Hammond's approach to film during the First World War marks a departure from the approach taken by current literature about early cinema history. Hammond examines the experience of film-going in the context of the war, and its resulting social changes, rather than documenting the history of its production or censorship. Southampton, not London, becomes the focus of his study of the reception and exhibition of film during the war, moving away from the assumption that major cities are a stand-in for a nation. Hammond deconstructs Southampton's cinema culture during the war to understand the role the social condition of the war played in the cultural acceptance of cinema as a legitimate and important source of entertainment.

Rather than addressing a single genre or style of film, Hammond addresses a variety of films, mirroring the programs of theatres in Southampton, while using the progression of war as his master theme. Hammond's discussion begins with films that educated the public about the war, topical films, particularly *The Battle of the Somme* (1916). Epic or super-films, as Hammond describes them, are examined to discuss the manner in which American films had a different reception in Britain, as a result of social conditions and exhibition practice. He concludes with an examination of the social acceptance of comedy, particularly that of Chaplin. Hammond tracks changes to the reception of film during World War One marking the progress of their social acceptance and the continuation of a distinct British film culture despite the influx of Hollywood films.

The first case studies discuss the role of topical film in the legitimization of the theatre and the new audiences they attracted. The Role of Honour films reveal the role the cinema played in the community, particular the public mourning of fallen soldiers. Similarly, the reception of *The Battle of the Somme* (1916) in Southampton highlights the educational rationale that was used to legitimize film and attract a new, heterogeneous audience to the cinema. Both case studies emphasize the role that cinema space played in developing the home-front imagination, where issues of the home front and the war front met.

In the two case studies of the super films, *The Birth of a Nation* (D.W. Griffith, 1915) and *Civilization* (Reginald Barker, Thomas H. Ince, Raymond B. West, 1915), Hammond discusses the role of these fiction films in developing the respectability of the cinema. *The Birth of a Nation* emphasizes the capacity of film to generate emotional connections, as the film's war theme mirrored home-front anxieties and concerns. The case study regarding the exhibition of *Civilization* and its less popular reception opens up a dialogue about the
audience's changing taste, a declining interest in educational films, and a greater demand for entertainment film from all audience groups.

Hammond's last case studies deal with the role of cinemas as a space for entertainment, particularly comedy film. With the increasing duration of the war and its social stress, Chaplin provides an opportunity to discuss the new position of the comedy film as an important element of social health and morale. Chaplin also provides an opportunity to discuss the role of exhibition and reception in the understanding of the film text, particularly the relationship between the British Music Hall tradition and the character of the tramp in Chaplin's films.

One of the important theoretical conceptions used by Hammond is Benedict Anderson's notion of the imagined community. The experience of film linked the geographically separate spaces of the front line and home front, creating what Hammond refers to as the home-front imagination. The shared practice of going to the cinema creates a historically shared community experience, integrating cinema-going into a cultural and social entity in Britain. As the war progresses, Hammond sees changes in film's role in the development of the home-front imagination. Initially it was the role of the films to provide information about the war; however, this role developed into one of maintaining morale and providing entertainment.

Regardless of the film, Hammond tracks long-term discussion of the role of the cinema space. Hammond's discussion of the social space of the theatre and its dual position as both public and private space is loosely carried throughout the text. The theatre begins to play a similar role to the park, both spaces where public discourse and private meaning intersect. As war images circulated, gaining a new social acceptance, the cinematic space became a bridge between private and public, assisting in the creation of the imagined community. Cinema and the films shown were linked to society as the film exhibitors tailored their programs to the public mood. Hammond presents cinema culture during the war as the period when the cinema shifted from a threatening space to being one of regeneration and relaxation.

The Big Show marks an important attempt to re-evaluate the importance of early cinema, particularly the role the war played in the development of the town's social legitimacy. Hammond's case studies demonstrate the importance of the cinema in catering to social needs during the war, whether as a space of education, public mourning, or relaxation. However, the case study format does limit the space for the discussion of these transitions. As Hammond notes in his conclusion, this book provides a foundation for the study of national film culture beyond the realm of production, and encourages more research to be done on this time period from the perspective of reception. Throughout the text, there are suggestions of other areas of study which help us done to further understand the time period, such as a study of the impact of women's films. Thus Hammond's book does not write a comprehensive history of British cinema culture during the war, but through his case studies, demonstrates the space for new insights. Additionally, The Big Show is a guide for others on the value of reception and exhibition studies to comprehend the social importance and position of cinema.
John Mills: Masculinity and British Cinema

By Gill Plain

Hollywood Heroines: Women in Film Noir and the Female Gothic Film

By Helen Hanson


A review by Elaine Lennon, Dublin Institute of Technology, Ireland

The paucity of scholarly writing on British film stars was bemoaned at the turn of the century by Bruce Babington, when, as he suggested, one textual direction (already begun elsewhere by Andrew Spicer, to name but one) could perhaps lie in "an attempt to understand, in close relation to the socio-historical complexities of British society, the underlying typologies of stars that the British cinema has produced" (Babington, ed., British Stars and Stardom from Alma Taylor to Sean Connery, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001: 21). As Alexander Walker once put it, John Mills acted for England. So associated did he become with the Royal Navy that he in fact wound up with his own uniform, and brought it with him from film to film. Defusing the problems of a monolithic culture, the author commences with a chronological examination of Mills' work, locating it in theatre and early 1930s cinema, and then through the 1950s genres, when Britishness and masculinity were being redefined with the onslaught of modernity. The notion of 'Britishness' (vis à vis 'Englishness'), while greatly problematic, is offset by the claim that Mills' Britishness was of a specifically English type; while those qualities he was seen to embody are of a piece with what is now thought lost -- the social codes of good manners, loyalty, family and kindness, all of which seem to have vanished in the haze of the rush towards modernity in the post-World War Two, end-of-Empire era.

This study of the quintessential Englishman is, for the most part, an admirably lucid distillation of much recent scholarship. While Mills himself commemorated his life in an entertaining memoir, this offers welcome academic ballast, and attempts a very difficult feat, albeit with, as the author explains, the necessary omissions of those major works examined in detail elsewhere. And what a career his became: the range was astonishing: believable in
musicals, as action man, naturalistic hero, frustrated 60s dad -- it seems remarkable that this was achieved in the context of British cinema. Plain excuses her ellisions with a remarkably broad-ranging textual analysis drawing on readings of nationhood, cinema, masculinity, class and performance, and rooted in a timescale from 1930 through 1970, when the possibility of an English Everyman is effected. She claims Mills' unique place resides in his having been "the only performer to have remained synonymous with key aspects of the nation across a period of some forty years," retaining a certain level of stability while simultaneously disrupting perceived social norms in his final years (7). Like a genre, Mills's characteristics are primarily based on just a few performances, principally, although not exclusively, in some 1940s productions -- most famously, *In Which We Serve* (Noel Coward, 1942), where he was seen to be a representative of a certain kind of stalwart Britishness amongst a cast carefully selected for its cross-class inclusiveness. The author notes that key to the popular perception of Mills in such parts was his survival to the end of the narrative. Mills's own disruption in the fabric of masculinity is noted in the failure of such dream roles as Alfred Polly in *The History of Mr. Polly* (Anthony Pelissier, 1949) and suggests larger ruptures in the notion of nationhood with which his star had been so closely and symbolically aligned.

"Banter" as a means of disguise is utilised here as a rhetorical tool. A means by which to explore the notion of meaning itself, Plain locates its most important role in the indirect mode of address dominating those homosocial groupings in which Mills played his famous wartime characters. The metonymic linking of actor with national institution is captured unflinchingly, recycling the usual press characterisations of Mills and expanding them from their reductiveness in order to explore the changing shape of his characters, and to effect more nuanced readings of masculinity and national identity. Mills's performances similarly shifted range in effect. As monarchism paradoxically rose, the flag gradually fell. The elitism supposedly negated by the propagandistic war efforts in British cinema reared again. In the 1950s the return of individualism is symbolised by the movement away from the perceived Everyman, and the mutability of the star's wartime persona similarly draws away from group heroism, shifting towards something altogether more ambiguous and troubling, even transgressive, *The October Man,* (Roy Ward Baker, 1947); *Scott Of The Antarctic,* (Charles Frend, 1948); *Ice Cold In Alex,* (J. Lee Thompson, 1958), all reflecting structural problems in the archetype itself, as well as being symptomatic of societal change and ideological representation in peacetime. Paradoxically, the war film emerges as the adventure narrative, while the wearying confinement of the domestic space supersedes the concerns of social change. The drift towards a non-hegemonic kind of masculinity is traced in Mills's 1960s roles, as he comes to be seen more as powerless suburban middle-class father and less as reassuringly mythical group leader. Indeed, Derek Malcolm would declare of him in *Ryan's Daughter,* (David Lean, 1970) that Mills had become 'Everymute'. Plain's case studies reveal a complex web of tensions underlying heroic representation and its relationship with imperialism and national hagiography, in a period of pessimism, disillusionment and readjustment.

While the author's somewhat baffling conclusion does not particularly add to the theoretical sum -- which at first appeared to be logical and expository, in asking what constitutes the meaning of John Mills within the context of this admirable interrogation of British film and social history -- Plain says that he happened to be the right man at the right place at the right time; perhaps it's the getting there that's interesting. It could be that the time of the quintessential Englishman has come and gone, so that it is literally too problematic to keep him as the still centre of such a fluid range of definitions, despite his continuing resonance;
while the journey towards an understanding of national identity and gender subjectivity in cinema continues.

Helen Hanson, on the other hand, draws out the many complex strands of American womanhood into a portrait of female subjectivity and national denial that is also exacting, as the femme fatale of film noir and the wronged victim of Gothic get an airing, not merely as generic characters, but generative figures in their own right. The process of audience identification, gender perception and positioning, mode of address and narration, form the structural framework examining these stories of fear, romance and suspicion. Setting out to right some contextual wrongs, Hanson sheds light on some of the fringe films of both genres in order to stretch out the canonical text's potential. As Barry Langford has pointed out, it is strange to consider that most of genre's rules are based on just a few films in most of their respective canons (Film Genre: Hollywood and Beyond, Edinburgh University Press, 2005). It is pleasing, then, to see Hanson go beyond the ground well-trodden by feminists in the 1970s and 1980s and we are reminded (if not directly by Hanson) that, for instance, Rebecca (Alfred Hitchcock, 1940) is not only Gothic, but also film noir, and that much of this cycle's existence derives from women screenwriters (and producers, in the case of Joan Harrison). She makes the telling observation that all Hollywood studios produced female Gothic films in the 1940s (46). However, the author overlooks the crucial interlocking element uniting the two narratives -- the fact that noir (or pulp) fiction itself grew out of Gothic literature; the 'working girl investigator' (an unfortunate term which has moral ramifications for the characters in question) is essentially Jane Eyre (which of course was reworked as Rebecca); and the more obvious fact, which she only occasionally alludes to, which is that as the dominant audience was female, these woman-centric films were clearly a result of immensely pragmatic decision-making -- for instance the pairing of Alan Ladd with Veronica Lake following their success in The Glass Key (Stuart Heisler, 1942), which made an impression not just on the box office but on fashion (or costume, which itself is discussed in some detail and which might have been linked to star performance and mode of address.)

On the whole, the great balancing act that Hanson attempts here works: re-establishing the female hero against the grain of the overwhelming assumptions of the 1970s theorists who stressed the existence of just two kinds of women in film noir -- the trusting victim or the manipulative femme fatale, principally as adjuncts of the male journey towards subjectivity, a critical zero-sum equation of startling arbitrariness which she goes a long way to correct here. The other achievement then is Hanson's focus on Hollywood Gothic, which has long been underrepresented in film studies. Drawing on the work of Ellen Moers, she frames her pursuit of the genre within socio-historical change (the shifting perception of female roles and attitudes towards marriage), and in feminist literature (with regard to fiction and cinema) and its engagement with this particular set of metadiscourses.

Hanson's skill extends to an unpicking of the meaning of portraiture in cinema -- The Two Mrs Carrolls (Peter Godfrey, 1947) elicits most attention from the author; to the noir buff it is a shame though that neither Laura (Otto Preminger, 1944) nor Scarlet Street (Fritz Lang, 1945) gets a look in in this feast of marginality. The evolution of cinema techniques in the 1950s, and the impact of colour in works such as Niagara (Henry Hathaway, 1953) are similarly ignored. Sexual excess, performativity (outside the issue of voice) and desire are all crucial components of both genres, yet Hanson unfortunately doesn't have the space to investigate these aspects of personae.
The book does not really work towards the end, in any sense; perhaps because the tiresome unpicking of second- and post-second-wave feminism is really not much help in understanding the 90s neo-noir and the new femme fatale cycles as Hanson has it. And why on earth did she skip the thirty years or so of films after the 1940s to focus just on this particular era? Particularly since this was when the prejudicial theories, which she determinedly re-casts, actually emerged. The Gothic/hag films, *What Ever Happened To Baby Jane?* (Robert Aldrich, 1962) et al., of the 1960s are a crucial link between both phases, and would have merited inclusion; while the reinvention of the more overtly sexual *noir* narratives commencing in the late 1960s, is also overlooked. The unfortunate effect therefore is to undermine somewhat the early part of the book’s success in reading against the grain. The appendix includes a list of Gothic works but omits the obvious -- a list of the lesser *films noirs*. Better editorial judgment might have prevented these oversights. The formation of the female narrative and female ideals within generic storytelling; issues of representation and gender conflict; and the challenge to dominant academic discourse offered here are too valuable to be limited to this volume alone.

Ultimately, both of these books amount to curate's eggs of sorts: interesting at all times and especially detailed in terms of the breadth and depth of their scholarship; but frustrating also for the inevitable gaps containing the existent theories on which much of the work stands and occasionally (and perhaps inevitably) collapses. These might well inspire further work amongst their peers, and are probably part of the building blocks towards a more deftly nuanced set of film studies. In a mere reader, they actually can inspire several highly motivated days in front of the small screen, in pursuit of the mostly fringe films that gave rise to this ambitious writing in the first place: perhaps, in the end, that is their truly triumphant conclusion.
Rethinking Disney: Private Control, Public Dimensions

By Mike Budd and Max H. Kirsch (eds.)

A review by Anthony Friedmann, Sam Houston State University, USA

This book is a symposium of scholarly essays, grouped around themes, with a helpful introduction by Mike Budd. They tour the social, cultural, ethical and economic issues that surround the Disney phenomenon and that emerge from its corporate history and ongoing activities. Every essay yields information and critical perspectives that leave the reader with a fairly comprehensive sense of how the Disney enterprise alters our world, even if indirectly for those of us who believe ourselves to be immune to mouse commerce. Few have not seen and loved, in childhood, some form of Disney animated narrative -- in my case, Fantasia (James Algar et al., 1940) -- and few would block their offspring from a similar experience. I took my child to Disneyworld in Florida some years ago and came away poorer in pocket but richer in understanding of what I was compelled to acknowledge was a major American cultural phenomenon. I rode the escalator up the Epcot Centre's animatronic summary of western civilization and fixed forever in my mind the quintessential Disneyfication (see "Diagnosis," 40) of cultural understanding when the tableau of Socrates in ancient Greece showed us an ass (animal) biting Socrates in the backside (ass in American-English). The edifice of western knowledge and learning is not simply anthologized but reduced to shallow clichés. The ostensible reverence for knowledge is contradicted by the subterfuge of the entertainment ride that is really marketing for Epcot corporate sponsors. Nevertheless, these realistic images, like Disney characters, colonize the imagination of the average man who is steered by Disney narratives to surrogate forms that conceal knowledge and perpetuate consumer complacency.

This is an important book because the researchers, scholars and critics who scrutinize the Disney corporate vision and its consumer creed, perform an indispensable service for the rest of us, whether we are cultural critics or casual observers of our contemporary world. The Disney entity has become a major owner of media channels in America and across the world, such that someone listens to Disney music or views Disney content at every moment of the earth's revolution. An article in the Los Angeles Times in September 2000, which is quoted, reports that:

200 million people a year watch a Disney film or home video; 395 million watch a Disney TV show every week; 212 million listen or dance to Disney music, records, tapes, or compact discs . . . More than 50 million people a year from all lands pass through the turnstiles of Disney theme parks. (48)
As an adult, I have always understood the Disney narrative to be a key to deciphering a quintessentially American paradox. The compulsion to sentimentalize -- substituting lesser emotions for greater ones -- links Disney to the way America mythologizes its history and frames its bellicose foreign policy and ruthless economic exploitation of its corporate interests in an anodyne ideological propaganda. For many Americans, this is difficult to detect because emotional responses to their stories and environments are real.

