Stigwood and Rupert Murdoch; the latter was

produced by MGM and distributed by Paramount. Another element that reunites the two films is their similar success both with critics and the public.

In the following chapter, Rayner analyses *Witness* (1985) and *The Mosquito Coast* (1986), grouping the two together because of their oppositions rather than for their similarities. *The Mosquito Coast*, a screen adaptation of a Paul Theroux novel, had been in the mind of the director for some time but because of funding problems Weir had to delay it, readdressing his attention to a studio project, *Witness*. The latter, therefore, is closer, as Rayner points out, to a contract project, whereas the first is a more personal project. Another reason why the book's author examines the two films together is because they had opposite fortunes. *Witness* had success both with critics and the public, while *The Mosquito Coast*, as *The Cars That Ate Paris* many years before, failed to find an audience.

Using similar criteria, Rayner studies the two subsequent films of Peter Weir together, *Dead Poets Society* (1989) and *Green Card* (1990). This time the repletion of events has a curious connotation; as in the case seen in the previous chapter, *Green Card* was supposed to be realised before *Dead Poets Society*, but, due to the unavailability of the leading actor (Gerard Depardieu), Weir worked on *Dead Poets Society* first. Another element that differentiates the two films is their opposite genesis: *Dead Poets Society* was a studio project, whereas *Green Card* was a personal project, being not only directed but also written by Weir, and is a French/Canadian co-production.

According to Rayner another reason why the two films are examined together is because they "provide" both a recognisable Weir style and "a sure signature of authorship" (222). As the author points out, this vision is not shared by Don Shiach who dismisses *Dead Poets* as a "well-crafted exercise in Hollywood emotionalism" (179). The different view between the two scholars goes beyond a divergent judgment on a single film, even though Rayner does not mention the other, more radical, differences. Shiach, indeed, not only does not share Rayner's idea of Peter Weir as an auteur, but also considers the auteur theory weak as a whole. Shiach, in *The Films of Peter Weir: Visions of Alternative Realities* (Charles Lett & Co Limited, 1993) states that "the auteur theory in its most extreme form has largely been discredited" and that

the very process of identifying directorial obsessions or repeated stylistic touches in a director's canon meant, according to the theory, inevitably those movies had some intrinsic worth -- was one of the weaknesses of the original *auteur* theory (2, 5).

In the seventh chapter, Rayner considers *Fearless* (1993) and *The Truman Show* (1998). The author is aware of their apparent disparity in critical reception and in their commercial success, but groups the two films together because he identifies their communal origin in Peter Weir's films of the '70s, in which the individual seeks to free himself from the constrictions of society. Rayner underlines that of all Weir's heroes Max (Jeff Bridges) and Truman (Jim Carrey) are the first and only to succeed in their efforts. *Fearless* and *The Truman Show* are united also by their criticism of American society, and in "theme, style and authorship" (256).

From the first chapter of *The Films of Peter Weir* the pattern of analysis that Rayner follows in the whole book is recognisable, though not always in the same order. It is interesting to note that every chapter is formed by only a section, without a subdivision in sections. First of all, the author determines where the film(s) examined stand within Weir's productions. Then

he compares it (or them) with the other film(s) of the director -- contemporary, previous or successive, considering certain features as echoes of past work. *Fearless*, for example, echoes *The Last Wave* in its themes, whereas *Michael* previews *The Truman Show*.

At a second stage, he describes the opening sequences to give the reader a sense of the whole film, employing a semiotic analysis -- looking at the framing and composition, the camera movements, and so forth. Thirdly the analysis passes at the level of meaning of the film(s), with a close examination of the films' themes and motives. At this third stage, Rayner seeks the similarities rather than the differences among the films, and he identifies a feature common to all of Weir's productions: the conflict between a single individual and society.

Another level of analysis consists in establishing the influences both of Peter Weir on other directors and of other directors on him. In this phase, Rayner mentioned those films -- Australian, American or European -- that, in one way or another, could have played a role in forming Peter's Weir cinematic identity.

Since many of Peter Weir's films are screen transpositions of novels, a further stage in Rayner's examination is the comparison of those films with the novel from which they are taken. The author points out the differences and the similarities among the novels and the films, valuing the effects of the director's addition or cuts. The comparisons concern *Picnic at Hanging Rock*, and the homonymous Joan Lindsay novel; *The Year of Living Dangerously* and Christopher J. Koch's novel; *The Mosquito* Coast and Paul Theroux's novel and, finally, *Fearless* and Raphael Yglesias' novels.

In the final chapter, the author reprises the argument raised in the introduction, affirming that the reason for Weir's success, in particular of his American success, lay in the fact that the director succeeded in combining the elements of the European art film tradition with the features of American genres, "connotation and narrative", creating what he calls the "'genre' of Peter Weir's films" (261).

The Films of Peter Weir, Second Edition is a book that presumes a certain degree of familiarity with the work of Peter Weir (the author only alludes to the film's plots), and might constitute a fruitful reading to those interested in a further investigation of the director's films from the perspective of the auteur theory, or to those readers and viewers that "simply" love cinema.

The Flash of Capital: Film and Geopolitics in Japan

By Eric Cazdyn
Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2002. ISBN 0-8223-2939-5 (pbk), 0-8223-2912-3 (hbk). 75 illustrations + 316 pp. £17.50 (pbk), £69 (hbk)
The Midnight Eye Guide to New Japanese Film By Tom Mes and Jasper Sharp & The Yakuza Movie Book: A Guide to Japanese Gangster Films By Mark Schilling

The Midnight Eye Guide to New Japanese Film

By Tom Mes and Jasper Sharp

Berkeley: Stone Bridge Press, 2005. ISBN 1-880656-89-2. 151 illustrations. xiv +365pp. £16.99 (pbk)

The Yakuza Movie Book: A Guide to Japanese Gangster Films

By Mark Schilling

Berkeley: Stone Bridge Press, 2003. ISBN 1-880656-76-0. 49 illustrations. +335pp. £11.46 (pbk)

A review by Kevin Teo Kia Choong, University of Calgary, Canada

As a formative part of a growing academic interest in globalization studies within various university campuses and strategic studies institutes, fuelled mainly by the economic rise of Asian countries like Japan, Korea, China and India, books contributing to the comprehensive study of Japanese cinema within an English-speaking, Western context could not be more welcome at this stage in time. These three books which I review cannot be underestimated in their value and timeliness as studies in this field in laying out or implying at a possible "history" of Japanese cinema and its various genres, despite their varying topical approaches and methodologies. While Cazdyn's book ventures into the realms of historiography, economics and globalization studies, applying these various theoretical concerns to Japanese cinema and creating a historiography of both Japanese film history and Japanese cinema itself, the latter two, by contrast, take a more traditional auteur-oriented approach in interpreting the resurgence of Japanese cinema and the evolution of the *yakuza* genre in the light of the demands fostered by the Japanese studio system and its subsequent collapse starting from the early 1970s.

To turn first to Eric Cazdyn's book, what appeals in a theoretical study like his would be the core metaphor contained within the title and the book's argument. The "flash of capital" refers not only to the attractiveness and allure of economics as a force compelling the industrial production of cinema in Japan, but more so, the very flash (light or visuality) of cinematic images which stands both in continuity and discontinuity with the traditional arts of Japanese culture, including the literary arts and dramatic performing arts like *kabuki*, *bunraka* and *Noh* theatre. The condition of modernity is seen to be reinforced by this very flash of cinematic images in the history of early Japanese cinema as a mode of individualistic expression, where the renowned *kabuki* actor Ichikawa Danjuro IX was jolted into the shock of seeing himself as a represented subject -- both seeing and seen-upon the viewing of *Momijigari* (Tsunekichi Shibata, 1897), the oldest remaining Japanese film (16). Furthermore, as Cazdyn illustrates further in his study, the attempt to negotiate and understand Japanese modernity, in the form of emerging capitalism, itself parallels the bid of the individual to negotiate varying forms of visuality and "technologized images" (21). He reinforces this in his first chapter's devotion to the comparative study of various representative mediums and the crises of meaning they invoke, such as promotional posters of traditional *kabuki* actors like Kataoka Nizaemon and posters identifying the culprits of the 1995 release of sarin gas in a Tokyo subway, namely fugitive members of the Aum Shinrikyo cult.

By extrapolation from these examples, Cazdyn suggests that the crisis of representation fostered by these images, in the dialectic between individual thought and social-collective processes of perception, points forward to three crucial conflicts in Japanese film history: firstly, the reflection and negotiation of Japan as both a colonized and colonizing nation; secondly, the struggle between the (individual) film director and the (collective) film industry (28); and thirdly, between the national (or nationalistic) impulse in Japan and global, transnational discourses of economic production. This metaphor of the "flash" (light) of capital, which pervades the book, is by far an organising principle which Cazdyn uses ambitiously to focus the various chapters of his book on the notion of Japan's economic rise as parallel with the rise in the medium of Japanese cinema and the construction of its cinematic history, since it criss-crosses between various discourses on Japanese economic history, the evolution from Japan's traditional arts of classical literature (such as the prose narrative, the *shosetsu*) to the film adaptation (the *eiga-ka*), and also, Japanese imperialistic history and its subsequent challenge in the face of globalization.

Alongside this economic aspect of the rise of Japanese capitalism, the significant roles of the pornographic (soft-core adult) film and animation in Japan have to be called forth to attention as a subject of study by Cazdyn's and Tom Mes and Jasper Sharp's books respectively. This is considering the immense income generated by the former as a common industrial crowd-pleaser in the 1980s and 1990s when the studio system had begun to feel the encroaching pressure of foreign film imports from Hollywood, and the status of the latter as a major constituent of Japanese cultural exports to the rest of Asia and the world.

In the case of the former, Cazdyn takes it up as a subject of study, stretching the limits as to what one would define as a vital binary between the "pornographic" and the "non-pornographic" in Japan. The risk that Cazdyn's book takes in its argument, notably in the fifth chapter on pornography, is to venture to claim that pornography's "most critical social function is to legitimate that which it is not -- the 'non-pornographic'" (174). This premise is contrary to the popular Western (American) ideological standpoint that a removal of crime, pornography and government corruption will lead to a better life. It goes a long way to suggest that pornography is in reality interwoven into the very socio-economic fabric of

Japanese society and contributes to its totality itself. The author uses four films as his test-cases, namely Shohei Imamura's *The Pornographers* (1966), Oshima Nagisa's *In the Realm of the Senses* (1976), and Hara Kazuo's *The Emperor's Naked Army Marches On* (1987), and Isaka Satoshi's lesser-known *Focus* (1996). For Cazdyn, the first example, a purported feature film about the making of a pornographic film, anticipates this problematic of defining the "pornographic", wherein the central character of Ogata, a maker and distributor of low-budget porn films, reveals this pornographic impulse not only through the human bodies he exploits in his films, but also within his everyday life itself. If the capitalism of Japanese society involves the commodification of everyday processes, in emerging television dramas and commercial advertisements, then pornography is "the commodity par excellence" accordingly (181). This dissolution of the boundaries between the feature film and the pornographic film is especially extended by Cazdyn towards the latter two examples of Nagisa and Kazuo's films, to imply that the circulation of these two films outside of Japan runs in tandem with the circulation of commodities on a global scale. He then uses the final example to illustrate the emergence of a "new" format of pornography influenced by reality culture, Docu-pornography, demonstrating as a part of his argument that the corporatization of the pornography industry in Japan has become so extensive to the point of pervading Japanese culture through its underlying principle of cultural commodification. This step in Cazdyn's argument is as such the boldest in its affirmation of the socio-economic worth of pornography in Japan as a subject deserving academic study on the basis of its case for globalization in Japan.

In the aspect of animation, however, a minor disappointment of mine with Tom Mes and Jasper Sharp's book arises from the fact that only one brief chapter-section was devoted to the study of Studio Ghibli and its contribution to the animation film genre's development in Japan itself. Studio Ghibli's ensemble directorial strength of Isao Takahata and Hayao Miyazaki, while arguably representing "something of a national treasure trove" as the book claims boldly (111), is not all that we associate exclusively with Japanese popular culture and its animation films. It is somewhat ironic that Mes' book relegates crucial animations which are geared to a large cult following outside of Japan to the margins of the book in the last chapter 'The Other Players', which classifies various independent feature films together. These animation films which are studied include the *Memories* trilogy of 1996, directed by Katsuhiro Otomo, *Avalon*, (Mamoru Oshii, 2001) and *Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within* (Hironobu Sakaguchi & Moto Sakakibara). Despite the recent publication date of the book in 2005, notable animation classics like Mamoru Oshii's *Ghost in the Shell* (1995) and Katsuhiro Otomo's *Akira* (1988) are not mentioned.

Furthermore, a history of recent and "new" Japanese animation, starting from the 1990s onwards, should also include a study of the development of experimental aesthetic techniques by Takashi Marakami, and its relation to the dominant *otaku* (animation comic) culture in Japan as well as the mainstream television-animation culture. Marakami's art espoused a merging of Japanese pop culture with post-modern art, called "Superflat" art because it disregarded categorical distinctions between "high" and "low" art, and this especially influenced the animation features of studios like Studio 4°C in well-known features like *Spriggan* (Hirotsugu Kawasaki, 1998), *Princess Arete* (Sunao Katabuchi, 2001), and *Mind Game* (Masaaki Yuasa, 2004). This might be too much to ask of an introductory guide to the subject of "new" Japanese cinema which involves animation films as but one genre among many, but further expositions of the various classics in animation other than those created by Studio Ghibli, arguably Japan's answer to Walt Disney, would add more interest to the value to the book in its study of animation as one such genre.

In comparison, Cazdyn's book takes on a more analogical approach towards the subject of animation. Using the test-case of Mamoru Oshii's *Ghost in the Shell*, Cazdyn engages in a critical dialogue with the film as less an example of the collapse of the human body as a form of subjectivity in the context of post-war Japan, but more so, as a narrative representing the break-up of the nation, thereby moving towards an idea of a "globalized system" (242) which challenges and militates against the idea of a "nation" or "nationalism". For me, while this allegorical reading of *Ghost* is original, it is not fully convincing, since it goes against the grain of what has conventionally been applied to studies of cyberpunk fiction narratives and comics in seeing them as affirmations of a post-modern crumbling of the individual subject. Given the cursory and short treatment of just one animation classic, which Cazdyn pairs up in comparison with another speculative fiction (or science fiction) film, namely Tsukamoto Shinya's *Tetsuo* (1989), in the penultimate chapter, it is evident that Cazdyn is not using animation per se to construct a history of Japanese animation, but rather to construct a theoretical-ideological framework around which to understand the rise of a transnational globalism in which Japanese notions of imperialism, especially centred on the cult of the emperor, are eroded in significance considerably. In the same way that the "I" subject collapses to give way to the "cyborg" in cyberpunk discourses, Cazdyn takes a speculative leap with the example of *Ghost in the Shell* to suggest that the demise of the "nation" as a viable discourse itself gives way to the discourse of the "global", thereby reinforcing his main focus on the parallel roles of globalization on Japanese capitalism and Japanese cinema.

The sharper and more closely focused topical approach of Mark Schilling's book on Japanese films of the *yakuza* (gangster) film genre is by contrast a refreshing change from either the ideological slant of Cazdyn's book, or the generic auteur-cinema approach of Mes and Sharp's book. As a self-confessed fan of *yakuza* films, and a Japanese film lecturer, Mark Schilling's particular focus on this genre seems appropriate and clearly elucidated. The book itself gives a brief introduction to the history of the *yakuza* film genre in Japanese cinema, firstly laying out the origins of Japanese *yakuza* in pre-war Japanese society in the form of *machi-yakko* (bands of townsmen) who organized themselves to resist bandits and looters, and were subsequently divided into two subsequent groups called the *bakuto* (itinerant gamblers) and *tekiya* (peddlers), the former being the main source to which modern triads attribute their beginnings. As Schilling observes closely, the organizational hierarchy of the *yakuza* in Japanese society under a leader, an *oyabun*, which could mean either "boss" or literally "father", points to the closely knit fabric within which the yakuza triad operates -- as a form of surrogate family -- and its pervasive nature in Japanese society. In addition to laying out its real social history shortly, Schilling also maps out the various phases of development in the Japanese *yakuza* film from its Golden Age in the 1960s, under the form of the *ninkyo-eiga* (chivalry films), leading up to its subsequent decline from the 1970s onwards under the crumble of Japan's studio system, in "pinky violence" films which pander to the audience's desires for gratuitous sex and violence, as well as the short-lived "realist" (*jitsuroku*) *yakuza* film. He later defines the *yakuza* film's overriding thematic concern, *giri-ninjo*, in which the hero is faced with a dilemma between his own interests and an obligation he must follow and may even cost him his life (23). While Schilling's introduction to the subject of *yakuza* films is by no means exhaustive, it is useful in setting the basic details and facts with which to understand the specific films he studies and criticizes later on in the book.

One of the primary questions which the three books relate to is especially the problem of the dichotomy which has been traditionally imposed between the "national" and the "transnational", when one mentions and uses the term "Japanese cinema". When we talk about Japanese cinema in relation to globalization and transnationalism, there is the

dangerous tendency to perceive it as a cinema which is on the verge of fading away into obscurity, under the charge that global blockbuster imports from Hollywood has eroded a strong sense of Japanese-nativist pride in their local productions. This dichotomy is one such problem which these three books return to, or are indirectly shaped by. Cazdyn's book provides no neat answers to this question concerning the validity of the dichotomy, openly admitting that at this moment when the rise of a transnational "global" culture is felt more than ever in contemporary Japan, there is at the same time a need as never before for the "functional ideology" of the nation (253). The old spectre of nationalism has hardly died out but re-appeared under another guise, although as Cazdyn claims, it has exceeded itself in his examples of *Ghost in the Shell* and *Tetsuo*.

As another facet of this problem concerning the national-transnational dichotomy, the latter two books provide an interesting aside to this debate. Rather than focusing on the debate *per se*, these two books indirectly suggest through their scope of study the possibly moot point of this debate: that Japanese cinema is actually experiencing a new "revival" outside of the studio system through new independent directors and *auteurs*. Indeed, the irony suggested by Mes's book regarding these various Japanese directors' foreign success, through the transcriptions of interview segments with them and their popular critical reception abroad, would be that Japanese directors who have garnered critical acclaim abroad have achieved this within a rapidly globalised context via discarding labels of being "Japanese." These directors thereby refuse to conform to the prevalent norms of industrial filmmaking practised within the Japanese studio system, in directors such as Takeshi ("Beat") Kitano, Takashi Miike, and Hideo Nakata, also imbibing what popular elements appeal to a Western audience.

In a similar fashion, the "transnational" element is implied in Schilling's book, where it has the virtue of focusing not only on *yakuza* films set and produced in Japan but also includes those financed by Hollywood capital and directed by Hollywood directors who set the narratives in Japan and used Japanese acting talents and producers. These examples include Frank Cappello's two films *American Yakuza* (1994) and *No Way Back* (1995), and Sydney Pollack's *The Yakuza* (1975). As a demonstration of this increasing scale of globalization, his inclusion of these films broaden the definition of a Japanese *yakuza* film, in considering possible international efforts at collaboration between Hollywood and Japan. Considering this aspect of multinational cooperation between various countries and directors, a further possible angle for the book to venture off into -- should there be subsequent revised editions -- might be the influence of the Japanese *yakuza* film on various multinational film productions like *Crying Freeman* (Christophe Gans, 1995), and the Hollywood-funded *Kill Bill* series directed by Quentin Tarantino (2003 and 2004), which has martial arts choreographers Yuen Woo Ping from Hong Kong, and Sonny Chiba from Japan, and various Japanese producers to its production credits.

My other minor criticism of these books in terms of structural divisions lie mainly with the structural divisions within the last two books, since the layout of their respective chapters can be either confusing or break the flow of the reading occasionally. Inside Mes and Sharp's book on Japanese cinema, the interspersing of pictures, a filmography and interview segments amidst the biography of each director may have given it a lively feel much like an entertainment or film magazine. On the other hand, there is some element of slight repetitiveness or overlap between the biography of the individual director covered in each selective chapter and the following individual reviews of those directors' select films.

By contrast with Mes and Sharp's book, Schilling's book has an added feel of journalistic film criticism to it, where immediately after the brief introduction to the history of the Japanese *yakuza* film, the book is broken up into three sections thereafter: firstly, individual biographies and interviews with notable Japanese directors in that genre; secondly, individual biographies and interviews with actors and actresses well-known for their roles in the *yakuza* film; and finally individual reviews of established *yakuza* film which are arranged alphabetically. Considering the breadth of the various biographies, interviews and reviews commanded within this one book, it is no less impressive to see that Mark Schilling commands a large degree of easy access to various well-known personalities in the Japanese film industry not enjoyed by others. However, in the last section of individual film reviews, there is an element of repetitiveness that is inevitable when the plot synopsis of one film echoes the tropes or plot structure of another and further differentiation between them could be further achieved by classifying them according to their directors, or their era of production, to allow for easier reading.

It is especially in this period when Hollywood's focus has increasingly turned "East" or "Oriental" by its attempt to import foreign plot formulas, copyrights, production, acting and directing talents from as far as Japan, China (including Hong Kong) and South Korea that these three books serve their functionality in the study of Japanese cinema's importance as more than a nativist film-going experience, breaking out of a proto-nationalist audience in Japan and attracting a greater global crowd.

Dietrich's Ghosts: the Sublime and the Beautiful in Third Reich Film

By Erica Carter
London: BFI Publishing, 2004. ISBN 085170-883-8. 29 Illustrations, x + 246pp. £16.99 (pbk)

A review by Michael Paris, University of Central Lancashire, UK

While Adolf Hitler boasted that his Third Reich would last for a thousand years, it actually lasted for only twelve and resulted in the almost complete destruction of Germany. Yet in little more than a single decade the Nazi regime was responsible for such unprecedented evils that we still find it difficult to grasp how such a gaggle of misfits, cranks, and psychopaths masquerading as a political party were able to exercise such influence over the German people that they became virtually accomplices in the Nazi war against humanity. The explanation is that the Nazis used a combination of "carrot and stick" -- the promise of a bright new future in a racially pure National Socialist utopia and disseminated through a highly sophisticated propaganda machine; and the underlying threat of severe consequences for those who refused to believe, administered by sinister and sadistic state organisations, chiefly the SS and Gestapo. Of these methods, the complex state propaganda initiative was probably the most effective.

For Joseph Goebbels, Hitler's master of propaganda, cinema was simply the most effective channel of mass persuasion -- the dominant element in creating a culture totally subordinated to the National Socialist State. Nazi cinema turned its back on the exciting developments in film made during the Weimar period such as expression, and rejected modernism in all its forms, in favour of what Carter calls "Volkisch sublime" as exemplified by the work of artists such as Emil Jannings. Yet in 1945, the Allies, desperately afraid of the malignant influence of Nazi culture, locked away the books, paintings, films and other artefacts created by the Nazis lest they continue to spread the virus of evil. However, considering how difficult it has been to access the overtly political films of the Nazi era, there is a fairly substantial body of work on the Nazi cinema -- including some excellent studies in English by Irwin Leiser, David Welch and Julian Petley, for example.

The major focus of these studies has been on the relationship between Nazi ideology and film culture. We know a great deal about how important film was in the Nazi propaganda machine, about how the film industry was controlled through the Reich Film Chamber, financed through the Film Credit Bank, and we know how the so-called "Political" films carried the National Socialist message to German film audiences and sometimes the wider world. We probably know all there is to know about the flagship films such as *Bismarck* (Wolfgang Liebeneiner, 1940), *Jew Suss* (Veit Harlan, 1940), or *I Accuse* (Wolfgang Liebeneiner 1941), and documentaries such as Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will* (1935), or *The Eternal Jew* (Fritz Hippler, 1940). But these political films (*Staastauftragfilme*), rarely

popular with the cinema-going public, represent only a very small percentage of the one thousand or so films produced during the Nazi era.

Of the vast majority of films produced between 1933 and 1945 we still know remarkably little. These were deemed by the Allied Occupation Forces in 1945 as "non-political" -- harmless musicals, comedies, romances and adventure narratives -- and seemingly therefore of little interest for the student of National Socialism. Certainly historians of Nazi cinema have appeared interested only in films which could help unravel the ideological meaning of National Socialism. Such an approach has taught us a great deal but has effectively placed the history of German film in the Nazi period in a straitjacket, suggesting that only films that have an overt ideological dimension should be studied. Yet as Carter points out, more recently the focus of Third Reich film history has begun to shift towards the more numerous, and arguably more socio-culturally important, films intended for mass entertainment with studies by Linda Schulte-Sasse, Stephen Lowry and Eric Rentschler, which have started to explore questions of textuality, spectatorship, genre, stars and markets (3). *Dietrich's Ghosts*, then, is a worthy addition to this new historiography.