Today, the Bush White House is to politics what Disney is to entertainment; they both transform policy into acceptable narratives for public consumption. The swelling heart and choking tears in response to Disney sentimental entertainment may feel genuine but they conceal deeper responses to human experience. The assembled scholars and critics reveal that this is not accidental but a corporate plan executed to co-opt human responses with conscious precision and ensure consumer immersion in their narratives and "self-fulfillment through consumption" ("Capitalism, Commodification, Globalization," 94). The acquisition of stuff generates enormous cash flows through the agile cross-marketing of tangible and intangible intellectual property such as the Times Square Lion King theatre adjoined to a Disney store. The theatre, the cable channels, the music, the book, the animated film, the DVD, the stuffed toys, the clothing, cross-promote one another.

Beyond commerce, there is a cultural vision fundamental to most Disney enterprises to reshape ethical, cultural narratives so that the axioms of Disney's corporate culture are preserved. It promulgates a mythical white middle-class western culture epitomized in the Disney American standard. The essay, "Saying No to Disney: Disney's Demise in Four American Cities," tracks the foray of the Disney Development arm into public planning and urban design, both in the private corporate real estate and in public spaces such as Times Square in New York. It documents in fascinating detail the friction that arises when Disney Imagineering confronts the real world of public democracy and public policy. Disney urban planning concretizes a world in which everyone is middle class. Its sanitizing vision inspired the movie, The Truman Show (Peter Weir, 1998).

Many feel themselves superior to Disney imagineering in theme parks, but we are all in danger of being fooled by the narratives of Animal Kingdom that involve the "guest" and disarm the cynic by advocating for the environment and the ethical struggle for the preservation of Nature. This leads to interesting contradictions in which a zoo must masquerade as nature and the natural be experienced through Safari Land or evolution understood through Dinoland. "The very scarcity of the animals Disney exhibits as its star attractions is caused by the persistent encroachment of worldwide consumerism" (224), for which Disney is the arch advocate. These contradictions are deciphered for us in Susan Willis's "Disney's Bestiary," and Scott Hermanson's "Truer than Life: Disney's Animal Kingdom" which posits "contradictions that would seemingly tear apart the fantasy of Animal Kingdom -- the ludicrousness of a hyper-consumerist theme park spouting ecological messages" (201). Any qualms the visitor has "are effaced by an economy that transforms ecological destruction into its opposite through elaborate and very effective green-coded images" (201). Disney commerce and corporate philosophy ties itself in knots that our essayists untie: "Disney's ecotourism becomes neocolonialist kitsch. The very concept of ecotourism -- that leisured consumerism and exotic adventure from the wealthy West can save endangered areas -- rest on unhealthy dependence on global capitalism to save the very things it destroys" (209). But Disney still rakes in billions of dollars while it "exhibits big science in the service of big business" (217).
Disney's conservative family values can even be reconciled with its polar opposite, gay culture, in Gay Days at Disney, the history of which is nicely documented and analyzed in Sean Griffin's "Curiouser and Curiouser: Gay Days at the Disney Theme Parks." Initially a crisis that sparked an all-stations alert for theme park personnel in 1978, the event morphed into a Gay Day aids charity fixture through the 80s and 90s, a trade off for the rich purse of the gay dollar that risked alienating the Christian right constituency among Disney's clientele.

Most of Disney's material comes from the public domain, e.g. folk tales and fairy stories, where the company has colonized "nearly all the fictional characters who have populated children's imaginations over the past century" (183). Even when it buys the rights, it tries to rebrand and *Disnify* the character. British readers will appreciate the investigation of how Disney appropriated Winnie-the-Pooh and made it into its most profitable franchise, tracked in Aaron Taylor's "Everybody Wants a Piece of Pooh: Winnie, from Adaptation to Market Saturation." Radha Jhappan and Daiva Stasiulis's 'Anglophilia and the Discreet Charm of the English Voice in Disney's *Pocahontas* Films' analyzes how Disney production casting appropriates the way class and character are understood in inflections of British speech and British actors to create heroes and villains in *Pocahontas* (Mike Gabriel and Eric Goldberg, 1995) and other films. The essay decorticates the transformation of historical fact in the Pocahontas story, showing how:

>T]he *Pocahontas* films engage the Euro-American imagination in a tissue of deceits that end up redeeming the colonization project as a love story between two different worlds, rather than depicting it as the holocaust it was for the Native American. (172)

In closing, we shouldn't overlook the informative introduction by editor, Mike Budd, which traces the history of Disney and the media criticism that dogs it. As Disney has acquired major media assets and become a force in world media, but particularly in America, where it controls ABC, a major television network and numerous cable channels, it has become a:

big and inviting media target, and draws special attention to its corporate behaviour because writers, artists, editors, and segments of the public are increasingly aware that behind all those cute characters, that family fun, and that nearly impenetrable aura is another avaricious multinational corporation. (3)

The editors have assembled investigative and critical writing that connects political economy and cultural studies and applies the disciplines of textual analysis to institutional analysis. In the end, Disney is a mammoth corporate text that begs deconstruction.

By Stella Bruzzi
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A review by Gerald R. Butters, Jr., Aurora University, USA

The documentary has become one of the most influential and critically acclaimed forms of filmmaking of the twenty-first century. From the wildly popular March of the Penguins (Luc Jacquet, 2005) to the politically potent Fahrenheit 9/11 (Michael Moore, 2004), the documentary can no longer be ignored by film critics. Documentary, as a genre of film, has been traditionally treated as an after-thought by film theorists and historians, much in the same realm as experimental film. Bruzzi's revised New Documentary has become the principal work in reconsideration of this genre and her critical insight will benefit not only those engaged in the re-evaluation of documentary but will also aid theorists working in the more privileged field of narrative/fictional film analysis.

A digression is necessary in order to prove this point. Bruzzi spends a great deal of time discussing British "star director" Nick Broomfield and his pivotal role both in front of, and behind, the camera. Borrowing from theorist Peter Wollen, Bruzzi argues that "the auteur is only the identity discovered within the text and does not pertain to the individual behind the parameters" (208). Thus, Nick Broomfield = "Nick Broomfield." Her meticulous discussion of this phenomenon immediately brings to mind influential director/writer/actors who work both in front of, and behind, the camera including Woody Allen, Clint Eastwood and Michael Moore. Where is the literature in examination of the rupture between star performer and creative artiste? Numerous theoretical examples within New Documentary could potentially impact the critical analysis of feature film criticism and television studies, demonstrating the richness and breadth of Bruzzi's work.

In her introduction, Bruzzi explains this revision was due to the renewed popularity of the documentary form and the advent of reality television from 2000. The rapid evolution of this genre on both television and motion picture screens called for a fresh analysis. In the first section of this text, the author launches into an aggressive critique of the theories of Bill Nichols. Over the past twenty years, Nichols has been established as "the authority" on documentary film and his schemata for the genre and corresponding theories have been accepted verbatim. Bruzzi, perhaps a little more delicately than in the first edition, continues to explore the problems with some of Nichols's work. This is prompted less by an academic need to take on an established authority than the necessity to re-examine the relationship between reality and documentary, as driven by recent televisual and cinematic trends. As Bruzzi argues in her conclusion: "Documentary now widely acknowledges and finally engages with its own constructedness, in its own performative agenda; it is not that reality has changed, but rather the ways in which documentary … has chosen to represent it" (252).
Certainly the use of dramatic reconstruction, be it in the work of Errol Morris or the refashioning of scripted reality drama, is one of the developments that has forced this new interpretation.

Bruzzi forcefully claimed that "a documentary will never be reality nor will it erase or invalidate that reality by being representational" (6). Yet the objectivity claim by multiple generations of documentary filmmakers contradicts this very notion. One of the ramifications of this argument is the problematic relationship between aesthetics and the documentary form. The flashier the cinematic process, the more questionable the "authenticity" of such a film.

In the author's section on "Ground Rules," she lays out her central thesis: "that documentary does not perceive its ultimate aim to be the authentic representation of the real" (13). This statement flies in the face of many documentary filmmakers and those who write about such film. The "purity" of the documentary form, as opposed to the lack of reality of the fictional film, is a binary that has structured film analysis since the days of Melies and Lumiere. Documentary film is assumed to be unbiased and objective, but, as Bruzzi elegantly lays out in her chapter on the voiceover, subjectivity, conscious structuring and bias are fundamental ingredients of each documentary film; in fact, they are necessary requirements if such a film will ever be made. A missed opportunity for the author was her failure to relate this to the historical fictional film, which is often critiqued for its inability to exactly replicate historical reality. While this was not the subject of this book, a number of the same arguments pertain to this genre.

Bruzzi significantly adds to the debate over image as historical record in her fascinating discussion of the Zapruder film, perhaps the most famous piece of accidental footage ever shot, and her analysis of compilation historical films, including the work of Emile de Antonio. Bruzzi is particularly impressed with the comic/tragic power of Millhouse (Emile de Antonio, 1971), a self-reflexive, scathing indictment of Richard Nixon. The material that addresses historical documentary filmmaking is certainly applicable to feature fictional films, particularly with the use of historical "real" footage in movies such as Forrest Gump (Robert Zemeckis, 1994).

Bruzzi proves to be most combative in her analysis of narration in documentaries. Voice-over narration is largely viewed in negative terms by film theorists, voice of God narration in particular being deemed manipulative and subjective. The author addresses The World at War (Lowell Mellett, 1942) and The Times of Harvey Milk (Rob Epstein, 1984) demonstrating this narrative technique. Yet Bruzzi argues that "the reductivism that has plagued discussion of documentary's implementation of voice-over" (58) refuses to acknowledge gender differences in narration, deliberate ironic narration or distanced narration.

The most valuable chapter in this volume is that which analyzes the legacy of direct cinema. Cinéma vérité, or the observational mode of documentary filmmaking, is considered one of the most important developments in the history of the genre. But this has also remained one of the most problematic developments due to the claims of its 1960s pioneers that their filmmaking was truly unbiased, simply observing in an unadulterated manner the individuals being filmed. Bruzzi documents the "purity" claims of such filmmakers and revisits some of the seminal debates critiquing the genre. An in-depth analysis of Salesman (Albert Maysles, David Maysles and Charlotte Zwerin, 1968) illustrates the author's point.
Bruzzi's work on "documentary journeys" illustrates the influence of direct cinema. She claims such films are "most frequently [encounters] between filmmakers and subjects, but also between different subjects and also … between the spectator and film" (81). This quest is an extremely influential concept in modern documentary filmmaking and the author illustrates the various forms this can take. The *Seven Up* series of Michael Apted and *Hoop Dreams* (Steve James, 1994) are narratives that took place over an extended period of time. Bruzzi aptly explains how such prolonged filmmaking has significant ramifications on the relationship between filmed subject and filmmaker. She also illustrates how the hundreds of hours of film must be shortened into a "social script" which creates narratological meaning for both the filmmaker and the intended audience. The *Seven Up* series in particular, lasting for over forty years, has created a complicated web of social meaning and poignancy. Other examples of documentary journeys include the body of Holocaust documentaries, of both the archive-dependent variety and that produced by docu-auteurs, filmmakers willing to make themselves part of the journey process. Bruzzi analyses both *Shoah* (Claude Lanzmann, 1985) and *Hotel Terminus* (Marcel Ophüls, 1988), comparing the ways that the Holocaust is relived in each monumental film. This form of docu-auteur film is that of a personal journey where the filmmaker attempts to find both witnesses and the truth behind the Final Solution. The final form of documentary journey observed by Bruzzi is that of the reflexive journey. It is defined as "one that offers a commentary beyond the journey undertaken, frequently on the nature of filmmaking" (109). The primary films critiqued are *London* (Patrick Keiller, 1994) and *Sherman's March* (Ross McElwee, 1986). While Bruzzi's chapter on documentary journeys delivers a brilliantly succinct, meaningful critique and theory of the sub-genre, one may question how this chapter belonged in a text entitled *New Documentary*. The majority of the films discussed are over ten years old; perhaps more commentary on the films' impact on current documentary filmmaking would be valuable.

Bruzzi does not ignore television. But the reader must realize that the author is a professor at the University of Warwick and her observations on docusoaps and reality television are clearly Anglo-centric. This will hopefully shake American television studies out of its self-absorption; one only has to read this valuable study on the last decade of British television to observe the tremendous impact that British television has had upon the decision-making of American networks. Reality television has been such a nebulous, all-encompassing term in American cultural studies that Bruzzi's telling of its history demonstrates the progression of various forms of factual entertainment and reality-based shows over time. The groundbreaking element of this chapter is Bruzzi's attempt to apply traditional cinematic theory on documentaries to contemporary television. One such example is her analysis of the "crisis structure," which seems to be the modus operandi of contemporary American reality television shows. This, she observes, is a reconfiguration of the mode used in observational documentary. An astute television studies scholar could easily apply Bruzzi's concepts to their own national television culture of reality programming.

The sheer richness of this volume is expertly illustrated in Bruzzi's work on the role of performance in the media imagery of American presidents Kennedy, Nixon, Clinton and George Bush, Jr. Political scientists as well as film scholars will find this chapter valuable. The author, of course, includes an analysis of *Fahrenheit 9/11* (Michael Moore, 2004).

Finally, Bruzzi analyzes the "performative documentary" which illustrates the "often hidden aspect of performance, whether on the part of documentary subjects or the filmmaker" (185). Performative documentary attempts to discover a different notion of "truth" or "reality" as compared with the traditional concept of the documentary. The work of Isaac Julien,
Nicholas Barker, Errol Morris, Molly Dineen and Nick Broomfield are included in this genre. Bruzzi defends Morris from attack on his aesthetic flourish *The Thin Blue Line* (Errol Morris, 1988), and political neutrality, *The Fog of War* (Errol Morris, 2004).

My criticisms of Stella Bruzzi's *New Documentary* are slight; they are more in the realm of missed opportunities than of fundamental problems. This is a powerful work that will greatly aid the current generation of film and television scholars. Bruzzi is extremely well-versed in both classic and contemporary theory on documentary and this makes it a richer volume. Perhaps the most impressive quality of Bruzzi's work is her ability to make a volume on theory so highly readable. This is not a sign of diminished scholarship but of thoughtful writing.
Hong Kong Film, Hollywood and the New Global Cinema: No Film is an Island

By Gina Marchetti and Tan See Kam (eds.)

A review by Konrad Ng, University of Hawai'i, USA

It has been a decade since Hong Kong's handover to China, an event that, in Hong Kong: Culture and the Politics of Disappearance (Minnesota University Press, 1997), Ackbar Abbas writes about as shaping the narrative and style of Hong Kong film culture. Abbas's work presented a cultural imaginary in which film was a chosen medium to negotiate Hong Kong's ethos of post-colonialism, hyper-capitalism, im/migration and Chinese-ness. Following the handover, scholars and academic presses picked up on what was recognized by Abbas and already popularized by Quentin Tarantino and "Midnight" film festival programmers for years: the meaning of Hong Kong cinema exceeds national borders and offers a productive point of departure for contemporary film studies.

Since the millennium, publications such as Esther Yau's edited volume, At Full Speed: Hong Kong Cinema in a Borderless World (University of Minnesota Press, 2001) and Meaghan Morris, Siu Leung Li and Stephen Chan Ching-kiu's edited work, Hong Kong Connections Transnational Imagination in Action Cinema (Duke University Press, 2006) have takes up Abbas's line of research by examining the transnational, diasporic and regional dimensions of Hong Kong cinema and its implications for contemporary film studies. Hong Kong Film, Hollywood and the New Global Cinema: No Film is an Island is the latest text to join this area of film scholarship.

Edited by Gina Marchetti and Tan See Kam, two bright Hong Kong and Macau-based scholars in the field of Chinese cinemas, the text brings together presentations from a Fulbright Program symposium exploring the links "Hong Kong has with world film culture both within and beyond the commercial Hollywood paradigm" (xi). Marchetti and Kam frame the resulting papers with a slightly different question: in what way does the concept of 'Hong Kong film' have social, political and economic currency in world film culture? The shift in perspective is reflected in how Marchetti and Kam situate Hong Kong cinema as a phenomenon whose meaningfulness emerges from the cultural and commercial discourses that manufacture it. That is, the resonance of Hong Kong film must also be situated as an economic enterprise that is driven, in part, by strategies of branding, product differentiation and niche marketing. For Marchetti and Kam, Hong Kong film endures locally, regionally and globally because of how it positions its "brands and brand-names globally so as to find trans-local and trans-regional niches within the transnational film marketplace...[and moves] between the dictates of Hollywood's aggressive forays into the Asian market and the fashions of the international festival circuits" (5).