Carter's starting point is in the existing scholarship but in this work, the first English language study of film aesthetics in the Third Reich, she takes us into uncharted territory. While not specifically focusing on Dietrich or on the "doubles" groomed by Goebbels to replace her on screen after 1933, there is some fascinating material on Nazi stars like Kristina Soderbaum, Marianne Hoppe and the bizarre Zarah Leander. Rather Dietrich, and what she represented, is seen as a key battleground for competing models of stardom. The book contains sections on film as art; the cinema of personality, exhibition, and a number of very readable case studies on 'Personality and the Volkisch Sublime'. These include studies of Emil Jannings, Carl Froelich, Dietrich and Zarah Leander. In this meticulously researched volume the author has provided a sophisticated but highly readable theoretical study, packed with telling anecdotes and remarkably well-illustrated. Personally, I would have liked to have seen a little space devoted to detailed analysis of some of the films mentioned in the text. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that *Dietrich's Ghosts* will further our understanding of German cinema under the Nazis.

The Real Ireland: The Evolution of Ireland in Documentary Film

By Harvey O'Brien
Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004. ISBN 0-7190-6907 6 (pbk); 0-7190-6906 8 (hbk). 16 illustrations. xi + 352 pp. £16.99 (pbk), £60.00 (hbk)

A review by Robert Miller, Queen's University, Belfast

The Real Ireland provides the first book-length account of documentary film in the Irish Republic. O'Brien's treatment links the development of documentary film-making in Ireland to the evolution of the Irish society in the independent twenty-six counties that make up the Republic of Ireland. The book is organised into six chapters that broadly follow a chronological progression over the decades of the twentieth century into the beginning of the new millennium. The text is followed by a filmography of Irish documentaries that takes up almost seventy pages and is a valuable resource.

The direction of influence is seen as uni-directional, from society to film, with Irish documentaries almost uniformly passively reflecting the dominant perspectives and concerns of Irish society at the time. In the rare instances where films challenged the status quo, their impact was limited by lack of circulation and (self) censorship, with the careers of those who dared to question the linked hierarchies of church and state stunted through lack of funds and there being few outlets for dissemination outside of the government-controlled media. O'Brien concludes on the last page of text, "Documentary film has never been at the vanguard of change in Ireland, nor has it ever achieved the impact of more traditional forms of oral communication in their modern guise (the talk show/current affairs discussion programme)" (262).

The influence of individual personalities, from ecclesiastical authorities and politicians such as De Valera and Haughey who were suspicious of the potential of non-fiction film, through film-making priests and others who worked within the system to those who chose at least once in their careers to challenge the status quo are covered in a series of absorbing accounts. O'Brien's coverage of the insular, claustrophobic nature of Ireland up through the fifties and the gradual thaw in cultural relations that began in the sixties effectively evoke these periods in a manner that will inform those currently aged under thirty and living the current cultural free-for-all that is twenty-first century Ireland. His account of how, instead of documentaries, Irish current affairs and talk shows (particularly *The Late Late Show*) took on the vanguard role in fomenting social change is fascinating. Their role would be worth investigating in comparison to other nations. O'Brien succeeds in his goal of using the history of documentary film in Ireland as a device for charting the social evolution of the Irish Republic across the decades of the twentieth century. Readers with a general interest in Irish society will find this an interesting book, providing a view of the Republic of Ireland's historical evolution from a slightly different angle.

O'Brien's comprehensive treatment of developments becomes less comprehensive when recent decades are considered. Partially, this is a boundary problem. Along with other commentators on documentary-making, he has to grapple with the multiplication of new genres of non-fiction television, particularly "reality" shows. As well, digitisation has meant that Ireland has seen a burgeoning locally-generated proliferation of professional-quality documentaries in which, rather than espousing any particular standpoint, the only requirement is that the subject (not necessarily located in Ireland) is one that might interest an audience. O'Brian deals with this problem by concentrating on documentaries that have been remarkable for their unorthodox approach or impact. A reasonable strategy, but one that does skirt over a significant evolution in recent Irish documentary production.

The comprehensive nature of the coverage of developments within the Republic from the early decades through the period of the "thaw" does predispose the book towards a weakness when considering influences upon Irish documentary making from outside the nation's borders. Co-productions and the funding of Irish documentaries from outside the country have been, and remain, characteristics of Irish documentary making. Many of the careers of Irish documentary workers have included periods working abroad. O'Brien notes these features in his accounts of film-making within Ireland but the book lacks analyses of the impact of these outside influences upon the internal evolution of the Irish documentary. Has outside funding provided a crucial counterweight to the virtual monopoly upon domestic production exerted by the government? To what extent has the "tourist school" of depictions of Irish society been fomented by the need to conform to foreign preconceptions of Ireland? How important was the importation of film-making techniques and approaches learned abroad by returning Irish craftspeople? Similarly, when discussing the evolution of styles of documentary film-making within Ireland, O'Brien notes how many Irish documentaries resemble films made elsewhere in their subject matter or reflexive approach but he does not deal with the question of whether this is a coincidental, parallel development or the deliberate emulation of influences from abroad.

O'Brien's treatment of Northern Ireland is a specific example of this inward-looking tendency. The development of documentary film-making in Northern Ireland, or whether there has been a development of documentary film-making in Northern Ireland, is not considered. The Northern Irish Troubles have produced a body of documentary work, generated largely by BBC Northern Ireland and Ulster Television. Much of this has been co-produced with Radio Telefís Éireann. Aside from listing the major titles, this body of work is not considered in the book. Similarly, the remarkable lack of independent RTÉ documentaries on Northern Ireland during the decades of the height of political violence in the north is only remarked upon.

This concentration upon inner developments within the Irish Republic does limit the book's scope. *The Real Ireland* succeeds as a book on the evolution of the Irish documentary and as a mirror to the evolution of the Republic of Ireland. It is less successful in placing Ireland as an exemplar case of a small nation within a global community of documentary film-makers or in exploring the effects of that global community upon documentary production in the country itself.

Bollywood: A Guide to Popular Hindi Cinema

By Tejaswini Ganti
London: Routledge, 2004. ISBN 0-4152-8885-41. 25 illustrations and 2 tables, x + 254 pp. £12.99 (pbk)
Gladiator: Film and History By Martin M. Winkler (ed.) & American Jewish Filmmakers (Second Edition) By David Desser and Lester D. Friedman

Gladiator: Film and History

By Martin M. Winkler (ed.)

Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004. ISBN 1-4051-1042-2. 26 illustrations, xii + 215 pp. £15.99 (pbk)

American Jewish Filmmakers -- Second Edition

By David Desser and Lester D. Friedman

Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2004. ISBN 0-2520-7153-0. 22 illustrations, x + 345 pp. £20.50 (pbk)

A review by Mikel J. Koven, University of Wales, Aberystwyth, UK

I was initially excited when I received anthropologist Tejaswini Ganti's book *Bollywood: A Guide to Popular Hindi Cinema*. As a folklorist, I am always interested in reading how other scholars with anthropology and film backgrounds approach their subject. Unfortunately, throughout *Bollywood*, there is a distinct impression that Ganti's currently unpublished doctoral thesis, 'Casting Culture: The Social Life of Hindi Film Production in Contemporary India', written while at NYU, is the book to read, rather than this one. Ganti's thesis, from the clues in this current book, is an ethnographic study of the Hindi film industry. In recognising the demands on academics when writing 'Guidebooks' like this one, it must be said that Ganti's book is a fine example of these kinds of quickie-studies: she's concise, intelligent in her arguments, never condescending, and often informative. However, the problem is that this constantly leaves one wanting to know more about Hindi cinema. Of course, this book is intended to be an introduction to Bollywood, just a taste sampling of what this cinema has to offer, but that does not mean this is an overly satisfying read.

Bollywood begins with a lengthy "introduction" (fifty-two pages worth), wherein Ganti gives a good, solid, comprehensive yet readable history of filmmaking in India, from the colonial

period of the later 19th and early 20th centuries, through Independence, and up to the modern age. This chapter is basic and utilitarian, focusing on the who-where-and-when of the history of cinema in India.

But the second chapter, 'The Production and Distribution of Popular Hindi Cinema' is by far the best in the book. Here is where Ganti draws upon her own research into the Hindi film industry and offers some really fascinating insights into the problems of making films in India -- historically and currently. Ganti discusses such significant and under-represented topics as the impact of regionally controlled cinema chains and distribution companies, the problems involved in dubbing films into any of the many languages indigenous to India and Pakistan, the hegemony of the Hindi-language, and the industrial practices in India which are substantially different to Western (Hollywood) production norms. This chapter is the real meat of the book, and as I noted above, deriving much of the material from her own doctoral thesis that promises to be an incredibly significant contribution to the study of world cinema.

The remaining three chapters are poor; and I am not sure whether or not the fault lies with Ganti being overly patronizing or the demands of Routledge for this book series. What follows are chapters touching upon 'Key Figures in the Bombay Film Industry" (91-136), 'Key Films of Post-independence Hindi Cinema' (137-172) and 'Reflections and Perspectives on Hindi Cinema by Contemporary Bombay Filmmakers' (173–205). Granted, as an introduction to Bollywood cinema, a certain degree of "who do we have to know and what are the key films we should look for" is inevitable. But in this particular book, the handling of this material is pedantic; little potted biographies of actors and directors, with a list of key films, or cursory plot descriptions and a point or two of importance about the film. I guess more is expected from Routledge than chapters that would not be out of place in a Pocket Essentials guide on Bollywood. The excerpts from Ganti's own interviews with key personages in the industry are not given sufficient context to be truly informative. I am sure within the context of her thesis, they are quite informative; but without that context they read as random.

Another problem with this kind of introduction is of course there will be disagreement about what to include and to exclude from consideration. Certain actors, actresses, directors, films will be considered as central by different scholars and for different reasons. On the one hand, I was rather surprised to see no mention of some of my favourite Bollywood stars or their films -- neither Pran (the actor who defined the "villain" role within Hindi cinema), nor Aishwarya Rai (one of the most popular and influential actresses in *world* cinema today) get consideration in this book. Rai does get a footnote, mentioning that she was on the jury of the 2003 Cannes jury -- surely this is more significant than to be relegated to a note. And on the other hand, my nascent and developing interest in Bollywood is further expanded by these discussions of personages and films unfamiliar to me.

But overall, I question the logic in Ganti's (or perhaps the publisher's) approach to *Bollywood*. In Nasreen Munni Kabir's *Bollywood: The Indian Cinema Story* (Channel 4 Books, 2001), although a mainstream and popular (that is, not academic) study of Bollywood, popular Hindi-cinema is introduced in a much more systematic way: her book is divided into the major character types (the hero, the heroine, the villain and the vamp) and within this typology, she develops not only an introduction to the key personages and films, but grounds these discussions within a much more manageable and informative framework. Kabir also gives much more importance to the role of music in these films and her discussion of the "playback" singer is crucial to understanding Bollywood. In Bollywood films, the songs are

not sung by the actors, but the actors lip-sync to established playback singers' songs. Often these playback singers are as popular, if not more so, than the actors lip-syncing to them, this aspect of Bollywood being one of the vernacular aesthetics of popular Hindi cinema. While the playback singer's role is obviously mentioned by Ganti, there is no consideration of this role's importance within the aesthetic of Bollywood.

One of the major problems with Ganti's book: *Bollywood: A Guidebook* is that it gives the kind of introduction one *thinks* a Western audience wants. I remain unconvinced as to where the fault lies -- with Ganti trying to anticipate what she feels film studies demands, or with the publisher's editorial practices. I am tended to opt for the latter explanation, and I look forward to the publication of Ganti's thesis in book form.

Gladiator: Film and History is a collection of ten essays by Classical historians on Ridley Scott's 2000 multi-Oscar winning epic. As Winkler himself notes in the 'Editor's Preface', *Gladiator* was the first epic film Hollywood produced about ancient Rome since *The Fall of the Roman Empire* (Anthony Mann, 1964) (xi). So in many respects, this current volume should have some aura about it of a symposium wherein scholars debate the representation of the ancient world in the intervening thirty-six years. Unfortunately, such is not the case: what *Gladiator: Film and History* is, is a collection of Classicists pointing out that once again Hollywood "got it wrong", that if Hollywood had only just *read* the classical source materials, they'd have found a much more dramatic story, and that, as Martin Winkler points out in one of his *two* papers in this volume, "the pillars on display in the Colosseum are *metae*, turning points for chariots in the Circus Maximius, and are out of place here…" (28). So now we have been told!

Alan Ward, in what is perhaps the most pedantic and didactic essay in the collection notes the following, which needs to be quoted at length:

Perhaps historians of ancient Rome should simply be grateful [to *Gladiator*] for its valid general insights and overlook it many factual errors. The *artiste* will say that concern with such details merely reflects the overly punctilious quibbles of pettifogging pedants who cannot appreciate the forest for the trees. Certainly creative artists must be granted some poetic license, but it is still disappointing that the scriptwriters of *Gladiator* did not show at least a little more intellectual discipline and respect for the historical records. Poetic license is not carte blanche for the wholesale disregard of facts in historical fiction or films. In most cases, getting easily determined factual details correct is not impossible with the drama and excitement needed for a best-selling book or a success at the box office (42).

Ward may be surprised, had he consulted any reference that was not originally written on parchment scrolls, that the discourses about the relationship between film and history have developed well beyond the "but is it *historically* accurate" stage. Perspectives like Ward's are not incorrect (unquestionably there are hundreds of factual errors in *Gladiator*), nor do I fall behind the argument which Ward characterizes as that of the "*artiste*," that *Gladiator* should be seen as art and not history. What arguments such as Ward's and many of the contributors to this volume are, however, is irrelevant.

Beginning with Pierre Sorlin (1980), or even tracing back further to Hayden White's *Metahistory* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), the debate about the representation of history, particularly in popular media forms such as films can no longer stagnate on the accuracy/inaccuracy debate; such arguments are nothing but ancient straw men. The

historical films, whether taking place in ancient Rome or 1950s Wisconsin, are much less about the historical period being represented than about the society which produces such representations.

Classicist Maria Wyke had, I naively thought, put these irrelevant debates once and truly to bed in 1997 (at least in Classical studies) with her magnificent *Projecting the Past* (Routledge). I think it is both interesting and significant that the only chapters in this collection which cite Sorlin (or White, or Wyke; although these latter two are obviously much less cited than Sorlin) are those few papers which are attempting to debate how *Gladiator* engages with its historical subject, and not just the product of "pettifogging pedants". It is also highly suggestive of the ideology of this collection that none of Sorlin, White or Wyke's work is referenced in the 'Further Reading' section, and only Sorlin appears in the index. The more reasonable chapters are Winkler's two pieces, one which attempts to create a "tradition of historical cinema" and the other which discusses the "ambiguities of spectacle"; Monica S. Cyrino's piece on '*Gladiator* and Contemporary American Society' gets the spirit of Sorlin right and is certainly the best chapter in the collection, but even her argument ultimately takes the easy road of comparing contemporary America with ancient Rome; and Peter W. Rose's chapter 'The Politics of *Gladiator*' attempting an ideological reading of the film. The other chapters are either condescending trifles or pieces of ancient historical research on Commodus' rule (Eckstein) and 2nd Century Roman blood sports (Potter), with nothing but the vaguest connection to Scott's film. The collection is rounded off with appendices of excerpts from the ancient sources on Commodus' rule.

I think what truly makes this book an irrelevant collection is that there is no discernable contribution from anyone involved in film scholarship. The topic of the representation of history, including the representation of ancient Rome, is too important to be left entirely in the hands of Classicists; for left to their own devices, *Gladiator: Film and History* clearly shows the limits of their scholarship.

I have a strange and ambivalent relationship with the first edition of Desser and Friedman's *American Jewish Filmmakers*: it was a cornerstone piece of reading for me as I was beginning my own doctoral research, and largely informed many of my assumptions about Jewish American filmmaking prior to doing ethnographic fieldwork at a Jewish film festival in Toronto. However, as I discovered doing my doctoral research, particularly my audience research with actual Jewish film-goers, the assumptions I had taken from Desser and Friedman were largely misinformed, so I was told by those film audiences I interviewed, and I needed to completely re-think my approach in situ. Many years later, when I am now in a position wherein I can look at *American Jewish Filmmakers* from a fresh perspective and not be worried about their ethnographically unverifiable claims, does this book hold up as film scholarship, and does the book warrant a second edition? These were my questions going into this current book.

The book itself is not much changed from the first edition (1993). A lengthy introduction opens the book (1-33), wherein the authors outline what in their experience constitutes Jewish identity. As they themselves note: "Our methodology encourages viewers to recognize these films as part of a Jewish cultural tradition as well as an American cinema tradition, to draw conclusions about their relationship to a Jewish heritage in addition to an American experience" (5). The Jewish cultural traditions the authors identify are Jewish humour (9-14), a concern for social justice (14-16), Jewish life-style trends (16-17), a "mosaic of American Jewish life" (18-21), "the Jewish encounter with America" (21-27) and "The American

Jewish response to Judaism" (27-30). Through these themes or traditions, Desser and Friedman textually explore four filmmakers' *oeuvres* -- Woody Allen (34-112), Mel Brooks (113-168), Sidney Lumet (169-231) and Paul Mazursky (232-286) -- looking for these aspects of American Jewish thought. For their second edition, the authors have appended to their original chapters an 'Afterword' updating the *oeuvre* to the present (2004). While this is relevant to do for the chapter on Woody Allen (94-110), the meagre, less than two full pages of 'Afterword' given to Paul Mazursky (284-286) makes one wonder whether even writing such an 'Afterword' was worthwhile. But, full credit to Desser and Friedman, their methodology is consistently applied throughout the work; and, as far as the "everyone has a right to their own opinion" kind of textual analysis goes, it is thought-provoking. A whole article could be developed merely arguing with their readings of these filmmakers work and their interpretations of the films.

One of the major problems with this book is that hardly anybody does this kind of research anymore. With such a transparent privileging of the director as *auteur* (as opposed to focussing on the Jewishness of the screenwriters or actors, or the reception of these films within the Jewish press, etc.), this book feels really outdated. *American Jewish Filmmakers* reads like "scholarship du papa", to paraphrase François Truffaut; Desser and Friedman's unproblematic adoption of the auteur-theory seems out-of-touch with contemporary film scholarship. That is not to say there is anything wrong with their approach, in itself, but that the execution of their project seems largely moot as it is so grounded within their own textual interpretation vis-à-vis the ethnicity of the film's director.

In terms of the *Jewish*ness of their book, the criticism I encountered in the field still holds true: Desser and Friedman's definition of what constitutes a "Jewish American Filmmaker" and more significantly, how that Jewishness manifests itself is much too essentialist to be useful or meaningful. Their understanding of Jewishness derives from their own experiences of being Jewish, but then is generalized to be singular American Jewish experience. As I noted above, the authors' "scholarship du papa" aligns them with at least a previous generation of film scholars, and likewise, their understanding of Jewishness derives from a specific generational (and national) experience of Jewishness. To then assume to speak for all American Jews is highly problematic, but this is exactly what the authors end up doing. As this is a criticism levelled against my own work at times, I note it with some sympathy: to discuss the Jewishness of these key filmmakers (although one can quibble about whether or not Paul Mazursky is a *key* filmmaker) requires some essentializing, if only for rhetorical purposes. But somehow this rhetoric needs to be made more transparent.

Still, the most problematic feature of American Jewish Filmmakers, which in the second edition the authors have made no attempt at addressing, are a few pages in their introduction (30-33). As part of their initial project, Desser and Friedman sent out 170 surveys to those directors listed in the Director's Guild of America directory they either knew to be, or assumed to be, Jewish. They were disappointed with the minimal replies they received, noting that such a methodology had little merit (31). In a personal correspondence with the authors at the time of the first edition, they informed me they did not archive these responses. What?! Even those whose responses they saw little merit or value in could have been informative to another researcher. Surveys such as these need to be archived, as even the most seasoned of us never know what future use these raw figures and responses might have. The second edition of American Jewish Filmmakers could have addressed these methodological problems, but instead they chose simply to keep the introduction as is. Besides which, the inclusion of these three or four pages have no standing or relevance to the

rest of the book. Why include it, particularly when it could simply have been snipped for this second edition?

And here, for me, lies the problem with the second edition of *American Jewish Filmmakers*: it is not sufficiently redeveloped to warrant a second edition (as opposed to a reprint of the original). The Woody Allen section is given an additional fifteen pages of 'Afterword', but that probably equals the total number of pages given to the 'Afterwords' of the other three directors combined. Without actually rethinking the material more, there is no reason for a second edition of this book. While *American Jewish Filmmakers* stands on its own as a piece of textual analytical scholarship, its unproblematic privileging of the auteur-theory seems anachronistic in 2005.

The Lost World of Mitchell & Kenyon: Edwardian Britain on Film

By Vanessa Toulmin, Simon Popple and Patrick Russell (eds.)
London: bfi Publishing, 2004. ISBN 1-84457-047-9 (hbk), 1-84457-046-0 (pbk). 210pp. £48 (hbk), £15.99 (pbk)
The Silent Cinema Reader By Lee Grieveson and Peter Kramer (eds.)

The Silent Cinema Reader

By Lee Grieveson and Peter Kramer (eds.)

London: Routledge, 2003. ISBN 0-415-25284-9. 423pp. £19.99 (pbk)

A review by Larraine Porter

The recent Mitchell and Kenyon Project, of which this book is the final component, represents one of the most comprehensive archival projects undertaken by the British Film Institute in London and the culmination of almost a decade's work by the bfi, the University of Sheffield and a number of dedicated individuals. The project includes a three-episode BBC2 series, a DVD and a national cinema tour in addition to this comprehensive book of essays dedicated to the Mitchell and Kenyon phenomenon.

The rediscovery of the Mitchell & Kenyon film collection, involving around 800 cans containing nitrate copies of Victorian and Edwardian actuality films, is the stuff of mythology. Stories of workmen finding the cans in a skip on a building site in Blackburn are seductive, if not entirely true. What cannot be refuted however, are the importance of this discovery and the elements of serendipity associated with it. Anyone who has witnessed these films on television, DVD or better still on a big cinema screen, cannot help but be mesmerized by the quality and immediacy of the images of Edwardian Britain that they present us with; the shadows of our forgotten ancestors.

In terms of the events and people that led to the discovery of the films and the projects which came out of it, credit is rightfully given in the introduction to this volume to Peter Worden, a film historian and collector who for thirty years had calculated the likelihood of films being left in the property from which Sagar Mitchell and James Kenyon had ran their business. Credit is also given to the Cinema Museum in London who later acquired the films and donated them to the National Film and Television Archive to ensure their future survival and their launch into the public domain.

The Mitchell & Kenyon films are, if not unique in the international canon of extant Edwardian cinema, very significant in that their subjects are ordinary working class people living, playing and working in the Victorian industrial cities of the Midlands and Northern

England. Captured by the eponymous entrepreneurial showmen, these actuality records of teeming humanity show us our own ancestors rather than the lives of the rich and famous. And they were intended to be viewed precisely by the people who starred in them, so the bigger the cast, the bigger the box office. Watching these films a century later, viewers can see themselves reflected back in a wholly recognizable way. They also show us our cities as bustling social spaces occupied by pedestrians and trams and in all their architectural splendour before the devastation caused by World War II and by 1960s developers and before they became the homogenized homes to multinational retailers that we are now left to lament.

The book also reminds us that these films were made in the days before cinema as we know it (as a social institution housed in a purpose-built space) existed at all and these films would have been screened by regional showmen as part of peripatetic fairs and local festivals such as Nottingham's own Goose Fair. It is impossible not to be both moved and fascinated by the multitudes leaving factory gates at "knocking off time", of crowds milling about the city, taking Sunday strolls, promenading at the seaside, at football matches and sports events or taking part in a plethora of parades, processions and traditional folk festivities. From babies to old people, from the poorest working classes to the "better offs" and factory bosses, these films are both democratic and deliberately crowded. People walk up to the camera smile, wave, lift their hats, make rude gestures or simply stare, perhaps mistaking their first sight of a moving cine camera for a still photographic one, where they would be required to remain motionless. Children repeatedly run around the camera to ensure maximum appearances, cheekily jostling for position. Out of the crowd will emerge a particular face whose individualism will captivate us, like the cheeky boy whose impish smiling face adorns much of the project's publicity and who seems to be beckoning us to step back into his world. It's poignant to think that many of these young boys and men would later lose their lives in the Great War that devastated their generation a decade later. Another thing that strikes the 21st Century viewer is the sheer quality of the images, miraculously preserved for hundred years in tin canisters and subsequently restored to near their former glory -- testament to the stability of the nitrate image, which has arguably never been surpassed in terms of longevity and quality. It is interesting to surmise what the digital age will leave us with in that respect.

The three BBC2 documentaries on the Mitchell and Kenyon films, hosted by TV historian Dan Cruickshank and broadcast in February this year, attracted around six million viewers per episode. A subsequent national cinema tour commenced with a sell-out launch in Blackburn, the original home of the M&K Company, which attracted 600 people. These films and this project have captured the imagination of the Nation, like no other archival cinema project has done before.

This preamble is necessary to explain the significance of the film collection and ergo, the prescience of this volume of essays dedicated to the Mitchell & Kenyon phenomenon. The three editors have different relationships to the project: Vanessa Toulmin was involved in the early negotiations to secure the collection and in later research to identify and catalogue the material, Patrick Russell is the Keeper of Non-Fiction film at the British Film Institute and is joint co-coordinator of the project and Simon Popple is an early cinema historian. Their collective experience, knowledge and proximity to this project are reflected in the quality of the contents in this volume.