Simultaneously, Hong Kong film (re)produces its local-ness in ways that remain conversant with other film cultures, including "European art cinema and Hollywood commercial
genres...[and] resurgent filmmaking centers in the People's Republic, Korea, Japan, Thailand, and elsewhere in the region" (5). The inter-connective dynamic of Hong Kong film and the scope of the book are summarized by the publication's subtitle, *No Film is an Island*. This phrase, also the subtitle for Kam's essay in the anthology, describes the tactics within and outside Hong Kong that "involve [the] astute juggling of 'foreign' and 'local' cultural capital accrued in, and available to, the late colonial Hong Kong film-scape"; Hong Kong film "is inextricably (inter-)connected in some way, via discourse or practice" (14).

Marchetti and Kam group the anthology's fifteen essays according to three broad themes. Section one assembles essays that "focus on films made by Chinese/Hong Kong filmmakers on the move in the United States, Thailand and Australia, as well as those about Chinese/Hongkongers abroad" (5). Section two brings together essays that present a "comparative" film studies. These essays examine "how popular genres travel between and across national boundaries" (7) to illustrate the contemporary cross-cultural and transnational resonance of Hong Kong film. The last section groups essays that examine "Hong Kong cinema in relation to global markets" (7) such as film festivals, international film markets, niche markets and ancillary industries to demonstrate the formation of Hong Kong film as a commodity.

The chronic challenge for conference publications seems to be that the academic rhythm achieved in symposium conversation may not translate well in print. The essays, penned by scholars based in academic institutions in America, Australia, Hong Kong, Macau and Canada, are uneven in terms of analysis. For example, Amy Lee's study of Hong Kong television in U.S. Chinatowns and Stephanie Hemelryk Donald and John Gammack's exploration of the branding dynamics of the Hong Kong visual-urban feel like departures from the anthology's focus on cinema. Likewise, Peter Rist's elaboration of the auteurism of often-neglected Hong Kong filmmaker, Johnnie To, contradicts Marchetti and Kam's resistance to auteurist approaches to the study of Hong Kong film (4).

However, some good rhythms can be found, such as Kam's contribution to the anthology. In "From South Pacific to Shanghai Blues: No Film is an Island," Kam takes issue with David Bordwell's popular *Planet Hong Kong: Popular Cinema and the Art of Entertainment* (Harvard University Press, 2000). Kam claims that Bordwell's analysis assumes Hollywood film as a cinematic origin and as a consequence, Bordwell accounts for the innovativeness of Hong Kong film as a complimentary form of cinematic plagiarism. Kam contends that Bordwell's position offers:

little insight into the interplay of intersections in cinema (or, for that matter, cross-medium borrowing and cross-territory appropriation) which account for the diverse filmmaking traditions that we know today [given how] film production, and consumption, film scholarship has become globally interconnected...[and] [b]order-crossing professors...[can] become tourists of foreign places and sightseers of 'beautiful' things. (15-16)

Kam argues for more sophisticated and reflective approaches to Hong Kong film and more generally, world cinema; for Kam, Bordwell mistakes the "Planet Hollywood tree for the forest of Hong Kong cinema" (16). Kam's response is to explore the parodic narrative and tropes of *Shanghai Blues* (Tsui Harks, 1984) to show how "Hollywood enjoys no more than a transitory existence in the cultural spaces of Hong Kong movies" (33). Kam contends that the melodramatic and anachronistic references to Hollywood in *Shanghai Blues*, playfully re-
articulates Hong Kong-ness in a way that "summons and constructs its presence in a world structured by hegemonic cultural forces on the one hand and their fissures on the other" (34). By gesturing to an interstitial cultural genealogy, the film exemplifies a different cultural space that is not predicated upon a simple dialectic of origin/copy.

Another insightful paper is Bliss Cua Lim's essay, "Generic ghosts: Remaking the new 'Asian horror film.'" Rather than read the relationship of Hong Kong film and Hollywood as a simple one-way transaction, Lim contends that Hollywood's recent trend of acquiring and remaking horror films that are both made in Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong and Thailand, and commercially successful in region of Asia, reveals a complex cultural dynamic that "challenges us to rethink prevailing paradigms for national cinema and its imbrication with genre scholarship in the discipline of film and media studies" (112). The emergence of the "Asian horror film" as a regional description and a term for global marketing, softens generic and national distinctions -- first, in the way that the manufactured association between "Asian" and "horror" conveys a generic intertextuality so as to appeal to a wide market and second, in the way that the commodity is predicated on the active deracination of films from Asian nations.

Cindy Hing-Yuk Wong's 'Distant screens: Film festivals and the global projection of Hong Kong Cinema' is a thoughtful piece on the role of film festivals in the discursive formation of world film culture and the construction and circulation of Hong Kong-ness. Wong demonstrates how film festivals, especially large international film festivals, "create knowledge" (179) through film selections, programming and the commonly recognized role of film festivals as arbiters of art, culture, politics and identity. In the case of Hong Kong film, Wong contends that Hong Kong-ness has been "intricately embedded in negotiation with Chinese identity, and a more broadly defined Asian identity within a system of meaning and practice predicated on relations among different cultures and regions in the global festival circuit (192).

Many other essays are noteworthy for their gloss on contemporary Hong Kong cinema and its relationship to world film culture. Aaron Han Joon Magnan-Park traces the metamorphosis of "friendship" in John Woo's films from Hong Kong to Hollywood. Staci Ford reads how select Hong Kong films question U.S. history, culture, and identity and by doing so, "cajole[s] movie-going Americans into taking a look at themselves in a different light" (62). Adam Knee explores the role of Thailand in the Hong Kong cinematic imagination and contends that Thailand is an:

allegorical closet in which reside the true and hidden desires of Hong Kong
and an entire realm of mysteries and alliances repressed in modern life[;]
Thailand offers a way to get back to what has been paved over in
contemporary, urban Hong Kong existence. (89)

Joelle Collier studies the emergence of Hong Kong's "Noir East" films during a period of social, political and economic volatility similar to the era preceding the film noir movement. While similar in terms of narrative and style, Collier argues that Noir East is not an exact copy of Hollywood's film noir; rather, Hong Kong filmmakers have "appropriated and elaborated … [and] reconfigured the genre so as to reflect the anxieties of post-modern Asia, not postwar America" (139). Laikwan Pang examines the mutuality of performativity between Jackie Chan, Hong Kong's Ambassador of Tourism, and Hong Kong's tourism discourse. She suggests that the touristic symbiosis between Chan and Hong Kong, between
movie star and his or her community, is regulated by necessities of self-commodification. And Peter Hitchcock juxtaposes the filmic form and intertextual references constitutive of both *Kill Bill* (Quentin Tarantino, 2003) and *Shaolin Soccer* (Stephen Chow, 2001) to explore the dynamics of niche cinema within global film culture. Hitchcock treats *Shaolin Soccer* as an important illustration of how niche cinema, often the category for "foreign" films, displaces the cultural boundaries of Hollywood's hegemony in global film culture.

The unfortunate downside to publications about Hong Kong cinema is that the topic's cultural specificity often precludes wide distribution. Since *Hong Kong Film, Hollywood and the New Global Cinema: No Film is an Island* is available as a hardcover text and eBook at the outrageous price of £75.00 each, I'm certain that the book's availability will be limited to wealthy libraries with acquisitions staff who are advocates of Asian film scholarship. I sincerely hope that Routledge's release plan includes an affordable paperback edition since this collection convincingly demonstrates that the phrase "no film is an island" says much about the state of world cinema and offers some interesting directions for contemporary film studies.
Britain Colonized: Hollywood's Appropriation of British Literature

By Jennifer M. Jeffers

A review by Kevin M. Flanagan, North Carolina State University, USA

The American culture industry excels at appropriation. Popular entertainment in the United States is largely comprised of hijacked, cannibalized, and re-vamped styles/modes/texts from other national traditions. Britain Colonized: Hollywood's Appropriation of British Literature assumes the role of "cultural vigilante," exposing a series of practices (amounting to a pervasive "theoretical paradox") regarding contemporary Hollywood film adaptations of British literary texts (228). Troubled by an increased tendency for U.S. schools to teach literary texts from Americanized film adaptations, Jennifer M. Jeffers seeks to expose how Hollywood leaves its hegemonic signature on these works of British literature (9). Obviously disenchanted with pervasive debates surrounding adaptation studies as a search for fidelity to source works, Jeffers constructs an elegant argument based on Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's "territorialization" model, further augmented by an elucidation of the J.L. Austin/John Searle and Jacques Derrida debate over levels of intention in linguistic utterances. Though tightly-construed as an investigation of a select handful of film adaptations of recent British literary texts, Jeffers covers a range of movies, from the widely popular, The English Patient (Anthony Minghella, 1996), to the largely neglected, Waterland (Stephen Gyllenhall, 1992). Despite a few minor missteps, Britain Colonized explores a framework for film adaptation studies which refreshingly illuminates the nexus between film text and literary text.

Britain Colonized is an intervention into adaptation studies which relies on the cultural and historical circumstances of 1990s Britain. Narratives available to this period include "new capitalist axiomatic" of the heritage industry, the branding and projection of a youthful "Cool Britannia," and the rise of "lad" culture as a symptom of pervasive post-feminism (45, 136-138, 194-196). Jeffers grinds these contextual circumstances against the dominance of American finance capital, cultural exportation, and narrative genres, exposing how British literary work effectively becomes American once it hits the screen.

Jeffers constantly refers to the paradoxical nature of these films, which "simultaneously enact both sides of the Searle/Derrida debate" (28). Austin and Searle support the idea that language and performative utterances can be controlled, that "the words perform the deed," and that locutionary acts can make definite meaning (26-27). Jacques Derrida, to the contrary, shows that "repetition of the performative" makes meaning, and that contextual or illocutionary circumstances around the language-act are as "meaningful" as the intended words themselves (25, 27). Thus, Jeffers surmises (at multiple points in Britain Colonized, and usually in as many words) that in these film adaptations:
The filmmaker radically reiterates the literary text at all levels -- narrative, plot, circumstances -- into a different context of meaning (in order to satisfy a mass-market audience), while at the same time repeating familiar citations that reconstitute the film into recognizable and predictable product (in order to satisfy a mass-market audience). (28, italics in original)

Jeffers proceeds to show how this debate plays-out through each film, but the reiterations are not always as radical as she posits. While some of the films seem to differ from their literary source the most in terms of their characterizations, and focus within those characterizations (The Remains of the Day [James Ivory, 1993] or The English Patient), others change with their partial, even total, removal of Britain from the filmed narratives, Waterland, High Fidelity (Stephen Frears, 2000). In "Conclusion," Jeffers cedes that "as we progressed through Britain Colonized, the level of disregard for the British literary text increased," citing High Fidelity as the most radically altered film text, in which "nothing 'British' remains in the film" (227).

Britain Colonized frames textual adaptation -- in this case, transnational film adaptation -- as an act of "territorialization." Mainly following Deleuze and Guattari's Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia (University of Minnesota Press, 1983), Jeffers frames Hollywood film adaptation/cultural appropriation as an act of altering a source by removing its original context/meaning/form/aesthetic function and reconstituting it as something different, new, even philosophically and ideologically re-orientated. Thus, Hollywood, capitalism's agent per excellence, "determinitalizes with one hand as it reterritorializes with the other" (5). Film adaptations of British texts that contain American finance are aimed at American audiences, or even transported into American contexts, and are primarily concerned with netting more money, yet the reterritorializing act transmits values, cultural views, and aesthetic modes (5). Once reterritorialized as a film, the original literary text has been transformed by a new (in this case American) set of what Deleuze and Guattari call "State philosoph[ies]," characterized by governing principles like "representation," "categorical thought," "recognition," and "repetition of the Same" (29). For Jeffers, Hollywood film adaptations of British literary texts are characteristically, pervasively, and sometimes haphazardly, different from their source. While "determinitalization" and "reterritorialization" are especially useful for conceptualizing geographically, nationally, and racially different forms of adaptation, their use could be extended to any area of film adaptation studies. An author engaged in adaptation spatially, ideologically, and philosophically, determinitalizes a text just as they reterritorialize it with their own axiomatics.

Jeffers shows this total Americanization by using each film to illustrate a different strategy of/for reterritorialization. In "Heritage and Nostalgia: What Remains of The Remains of the Day," the American viewer is allowed to view pre-World War Two Britain in its aristocratic and pastoral splendor, while at the same time disavowing its dangerous flirtation with fascism, by identifying with the film's aggregate American character, retired politician and defender of liberty Jack Lewis (played by Superman himself, Christopher Reeve). Possession (Neil LaBute, 2002), adapted from A.S. Byatt's Booker Prize-winning novel, is structurally exposed as conforming to each of the narrative tropes of the American Western film (84-85). The chapter 'Cinema's Romance with the Colonial: The English Patient's "AntiConquest" Adventure' exposes The English Patient as a film adaptation coded such that American audiences can participate in the colonial adventure yarn, made palatable by virtue of America's total non-intervention in 1930s North Africa (115). Jeffers's best work comes in
"Cool Britannia for Sale: Trainspotting and Bridget Jones's Diary" which recounts two Americanized engagements with how a newly prosperous, young, and affluent British culture projected itself to the world.

Though theoretically rigorous, deftly argued, and generally fair-minded, Britain Colonized suffers from an insistence on Britain's almost total subservience to American cultural values. The book's carefully chosen set of films seem to paint this picture, but the continued production of new works and a widening of the field of adaptations assessable under this model (Mansfield Park [Patricia Rozema, 1999], Revenger's Tragedy [Alex Cox, 2002]), and other films that bear some American participation but are not bound to Hollywood might re-assert the British identity of British literary adaptations.

The book's greatest weakness is its under-estimation, indeed almost wholesale dismissal, of American audiences. Constantly referring to mainstream audiences and the eponymous "average American" in the negative, Jeffers's criticism sometimes veers dangerously close to paternalistic. In discussing Shakespeare in Love (John Madden, 1998) -- included in the text as an example of the reterritorialization of an entire author -- Jeffers asserts that faced with the film's postmodern liberties, "the average American cannot tell what is supposed to be 'real' (true to life, factual) and what is fictional" (207). Jeffers does not qualify or quantify who an "average American" is and does not seem to differentiate between who sees these film adaptations and for what reasons. Britain Colonized suffers when it explicitly tells the reader what Americans do and do not "know."

Britain Colonized is a very important book for film adaptation studies. In reframing how film adaptations work, reconcile their artistic duties with economic considerations, and differ when appropriated in different national contexts, Jeffers has provided scholars with new map for how to study literature on screen.
From Box Office to Ballot Box: The American Political Film

By M. Keith Booker

A review by Nicholas Witham, University of Nottingham, UK

Introducing From Box Office to Ballot Box: The American Political Film, M. Keith Booker concedes the obvious (and perhaps even clichéd) point that "all culture is political" (1). His book, however, is concerned with providing an "overview of the issues central to the genre of American political film" (3). This is a genre he regards as "that species of film which is directly concerned with the workings of politics and the role of politics in our lives" (3). The book is therefore admirably broad in its scope (it cites 289 films at this reviewer's count), but unfortunately functions only as a superficial guide to American political filmmaking, rather than as a sustained piece of critical engagement.

Booker's text is separated into eight chapters, the divisions between which are thoughtfully constructed. Each deals with a broad, thematically linked body of political filmmaking: political campaign films; films dealing with the process of government; the effects of McCarthyism on filmmaking; cinematic representations of the Cold War; representations of the relationship between politics and the media; labour and class in film; Vietnam war films; and finally, American film and warfare after the Cold War. The author tends to introduce each chapter with a brief rundown of the key historical and political themes that inform the films under analysis. He then speeds into thematic descriptions and brief analyses of these films. Regrettably, this process is both too descriptive, and too analytically brief. Booker does not craft a broad argument about the nature of American film's engagement with each of these political themes, and then evidence it with detailed readings of certain films. Instead, he presents the reader with what is essentially a list of all of the films that could possibly be construed as relating to the particular theme at hand. The plot of each is synthesised, often in great detail, and then a very brief concluding remark or two added to analyse the film's position within a certain political tradition.