This is a handsome and fulsome book with a frame capture from M&K 205 (all the films are referred to by their catalogue numbers) featuring a well-turned-out crowd on Blackpool Pier in 1903, on the cover. And it is well illustrated throughout with high quality images

representing the various themes and activities that Mitchell and Kenyon recorded -- divided into sections for the purpose of contemporary programming -- youth and education, high days and holidays, workers, people and places -- a taxonomy echoed throughout the bfi's programming, information and marketing material. All the images from the films, reproduced in the book, are seductive in the way that Victorian and Edwardian photography invariably is. Partly this is the remarkable clarity and detail present in the nitrate originals, (and there is no better master material for generating subsequent copies), and partly it is for the density and richness of their content and composition. Any frame captured from any Mitchell and Kenyon film will be artfully framed and composed. These men knew their craft like the archivists who, hundred years later, have worked to restore these films to their former glory.

The book is divided into three sections: Overviews, The Films in Context and The Film as Historical Evidence, and is undeniably a significant addition to studies in early and silent cinema. Anyone who survived the obsessive structuralism of film studies in the 1970s/80s, where silent cinema studies (then in relative infancy) attracted more than its fair share of frame-counting theorists, will be heartened to see the breadth and balance in approaches among the contributors here. There are essays on the politics of archival practice and the processes involved, essays on the regional significance of the films and their importance to local cinema histories, and different contextual histories from cinema, to social and cultural studies. This diversity of approach also offers a wider variety of inroads into early cinema studies for the casual reader, historian and scholar alike.

The introduction states that the book represents the culmination of this groundbreaking project and looks forward to a new future for British film heritage which can be "as rewarding for the archivist, the academic and the layperson" as this (project) has been (5). Indeed, the challenge of any volume such as this is to reconcile the different imperatives, expectations and practices of the archival, academic and viewing communities such that it can achieve the broad readership and respect that it deserves. From the outset, the position of the audience needs to be recognized, here represented by the term "layperson", for it is they who need to have this material presented to them in accessible and entertaining ways for it is they who have turned out to cinemas around the UK or tuned into the TV documentaries, in huge numbers to witness these films. The layperson has helped create a market, which will mercifully justify further investment and endeavour in this field.

For the most part, this volume satisfies a variety of expectations, combining essays dealing with different regional perspectives on the collection, to biographical information about the film makers themselves, to analysis of particular "genres" such as the factory gate film and the ceremonial procession film to the Boer War reconstruction films for which Mitchell and Kenyon were originally known only to a few enthusiasts and historians. It also brings together essays by historians, archivists and artists with contributions from traditional film studies' academics -- in other words, covering the archival practices of research, identification, restoration and preservation through to analysis of content and form.

The first essay 'Mitchell and Kenyon: A Successful Pioneering and "Travelled" Partnership of Production', by Timothy Neal, Vanessa Toulmin and Rebecca Vick deals with the biographical details of the film makers and the progress and final demise of their production company -- a period from the end of the 19th Century until the last known productions in 1913. There is probably much more to say about this pioneering duo, but this chapter gives a useful insight into their business and the *raison d'etre* for the films they produced. Later

historians might place them into a broader context of British film production prior to World War 1.

Patrick Russell's contribution 'Truth at 10 Frames per Second? Archiving Mitchell and Kenyon' gives insight into the complex, time-consuming and labour-intensive processes involved in film restoration and preservation. These films did not emerge from their decades of hibernation looking bright-eyed and bushy-tailed, and it is gratifying to see credit given to the behind-the-scenes work of the archivists, technicians and restorers who work so painstakingly in this area. It's also good to see an essay by the only non UK-based writer, Tom Gunning, who will be well known to anyone who has delved into early and silent cinema studies. Gunning, a pioneer in the field of early film as spectacle, (the "cinema of attractions") has contributed to his usual high-standard, combining scholarly research and scope with insight and readability. Here he deals with mass culture and issues of class citing Raymond Williams and Freud at the beginning of his article. But no one more than Gunning can appreciate the humanity in these films and the beauty of their images and composition. "The fact that there will always be more than we could see, understand or embrace, makes these films, for me at least, among the most exciting works in the history of film" (56). Praise indeed, from a cinema historian of Gunning's experience and standing.

Another contribution from Vanessa Toulmin, ' "We take them and make them": Mitchell and Kenyon and the Travelling Exhibition Showmen' details the variety of contexts in which these films would have been screened and the links between early cinema exhibition to other forms of popular entertainment such as the music hall, town hall shows, fairgrounds and so on. Mitchell and Kenyon were able to draw upon pre-existing networks of mass popular entertainment in order to maximize audiences for their screenings. Toulmin is an expert and a pioneer in combining early cinema studies with other forms of visual and popular culture.

Importantly, three chapters are given over to Mitchell and Kenyon in Ireland, Wales and Scotland where relatively few films from this period survive. Authors Robert Monks, Dave Berry and Janet McBain respectively, are all authorities on their national film archives and their work has been crucial in achieving recognition for non-English archive film. It also testifies the geographical reach that Mitchell and Kenyon achieved in the days before the UK film industry all but succumbed to the gravitational pull of London.

There are nineteen contributors to this book and eighteen chapters, so discussion of all is outside the scope of this review. One chapter that particularly engaged me was John K. Walton's 'The Seaside and the Holiday Crowd' that provides us with a hermeneutics of the seaside, using the films as evidence to interpret the dress codes of hats, pinafores, pipes, cigars and cigarettes in terms of economic class and social status. A hatless person at the seaside, for example, was likely to be suffering from extreme poverty. Walton reminds us that the Edwardian period saw a boom in holidays for the relatively affluent working-class families in the Northern mill-towns who benefited financially from high employment levels and the child labour that contributed to the family income.

The Lost World of Mitchell and Kenyon does justice to these magnificent films. The contributors clearly share a passion and a respect for the films and the men who produced them and as such they offer us a viewers' perspective on these poetic reminders of our neglected Edwardian past.

Featuring a comprehensive collection of essays by leading international scholars and covering almost two decades of early and silent cinema studies, this substantial volume provides a very useful digest and a welcome addition to the existing crop of readers on cinema studies. Although the emphasis is largely on US scholarship and the development of the classic Hollywood and American cinema, there are overtures to European cinemas and early British pioneers. One of the key issues for silent cinema studies has always been that US scholarship has so overwhelmed the field that the early and silent cinemas of Europe and the Soviet Union are often understood by comparison to the classic US model. This volume attempts to redress that tendency by including a section on European Cinemas, though the majority of contributors teach at US universities (fourteen out of twenty-three) reflecting perhaps where the bulk of interest in this field lies, but is also a nod towards the bigger US market for books such as this. The US has stolen a march on the rest of the world and provided us with the majority of scholarship supported by key US universities and this reader merely reflects that. Excluding the editors, two of the scholars represented in the volume work in the UK (both coincidentally originate from the US) Roberta Pearson and Frank Gray.

There are two ways of crediting this collection -- firstly we can argue that it is a reflection of the post-structuralist canon, with the heavyweights in cinema history like Charles Musser, Tom Gunning, Richard Abel, Kristin Thompson and David Bordwell having key essays reprinted, or we can argue that it is valuable snapshot of the paths that silent cinema studies have taken since the 1980s. It is certainly a very valuable one-stop-shop in that respect. My preference would be for the latter and, for the price, is a very useful compendium, if not for the casual reader, for the student or historian of film studies. In its selection of essays, the volume sets out to strike a balance between different approaches; from studies around stars like Chaplin, Keaton and Valentino, to directors like Cecil B de Mille, to film forms like the popular serials, their heroines and female fans, to studies on specific films like the early feature film *Traffic in Souls* (George Loane Tucker, 1913) to genre-based approaches like Linda Williams' *Race, Melodrama and The Birth of a Nation* (1915) to studies on form such as the European avant-garde to national cinemas such as 1920s German cinema and Russian film between 1908-1919 and topics such as Shakespeare on film and the unlikely preponderance of films about boxing and prize fighting.

The contributions of the editors of *The Silent Cinema Reader*, Lee Grieveson and Peter Kramer, reflect their considerable expertise, interests, commitment and to silent cinema studies. The volume also reflects the past, present and future potential in terms of approaches to cinema studies. Unlike the Mitchell & Kenyon volume reviewed above, it doesn't embrace the work of social and cultural historians with quite the same eclecticism, but three of the most recently written essays reflect the influences of these "alternative" models. Linda Williams' essay, 'Race, Melodrama and Birth of a Nation', Gaylin Studlar's 1996 essay "'The Perfect Lover"?: Valentino and Ethnic Masculinity in the 1920s' and Shelley Stamp's 'Movie-Struck Girls: Women and Motion Picture Culture After the Nickleodeon' are indicative of the welcome encroachment of gender and race studies into this field. Is it significant that these contributions are by women writers (the volume featuring eight women contributors out of the twenty-three)? To some extent it is, as it has largely been women writers who have pioneered the move away from the "space, frame, narrative" structuralism of previous decades by importing issues of gender and sexuality, race and representation. With the field still wide open to new voices and research, as early and silent cinema studies open up we should expect other national cinemas -- in particular Chinese and Japanese and not to mention a wider understanding of British silent-cinema -- to receive wider scholarly attention and future volumes like this to carry essays on early black cinema (the fascinating work of US

historians Pearl Bowser, Jane Gaines and Charles Musser on black director and entrepreneur Oscar Micheaux for example). It is no criticism of *The Silent Cinema Reader* that it does not enter these fields, but interesting to observe where the emphases and interests of the past two decades of research have rested and to ponder why this should be so.

Grieveson and Kramer open their introduction with Maxim Gorky's immortal words; "Last night I was in the kingdom of shadows" (1), as he describes the first time he witnessed moving pictures in 1896. And this sets the tone for the volume, which ultimately explores the enduring fascination that silent cinema holds for scholars. Indeed, the majority of the contributors in this book are regular delegates and avid viewers at the long-running silent film festival every October in Sacile (formerly Pordenone) in Italy, where, to their collective credit, they (and I) view silent cinema, wall to wall, for seven days and seven nights with rapt attention. What other international film festival could boast such a compulsion for academics and scholars of the calibre represented here? Certainly, not Cannes, Edinburgh or London. Kramer and Grieveson do sterling work in analyzing the sometimes perplexing fascination that silent cinema holds for the contemporary viewer "across the divide now of two centuries" (1) and offer three reasons for this volume; the need to explain the films themselves; the speed of change from the 1890s to the 1920s and the need for historians to answer questions associated with the social, economic and industrial contexts in which cinema was born and grew up, and finally the ways in which the past can be used to inform future developments in new media.

Pioneering US historian, Charles Musser provides the volume's prologue with the first of two contributions 'At the Beginning: Motion picture production, representation and ideology at the Edison and Lumiere companies'. This essay plunges the reader into a considerable amount of detail particularly about the Edison Company's films and reflects Musser's own substantial and painstaking research in this field. From here on, the book is divided into six sections covering areas such as storytelling and narrative, projection and exhibition practices, the birth of the feature film from 1913 onwards, classical Hollywood and European cinemas. Each section opens with a useful contextual introduction by the editors who draw upon their own research and expertise alongside that of the authors featured in the ensuing chapters. For these alone, the book is worth the cover price, for they both provide the reader with the necessary background information to better understand and appreciate the detailed and specific scholarship of people like Richard Abel, Ben Brewster, David Bordwell, Kristin Thompson and Yuri Tsvian et al, as well as signposting key areas of silent cinema studies in an accessible, concise and readable fashion.

Whilst it is important to represent the works of massive scholarship by people like Musser and Able who have produced important historical tomes in the 1980s and 1990s it is also important to have a new generation (if not in age, then in diversity of approach) being represented. Silent cinema studies is at an exciting point in its relatively young history and building upon the archaeological spadework conducted by the first generation of largely US scholars in the 1980s, the time is now ripe for a wider range of younger academics from different ethnic, intellectual and national backgrounds and with different approaches, to take up the challenges that lie ahead. By default, this book throws down the gauntlet to film studies in the UK and shows the field to be wide open to new and emerging scholars. *The Silent Cinema Reader* will be a very useful starting point for any under or post-graduate student considering moving into this exciting field.