For example, after a whole two pages describing the plot of Nixon (Oliver Stone, 1995), Booker concludes with the pithy yet wholly superficial two-line remark that the film "is clear in its vision of a corrupt American system whose villains are not individuals but secret and sinister forces that transcend the power of any one person" (42). Whilst there is nothing inherently wrong with his understanding of Stone's film, this example illustrates the author's prioritisation of description over analysis, one that is present throughout the book. This is accentuated when Booker consciously appropriates other authors' analysis of certain films, rather than supplying his own, something which is especially apparent in his use of Timothy Corrigan's superb A Cinema Without Walls: Movies and Culture After Vietnam (Rutgers University Press, 1991) in the chapter on Vietnam war films. Overall then, the thematic
synopses are too descriptive, and the analytical readings too brief. This makes for a bland reading experience.

The book is also entirely free of any system of referencing. Certain key books are mentioned within the text, but apart from this there is no bibliography or footnoting. It is hard to imagine that Booker researched and wrote without referring to more than these few books, and he should therefore have supplied his readers with a bibliography. Whilst this lack of scholarly baggage may have been intended as a nod to non-academic readers, it is hard to excuse a book that implicitly suggests that there is no further reading to be done on the topics it discusses. *From Box Office to Ballot Box* is by no means the final word on American political filmmaking; its self-professed status as an "overview" (3) suggests that its author should have included at least some kind of a guide to further reading.

On top of this, it appears that the book has been poorly proofread. There are numerous typographical errors throughout, and in places Booker's prose style is far from lucid. As an example, take this particularly clumsy excerpt: "Spartacus is not really a radical film. For one thing it was an extremely expensive film that had to seek a mass audience in order to recover the cost of the film" (142). These are simple problems that give the impression of a book written in a hurry, with scant attention to detail. It must be hoped that these errors will be eliminated in any future edition, and that a full bibliography will be supplied.

However, Booker's conclusion manages to provide a less frustrating end to the book. It does this precisely because it enters into the critical analysis that is missing elsewhere. The author suggests that "American political film seems to have taken a decided step backward in critical power in the early years of the twenty-first century, even as the political problems facing America have grown more and more pressing" (215). This is because of the malign influence of round-the-clock television news, as well as the increased energy that has been put into documentary political filmmaking, at the expense of fictional forms. In spite of this, Booker suggests that there are reasons for cautious confidence in the critical potential of political filmmakers. To demonstrate, he provides an insightful analysis of *V for Vendetta* (James McTeigue, 2005). It is suggested that the film's dystopian representation of near-future Britain controlled by a fascist dictatorship "represents a powerful and even daring critique of the Bush administration" (219). Booker argues that the film is not without its flaws, especially because it seems to legitimate terrorist action in certain situations, but that its implicit critique of contemporary American political culture suggests that "it is still possible to make controversial political statements in American films" (219). This leads Booker to an astute (if again clumsily worded) conclusion, one derived from imaginative and insightful critical analysis of a single filmic text:

> The case of *V for Vendetta* thus suggests both positive and negative potential for the future of American political film. Indeed, American political film in the early twenty-first century may be at an important crossroads that could lead either to a genuine renaissance in political filmmaking or to the disappearance of real political commentary from American film altogether. (220)

*From Box Office to Ballot Box* is not all bad. If one takes on board the above criticisms, it is possible to read it as a type of encyclopaedic introduction to American political filmmaking. The author is undoubtedly correct in identifying the key themes in this area and has constructed his chapters accordingly, engaging with a large number of movies. It is therefore possible to imagine that an interested general reader searching for films that deal with certain
political issues would be able to pick up the book and quickly construct a viewing list. But beyond this, Booker's apparent reluctance to critically engage with his chosen films in anything more than a perfunctory manner makes for a contribution to the field that is neither groundbreaking, nor stimulating to read.
Mexican National Cinema (National Cinemas)

By Andrea Noble

A review by Heather Macdougall, Concordia University, Montreal, Canada

Mexico has enthusiastically embraced the moving picture from the very first days of the medium, through a golden age of film production in the 1940s, to the present day and its consistent release of internationally acclaimed films. The strength of the Mexican film industry lies not only in its powerful cultural institutions, its brilliant directors, and its captivating stars, but also in its insatiable domestic audience and its privileged position in relation to the rest of the Spanish-speaking world. If it is Latin America's most commercially successful film industry, it is certainly also the most studied. What, then, can Andrea Noble's *Mexican National Cinema* contribute to the already substantial literature available on Mexican Cinema?

Noble herself admits in her introduction that "Mexican cinema is now admirably archived and well documented in Spanish and, increasingly, in English" (3). With this statement as justification, she forgoes a traditional chronological survey of the country's filmmaking history in favour of a thematic exploration of the relationship between film and Mexican cultural identity. In the afterword, Noble states that when writing her book she found her guiding principles in Catherine Russell's *Experimental Ethnography: The Work of Film in the Age of Video* (Duke University Press, 1999), emphasizing in particular that "it is essential to view film as a cultural representation and therefore to focus at once on the audio-visual narrative strategies by which film makes its meanings, and, at the same time, the historical contexts that shape these meanings" (173).

The influence of the cultural anthropology approach is apparent throughout the book, and indeed the text occasionally appears to be intended as a treatise on Mexican identity, with films used merely as examples to illustrate greater cultural themes. This is not to say that the book does not adequately address the importance of the films. On the contrary, Noble does a commendable job of drawing together research done in both film studies and Mexican cultural theory, while keeping her text interesting for scholars working in either discipline by highlighting the ways in which film has served both to reflect and to shape popular movements in Mexico. This thematic approach makes for an engaging read, yet could be disorienting for readers who do not already have a fairly solid understanding of the chronological sequence of events (despite the inclusion in the introduction of brief but extremely competent overviews of both Mexican cinema's industrial contexts and Mexican cultural history more generally). It might not be suitable, then, as a textbook for an undergraduate course on Mexican cinema, for example. Rather, it could more appropriately be used as a complement to one of the many chronological histories mentioned by Noble in her introduction, such as the comprehensive *Mexican Cinema* (BFI Publishing, 1995),...
In the body of the manuscript, six chapters each provide an overview of a theme, followed by a close analysis of selected films. The first chapter, "Remaking Mexican Cinema," focuses on Mexico's problematic quest for cultural modernity, a topic which recurs in subsequent chapters as well. *La Mujer del Puerto* (Arcady Boytler, 1933), a well-known film in the canon of Mexican classics, and Arturo Ripstein's 1991 remake of the same title, are particularly apt choices for an exploration of the changes in Mexican cinema over the decades. Noble compares the two versions of the film, drawing particular attention to the treatment of the theme of incest. In the original version, the female protagonist commits suicide upon discovering that her lover is in fact her brother, while the remake provides a harmonious, if controversial, ending with the siblings expecting their second child together. Noble places both films in the context of the geo-politics of the time of their respective release, particularly the struggle between creating specifically Mexican cinema and presenting a positive view of the nation to a broader audience, and concludes that "the happy ending of consummated incestuous sexuality can be read as recognition that the dream of cosmopolitan nationalism which found expression in a cinematic idiom of the 1930s is a failed project" (46).

The second chapter, "The Mexican Revolution as Moving Memory," deals with what is of course the most important event to happen in Mexican history during the cinematic age. Noble discusses both the important role that cinema played during the revolution itself and the place that the revolution has held in the nation's cinematic imagination since that time. The moving image was still a relatively new technology when the revolution broke out in 1910, and Noble includes an amusing anecdote of how audience members actually shot at the screen when unpopular figures appeared in newsreels. In the decades that followed, Noble explains, the revolution underwent "a process of institutionalisation" through which "the revolution's meanings were constructed and promoted in an on-going process that involved the selective appropriation of elements of the past that corresponded to the needs of the present" (49), thereby becoming a cornerstone in the national mythology and collective memory. This chapter concentrates predominantly on the use of documentary footage of the revolution, focusing in particular on *Memorias de un Mexicano* (Carmen Toscano, 1950), an edited collage of footage shot by the director's father during the revolutionary period, linked together by fictionalised narrative voiceover. As the title suggests, the film provides much fodder for a discourse on memory, and Noble extends this discussion beyond the revolution to explore the role of myth, memory and nostalgia in modern Mexico.

The most interesting research, in this reviewer's opinion, shines through in the third chapter, "The formation of a national cinema audience." It seems curious, in fact, that this wonderful investigation of "the consumption of film images in Mexico and the idea of national belonging forged through the act of spectatorship" (72), is buried in the middle of the book when it would have made a very fitting opening chapter. Nevertheless, Noble provides an illuminating survey of film viewing as social practice in Mexico, outlining how the cinema was approached by different classes, genders, political factions, and regional populations over the past century, including such information as the price of tickets and expected picture-house etiquette and dress. She also pays substantial tribute to Carlos Monsiváis and his research on film as cultural mediator through the promotion of "spectatorial identifications with a repertoire of new and traditional images associated with lo mexicano that were played out on screen" (71). In order to further explore the dynamics of screen–spectator relationships, she provides a close textual analysis of the classic *María Candelabra* (Emilio Fernández, 1943),

published by the British Film Institute in association with the Instituto Mexicano de Cinematografía and the Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes.
which was released during the peak of Mexican cinema's golden age (the 1940s) and -- not coincidentally -- at a time of heightened cultural nationalism. Noble draws attention to the interplay between traditional indigenous and Spanish visual systems, and to the use of symbols in the film to reference the colonisation of Mexico (for example, María Candelaria's symbolic burden as the Virgin of Guadalupe, a unifying national symbol and an example of a Catholic concept superimposed over a pre-existing indigenous icon). This chapter also introduces the problems of state-encouraged *indigenismo* as a nation-building myth, a theme which resurfaces again throughout the subsequent chapters.

The final three chapters each deal with a different genre of film while repeatedly bringing attention the key themes of gender roles, *indigenismo*, and the representation of space. Chapter four examines the use of melodrama in Mexican cinema, and offers analyses of three films which exemplify the changing cinematic treatment of the family in melodrama: *Una Familia de Tantas* (Alexandra Galanty, 1948), *El Castillo de la Pureza* (Arturo Ripstein, 1972), and *El Callejón de los Milagros* (Jorge Fons, 1995). Chapter five, though titled "Seeing the Other Through Film," is actually a foray into the use of the road movie genre as a vehicle for bringing modernity into dialogue with tradition through encounters between characters from urban and rural locations throughout the country. Referencing Sergei Eisenstein's unfinished yet highly influential *¡Que Viva México!* (Grigori Aleksandrov and Sergei M. Eisenstein, 1932) and Alfonso Cuarón's feature *Y tu mamá también* (Alfonso Cuarón, 2001), Noble remarks on the foreign influences (the ethnicity of the director in the first case, and the appropriation of a stereotypically Anglo-American genre in the second) in works that, ultimately, serve as self-reflexive commentaries on what it means to be Mexican in a nation plagued with schisms caused by gender, regional, ethnic and economic divides. The sixth and final chapter looks to another important schism, the border between Mexico and the United States. The border movie is a key genre within Mexican cinema, and border crossings have been a constant thematic presence although the valences associated with that border have fluctuated wildly. Noble considers two films in this chapter, *Espaldas Mojadas* (Alexandra Galanty, 1955) and *El Jardín del Edén* (María Novaro, 1994); her critical readings of the films are supplemented by interesting accounts of the problems encountered by the film crews when shooting on the border and the concessions that had to be made following pressure from American governmental bodies.

Throughout the book, Noble's writing style is clear and readable when discussing general themes and historical contexts, but she seems to struggle to keep this easy flow in her textual analyses of the selected films. At certain points she slips into a more laboured and convoluted writing. One other criticism is that she relies perhaps too heavily on direct quotations that interrupt the flow of the writing, but she must simultaneously be commended for her exceptionally thorough research which branches out into all areas of Mexican cultural history, film studies, and national identity theory. It is a nice touch, also, that quotations from Spanish primary sources are included in both the original form and in translation. For reasons mentioned at the beginning of this review, the book may not stand alone very well, but the content is such that it is still a worthwhile read and an excellent complement to more traditional histories of Mexican film. In particular, I recommend that any scholar interested in Mexican cinema read at least the chapter on the formation of the national cinema audience, as it illuminates the context in which Mexican films were (and are) viewed domestically.
Alanis Obomsawin: The Vision of a Native Filmmaker

By Randolph Lewis

A review by Rachel Walls, University of Nottingham, UK

Randolph Lewis was short of neither enthusiasm nor ambition when he wrote his study of Alanis Obomsawin, an Abenaki documentary maker who has worked at Canada's National Film Board (NFB) since the 1960s. This is the first book-length work to focus on a native filmmaker, and Lewis hopes that it will be the start of a more comprehensive dialogue on Native filmmaking with Obomsawin gaining the recognition she deserves as its central figure. Lewis considers the septuagenarian filmmaker as a pioneer of alternative media practices that might be adopted worldwide as a means of crosscultural exchange of ideas and perspectives, and appears to view Obomsawin as a shining example of artistic practise in an "era that thrusts the psuedoreal in our face at every turn" (xxii). Though the book does not talk in any great detail about other indigenous filmmakers, Lewis is convincing in his desire to direct attention to Native filmmaking in North America, and in his keenness to illustrate his conviction by pledging further author royalties to the Film and Video Studies Library at the University of Oklahoma for the purchase of Native films (xxvi).

The North American documentary tradition began with the portrayal of a Canadian indigenous population in the documentary Nanook of the North (Robert Flaherty, 1922). Lewis begins his book on Obomsawin with an epigraph by Flaherty, quoting him alongside a poetic comment on the appropriation of culture by Native writer Joy Harjo. Flaherty wrote, "In the end it is all a question of human relationships" and while his films were successful in portraying human relationships, it is doubtful how honest a depiction this was, as most scenes were pre-arranged. Additionally, it is likely that he had little interest in actually connecting with the subjects himself. In his book, Lewis suggests that Obomsawin's importance lies in her insistence on a more equal balance between those behind and in front of the camera. "Obomsawin strives to maintain lifelong relationships with her subjects" (192) he tells us, elsewhere describing how she visited and stayed with the foster parents of child suicide victim Richard Cardinal: "I slept in his bed, and that night I was really concentrating and talking to him, and wondering if there was something I should do […] so that's when I decided to make the film" (68). In Obomsawin's films, Native Canadians are participatory subjects in a native vision, rather than objects of Robert Flaherty's documentary gaze, and Lewis is keen to stress the importance of Native people retaining control over projected images of themselves after so many years of the opposite being true.

Lewis portrays Obomsawin as an extraordinary woman, continuing even in her seventies to put herself into risky situations in order to ensure alternative perspectives get the screen-time they deserve. If Lewis' book veers towards sentimentality, it is perhaps due to his undisguised fan status:
The sceptical reader might wonder why I have been so taken with Obomsawin's work -- I'm not native, I don't live in Canada, and I was barely born when the NFB first hired her. Frankly, I cannot help but prize an independent filmmaker whose vision has held steady for thirty-five years of principled cultural critique, who stands for something more than herself, and who embodies the best media practices in the face of the worst. (198)

Lewis seems an unlikely author for such a study at the outset, his background being in American and Media Studies rather than Film, Canadian or Native studies, though his previous book-length publication on Emile Antonio shows a developed interest in documentary by filmmakers aiming to counter governmental and mass media representations. His interdisciplinary background is evident in Alanis Obomsawin, as he explores her First Nations background in the first chapter "Abenaki Beginnings," utilising historical events, Obomsawin's personal recollections, literary sources, and fictional film representations to increase understanding of her development.

In the second chapter Lewis looks at her early films, giving an adequate impression of her style through his descriptions despite a light emphasis on technical detail and technique. Additionally, he maps the significance of these films and outlines Obomsawin's thematic preoccupations. Each of her early works deals with a different social issue: the foster care of Native children, the role of women, the endangering of native way of life by a hydroelectric plant, fishing rights, drug rehabilitation and homelessness. Lewis is keen to emphasise the positive and practical endings of her films, despite their often tragic subject material. He also draws links between her filmic style and the oral traditions of her Abenaki forefathers, suggesting her documentary technique revolves around the spoken word and the voices of the people in her films. In the third chapter, "A Gendered Gaze?," Lewis asks "is it significant that the cardinal filmmaker in Native cinema is female?" (70). Having previously stated that Obomsawin has never called herself a feminist (40), he proceeds to analyse the importance of her gender, suggesting that she shares a combination of five filmmaking practices with other female North American filmmakers who seek to challenge the sexist societies in which they live (79). Additionally, whilst careful not to subscribe to a stereotype of Native women as nurturing mother-earth figures, he concludes that the empathetic concern shown in her films is tied to her gender, and consequently answers the chapter's initial question with a resounding "yes."