Early Cinema: From Factory Gate to Dream Factory

By Simon Popple and Joe Kember
London and New York: Wallflower, 2004. ISBN 1-903364-58-2. 6 illustrations. Preface + 136pp. £12.99 (pbk)
Love Rules: Silent Hollywood and the Rise of the Managerial Class By Mark Garrett Cooper & William Beaudine: From Silents To Television By Wendy Marshall

Love Rules -- Silent Hollywood and the Rise of the Managerial Class

By Mark Garrett Cooper

Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2003. ISBN 0-8166-3753-9. 15 illustrations. x + 279 pp. £15.20 (pbk)

William Beaudine: From Silents To Television

By Wendy Marshall

Lanham, Toronto and Oxford: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2005. ISBN 0-8108-5218-7. 20 illustrations. xviii + 387 pp. £35.15 (pbk)

A review by Richard Harrison, Norwich City College, UK

It is a lamentable fact that, of the many thousands of films made in the silent era, only an estimated one in ten survives today. In cultural terms, this loss alone would be bad enough were it not for the pervading fallacies about silent films themselves that still persist. These fallacies have a real, active danger of affecting reception of silent cinema for those who have yet to experience the delights of the Keystone Cops, the technical inventiveness of Georges Melies or the sheer beauty of *Sunrise* (Murnau, 1927). It is my view that literature covering this silent period must, as a matter of necessity, explicitly address the prevalent fallacies. Thus, the books that have appeared (and continue to do so) regarding silent cinema have an important task in hand -- to inform, to educate and, above all, to inspire.

Early Cinema -- From Factory Gate to Dream Factory starts from almost a losing position, for (as is freely admitted in the preface) "its bias is predominantly British". There is nothing wrong with this condensed approach (indeed, a mammoth book that endeavoured to cover the entire pre-talkie production worldwide would be a major task) but to produce "an appropriate introduction to the study of Early Cinema" (preface) and largely omit the crucial role played by France and the United States (to name but two countries) seems oddly paradoxical. There

is also no mention (in the section referring to "the great man theory" (27)) of William Friese-Greene (1855-1921), surely deserving of a mention here, as he is often unjustly overlooked in more general accounts of cinema's early development.

Moving away from the slightly problematical nature of the book's coverage, the text is divided into five main chapters (covering 'Cinema 1895-1914', 'Approaches to Early Cinema', 'The Uses of Cinema', 'Exhibition and Reception' and Film Form: Genre and Narrative'. These chapters average twenty pages each, but are then further divided into many smaller pertinent aspects, such as 'Why Study Early Cinema?', 'Critical Approaches' and 'Technological Determinism'). Although this makes the book less daunting, and, by extension, easy to dip in and out of, it can create a rather "loose", haphazard feel to the text and the information within it that is exacerbated by the absence of an index. Thus, looking for specific information about Robert Paul entails a trawl through each section, rather than flicking directly to the index. Perhaps the idea is to engage the reader and avoid the book being used as a mere reference tool. Whatever the reason, it only serves to alienate the reader looking for follow-up references to any point of interest. The range of the book is vast in terms of its ambition but it does not always succeed. However, a very useful chronology of key dates in the first chapter clearly outlines important developments that are of use to both the casual reader and the committed film historian, thereby fitting in with the "appropriate introduction" cited earlier.

Later in the section entitled 'Understanding Early Film Spectatorship', the authors refer to "the heterogeneity of layered performances and performance styles" and "the increasing significance of personality to the successful film institution" (68). Occurring as it does just into the chapter allegedly assisting comprehension of "early film spectatorship", this is an academically dense complication which is as wordy as it is unnecessary. The book as a whole suffers from being seemingly caught between desiring to produce a detailed academic study of early cinema to interest the ardent film historian and seeking to provide what it sets out to do by using the word "introduction".

Although Popple and Kember do provide a useful 'Sources and Resources' section, which brings early cinema into the digital age by citing useful websites, they do not tackle the basics in sufficient depth, as has previously been argued. Under the heading 'A Primitive Cinema?' in chapter two, the following is to be found -- "without a wide range of contextual knowledge, the small fraction of early films that still survive are of limited value" (33). In common with much of the rest of the book, this raises more questions than it answers, the major reaction being that this is blatantly untrue. One can marvel at the imaginative creativity in Williamson's *The Big Swallow* (1901) and appreciate its blurring of the spectator/performer divide without needing "a wide range of contextual knowledge". Likewise, Hepworth's *How It Feels To Be Run Over* (1900) is both amusing and surreal -- it does not demand any prior knowledge of Hepworth or his production background. Films *can* gain from a more detailed knowledge (Bamforth's *The Biter Bit* takes more than inspiration from the Lumieres *L'Arroseur Arose for example), but they can be appreciated per se as artefacts precursing what follows without having to be analysed with strict reference to a pre-existing structure of "contextual knowledge*".

Overall, Early Cinema -- From Factory Gate to Dream Factory promises more than it delivers -- it would have been nice to see more illustrations of early cinema's coverage in contemporary media and even a case study of how cinema developed in a large city (say Manchester) and a less industrial part of the country. In a more measured, stimulating

approach, mention could also have been made of British exhibition (The Gem cinema in Great Yarmouth, which opened in 1908, for example, was the first electric cinema in the country), as opposed to the eclectic collection of oddments which constitutes this necessary attempt to provide "an introduction" to early cinema. There *is* a pressing need for a book which not only provides a clear overview of early cinema for the interested observer but takes this further to interest the film scholar, but, unfortunately, this is not yet it.

Mark Garrett Cooper, in *Love Rules -- Silent Hollywood and the Rise of the Managerial Class*, presents an intriguingly specialist link between American socio-economic development and the rise of the motion picture. Taking the archetypal Hollywood heterosexual white love story as his example, the author argues that "Hollywood cinema helped change who could rule and how rule would be conducted" (216). The ideology of the love story, he argues, was organised by a managerial class who sought to use it to illustrate their emergence, mastery and ultimate dominance. This main thesis is spread over four chapters. After a reasonably lengthy introduction (where the author cites the over-rated *Sleepless in Seattle*, [Nora Ephron, 1993], as a modern example of the Hollywood love story uniting the heterosexual couple across space and time), subsequent sections deal with 'The Visual Love Story', 'The Public', 'The Influence Industry' and 'Ethnic Management'. These chapters (around forty pages each) are supplemented by a conclusion and copious notes to each chapter, showing an abundance of consulted reference material. Despite this, as with *Early Cinema -- From Factory Gate to Dream Factory*, the hypothesis put forward is clouded in a rhetoric that proves rather too dense. True, the subject-matter and Mark Garrett Cooper's "take" on it is far from straightforward, but even the introduction to the book makes the initial impression that this will be a hard-going volume. "The Hollywood love story", it declares, "posed a question of authority and answered it" (5). It is really without possible debate that the inclusion of the romance was (and still is) key to Hollywood storytelling, but if all genres and styles of film-making (especially within the "Classical" timeframe that the author discusses) were reducible to less an expectation or desire but a pure cast-iron certainty, films would long since have lost their appeal. It is the author's reluctance to frame his arguments in a clearly ordered fashion and the way he challenges (or simply dismisses) influential critics that makes *Love Rules…* less of a powerful polemic requiring a sea-change of interpretation but a book whose ultimate merit is rather more questionable.

An example of this unnecessary double standard of challenging existing criticism whilst failing to provide any coherent substitute appears as early as page twelve, where Mark Garrett Cooper refers to David Bordwell's "sweeping critique" and that Bordwell's [narrative] model falls short when it fails to recognize that the love story does not happen "*in* space as much as *to* space" (12). So, an alternative 'reading' is posited here by Mark Garrett Cooper, who does not, however, provide a logical substantiated argument for this peculiar "*to* space" concept. Another potential problem for the author is his analysis of leading filmic texts, chosen from Hollywood's silent screen era. Thus, when discussing *The Crowd* (King Vidor, 1928), Mark Garrett Cooper largely omits 'conventional' cinematographic analysis in favour of a sociological approach -- the closing scene apparently "suggests that John finally fits in" and that it also "annuls the opposition between individual and mass with which it began" (83). In fact, the film includes the conventional "happy ending' despite its tragic dissolution of John's ambition and desire to be different, and *not* to 'fit in'. The closing scene is also cyclical in its situation of John with*in* space, harking back to the opening of the film and representing visually a potentially downbeat (if 'realistic') conclusion -- John is still part of the crowd despite his desire to escape from it. So, despite his best efforts to coerce *The*

Crowd to adapt to his polemic, the author only succeeds in making the reader rather dissatisfied with his analysis.

In an interesting chapter on 'Ethnic Management', Mark Garrett Cooper's desire for rhetoric at the expense of brevity and clarity again emerges -- "sound that appears embodied locates itself in a space irreducible to the frame" (163) -- but his penchant for contentious statements is also present -- "to grasp *The Jazz Singer*'s significance requires an appreciation for just how controversial Jewish identity was at the time" (175). So, the sound technology employed in the film and its fascinating use of Jolson as star are not as significant as this concept of Jewish identity? The film is remembered today as being (in crude terms) 'the first sound film' (by this read: first film to include a portion of sound), not in terms of identity, Jewish or otherwise.

Then, as *Love Rules…* draws to its wordy conclusion, Mark Garrett Cooper describes the link often forged between films like *The Cheat* (DeMille, 1915) and the 'low-key' chiaroscuro lighting prevalent in German Expressionism through to Film Noir (interestingly side-stepping French poetic realism). Then, whilst the reader is still feeling a sense of injustice at this challenge to their rational thinking, the author astonishes with his statement that "in film appreciation classes…the Odessa Steps sequence of *The Battleship Potemkin* provides a staple example of 'good' editing, quite apart from a consideration of why one might require montage to represent a revolution" (209), which makes one wonder exactly what he is trying to articulate.

In attempting to sum up his arguments, Mark Garrett Cooper ultimately states that "It [Hollywood] represented a world that professionally trained specialists would necessarily vie to depict and order" (216), which is a fairly explicit reference to the Studio System and the dominant mode of production which would organise the production of films throughout the period the author in fact discusses until its breakdown following the Paramount Decrees in 1948. That the moguls who controlled the studios vied to depict 'a world' in a fairly homogenous fashion as a white middle to upper class (the author would insert 'managerial class' here, no doubt) heterosexual one is an interesting concept, but rather too monolithic. It is, in fact, like assuming that genre films follow a basic pattern that is repeated *ad nauseam* or that a star image like that of (for example) Rudolph Valentino could only be utilised to play a particular type of character. It is a dangerous avenue to assume aspects of film history are set in stone as monolithic creations, never changing and all forging one purpose. However, in his conclusion to *Love Rules…* Mark Garrett Cooper does exactly that.

As a contrast to the other books here that relate to silent cinema, Wendy Marshall's in-depth biography *William Beaudine -- From Silents To Television* is both fascinating and informative, a book that can be read by anyone remotely interested in film to those constantly working in the industry itself. Although Marshall herself is Beaudine's grand daughter, this becomes not a hindrance but an advantage, for she is able to draw on material possibly unavailable to other researchers as well as her personal anecdotes of 'Beau' himself, to provide a refreshingly good humoured biography of the man himself.

It is pertinent that books such as Marshall's prevent us from forgetting those figures in film history whom, whilst not the high-profile stars or directors (the "household names"), were nevertheless vital in the production of motion pictures which caused audiences to flock in their millions to the cinema in the pre-television era. William Beaudine is such a person -- not instantly recognisable to the average film-goer in today's multiplex society, but responsible

for a huge body of work which deserves both to be recognised and to be appreciated. The scope of this work (detailed in the well-presented and thorough filmography) causes one to remember that Beaudine was the man who directed four of the Will Hay films (including the classic *Boys Will Be Boys* in 1935). Less well-known is the fact that Beaudine started his acting career as early as 1909 (in *To Save Her* Soul, directed by none other than D.W. Griffith) and went on to direct Mary Pickford in *Sparrows* (1926) and work with the East Side Kids in a series of 'B' movies before finishing his career working in television on episodes of *Lassie* and making Campbell's Soup commercials. It is the sheer diversity of Beaudine's work that Marshall manages to both capture and animate -- he did, after all, have a career that spanned the major changes in film history, even if he did not personally direct the landmark, genre-defining films within it.

Considering the vastness of the Beaudine canon, Marshall does an excellent job in pulling all its facets together. In a concise fashion, yet with a continually evocative tone, the events leading to Beaudine's first job at Biograph Studios are chronicled with a vivid sense of both period and personality. Of particular interest in the 'Griffith era', as in later relationships with other notable film industry personnel, are the comments made by Beaudine himself (who fortunately lived until 1970 -- long enough to be interviewed about the 'golden age' of Hollywood) about his compatriots. As well as providing a solid foundation for Marshall's story, these comments shed further light on other people such as Griffith himself, and his working methods. Worthy of mention are the anecdotes of working under Griffith which provide a dose of humour and add interest to what could easily have become a rather dry chronology of events. Beaudine's early story is truly a 'rags to riches' one, and this emerges particularly strongly in the part of Marshall's book where Beaudine's personality helped him rise through the studio ranks to gain more prominence and ultimately direct films rather than assist in their making.