Obomsawin's most famous work, Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance (Alanis Obomsawin, 1993) and the subsequent films made from additional Oka crisis footage form the subject matter of Chapter four. The title of this section, 'Documentary on the Middle Ground,' highlights Lewis' main argument that documentary acted as an appropriate tool for building bridges between natives and non-natives in the case of the Oka Crisis. Without Kanehsatake, he suggests, few people would be aware of the other side of the story, the side that mainstream media coverage neglected to portray. In the fifth chapter, the nature of documentary itself, and its aptness to Obomsawin's ambitions, are considered, Lewis choosing Maria Vargas Llosa's article entitled "Why Literature?" (New Republic, May 14, 2001) as a useful framework for answering his own question. The final chapter, 'A Cinema of Sovereignty,' begins with an appraisal of Obomsawin's most nationalistic films, Is the Crown at War with Us? (Alanis Obomsawin, 2002) and Our Nationhood (Alanis Obomsawin, 2004) (national here referring to the Mi'kmaq tribes whose stories she tells), and concludes by proposing possibilities for indigenous art worldwide.
Throughout the book, Lewis is unafraid of drawing on literary sources in order to enhance our understanding of the native perspective in the various conflicts Obomsawin has documented. *Incident at Restigouche, Is the Crown at War with Us?* and *Our Nationhood* (Alanis Obomsawin, 1984) stemmed from fishing and logging rights disputes between the Mi'kmaq people and the government, and *Kanehsatake: 270 years of Resistance, Spudwrench* (Alanis Obomsawin, 1997), and *My Name is Kahentiiosta* (Alanis Obomsawin, 1995) used footage filmed during the Oka Crisis. In the final chapter, "Cinema of Sovereignty," Lewis relates a Mi'kmaq myth to help explain the nation's historical relationship with the water, and quotes a local poet, Rita Joe, suggesting that she "was on a poetic parallel to Obomsawin's career [...] finding her voice as a poet and directing it, often, at the white Canadians who did not seem to understand her people" (161). Earlier on in the text, links are made with author/songwriter Leonard Cohen, whom Obomsawin befriended when living in 1960s Montreal. Lewis believes Cohen's character Edith, the narrator's wife in the controversial *Beautiful Losers* (McClelland and Stewart, 1966), was inspired by Obomsawin, and that, through books Cohen found at her apartment, Obomsawin introduced him to Kateri Tekakwitha, the seventeenth century Mohawk who becomes a saint-like figure for Cohen's narrator (19). At this point Obomsawin was yet to become a filmmaker, and Lewis devotes part of his opening chapter to her previous career as a successful singer and storyteller who made a name for herself touring North America, educating audiences about her culture. Lewis seems to see Obomsawin as continuing in this instructional role in her work at the NFB, passing on the culture of her people to natives and non-natives through popular and accessible mediums. It is debateable whether documentary is a popular medium that reaches the masses, yet Lewis argues that, in this case, it is and has. He begins the book with an anecdote of a Montreal taxi driver enthusiastically responding to a mention of Obomsawin: "Mademoiselle Alanis! [...] Oui...I watched one of her documentaries on television last night" (xi, emphasis in original). While this proves little, being perhaps a mere coincidence, it serves as a lead in to Lewis' argument that Obomsawin is unusually well known for a filmmaker in her field, and especially for a female filmmaker of colour, "winning numerous awards at film festivals in Canada, Europe, and Asia" and being shown frequently on Canadian television and even on Japanese Television "to an estimated audience of eighteen million" (page xiii).

While Lewis names few other native films, other than the fictional *Smoke Signals* (Chris Eyre, 1998) and *Atanarjuat* (Zacharias Kunuk,2001), the book does contain an appendix, which is "suggestive rather than comprehensive" (207), of Native documentary films. He is keen to emphasise that this is the first book-length study of any indigenous filmmaker, rightly highlighting this as a significant absence which he has begun to put right. He draws parallels on several occasions with the Maori filmmaker Merata Mira (xii, 60, 72 and 79), "in many ways Obomsawin's equivalent in the Southern Hemisphere," though the New Zealander would eventually diverge into fictional film subject material. This comparison is typical of Lewis' aspiration to attach global importance to Obomsawin's work, and he suggests that she is an appropriate example for international indigenous cultures in rewriting the histories that dominant media have imposed put upon them. His strategies for a "Cinema of Sovereignty," exemplified by Obomsawin's work, "provides an ideological rebuke to dominant practices of looking at Nativeness and, in this sense, troubles the visual impulses of white settler cultures in the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and elsewhere" (182). In the conclusion, perhaps a little tenuously, Lewis brings Iraq into the equation as one of these 'elsewheres' which might find Obomsawin's technique useful. He feels there has been a missed opportunity for "nuanced dissent and informed analysis [...] hard questions and independent reporting" (200) in the Western portrayal of the Middle Eastern crisis.
The reference to Iraq is one of several attempts to emphasise the urgent day to day relevance of his study, another being his comments on the proliferation of staged 'reality' TV shows such as *Survivor, Real World, and Temptation Island* (204). He sees these as "the wrong type of documentary" (xxii), disputing their claims to show material with bearing on reality, and fears they are viewed without discernment by the American public. It is also one symptom of a personal despair Lewis conveys regarding American attitudes. He comments that, while shown in Britain and Japan, *Kanehsatake* has never aired in the U.S. (104) because of an "enduring metaphysics of Indian hating," the result being "a terminal neglect of all things Native in the United States, unless routed through dusty Costnerian operas or Michael Eisner's animated minions" (xiv). In the conclusion he becomes even more vitriolic (and perhaps less relevant) in his condemnation of the U.S. where:

> media corporations have shown no interest in indigenous points of view, and where right wing politicians begin fuming whenever a trickle of state funds ends up in the hands of an artist smearing chocolate on her naked body or painting the virgin Mary with daubs of elephant dung. (201)

Whilst not buying into the idea of Canada as drastically more supportive of its Native peoples than its southern neighbour, he does feel that Canada and the NFB was an appropriate location from which Obomsawin could launch her alternative perspectives.

In conclusion, while Lewis is over-ambitious in his assertion that Obomsawin's work can be used as a model for the representation of repressed cultures worldwide, he is certainly right to draw attention to the neglect of Native filmmakers, particularly one as talented and as socially relevant as Obomsawin. His interdisciplinary focus renders the text accessible to readers with a large range of interests, rather than just being a book about a filmmaker for film buffs. This is a fascinating, if perhaps slightly romanticised, tribute to Alanis Obomsawin. Lewis' emotional involvement with the subject material and his apparent anger at the U.S. is sometimes jarring, yet is perhaps appropriate for an analysis of a documentary maker. Works in this field are implicitly subjective, assembling various types of evidence to back up a chosen thesis. In writing about Obomsawin, Lewis reflects the form she excels at, piecing together the many strands of his argument and ensuring his voice and his views are heard.
Alphaville (French Film Guides series)

By Chris Darke

A review by Helen Donlon

In Chris Darke's vision of Alphaville, Une Étrange Aventure de Lemmy Caution (Jean-Luc Godard, 1965), Eddie Constantine is Orpheus in a trenchcoat guiding us through the city of night, light sabre in hand; a noir hero whose adventures in a dystopian Parisian cityscape of the future bring to mind a sort of Walter Benjamin field trip meets The Day The Earth Stood Still (Robert Wise, 1951).

At 114 pages, this is a welcome addition to the French Film Guides series from University of Illinois Press and I.B.Tauris. Darke's intention is to provide an interesting annotation of the film and its components, including an intelligent meander through the corridors of its literary connections, as well as its links to previous works and other filmmakers, with a lot of emphasis on the Murnau/German Expressionist connections. As Darke points out early on in the book, Alphaville, which won the Prize for Best Film in Berlin in the year of its release, stands out from the rest of Godard's considerable oeuvre in one respect -- it's a film for those who don't like Godard. His sole feature length venture into sci-fi, it seems to stand apart from other Godard films of the period, with its anti-hero b-movie narrative, its often very odd dialogue and its obsession with light and darkness.

Darke leads us through Godard's black and white urban landscape, a "haunted chiaroscuro of German expressionism and the monochrome of film noir," linking in the other Parises which constitute what he calls Godardville: Haussmann's boulevards, the HLMs (low rent housing blocks now synonymous with Parisian political unrest in May 1968 at Nanterre, and represented in Godard's other films of the period); Paris as a city of the future, city of the past, city of light, and night. He cites Walter Benjamin's study of Paul Klee's 'Angelus Novus,' "his face turned towards the past," and this past is Lemmy Caution's Alphaville.

Eddie Constantine's high profile in German popular film culture at the time of Alphaville's making is also discussed here, as is the cult of Lemmy Caution. Now Lemmy is Orpheus, or as Darke would have it, a "pop art Prometheus" (52), bringing fire from the gods to the benighted masses, which he indeed does, as in the very first scene we see him sitting parked in his car in Alphaville, waiting, with his zippo alight in front of him. The zippo also comes back to life when he first meets Karina and she asks him for a light. Light is used dramatically throughout the film, and Darke goes into great details about this and its significance to Godard, to the Orpheus myth, and to the sci-fi continuum. On another visual note, he discusses the significance of arrows and circles in the film, and their repeated symbols throughout, including in the form of the white trim on Karina's coat. The Orpheus myth naturally extends to Karina's Eurydice, attempting to look back at Alphaville as they leave in the final scene to start life over in the outside world.
Dystopia is a recurrent theme in Darke's interpretation of *Alphaville*'s corridors. A close reading of Godard's homages to German expressionism, especially *Nosferatu* (F.W. Murnau, 1922), film noir and of course Cocteau, whose own *Orphée* (Jean Cocteau, 1950) offered a similar architecture of Paris-as-underworld and was also a semi-political exploration of contemporary (post-war) society. In Lemmy Caution's underworld Paul Eluard's *The Capital of Pain* (First English Translation, Penguin, 1973) is represented as some kind of codebook from which Karina, as the benighted Natascha/Eurydice, will learn how to love in her future, as it is suggested she had loved in her long-forgotten past, once she escapes from the Orwellian entrapment of her present.

Originally called "Tarzan vs. IBM," Darke discusses how the *Alphaville* project came into being, and how it nearly got shelved because Godard had been approached to direct *Bonnie and Clyde* (Arthur Penn, 1967) in the U.S. This leads on to a discussion of Godard's fabled scripting methods, via author interviews with cinematographer Raoul Coutard, and with Charles Bitsch, who was Assistant Director on *Alphaville*, and leading on later to an interview with cult film director and writer/publisher Peter Whitehead, who had taken the then unprecedented step of publishing the script for *Alphaville* after the film had been finished and screened in Europe. This recent interview with Whitehead yields a wonderfully amusing story about the meeting between Whitehead and Godard:

> Godard was in London staying at the Hilton. I'd drawn up a contract and was told that I should go and meet him. For me, this was a high point in my life, to meet my hero! I knew all of his films. I'd seen *Vivre sa vie* 12 times! He was sitting in the foyer, I could see the back of his head, so I came up to him and said 'Monsieur Godard?' and he leapt out of his skin. I introduced myself, saying 'I'm the guy who wants to do the screenplay.' 'Oh yes,' he said, 'where's the money?' (83)

In the opening credits of *Alphaville* we see the now famous Chris Marker image on the streets of Moscow which later turned up on *Inmemory: A CD-Rom* (Chris Marker, 1997). Marker's work with Godard and his place in the pantheon of important young left bank filmmakers in the 1960s is briefly discussed (he was part of the alternative Cahiers du Cinema group that included Resnais, Varda and of course Godard). It was Marker who once said "Godard nailed it once and for all: at the cinema, you raise your eyes to the screen; in front of the television, you lower them" (39), as Darke points out. The title credit image perhaps acts as a backdrop to the introduction of Constantine as Caution, who has come on behalf of a Soviet-sounding organisation known as Figaro-Pravda.

Darke does succeed in providing a very compelling annotation and includes some interesting peripheral cult scencsters, including, as mentioned, Peter Whitehead and also the sound artist Scanner. I was at the Marek Pytel/Reality Films screening where Scanner performed the live remix to the soundtrack of *Alphaville* at the London IMAX a few years ago, which Darke discusses in some detail. It was heartening to see a packed late night IMAX crowd for such an event, despite the serious limitations of the print in the IMAX format, which Darke touches on, although he doesn't mention the gasps of complete horror that emitted from several rows of muse-purists when Karina appeared as a football-shaped vision of rotundity in the hotel corridor, due to the distortion on the print.

He also includes mention of artist Belinda Guidi's 2002 light sculpture dedicated to *Alphaville* (she has produced several sculptures inspired by Godard's work). There is a great
swathe of an early chapter devoted to Alphaville's cult status and its unusual reincarnation as a kind of super-de-luxe answer to the HLM of Godard's 1960s Parisians visions. This version is just outside of Sao Paolo in Brazil, and is a CCTV-monitored helicopter-padded gated community for the super-rich, called... "Alphaville." The discussion and accompanying photographic evidence borrowed from the cult Irish art ensemble Desperate Optimists, provide a fascinating and frightening aside to the completely unironic afterlife of the film's dystopian concepts and you can almost see libre/occupé signs on the buildings. One wonders if having the name "Alphaville" co-opted by Brazilian architects and urban planners back in the 1970s tickled or horrified the then post-commercial Godard.

Darke is a potent writer, his storytelling is wonderfully woven and multi-layered, and he has a flair for a good turn of phrase: "Pop art Prometheus" (52) is a classic and "Metropolis for Mods" (82) another.

Another reason the book works well is because he has fished out information from so many interesting sources that even the most knowledgeable Alphaville fan will discover something new. It hadn't occurred to me that Guy L'eclair was of course Flash Gordon in French. Similarly, I didn't know that Lemmy Caution's original creator, Peter Cheyney, had been a British strike-breaker and fascist organiser. There is quite a lot of brilliant trivia here in fact. I never knew before that Roland Barthes was invited by Godard to play the part of one of the scientists but turned it down because he was afraid of being made to look ridiculous; or, indeed, that Godard had expressed an immense hostility to structuralism as a movement, which could be the real explanation for Barthes' refusal to participate. Furthermore, Darke makes use of a vast bibliography of articles, books and published interviews and the text is punctuated throughout with good footnotes, citing the likes of Lotte Eisner and Enrico Fermi amongst many valuable Godard critics and film commentators. The appendices are great too, and include a filmography of all the films referenced in the book, along with full Alphaville film credits,

As a long-time fan of the film (I was horrified to find back in the late 90s that not only was it not in stock on either tape or CD at London's Virgin Megastore, but neither had the sales clerk in the French film section heard of it -- happily I was given a VHS tape copy by Peter Whitehead) this book is a very welcome contribution to studies on Godard, and Chris Darke seems to have found enough of all the right references and connections to keep any reader satisfied. It would be great to see him do more of these titles.
The purpose of Thomas Elsaesser's recent book is, as he states in the Preface, to "develop a way of thinking about European cinema which focuses on the many imaginary or mirroring relations a nation's cinema maintains with itself and its others " (10). The big other, also referred to as Europe's 'significant other,' and its 'bad other,' is, as the title implies, Hollywood, and American film is never far from Elsaesser's thoughts on European cinema. European Cinema: Face to Face with Hollywood comprises a selection of articles and interviews that span almost four decades of the author's film criticism and scholarship. The collection offers a broad range of subjects as varied as auteurs, world cinema, British television, German women directors, and discussions both of well-known and unfamiliar directors (from Josef Losey to Edgardo Cozarinsky and Heddy Honigman). This is not simply a retrospective, a compilation of the author's influential writings pulled together from diverse sources (including Monthly Film Bulletin, Sight and Sound, The Brighton Film Review, university lecture papers and interviews between the author and filmmakers), for bookending the older sections is fresh material in which Elsaesser outlines some new approaches to European cinema.