Another notable feature of Beaudine's directorial career is that, unlike someone such as Alfred Hitchcock (who was born in England yet lured to Hollywood), 'Beau' moved to England from the 'Golden Age' of 1930s Hollywood. However, the problems associated with Beaudine's reluctance to pay income-tax caused him to move back to America late in 1937, where another shock awaited him -- Darryl Zanuck's refusal to let him work for 20th Century Fox. In a fickle film industry, "Hollywood no longer claimed him [Beaudine] as one of its own" (201) which provides a sense of tragic fate that is further brought home by the continually frank depiction of Beaudine as a hard-working, respected taskmaster. It is the very representation of William Beaudine throughout her book that makes Marshall's revelation of his downturn in fortune so additionally compelling and melancholic. By 1953, having worked with many major stars, Beaudine found himself in California shooting Westerns for television. Although the work continued, times had changed, and William Beaudine was growing older. Fortunately, he did live to see the critical re-evaluation of *The Canadian* (1926) and the respect it created for him amongst film historians. Until his death aged seventy-eight, Beaudine was the oldest active director in the film world. Whether working on films for Biograph or Paramount, with major stars or 'B' picture cast lists, he developed a knowledge and experience that was appreciated by those that worked with him, and it is this likeable nature that comes across movingly in Marshall's biography.

As well as providing a well-narrated analytical overview of William Beaudine's life, Marshall's book is notable for its humorous anecdotes, stories and incidents that make 'Beau' stand out as an individual. The accompanying filmography and bibliography are excellent, and provide a wealth of resource material for those interested in more specific aspects of

Beaudine's career, including as they do newspapers, magazines and websites in addition to the films themselves. A detailed index supplements what is an extremely well-researched book, certain to be the 'Bible' on Beaudine.

The only criticism concerns the absence of notations as to the existence of his body of work, but this would inevitably involve a huge amount of research, a fair degree of assumption and speculation as well as a section of notes that would complicate the clearly structured information that is present.

In her introduction, Wendy Marshall provides justification for her biography in these terms -- "William Beaudine's legacy is worth remembering, and not just because he was important to me and my family" (xviii). This, I feel, is important. Iconography and the establishment of fan-based cults' have decreed that posterity will remember those Hollywood players who, whatever their true merits, have cast a spell on audiences down the years. Less certain is the role in film history played by the 'supporting cast' -- the actors, actresses, technicians and directors who made the cinema their life as well as their livelihood. Books like *William Beaudine -- From Silents To Television* redress the balance and ensure that, whatever happens, some sort of documented legacy will survive so that academics to the casually interested observer will be made aware of these people. Despite all its glitz, glamour and worldwide popularity, a film industry consisting of a mere handful of iconic individuals would be very dull indeed, and we should be highly appreciative of the William Beudine's of this world for providing additional variety for that, after all, is the spice of cinematic life.

The New Brazilian Cinema

By Lúcia Nagib (ed.)
London & New York: I.B. Tauris, 2003. ISBN 1-86064-928-9 (pbk), 1-86064-878-(hbk). 25 illustrations, xxvii + 296pp. £9.89 (pbk), £29.70 (hbk)

A review by Sarah Barrow, Anglia Ruskin University

Brazilian cinema has undergone a remarkable rebirth since 1994 when the government established an Audio-Visual Law designed to support and promote films made by national directors. President Itamar Franco thus put an end to several bleak and barren years for Brazilian film that had culminated in the closure of the national film institute (Embrafilme) and in the almost total collapse of feature film production. The Brazilian Cinema Rescue Award was created and grants allocated to around ninety projects in just three selection rounds. Between 1994 and 2000 an astounding 200 feature films were produced in Brazil, several of which attracted international acclaim and a warm domestic reception. The most significant of these in terms of box office revenue, popularity and critical appeal was Walter Salles' multi-award-winning and Oscar-nominated Central Station (1998). This film and others since have succeeded in focusing deserved attention on the renewed enthusiasm for film-making in Brazil in the 1990s, while at the same time encouraging audiences to find out more about the history and diversity of a nation and its national cinema.

The New Brazilian Cinema offers an excellent opportunity for students and the general reader to take such a quest further. The editor of this wide-ranging compilation of essays on the nature of contemporary Brazilian cinema is Lúcia Nagib whose presence in the UK since the 1990s has coincided with a resurgence of interest in Brazilian cinema specifically and Latin American cinema more generally in this country. This book was the result of a conference in 2000 at Oxford University on Brazilian Cinema of the 1990s, during which many of the chapters published in this volume were presented as papers. Alongside this important event, Nagib also co-ordinated a festival of Brazilian film and thus brought together academics, journalists, film-makers and policy-makers from the UK, the US and Brazil to discuss and view contemporary Brazilian cinema. Since then, Nagib has continued to publish on a range of issues relating to Brazilian cinema and was one of the co-ordinators of an international conference on 'New Latin American Cinemas' at Leeds in June 2005.

Many of those who attended that recent conference are represented in this collection. The book is divided into seven sections and sixteen chapters, the title of each section demonstrating how the editor has attempted to group essays into coherent thematic areas: production and policy; representation and social change; documentary; nostalgia for such culturally resonant landscapes as the *favela* (urban slums) and the *sertão* (arid wastelands); screen adaptations; the importance of political and cinematic history; and an intriguing epilogue on linking past and present in terms of cinema's development generally and Brazilian cinema's history more specifically from British film theorist and film-maker Laura Mulvey.

This latter point, perhaps above all else, is helpful in pointing to the key linking thread of this book, that is, a concern with the past and its influence upon the present, a desire to reflect upon where Brazilian cinema has come from as well as pointing to where it is going. This makes Nagib's collection a particularly important one in times when it is all too tempting for audiences with little or no knowledge of Brazilian cinema history to compare those few contemporary Brazilian films that are released in the UK and the US with work by more familiar directors, and to try to guess the Western references and influences while neglecting those that are closer to home for the film-makers concerned. Thus it appears that the editor has a strong political agenda in reminding and/or educating readers about the specificities of her own nation's cinematic history and of the importance of history/histories per se.

Nagib makes clear in her introductory remarks that the contributors were allowed total freedom to express their own point of view and admits that this resulted in some contrasting and contradictory arguments being offered depending on the position, nationality and experience of the writer: film-maker or policy-maker; academic or journalist; British, North American or Brazilian. She aims, thus "to guarantee a space for the variety of readings a film, a movement or a film-maker can arouse" (xix). The subsequent heterogeneity of ideas and viewpoints is a welcome acknowledgement of the complexity of studying a national cinema and is what is likely to make it of greater interest to most readers today. Similarly, there is space not just for critically acclaimed films of the more art-house variety but also for the study of popular genres to be discussed later in this review. The assumption of sameness and consensus amongst all the different players of a national cinema has long been challenged and undermined (see Hjort and Mackenzie's *Cinema and Nation*, Routledge, 2000 for example), while the increasing diversity of issues, places and peoples explored, critiqued and/or celebrated by films that are funded and supported by a national infrastructure has drawn attention to the wonderful difficulty of prescribing what a "national cinema" should look like. Thus, this anthology of analyses and accounts that investigate diverse aspects of production, content and form sets off a lively and dynamic debate not only about the state of Brazilian film today, but about the conceptual problematic of discussing a "national cinema".

Chapter One on film policy in Brazil, for example, provides an inevitably optimistic account of the range and nature of support mechanisms offered by the state since 1994. Written by José Álvaro Moisés, the former National Secretary of Cultural Support (1995-1998) and National Secretary for Audio-Visual Affairs (1999-2002), the article mainly outlines the benefits and positive results of the Audio-Visual Law, while acknowledging some of its limitations. This point of view is then countered by the chapter submitted by Carlos Diegues, a 'contemporary' Brazilian film-maker who helped to found the important *Cinema Novo* movement of the 1950s and 1960s. He believes that the current initiative is unlikely to succeed for very much longer if the crucial area of film distribution remains neglected and under-developed. He also points to the reality of declining cinema audiences, and the failure on the part of Brazilian TV to support its national film-makers.

Further highlights of this text include a highly engaging analysis of the under-explored soft porn comedy genre by Stephanie Dennison that offers a detailed account of the development of screen adaptations of the work of Nelson Rodriguez. Dennison argues convincingly that there should be room in national cinema studies for acknowledgement of work that is 'popular', arguing that the producers of such films as those she draws attention to have the aim of producing "a watchable, well-made, commercially viable cinema which will, hopefully, play its part in convincing the Brazilian Cinema-going public that national cinema is a safe bet because it can be good, as well as great and very bad" (189). In a slightly similar

vein, Lisa Shaw's insightful contribution focuses on the popular musical comedy genre and in particular the film *For All* (Luiz Carlos Lacerda and Buza Ferraz, 1998). Here though, the author pays special attention to the domestic (1940s and 1950s Brazilian *chanchada*) as well as the US (Hollywood musical) influences drawn on by the directors of what Shaw argues is largely a "nostalgia" (241) film. She thus reminds us that while it is important to remember Brazil's own cinema history, nevertheless the cultural, economic and political links between Brazil and other parts of the world play an important role in understanding the development and success of Brazilian film today.

The notion of nostalgia flagged up by Shaw and the general idea of re-appropriation of the past by the present for commercial and/or political reasons lead me to a further reflection on this volume's approach to history. It seems to suggest that historical developments -- both cinematic (such as *Cinema Novo* and the Audio-Visual Law) and socio-political (military dictatorships, corruption, economic success and collapse) -- need to be remembered, acknowledged and accounted for as influences and motivations, but it also promotes the idea of innovation and forward movement, of recognising the new (increasingly transnational) contexts -- both limiting and full of possibility -- within which national film-makers are working today.

European Cinema

By Elizabeth Ezra (ed.)
Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004. ISBN 0-19-925571-7. x + 344pp. £15.99
The Couch and the Silver Screen: Psychoanalytic Reflections on European Cinema By Andrea Sabbadini (ed.)

The Couch and the Silver Screen: Psychoanalytic Reflections on European Cinema

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A review by Stephen Woollock, University of East Anglia, UK

With a title such as *European Cinema* appearing both bold and ambiguous it is tempting to approach the text with perhaps too much expectation. Could this be the book to finally pinpoint the essence of a whole continents' cinematic output that has little to unify it except the dialogue that emerges in books such as this? Thankfully the answer is no. With geographical discussion of film production in critical discourse seemingly reified into the "holy trinity" of "Hollywood", "European" and "World" cinemas, the chance to address the state, and history, of any one of these necessarily raises issues of definition, interdependence and exclusion. In what is essentially an anthology aimed at undergraduates, Elizabeth Ezra edits the varying contributions to provide what the jacket describes as, "the first to provide overviews of the key movements in European cinema since the creation of the medium in 1895".

Split into three sections ('Early Cinema', 'Postwar Cinema' and 'New Currents') with sixteen essays in total, the emphasis varies significantly between films from certain *periods* ('French Cinema in the 1930s' -- Dudley Andrew, 'Postwar Scandinavian Cinema' -- Peter Schepelern, 'Contemporary Spanish Cinema' -- Peter William Evans) to films from *movements* ('Dada and Surrealist Film' -- Rudolf Kuenzli, 'The French New Wave' -- T. Jefferson Kline, 'The Cinéma du Look' -- Sue Harris) to films from particular *countries* ('Soviet Cinema: The Old and the New' -- Denise J. Youngblood, 'From Ealing Comedy to the British New Wave' -- Sarah Street, 'The New Italian Cinema' -- Gaetana Marrone). It is this inconsistency in the academic community towards what should, and shouldn't be the parameters of discussion of European Cinema (and, more importantly, to what ends) that is echoed in this book and what makes it both a worthwhile synopsis and an incentive to future study.

In a necessarily gnomic introduction for a collection of this type Ezra covers the most salient points to have emerged from the study of European Cinema over the past forty years of

academic institutionalisation. Providing historical and industrial context in the form of artistic movements, political motivations and national agendas, the perennial question of "What is European Cinema?" (1) is addressed throughout as a label in continual flux and subject to the vagaries of academic attention. By casting the role of villain so early in the book to Hollywood (which after the brief heyday of European invention and sustention up to the First World War became the dominant style of film exhibited) a shadow is thrown over the rest of the chapters that continually define European Cinema as the "other" to Hollywood.

Admittedly the standard view of European Cinema, and one hard to completely deny, the complexity of the filmic output of numerous countries with as many languages and customs is suppressed by this oft-repeated perspective. In dividing the book into three sections however a possible answer to this approach is found in that the latter chapters tend to focus upon movements within the film community of a particular country (whether intentionally congregated or manufactured by distributors and academics) divorced from the context of national and/or political circumstances. While rather a consequence of insufficient distance in time for genuine reflection than a determined attempt to present a fresh perspective on the cinematic output of a particular country, the results offer a way to appreciate and investigate film from the perspective of those who were involved in their making. As a number of the chapters testify however, it sometimes feels that too much reflection leads to over- rigidity. Thankfully a handful of contributions buck this trend.