From the start, it is clear that Elsaesser find the notion of European Cinema highly problematic. "Any book about European cinema," he begins, "should start with the statement that there is no such thing as European cinema, and that, yes, European cinema exists, and has existed since the beginning of cinema a little more than hundred years ago" (1). European cinema is difficult to conceive of not least because it is a composite of individual national cinemas, each of which is defended as "part of an inalienable national patrimony" (13), even if the individual European states are unable to sustain wholly independent film industries (while Hollywood, perhaps the only industry to have been able to function as a national business, is rarely discussed in terms of being a national cinema). In Europe, new financial incentives and funding schemes have encouraged greater intercontinental co-operation, with the result that contemporary filmmaking in Europe is increasingly an international enterprise. Where international productions were previously bilateral ventures, they are now often multilateral. Such cross-border collaboration is proof of shared economic concerns borne of an "ingrained anti-Americanism" (17) and designed to defy Hollywood's dominance, rather than being evidence of converging artistic visions. Elsaesser is not persuaded by the view of Hollywood as a cultural and economic threat to the European film industries. Europe, he argues, has always been in dialogue with Hollywood (a relationship he describes at one point as being like a two-way mirror) and though the exchange of ideas has often been asymmetrical, the author contends that it is no longer possible, or useful, to speak of this relationship in terms of confrontation (if anything, it was, as Elsaesser notes, television that posed the major threat to traditional film production, though even this may ultimately have
proved beneficial). The European/Hollywood stance is not always proof of binary opposition; transatlantic exchange has often shown that the relationship is mutually beneficial and not always a question of asserting economic or aesthetic superiority. The influence of Sam Fuller on Wim Wenders, and the latter's influence on Jim Jarmusch, who, in turn has inspired some young European filmmakers, is evidence of interaction, of exchange and adaptation that blur what were once distinct boundaries. Such transatlantic dialogue can therefore be valuable to the filmic art on both sides -- so long as it is not a matter of bland imitation. Of course, some modern European productions do exactly that, though those films that do ape Hollywood are rarely successful. Other internationally financed projects hope to profit from the continent's traditions and locations (generally anodyne tourist brochure versions of European culture), resulting in the much-derided "Europuddings," which, according to critics, are cooked up by committees who believe that these international efforts are the recipe for sustaining filmmaking in Europe. Long a champion of avant-garde and non-mainstream filmmakers, Elsaesser is naturally sceptical of the drift towards a European cinema that values commercial worth over cultural significance.

At the same time, Elsaesser recognises that those features traditionally considered the hallmarks of a distinctly European cinema (filmmaking that was both politically engaged and aesthetically stimulating -- qualities that bespoke Europe's true intellectual heritage) are no longer reliable or suitable markers of a "European-ness" that marked it against its "significant (bad) other." Few of the new wave veterans are still able to fight the good fight. But the avant-garde preferences and commitment to the principles of that generation, which once marked European cinema apart from Hollywood, have not disappeared entirely. The festival circuit (whose significance Elsaesser discusses in one of the book's most interesting chapters) continues to provide a forum for experimental filmmakers from around the world (filmmakers as diverse as Chantal Ackerman and Apichatpong Weerasethakul). Nevertheless, only a handful of contemporary filmmakers, such as Lars von Trier, whose film Dogville (Lars von Trier, 2003) provides a still for the book's cover, are able to break out beyond the circuit, the art-house cinemas or art galleries. For examples of "New European Cinema," Elsaesser proposes one look to those films which, despite their cultural specificity, offer insight into "post-nation subjectivities and communities" (28), some of the pertinent issues of our time. Illustrating this, Elsaesser focuses on the Edinburgh setting of Trainspotting (Danny Boyle, 1996) and the Berlin of Run Lola Run (Tom Tykwer, 1998).

The accession of eastern European states to the EU, and increased migration, has seen the notion of Europe extend beyond the political boundaries that have existed since the end of the war, resulting in a new, post-national Europe. These issues naturally spill over into the cultural realm and Elsaesser considers these consequences in relation to film. The film industry, he suggests, has provided one of the key forums for 'hyphenated European nationals' such as Fatih Akin to play a vital role in narrating this new, multi-ethnic Europe and to contribute to the 'dis-articulation' of the traditional understanding of the nation and state:

Only a state that can admit to and make room for the multi-cultural, the multi-layered within its own hybridities can henceforth claim to be a nation, and therefore only films that are prepared to explore hybridities, in-between states, the self-in-the-other can be in the running for a national cinema. (39-40)

Dissatisfied with what he sees as the tired discourse surrounding national cinema, Elsaesser calls for a "new cognitive mapping of the hitherto central categories such as 'nation', 'state', 'identity' and 'otherness'"(78) and, in the final chapter, makes the case for a European cinema
that is defined by its "capacity for cultural competence, rather than its assertion of cultural identity" (510).

Elsaesser develops his argument for a new understanding of Europe (and of its cultural products), one that offers a counter-proposition to Fortress Europe, in a chapter titled 'Double Occupancy and Small Adjustments.' Here, he suggests that:

our identities are multiply defined, multiply experienced, and can be multiply assigned to us, at every point in our lives, and this increasingly so -- hopefully to the point where the notion of national identity will fade from our vocabulary, and be replaced by other kinds of belonging, relating and being.

(109)

This is, as the author admits, as much an aspiration as it is an observation. Not that double occupancy in any way refers to an idyllic state. It is, he concedes, polysemic and intended to be "understood as at once tragic, comic and utopian"; even so, 'double occupancy' may prove preferable to other designations such as multiculturalism, which is increasingly viewed as a rather unsatisfactory, empty label. Certainly, directors such as Fatih Akin, who are routinely held up as shining examples of multiculturalism, reject these labels (in Akin's case that of 'Turkish-German filmmaker'). That his most successful film, Gegen die Wand/Head On (Fatih Akin, 2004), was celebrated in Germany and abroad as a sign of German cinema's resurgence and proof positive of Germany's multi-ethnic community, while also being claimed as a Turkish film, demonstrates the point the author is making about the elasticity of modern European identities and underlines why Elsaesser is agitating for a new conception of European Cinema. This does not mean the end of national filmmaking altogether of course. One could point to any number of directors who provide evidence of filmmaking that is not just nationally but regionally specific, a particularism that distinguishes them from those films specifically made for world audiences (in England Shane Meadows, for example; the Dardenne Brothers in Belgium; or Germany's Andreas Dresen).

When, in the final chapter, Elsaesser proposes that it may be necessary to view European cinema "neither from 'within' nor from 'without', but as part of a more dynamic as well as fluid totality -- that of world cinema" (486), we recognise that he is hoping to surmount the limiting idea of national cinema altogether. Like the term multicultural, "World Cinema" has become a limited designation (intended only to refer to films not made in Europe or Hollywood) and generally failing to acknowledge the distinctiveness and variety of other films.

Lest one think that European Cinema is concerned only with theoretical musings on the institutional, cultural and political developments in Europe, it should be emphasised that the volume also includes some original discussions of a wide range of titles, from the epic series Heimat (Edgar Reitz, 1984-2006) to The Go-Between (Joseph Losey, 1970) and Persona (Ingmar Bergman, 1966), which add to the book's wider aesthetic and critical evaluations. It is in sections such as these that confirm Elsaesser's reputation as both theorist and cinephile.

If there is anything to criticise, it is perhaps a too narrow a consideration of what constitutes European cinema. Mediterranean Europe hardly figures, for example; and while an interesting chapter on the East German filmmaker Konrad Wolf is included (and perhaps only because Wolf counted as the GDR's one true auteur), the volume, for the most part, privileges the discussion of filmmakers from western and northern Europe, though the subjects
discussed are by no means the usual suspects (Edgardo Cozarinsky and Ulrike Ottinger, for example, are rarely discussed outside of their national context). More, too, might have been said about the many European-Hollywood co-productions, particularly those which aim to take advantage of quintessentially European connections (in terms of location or literary source) and which invariably insert a marketable American star in amongst a European troupe of actors: for example, *Enemy at the Gates* (Jean-Jacques Annaud, 2001), *Captain Corelli's Mandolin* (John Madden, 2001), or even, at a stretch, *Chicken Run* (Peter Lord and Nick Park, 2000). Admittedly, further consideration of, say, Eastern European filmmaking would have swelled an already substantial volume. These are minor quibbles, however. *European Cinema: Face to Face with Hollywood* is significant for what it contains rather than for its omissions. Elsaesser's willingness to challenge existing assumptions and jargon, his eagerness to highlight paradoxes and to suggest new interpretations (his view of film festival programmers and festival directors as new power brokers within an increasingly globalised industry and the case he makes for viewing festivals as an advanced network that has gone some way to facilitating a post-national European cinema is particularly interesting) makes for an intellectually robust yet highly readable account. The result is ultimately an absorbing and wide ranging collection and represents a thoughtful contribution to continuing debates surrounding national cinema and filmmaking in Europe.
Soft in the Middle: The Contemporary Softcore Feature in Its Contexts

By David Andrews

A review by Jane Fader, Wayne State University, USA

At a point when scholars are almost as interested in pornography as they are in outmoding binary thought, David Andrews kills two birds with one stone in his new book, *Soft in the Middle: The Contemporary Softcore Feature in Its Contexts*. In true feminist fashion, Andrews explores and theorizes contemporary softcore pornography -- a long ignored and much debased cinematic genre themed with female subjectivity and desire, centered around female nudity, marketed to a female audience, aestheticized with feminine sensibility, and consumed in the domestic sphere. With the utmost sophistication, Andrews legitimizes softcore as a genre in its own right with a thorough defence of its unique amalgamation of historical informants, subgenres, themes, and consumer mediums. *Soft in the Middle* is an engaging and enlightening read for anyone who has an intellectual investment in media, sexual representation, or feminism.

Defining softcore as "a system of self-conscious texts rooted in an equally self-conscious 'middle' industry situated uncertainly between hardcore and theatrical Hollywood" (184), Andrews begins *Soft in the Middle* by proposing two theses, one historical and one theoretical. First, Andrews claims that softcore is a contemporary postfeminist genre evolved from sexploitation and influenced by feminism. Second, he positions softcore as "steeped in abjection, pervasively defined by what it is not -- and quietly enjoyed for what it is" (16). It isn't Hollywood, it isn't art, and it isn't hardcore porn. Yet, in "Soft v. Hard," the chapter devoted to differentiating softcore from its phallic cousin, Andrews argues that the cultural devaluation of softcore runs deeper than its abject definitions. After a brief historical account of the feminist porn debates that distinguished softcore from hard, "preceded by the erotica-porn distinction, which it closely resembles" (25), Andrews demonstrates that softcore is further ostracized by its middlebrow appeal and "soft" focus, both of which are feminizing characteristics and result in a "weightless" aesthetic.

Andrews's observation that:

> Viewers who do not identify themselves as feminists have, then, disdained softcore as too feminist, too correct, to be erotic, while those who do identify themselves as feminist have disdained it as too timid, too mainstream, to be "authentically" feminist (31)

is, as he points out, telling of contemporary feminism, not contemporary softcore. Adopting Tania Modleski's definition of postfeminism -- "the appropriation of feminist thought for non-feminist purposes" (11) -- Andrews claims that softcore is a cinematic example of the
postfeminist condition. In fact, softcore is so thoroughly postfeminist that its sexploitation roots demonstrated postfeminist values even before second wave feminism came to shore. Though industrially and culturally dominant, Playboy is the exception to the rule, lagging behind in prefeminism while the rest of Western culture has moved on twice over (206).

A descendant of misogynistic sexploitation films, softcore was born as a reaction to second wave feminism. Though this appears to be a feminist manoeuvre on behalf of the sexploitation industry that only resulted in a postfeminist 'middle feminism,' in actuality, it was a ruse "to maximize female display and to unify narrative and spectacle" (78). As Andrews later notes, "In this economy, female narrative agency trumps all other feminist/liberal values, including equality" (171). Themed and organized by female subjectivity, the softcore genre can be characterized as different from classical sexploitation by "the use of a female protagonist, the emphasis on the female face, and the liberal treatment of female desire" (46).

The generic development of softcore retained three of sexploitation's narrative formulas: awakening sexuality, the empowered babe, and the suburban film, which condones extramarital relationships for unhappy housewives and has "affected contemporary softcore by supplying a blueprint for placing an eroticized heroine in a domestic setting and by reinforcing the misandristic tendencies of postfeminist forms" (71). Formatted for rental and late night cable television, softcore narratives are driven by the (sometimes illicit) desires of strong but sensitive female protagonists who are able to take it all off without interrupting the plot. Because focusing on the expressive, orgasmic female face is a generic staple, softcore also offers a psychosexual identification with these female characters that is found in neither hardcore nor Hollywood features.

In "The Softcore Public," Andrews relays his admittedly limited qualitative analysis of a variety of consumer response websites, ranging from the mainstream IMDb to the specialized Softcore Reviews. Describing softcore consumers as "a singularly difficult object of analysis" (184), Andrews claims that, "since every level of softcore shows traces of anxiety...consumer silence seems to assume a surplus intentionality" (185). However, some sexes are more silent than others. Although "both men and women are susceptible to the ideologies that restrict and devalue softcore ... women are less likely than men to register their responses to softcore -- and when they do, they prefer the most mainstream response sites (186)," it is worth noting that despite softcore perpetuating a masturbatory double standard (irredeemable male masturbation and superior, emasculating female masturbation), the silence of female consumers "is so pervasive that one might almost think that the raincoat-man pejoratives that have long attended softcore demonize female, not male, masturbation" (192).

Throughout Soft in the Middle, Andrews remains undeniably respectful to the genre and its consumers. Rejecting the "snobbish" hierarchal taste values of both Sartre and Bourdieu, Andrews has:

zero desire to add to the anxiety already entangling the softcore genre through any insinuation that its self-consciousness, which is nothing if not useful, proves that its texts and fans 'really' are inferior. They are not: for neither they nor anything else has intrinsic value. (189)
Holding strong to this non-judgemental disposition until the end, Andrews concludes with a hopeful note for the future of softcore, wishing well to the industry and its consumers, as well as encouraging people of a (more or less) frigid culture to "take joy as they can" (257).

A valuable surprise in Soft in the Middle is Andrews's history of masturbation on screen, which he returns to and elaborates on at many points in the text. Beginning with the burlesque films of early cinema, Andrews's accounts for celluloid self-service as feminine through and through. It seems masturbating, female characters are portrayed as sexually superior and autonomous, while hairy-palmed males are given as unsophisticated and, interestingly enough, feminine. Furthermore, the female voyeur was secured as acceptable early on in erotic cinema, while the male voyeur remains bound to the teenage sex-comedy stereotype, awkwardly fumbling and seemingly just-pubescent, his eyes squinting through a locker room peephole. Framing the taboo-ridden performance of masturbation as a specifically feminine act of sexual autonomy is a distinctive notion that begs for further research in more contexts.

On one last positive note, the literary style used in Soft in the Middle makes for both viable comprehension and enjoyable reading. Recognizing that the most popular features are not always the most representative of the genre as a whole (as well as the cultural urge to refer to any film that lingers on a sex scene as the pejorative 'softcore'), Andrews makes useful comparisons that elicit a more replete definitional understanding. This is most apparent in the chapter 'Sex is Dangerous, So Satisfy Your Wife,' which juxtaposes the erotic thriller with the softcore thriller in order to further clarify softcore's developmental history. For example, the erotic thriller Fatal Attraction (Adrian Lyne, 1987) is not a softcore thriller because it does not fulfil the generic necessities of a spectacle-maximizing female protagonist and a positive affirmation of female sexuality. In a softcore thriller, the director would invert the genders and then shunt the blame onto the spouse, implying he invented his destruction by neglecting his wife's "needs." But because erotic thrillers treat male infidelity as a self-indulgence with lasting effects but no final justification, these motifs remain only nascent in, for example, Fatal Attraction. (137)

Soft in the Middle: The Contemporary Softcore Feature in Its Contexts is a progressive feminist effort and an important academic contribution. Andrews demonstrates an invaluable knowledge of the industry and a refreshingly honest and open-minded approach. Beyond solidifying the definition of the influential and expansive genre of softcore pornography, Soft in the Middle provides in-depth lessons on genre formation and postfeminism, making it a useful text in the fields of cultural studies, gender studies, and media.
The Films of Kenneth Branagh

By Samuel Crowl<
£22.95 (hbk)

A review by Connie Luther, University of Calgary, Canada

It is hardly surprising that Samuel Crowl should follow up his study of Shakespeare on film, Shakespeare at the Cineplex: The Kenneth Branagh Era (Ohio University Press 2002), with this in-depth study of Kenneth Branagh's art as a filmmaker. Crowl analyzes the first eight films Branagh has directed, beginning with Henry V (Kenneth Branagh, 1989), the film which, as Crowl points out, was the beginning of a renewed cinematic interest in the Bard that is ongoing, thanks largely to the efforts of Branagh himself. Crowl, a respected Shakespeare scholar in the U.S., writes accessibly and informally in this amply illustrated work, conducting scholarly analysis in a chatty, if star-struck narrative style that reflects the seductive allure of show business glamour.

Crowl provides a detailed analysis of Branagh's efforts to combine elements of popular film with those of classical theatre, contending that Branagh has succeeded in "mingling" classical (Henry V and Hamlet [Kenneth Branagh, 1996]), with commercial (Dead Again [Kenneth Branagh, 1991]) and Mary Shelley's Frankenstein [Kenneth Branagh, 1994]), projects and "has sought to erase the line between films made for the art house and the multiplex" (ix-x). Crowl argues that Branagh's signature long, uncut shots, along with "the naturalistic, unaffected, conversational style he pioneers for speaking Shakespeare's rich, muscular language, and his unembarrassed embrace of popular Hollywood film images and idioms all help to achieve his goal of liberating Shakespeare from being contained in 'some cultural church'" (92). But Crowl refuses the easy designation of postmodern pastiche (a style he seems to dislike), for Branagh's work, although he refers again and again to Branagh's montage style, particularly his reliance on various Hollywood genres. Crowl argues that Branagh's work resists a postmodern reading because "the past is palpably alive for Branagh" (52). According to Crowl, Branagh's reverence for the historical artefacts of Shakespeare's plays is apparently expressed in his willingness to perform sometimes brilliant, sometimes grotesque Hollywood-style experiments on them. In the end, Crowl fails to convince readers that the postmodern descriptor does not apply to Branagh's films.

The tone of Crowl's critique is consistently sympathetic and respectful, even affectionate. Although he acknowledges the shortcomings of Branagh's often reckless creative approach, Crowl is always gentle, and sometimes defensive. In his critique of Peter's Friends (Kenneth Branagh, 1992), a critical and box office flop, Crowl blames the screenplay for the film's failure to engage its audience, while emphasising the effectiveness of Branagh's camera work, particularly the long and complex shot that opens the film. Crowl ultimately justifies the merit he sees in the film because of "what it tells us about Branagh and his development as a film director" (69). While acknowledging the obvious excesses of Branagh's work in Mary Shelley's Frankenstein, Crowl describes Branagh's efforts in high-
flown rhetoric, sounding more like a fond father indulging his impetuous progeny than a distanced critic:

Branagh, as always, wants it all: fairy tale, historical romance, love story, with just a hint of incest, rebellion against the power and finality of death, and the quest to push the limits of science and knowledge all mixed together with a tragic Promethean creation myth. (99)

Again, Crowl blames an inadequate screenplay that just cannot contain Branagh's "passionate Shakespearean intensity" (99). For Crowl, Branagh's scenery-chewing performance in this overwrought film reflects his "romantic spirit" rather than the "expansive ego" that other critics, as Crowl acknowledges, attribute to Branagh (109). In his defence of Branagh's "flamboyant" shot of the 'How all occasions' soliloquy (IV.iv) in his grandiose full-text Hamlet, Crowl argues that "the extravagance of the shot is not self-indulgent: it is a searing critique of the character. Hamlet, in the vast expanse of landscape, has been reduced to little more than a tiny black dot making grand but impotent gestures" (142-43). In assessing this film's commercial failure, Crowl calls it "a stunning achievement," remarking that "[t]here's nothing quite like it in the history of Shakespeare on film," but then admits the obvious problem with the film, that "[a]udiences were not, it proved, ready for a four-hour Shakespeare film at the art house or the cineplex" (148). Crowl argues that Branagh merely "flirts with pandering to his teenage audience's sentimentality," in his Much Ado about Nothing (Kenneth Branagh, 1993), and as he discusses the failure of Branagh's clowns in his Love's Labour's Lost (Kenneth Branagh, 2000), Crowl remarks that "Branagh knows better," even while he observes that Branagh "remains baffled about how to treat Shakespeare's clowns" (160). In his section on Branagh's use of actors inexperienced in dancing or singing in this film, which is a musical, Crowl remarks that "his [Branagh's] energy and optimism about such ventures seems impervious to their obvious pitfalls, and it is remarkable how often he gets away with it, driven by an unlikely combination of Irish charm, Protestant work ethic, and chutzpah" (150). It is obvious from the film's critical and box office failure, however, that Branagh did not in fact 'get away with it.' Perhaps the reason for Crowl's loyalty to Branagh's work is best revealed in his comment on Branagh's In the Bleak Midwinter (Kenneth Branagh, 1995): "The film's landscape and tradition are English but its spirit is decidedly American. Branagh's energy and boundless optimism are American qualities and run against the grain of English irony and understatement" (126). In this joyous proclamation of hackneyed stereotypes, Crowl claims Branagh for America.

But all of this is not to say that Crowl's indulgence of Branagh prevents him from providing intelligent analysis. Crowl makes a compelling case for Branagh's skilful and often inspired, if uneven, film work. Crowl argues, despite his obvious delight in the theatrical entrance of the King Henry in Branagh's Henry V, that it is the tight shots and intimate feel of this film, rather than grand sweeping shots, that make it appealing to younger audiences, and that the film's gritty realism accounts for its unexpected success. In his astute discussion of Dead Again, Crowl emphasizes that the subtle ambivalence of perspective deftly establishes the noir thriller's sense of mystery, and that one of the best moments of the film is the low-key scene in which Branagh's Mike Church charms and wins Emma Thompson's amnesiac "Grace" (47-48). Crowl calls Branagh's In The Bleak Midwinter an "overlooked gem," and elegantly highlights the way in which this quiet little film provides thoughtful insights into Hamlet, which contrast tellingly with Branagh's later flamboyant film production of that play. It seems evident from Crowl's analysis of these three most successful of Branagh's films that they succeeded because they reflect restraint, a point that Crowl himself, however, does not
clearly make in his emphasis on Brangh's bold and audacious approach to filmmaking. This oversight, along with his propensity to defend or excuse Branagh's excesses, weakens the critical quality of Crowl's analysis. While the lively discussions and warm, generous tone of this book make it an appealing read, its value for serious film scholarship is limited by its rather obvious partisanship.
Shakespeare on Film (Inside Film Series)

By Judith Buchanan

A review by Alissa Burger, Bowling Green State University, USA

Shakespeare has been prolifically realised on film from the silent era to today, imagined and achieved differently across diverse generic and cultural boundaries. Covering a span of over one hundred years from 1899 to 2000, in *Shakespeare on Film*, Judith Buchanan achieves an effective overview and some insightful critical readings of several of these films. Buchanan divides her text into two key sections. The first, "'Degrees of Remove': Translating the Language, Translating the Story," explores silent British and American films, Italian and German adaptations, Akira Kurosawa's cross-cultural realizations of Shakespeare's plays, and American "offshoots," such as *Forbidden Planet* (Fred M. Wilcox, 1956) and *O* (Tim Blake Nelson, 2001). In the second section, 'Moment and Context: How History Works on a Story,' Buchanan illuminates the ways in which a film is shaped by and responsive to its historical moment. To achieve this goal, Buchanan explores historical readings of several versions of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Tempest*, cultural negotiations played out in the films of Kenneth Branagh, and the role of cinema within Shakespeare films, such as *Romeo + Juliet* (Baz Luhrmann, 1996) and *Hamlet* (Michael Almereyda, 2000).

Buchanan employs a variety of methodologies to produce a truly interdisciplinary perspective on Shakespeare films, utilizing discourses of history, performance studies, production history, and textual and comparative readings, highlighting the ways in which the films exist in active moments of interaction with one another, as well as their respective social and historical contexts. As a result, the films are cast productively as "in conversation" with one another, across borders of time and culture, rather than isolated material artefacts in and of themselves; as Buchanan points as she begins discussing multiple versions of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, "[t]he presence of a composite performance legacy 'in' the inherited text complicates any simple notion of a pure source and disrupts a putative line of direct, unimpered influence from author to interpreter" (121). Choosing an interactive site such as this for addressing the films enables Buchanan to move beyond the authentic/inauthentic or cultural/popular dichotomy that frames much of the discourse surrounding Shakespeare adaptations to film.

Opening up this space for conversation, Buchanan can effectively engage filmic "offshoots" in her discussion, including *Island of Lost Souls* (Erle C. Kenton, 1932), *Iguana* (Monte Hellman, 1988), *Men of Respect* (William Reilly, 1991), and *O*. Buchanan also addresses Fred McLeod Wilcox's *Forbidden Planet*, which she argues may not even have been intended -- and certainly was not advertised as such on its release -- as a Shakespeare adaptation. *Shakespeare in Film*, however, marks its significance because of the narrative precedents found in *The Tempest* and the connections drawn between the two films by the critical community. Addressing the discussion surrounding the correlations between *Forbidden*
Planet and The Tempest, Buchanan provides an invaluable and meticulous genealogy of this idea as it has developed from first mention by Kingsley Amis in 1961 (98), through its current position within contemporary Shakespearean and filmic discourses. In further discussion of Forbidden Planet, Buchanan explores the idea of intent in Shakespeare adaptations, pointing to the archetypal nature of many of Shakespeare's plays, and asking what the connections between these works "may legitimately be taken to signify about the nature of the relationship between the two texts" (97). Buchanan's interrogation of the correlations between play and film prompt her to embrace this uncertainty and range of interpretations, arguing that multiple and diverse films "appear somewhere along a continuum of graduated removes from a narrative as ubiquitous as The Tempest. The cut-off point beyond which audiences fail either to identify the resemblance or fail to think it an interpretively useful referent varies between individual spectators and spectating communities" (102), privileging viewer distinction in what can be considered as a Shakespeare film and opening space for the voices and value of multiple perspectives.

Furthering this multiplicity of viewpoints, Buchanan includes a wide variety of culturally diverse cinematic re-imaginings of Shakespeare's work, most clearly in Chapter Three, 'Cross-cultural Narrative Rhymes: The Shakespeare Films of Akira Kurosawa,' which offers readings of Throne of Blood (Akira Kurosawa, 1957), The Bad Sleep Well (Akira Kurosawa, 1960), and Ran (Akira Kurosawa, 1985). With close attention to cultural specificity and intercultural connections, Buchanan delineates Kurosawa's process of adopting the Shakespearean text and drawing historical and cultural connections to create films which are uniquely Japanese, participating in a tradition of hybridizing European influences and Japanese traditions. As Buchanan points out through close reading of Throne of Blood, Kurosawa looked to Shakespeare's Macbeth and "found points of correspondence between the legendary history of medieval Scotland and that of sixteenth-century feudal Japan" (74), combining the narrative of Macbeth with Japanese dress, traditions, and history to reinvent the familiar story with specific cultural resonance in Throne of Blood.

Buchanan succeeds in anchoring her readings of the films themselves within the historical and cultural contexts of their creation and surrounding discourse, a strategy that is especially dynamic in her discussion of O (Tim Blake Nelson, 2001). Constructively combining theoretical lenses of production history and cultural resonance, Buchanan tracks the multiple contexts in which O must necessarily be read, such as the postponement of the film's release in the wake of a series of fatal high school shootings, including the tragedy at Colorado's Columbine High School (110). In the wake of the shootings and attendant media discussion, Buchanan argues, "the scene of high school carnage and the subsequent human and institutional turmoil at the end of O has become uncomfortably reminiscent of scenes from recent television news reports" (110), making it necessary to read the film and its turbulent events in light of one another, just as Buchanan argues Othello (Oliver Parker, 1995) must necessarily be viewed and discussed within the context of the O.J. Simpson trial of the same year (110-1).

A key challenge in addressing Shakespearean film adaptations, and one Buchanan acknowledges early in her own work, is the impossibility of attending to the wealth of works, spanning over one hundred years of filmmaking. In her film selections, valuable critical analyses, and the connections between these films, which provide an accessible and productive framework for further exploration, Buchanan effectively compensates for this necessary limitation. In addition, Buchanan ends each chapter with a bibliography of suggested further reading, as well as a select filmography at the text's conclusion. Buchanan
draws from a wealth of resources, including unpublished British Film Institute special collections, theses, books, and journal and trade paper articles to achieve a meticulous and engaging outline of the connections and performance traditions of the films she discusses, bringing a new and invaluable perspective to the discourse surrounding Shakespeare on film.
The Films of Woody Allen: Critical Essays

By Charles L. P. Silet (ed.)

A review by Jarrett Neal, Aurora University, USA

A collection of essays that examines multiple aspects of cinema icon Woody Allen's career from a multitude of perspectives -- director, writer, actor, comedian -- The Films of Woody Allen: Critical Essays, edited by Charles L. P. Silet, attempts to deconstruct and demystify the filmmaker, his wide oeuvre and the "Woody Allen schlemiel," the nervous, angst-ridden nebbish Allen portrays in many of his films. In a prolific career that spans nearly forty years, Woody Allen has ridden a veritable roller coaster in terms of his artistic, critical and commercial successes -- films such as Annie Hall (Woody Allen, 1977) and Hannah and Her Sisters (Woody Allen, 1986) -- and failures, among them September (Woody Allen, 1987) and Anything Else (Woody Allen, 2003). Yet Allen has always been, and continues to remain, loyal to his personal convictions and unique artistic vision. Therein lies the primary point of contention most film scholars and critics have with his films: where does Allen draw the line between his own insulated world and the world of his films? Additionally, this collection of essays, gathered from disciplines as diverse as cinema studies, theology and gastronomy, seeks to locate the origins of various ethical, metaphysical, theological and linguistic concerns that propel Allen's films. While some of the essays presented in this text achieve a level of writing and analysis that surpasses other works in this field, many of them are limited in their critique of the filmmaker and his films, and are at times ungenerous in regard to Allen's right to artistic license. Silet assembles a collection of essays that range from perceptive to pedestrian to scathing in their explication of and investigation into the concerns that serve as the creative impetus for the director and his films.

The Films of Woody Allen: Critical Essays is divided into two sections. Part One comprises general essays on Allen and his early works, focusing primarily on Love and Death (Woody Allen, 1975), Annie Hall and Manhattan (Woody Allen, 1979). This section of the book explores Allen's comic sensibilities, his Jewish background and his long-standing love affair with New York City. Parody and irony are essential elements in Allen's comedy. "Woody Allen's Comic Irony" by Christopher Moore details scenes in Allen's earlier films in which irony is employed as a vehicle to bemoan the absurdities of the real world. Leonard Quart's essay "Woody Allen's New York" effectively argues that Allen's affection for New York City derives from the director's childhood remembrances and romanticized visions of the city that themselves have origins in films of the 1940s and 1950s. New York, Quart argues, is a space where Allen's on screen persona and other characters can exhibit eccentric and narcissistic behaviour because of the city's cosmopolitan atmosphere. Quart quotes Allen's character Isaac Davis in Manhattan when stating that the characters in Allen's New York "constantly [create]...unnecessary neurotic problems for themselves because it keeps them from dealing with the terrible, unsolvable problems of the universe" (18). Additionally, the authors of this section contend that Judaism, and concomitant questions surrounding Jewish culture, religious practices and thought, serve as the principle aesthetic in Allen's films, second only to his appropriation of New York City as the grand stage on which his characters enact their
neuroses. The question of Allen's personal views toward his Jewish faith -- whether his comedy denotes his embracing or rejection of it -- leads to more elaborate discussions of the construction of comedy within the Jewish community, prompting many of the authors in this section to make a claim that Allen's humour, at its most self-deprecating, is both a reflexive analysis of himself and a sharp critique of the Jewish community. Questions of atheism and the filmmaker's desire for an understanding of human existence within the boundless scope of the universe figure heavily in Allen's films, as well as this portion of the book, which adequately unifies this section in terms of content and criticism.