In Dudley Andrew's chapter on 'French Cinema in the 1930s' the balance is redressed somewhat from orthodox attention on the Poetic Realist texts of the era to focus upon industrial and political forces that shaped an industry that produced many more films in a variety of genres than the usual limited scope that defines this period of French cinema. With the category of 'Poetic Realism' attaching itself retrospectively through critical discourse, Andrew's welcome attention to generally neglected cinema (albeit one he bemoans for the lack of social issues tackled) is succinctly summed up in the observation that, "French cinema of the 1930s has been called a theatrical display of nothing other than itself " (107).

Consistent with expectations from her work, Sarah Street's lucid chapter on British cinema ('From Ealing Comedy to the British New Wave') addresses issues of film production in light of state intervention and cultural and aesthetic trends of the period. With British stars and genres moving through a transformation from the early '50s to the late '60s, the aesthetics of realism that came to characterise the "New Wave" are here presented as a narrative beginning in social critique through comedy and ending in social critique through "realist" drama. While there is no doubt that the period under discussion was a crucial one for British cinema in general, the parameters set in the chapter has the undesired effect of making it appear that the cinema of the '50s was essentially a prologue and practice run for the cinema of the "New Wave" and unfortunately once more the complexity of a specific situation is undermined by both book format and focus. This pitfall is avoided by one of the more successful chapters in the anthology however.

Thomas Elsaesser's chapter on 'The New German Cinema', whilst restricting itself to a film movement rather than a period or country, presents the history, production and reception of this "movement" in a manner that highlights the cathartic nature of the films, if not for the consciousness of a nation, at least for the aspirations of the filmmakers. With the social unrest of the period (which Elsaesser identifies as between 1965 and 1983) giving unity to often disparate films, the resulting canon can be seen as the product of beneficent funding mechanisms that heavily favoured films with a historical focus and which were often made

with state sponsorship in mind. Moving on to acknowledge the filmmakers as representatives of the state, Elsaesser notes how the social function of film was grasped by the "changed status" (200) of the role of the director in the period that saw issues of "solidarity, the class struggle, and sexual emancipation"(200) replacing the film form fetishism and experimentation of the French New Wave movement and the lack of socio-political engagement that Andrew identified in the French cinema of the 1930s. Forming a marked counterpoint to the focus of Elsaesser's chapter, Sue Harris' subject of study (not the chapter itself) initially appears to be a case of sheen over substance.

In addressing "The Cinéma du Look" that emerged in France from the early 1980s onwards, Harris highlights the aesthetic qualities of films that were seen as, "a celebration of the visual and sensory elements of the filmic text" (219) and were as much a reaction to the contemporary staid films of the New Wave directors and their imitators as a response to the image-conscious society emerging in the period. By cataloguing the tropes of the "cinéma du look" and focussing upon the work of only three directors (Jean-Jacques Beineix, Luc Besson and Léos Carax -- admittedly the three most influential directors working within this aesthetic) the chapter appears in scope, if not content, to be making the case for the consideration of these films as a national rather than social phenomena. In sketching the debt to post-modernity displayed in form and (lack of) content, Harris makes claims as to the peculiarly French manifestation of this particular style of film whereas a more inclusive angle would perhaps consider the "cinéma du look" as an extra-national collection of films affiliated by more than directorial origin and use of specific actors. This possible revisionist stance to European cinema is best highlighted in the closing chapter of the book dealing with the question posed by the introduction, "What is European Cinema?" in terms that move beyond the triptych of 'national', 'movement' and 'period' categories advanced throughout the preceding chapters.

In 'New Directions in European Cinema' John Orr boldly posits the idea of a "transformational taxonomy" (301) in which the information age of "speed, movement, innovation and contact" (300) have created a hypermodern state reflected in the media in the form of disconnection. This leads Orr to propose four categories for addressing the contemporary and future European cinema; neo-Bazinian realism, traductive realism, hyperrealisms and the hypermodern avant-garde. With each of these categories in some way contradicting the cinema produced under the aegis of the other categories, the aim of the proposed methodology is to counter, to a degree, the constricting framework for understanding European cinema throughout the previous fifteen chapters. The approach proves an intriguing strategy and one designed to liberate the study of films that can often become mere appropriated grist to the academic mill and if Orr tries a little too hard to impose his personal reading on films it is only in an endeavour to reformulate dialogue around "European cinema". It is with this positive attempt to engage with the ever-changing cinematic output of an entire continent that the book ends and the promise of further transformations in theoretical and historical perspectives is inferred. With future study of European Cinema hopefully tacking account of recent developments in Film Studies, to include engagements with the distribution, exhibition and consumption of films, the grounding in the academically legitimised focus of study for European Cinema provided by this collection is both a concise aid to the history of this "style" of cinema and a spur for further investigation.

Whenever the subject of psychoanalysis is mentioned in the same breath as film it has become almost axiomatic to note that the two pursuits were invented in the same year. With

the first screening of a film to a paying audience (by Antoine and Gustav Lumière) and the first publication of what came to be called a "psychoanalytic" text (Josef Breuer and Sigmund Freud's *Studies on Hysteria*) both occurring in 1895 the temptation to forever link the two has resulted in over one hundred years of affiliation. The era of structuralism highlighted the imbalance in this connection however with the magpie appropriation of disciplines carried out by Film Studies in the late '60s and '70s proving markedly one-sided. For as much as the analysis of films (along with their creation and consumption) has benefited from the insights of psychoanalysis how much can the process said to be reciprocated? In what manner and to what degree can it be said that film has influenced psychoanalytic ideas and practice? The very nature of psychoanalysis with its confidentiality, self-reflection and insularity would seem to offer a desultory answer. On first inspection a possible counter to such an imbalance could be said to be provided by *The Couch and the Silver Screen*.

Considering the place of origin of both film and psychoanalysis being Europe (Paris and Vienna respectively -- although the claim with regards film is contentious) the subtitle of the book -- *Psychoanalytic Reflections on European Cinema* -- intrigues in its promise of a chance to refocus attention away from the films of Hollywood that have characterised the most persuasive (if not in argument at least in number) engagements between film and psychoanalysis. The chance to discern a psychoanalytically derived essence of "European" cinema, one distinct from the cinema emerging from America (both Hollywood and Independent) and the rest of the world, is an exciting prospect and one bound to highlight not only political, cultural and social differences but also, to borrow from Jung, how the collective unconscious of European filmmakers are influenced by such differences. That the book fails to deliver on this (admittedly implicit) promise is perhaps due to the origins of both the book and its content.

Part of the 'New Library of Psychoanalysis' series published in association with the London Institute of Psycho-Analysis, *The Couch and the Silver Screen* is the forty-fourth textbook in the catalogue and the only one to deal specifically with film. Alongside this obvious and understandable bias towards psychoanalysis the content of the book is revealed to be the resulting papers, panels and discussions with filmmakers from the 'First European Psychoanalytic Film Festival' held in London in November 2001. Divided into four sections ('Set and Stage', 'Working Through Trauma', ' Horror Perspectives' and 'Documenting Internal Worlds') the sixteen chapters represent the varied and variegated content that conferences invariably produce with the opportunity to engage with a topic privileged over any final and concrete presentation of findings and opinion. As such the book is refreshingly original in its approach to the subject of psychoanalysis and film (not film and psychoanalysis, a rather different proposal) in that the audience for the conference appears to have been constructed primarily of psychoanalysts with an interest in how their profession can be best represented in film (if at all) and on how certain films highlight psychoanalytic perspectives.

Although prefaced by Laura Mulvey, the book's three themes of "the impact of traumata on our lives, the presence of 'horror' scenarios in our unconscious minds and the constant preoccupation, in filmmakers and psychoanalysts alike, with documenting reality" (8) are filtered through a bias towards the experiences of filmmakers themselves and psychoanalysts' interpretation of their work rather than through a purely film studies approach. Demonstrated by the first chapter, 'The Inner and Outer Worlds of the Filmmaker's Temporary Social Structure' by Bernardo Bertolucci, Fiona Shaw and Chris Mawson, this approach offers insights not usually gleaned from more traditional academic work.

Essentially transcribing the conference panel (including audience questions and responses) the discussion addresses the filmmaking process as community/colony. With actors, technicians and the principal filmmakers forming what the actress Fiona Shaw prefers to call a "family" rather than a "school", the reality of parting a protected space of insular aims at the end of a shoot calls to mind the transition through the various stages denoting the separation and increasing autonomy of early childhood that both Freud and Lacan proposed, the two influences most evident throughout the book. With Bertolucci's candid reflections on his own working methods giving a welcome insight into the process of creation, the contributions from the audience equate the film set to the psychosis experienced by patients in their "dream state". By making the connection between the process of filmmaking and the process of psychoanalysis a further comparison is made that designates the collected community that gathers to shoot a film as the "unconscious of the film", an intriguing claim unfortunately capitalised upon due to the ending of the session. Another contribution from a filmmaker, Nanni Moretti, was focused on a different, if no less enlightening, aspect of filmmaking however.

In 'Sons and Fathers: A Room of their Own -- Nanni Moretti's *The Son's Room* (2001)', Nanni Moretti, Paola Golinelli, Stefano Bolognini and Andrea Sabbadini discuss the film of the title in relation to its depiction of a psychoanalyst as its central protagonist (it is tempting to imagine what the audience would have made of Patrice Leconte's *Confidences trop Intimes* [2003] had it been released then). Whilst generally the audience find the depiction of a psychoanalyst in the film to be a positive one, the criteria used for such an assessment concerns professional practice as a psychoanalyst rather than the more metaphorical and symbolic function applied by Moretti and the representative nature of art in general. Bringing to the fore the oft repeated (at least in this collection) dilemma of how to reconcile the analyst as professional and person, the contributions from the audience concerning the nature of the interaction between analyst and analysand chime somewhat with the relationship between Moretti himself and his film(s). With the acceptance by the audience of Moretti as auteur comes the concomitant claim of the film as symptom.

An equally inquisitive stance towards the notion of "authenticity" comes in the chapter dealing with the career of Michael Apted ('Narratives and Documentaries: An Encounter with Michael Apted and his Films' -- Michael Apted and Helen Taylor Robinson) in which the directors documentary films (in particular his *Seven Up* [1964 onwards] series) are discussed in relation to his fiction work (most recently *The World is Not Enough* [1999] and *Enigma* [2001]). With a lengthy overview of his career and working methods by the director himself, the resulting questions by the audience seek to rescue what is in effect a consideration by one filmmaker into the crossover between documentary and fiction practices and how each feeds into and off the other and place a psychoanalytic spin on notion of "truth", "authenticity" and "objectivity". Elsewhere in the book however this emphasis upon filmmaking practice is countered by more considered analysis of individual films.

In 'A Post-Postmodern Walkyrie: Psychoanalytic Considerations on Tom Tykwer's *Run, Lola, Run* (1998)' by Annegret Mahler-Bungers, 'The Cinematic Dream-Work of Ingmar Bergman's *Wild Strawberries* (1957)' by Elizabeth Cowie and 'Thomas Vinterberg's *Festen* (1998): An Attempt to Avoid Madness Through Denunciation' by Liliana Pedrón De Martin, the authors address films whose content they claim has special meaning for psychoanalysis and its practitioners. In each case however the emphasis upon psychoanalysis far outweighs film analysis. Used as a way to highlight, test and confirm various psychoanalytic approaches (and, as previously stated, overwhelmingly Freudian and Lacanian in origin) the interaction

of film text and psychoanalytic method is abandoned in favour of a synopsis of the film and a fuller engagement with the psychoanalytic theory under discussion be that may, respectively, Robert Musil's "*Möglichkeitsmensch*" (possibility man), the (re)interpretation of dreams or Freud's notion of "the uncanny". Albeit a refreshing way of approaching the subject of psychoanalysis and film, a question remains as to how much a discipline as insular as psychoanalysis hopes to gain from a consideration of either the depiction of psychoanalysis or the use of its theories in film. As the last chapter in the collection testifies ('Filming Psychoanalysis: Feature or Documentary? -- Two Contributions' by Hugh Brody and Michael Brearley), any attempt to produce an accurate record of the psychoanalytic process is fraught with so many difficulties as to make any serious attempt redundant. This is not to say that such attempts should be abandoned however. The example given by this particular attempt to understand the relationship between two pursuits of the same age is a welcome reminder that viewing a film from a different perspective can open up all manner of questions that in turn produce all manner of answers. If the promise of a particularly "European" psychoanalytic dimension to film as opposed to a generic one is not forthcoming at least the emphasis goes some way to redressing the imbalance.