Part Two of *The Films of Woody Allen: Critical Essays* narrows its approach to Allen's work, examining individual films on their individual merits, or lack thereof. The unifying themes that held together Part One of the book are absent here, yet this section manages to synthesize its claims by restricting its focus to Allen's films of the 1970s and early- to mid-1980s. The wide range of topics discussed here includes Allen's use of linguistics, food and ethnicity, while still addressing topics of theology and metaphysics. In a brilliant essay titled "Powerful Man Gets Pretty Woman: Style Switching in *Annie Hall,*" author Devin Brown argues that Allen's mastery of multiple levels of linguistics, from crass to erudite, enable the scrawny, squeamish nebbish he portrays on screen to seduce women while simultaneously exerting intellectual superiority. These essays, while more focused in their arguments than the essays of the previous section, level more pointed criticism at Allen and his film-making process. This works against the book in two ways. First, some of the essays presented here make compelling arguments regarding his films, yet go on to lambaste the director, in particular Bert Cadullo's "'Autumn Interiors, or the Ladies Eve: Woody Allen's Bergman Complex," which attacks Allen in a manner echoing the taunts of a schoolyard bully. These attacks are almost exclusively aimed at Allen's dramas. Like Martin Scorsese, Allen seems cursed by the very films that brought him fame. Audiences and critics alike laud *Annie Hall* and other comedies by Allen as layered, salient works that encourage multiple viewing, yet flatly refuse to allow the director to explore artistic realms that are radically different from his own. Though Cadullo and others are accurate in their claims that Allen's dramas owe too much to Ingmar Bergman, almost to the point of sheer plagiarism, he and his fellow critics express nothing more than their own narrow-minded churlishness when they condemn him for extending his creative talents into other genres; they simply do not allow him the right to fail. As these essays contend, Woody Allen, more than any other contemporary American director, is driven by specific ethical, theological and metaphysical questions he wishes to answer for himself; he must, therefore, be given the freedom follow his vision wherever those questions lead him.

The second problem with this book is that none of the scholarship presented examines any of Allen's film made after *Crimes and Misdemeanors* (Woody Allen, 1989). Though the director has seen only minor successes since the release of *Crimes and Misdemeanors -- Bullets Over Broadway* (Woody Allen, 1994) and *Match Point* (Woody Allen, 2005) stand out -- the assumption here is that Allen has made no films that merit discussion since the 1980s. This refusal to examine the entire scope of the director's oeuvre displays is indicative not of his inability to make a worthy film, but of the failure of scholars and critics to take the time to thoroughly examine his more recent works.

*The Films of Woody Allen: Critical Essays* is an eclectic and insightful collection, yet its limited appraisal of the director's artistic aims prevent it from a comprehensive analysis of Allen's abilities and his films.
The Television Handbook, Third Edition

By Jonathan Bignell and Jeremy Orlebar

Programming Our Lives: Television and American Identity

By Walter Cummins and George Gordon


A review by Erin Giannini, University of East Anglia, UK

As part of the Media Practice handbooks published by Routledge, The Television Handbook, Third Edition strives to provide an introduction to the aspiring media student. It succeeds. From providing background on "television today" to a special new section speculating on new technology and theory and its effect on the future of television, it is a strong introduction to television theory and practice.

The combination of Jonathan Bignell, Director of the Centre for Television and Drama Studies at University of Reading, and Jeremy Orlebar, who has practical experience in, and a long list of publications on, television production, is a smart one. Their focus is almost exclusively British television, which "has aimed to represent a relatively unified culture" (1) (although they do note some regional segmentation) and can claim that a majority of programming has been produced within the United Kingdom itself. There are occasionally some comments about the "cutthroat" American market versus the high regulation of television in the United Kingdom, which seem to set up a pointed critique of the American system without elaborating or contextualizing, but these are rare enough to be noticeable and do not seem to represent an undue bias. On the whole, Bignell and Orlebar introduce controversial topics such as the changing "acquisition of news" and the danger of "spin" in clear and straightforward terms without adding their own "spin" to topic. This is not to imply that they depoliticize these topics, but instead address them as a teaching tool and topic for further discussion.

The book is divided into five sections of short chapters examining the current state of television; the various aspect of working in television; theory; production; and "Future Shock," a short concluding section examining the influence of new technology on what lies ahead for both practice and theory. It is obvious that the authors have a firm grasp of their
subject matter, and are able to present complex ideas in a way that is accessible for their intended audience. The five parts all build on one another, introducing key concepts and increasing the student's practical knowledge before providing more detailed analyses of the issues and theoretical concepts involved in both studying and producing television in the United Kingdom. The extensive further reading sections at the end of each chapter, particularly in the chapters on theory, indicate the complexity of the debates over many aspects of television and are a helpful guide for students. The lengthy glossary at the end of the book is another excellent resource. The spotlighted interviews with television professionals are especially useful; they provide real world models for aspiring professionals. What's more, these interviews, combined with the authors' own explanations, demystify the process of production and elucidate the steps needed to acquire these positions. This is important, as the particularities of certain media jobs are not clear from the job titles, especially to novice media students.

Particularly helpful is the lengthy section (nearly one-third of the book) that parses the different theoretical views of television study. They examine genre and format, audience studies and scheduling, narrative theory, 'tabloid TV,' drama, news, sports, and highlight postmodernism through an examination of the music video format. Each chapter in this section starts with a definition of the theory and how it is practically applied to either the production or the study of television. Fittingly for the 'handbook' format, none of the chapters represent a lengthy discourse on any theoretical concepts, but it nevertheless breaks down the key concepts and encourages further study.

All in all, the third edition of *The Television Handbook* is an excellent addition to the series and is highly recommended as introductory text for media students.

Although similar in format to *The Television Handbook, Programming Our Lives: Television and American Identity* is focused on the effect of television on American society. However, this format is notably less successful. Authors Walter Cummings, professor emeritus of English at Farleigh Dickinson University, and George Gordon, a partner at Hay Management Consultants, are attempting to contextualize a very large topic in broad strokes: "Our Personal Lives," "Our Democracy," "Our Society," and "Our World." Each sections is broken up into short chapters, which means that no topic is really given the space or depth of analysis that it deserves. In the chapter "Mainstreaming: How TV Creates Norms," racial equality is given less than two pages of discussion, and much of that discussion seems to praise television's ability to normalize race relations:

> Not only did African-Americans come to play comic and dramatic roles equal to those played by whites, even portraying their professional superiors, but they also filled entire casts of shows devoted to family life, sitcoms with their own take on the tribulations of the white American households. (32-33)

The only example they provide of this new minority-friendly onslaught of programming is *The Cosby Show* (Jay Sandrich, Bill Cosby et al., 1984-1992). There is a brief nod at the end of the section toward the continuing problematic portrayal of Arabs and Muslims, only to point out that these portrayals have led to "voices of heightened consciousness -- including national politicians" to "call for tolerance" (33). They provide no examples of to whom these "voices" belong or the political and social reasons why television is rife with anti-Arab propaganda. Further, there is no acknowledgement of the debates over *The Cosby Show's* economic and racial politics, or the fact that many of the "minority" programs in the 1990s
were relegated to the Warner Brothers or United Paramount Network, only to be replaced by all-white tweener dramas such as *Dawson's Creek* (Kevin Williamson, 1998-2003). Although the chapter "Criminal Justice: Television and the Law" examines the debates around increased violence on television, and the increasingly "grey" portrayals of both law enforcement and criminals, they again makes no real acknowledgement of the treatment of minorities on crime drama. This would have been another excellent place to address the treatment of Arabs or Muslims in shows such as *24* (Jon Cassar, Robert Cochran et al., 2001). One wonders exactly what television programming Cummins and Gordon are watching.

A section that works a little better to integrate a more realistic view is "Our Democracy." In, "Staggering Costs: TV and Elections," the authors point out that the system of "exit polling" was in fact developed by the television industry, and provide a succinct history of politics on television, from Kennedy vs. Nixon to Bush vs. Gore. They acknowledge the undue influence television has had on the electoral process, pointing out that while television may seem to call for a "combination of physical or oratorical requirements [of] ubermenchen within our government…in reality it produces individuals who are dressed and preened by professionals and rarely say anything publicly that has not been scripted" (79). This, however, does not represent a particularly new or insightful revelation; worse, in their analysis of the 2000 election, they roll most of the responsibility for the early calling of a winner onto the Voter News Service system and "mistakes" by the voting officials in Florida. They do not address the furor that the 2000 election caused in the United States, or the ominous silence of the media on the topic. This is further proof of the drawbacks of the capsular format that Cummins and Gordon have chosen. That being said, "Pressure Through Pictures: Governing Through TV," provides a much more in-depth analysis of the questions raised in "Staggering Costs," addressing dissemination of information and the influence of pictures vs. words on both domestic and foreign policy, starting with the televising of the Vietnam War. Especially pertinent is television's role in influencing government policy after September 11, 2001. Television's repetition of the same images of the destruction of the World Trade Center, Cummins and Gordon argue, made it easier for Bush to pass legislation that would have faced much more resistance previously: "television might well be a major step toward achieving the type of mind control depicted in Animal Farm or 1984" (90). They also take issue with Rupert Murdoch and the Fox Network's claim to be "fair and balanced" and the effect of The News Corporation in purveying misinformation and bias to the general public.

In their introduction, Cummins and Gordon write: "Given the enormous access this medium has had to our lives, it is critically important for us to recognize the many ways it has changed us and our society" (xvii). Although this is an excellent goal, their execution is faulty and ultimately unsuccessful. In attempting to provide such a broad overview of 60 plus years of American television, none of the many topics they introduce are given the space they require. Any one of these sections could have justified a book in and of itself. Instead, Cummins and Gordon are only able to briefly touch on certain aspects of the debates and issues surrounding television production and programming, rather than position themselves within them. Had they either narrowed their focus or made the terms of their examination more clear, *Programming Our Lives* could have been a valuable resource. Instead, it merely provides a gloss of the most important topics, much like the medium that it seeks to examine.
**F is for Phony: Fake Documentary and Truth's Undoing**

By Alexandra Juhasz and Jesse Larner (eds.)

**A review by Brett Mills, University of East Anglia, UK**

_F is for Phony_ is part of the excellent Visible Evidence series published by the University of Minnesota Press. It's the seventeenth volume, and continues the series' work in examining the ways in which media technologies represent the world around us, particularly in the documentary. While the legitimacy of such factual media is questionable -- indeed, the "fact/fiction dichotomy" (182) is at the core of the debates which run throughout the Visible Evidence series -- it's undeniable that certain media texts aim to construct an intended reception which suggests some kind of veracity, and it's likely that the majority of audience members will read such media within this context. Books on factual media and documentary have repeatedly interrogated this claim, as well as exploring the particular ways in which specific texts represent the world they purport to capture.

In this book, Juhasz and Lerner bring together analyses of a number of films which are fake documentaries; that is "fiction films that make use of (copy, mock, mimic, gimmick) documentary style and therefore acquire its associated content (the moral and the social) and associated feelings (belief, trust, authenticity) to create a documentary experience" (7). Because of repeated attacks on the specifics of documentary, demonstrating a distinction between it and the fake documentaries under consideration here becomes problematic; if documentary is always an ideologically-informed take on the world around us, which employs a range of communicative techniques, how is a fake documentary any different? Indeed, the book's introduction contains separate sections written by each editor, in which Lerner takes Juhasz's definition of fake documentaries to task. In doing so, it helpfully demonstrates the slippery nature of such generic definitions, whilst simultaneously acknowledging there are ways -- somehow -- in which audiences are able to categorise texts, usually with little confusion. This notion of the documentary as "experience" becomes vital, then, for it notes that while it's tempting to focus on the textual and production elements of such films in order to see how they "work," "A fake documentary unmarked, and so unrecognized, is a documentary" (10). This implies that the focus of attention should be on reception studies, exploring how particular viewers categorise texts as conforming to their requirements for documentary 'proper.'

It's unfortunate, then, that the book doesn't follow this up as much as it could. Indeed, it's only Hight and Roscoe's chapter (171-86) on the reception of the New Zealand hoax film about a supposedly long-forgotten film director, _Forgotten Silver_ (Costa Botes and Peter Jackson, 1995), which places reception at the core of its analysis. In finding that duped audiences were not only embarrassed but angry, they highlight the social function which documentary is often required to fulfil, and the concomitant trust which audiences place in
filmmakers. This demonstrates the active role which is required by audiences in making sense of factual television, to the point where viewers are likely to feel disappointed when such exertion and investment is exercised towards a text which does not repay this work with the pleasure of veracity.

*Forgotten Silver* is examined as a "hoax" (178), which suggests it was an exercise in playing with this producer-audience relationship. The majority of *F is for Phony* doesn't examine this issue because its primary interest is the progressive, critical possibilities of fake documentary. That is, what happens when, rather than making a fake documentary and fooling audiences into believing that it is real, you make a documentary whose falsity is explicit and part of its very meaning? That is, "how do fake docs undo and redo actual and textual history, identity, authority?" (5). Here, documentary's social role is seen as problematic, precisely because it is used to suggest that the world around us functions in specific ways, and that there are particular strategies which should be employed for understanding it. The supposition of "authenticity" (146) which documentary relies on is ideologically specific and culturally conservative, and therefore it can be critiqued in terms of "objectivity, knowledge, and power -- usually the hidden, ugly secret of straight documentary" (12). Because documentary requires audiences to look at those captured by the camera, it inevitably sets up particular relationships between the viewer and the viewed, as well as defining who is worthy to be the subject of a film, as well as who has the authority to make such a film. In exploding the accepted working practices of documentary, this book argues that the fake documentary can make explicit the conventional strategies of the genre, simultaneously demonstrating their consequences and offering alternative methods of depiction. It is this active project which the book suggests distinguishes the fake documentary from the mock documentary; for the latter, the aim is merely to mock the conventions of documentary, whereas the former attempts to deconstruct the conventional documentary and, in doing so, offer an alternative schema to replace it.

For much of the book, this argument centres on issues of nationality and race, for "the birth of a/the nation is uncannily linked to the birth of ethnography, the cinema, and the primitive other they manufacture and consume" (14). So both Lerner (67-75) and Anderson (76-87) examine *Ruins* (Jesse Lerner, 1999), a fake documentary about the colonial history of Mexico which functions to question the ways in which that history has been constructed and the ideological and social consequences of it. The same approach is taken by Rocha (50-8) and Subrin (59-66), with Rocha questioning notions of history and Subrin discussing the ways in which documentary places women as objects, and how fake documentary may allow for feminist representations of women and femininity. Placing all of this in context is Keil (39-49), who examines the origins of cinema, finding that the distinction between fact and fiction used to be much more fluid; the documentary project is therefore one which has concocted a false dichotomy through the insistence of particular production and representational strategies.

What's noticeable throughout the book is that the majority of the texts explored are rather obscure, and are associated with cinema (in particular, art cinema or radical cinema). Considering the book's insistence on the importance of reception, it might have been worthwhile to examine such texts that have reached more widespread audiences. Indeed, debates about reality television have often focussed on the ways in which the medium has recently questioned the nature of its factual output. And with fake historical documentaries about possible imagined futures, such as the BBC productions *Smallpox 2002: Silent Weapon* (Daniel Percival, 2002), *The Day Britain Stopped* (Gabriel Range, 2003), *The Man Who
Broke Britain, (Gabriel Range, 2004), and If… (Richard Curson Smith and Jane Powell, 2004-2006), it seems that the form under discussion here has already started to make important inroads into debates about representing nations in popular formats to significant audiences. In the book’s penultimate chapter, Lebow (223-37) questions the radical claims made in the book for many of the films, and ponders whether mockumentaries might already have begun on the project which is being argued for. In that sense, the book neatly works towards maintaining a debate throughout, fully aware of the circular arguments that inevitably arise when trying to make sense of the relationships between media and reality. In doing so, F is for Phony appropriately raises questions about its own authority, and the academy's ability to answer any of the questions it sets itself. Perhaps, in the end, f is for failure; just as it should be.
Gospel of the Living Dead: George Romero's Vision of Hell on Earth

By Kim Paffenroth

A review by Edmund P. Cueva, Xavier University, USA

The core argument of this examination of the zombie movie genre is that George Romero's zombie movies can be helpful and practical in informing "our ideas about human beings and God" (2); that is, this genre supplies both an insight into human nature and poses some theological questions. Of particular consideration is the symbolism of the zombies:

In the end, Romero is asking what is a smart zombie, other than . . . a human being, a bestial slave to its appetites that struggles to be more? Or what are we, other than . . . slightly smart zombies, a tribe of deranged, self-destructive cannibals preying on one another? (7).

Bookended by an introductory section on the themes of the current zombie movie genre, and a conclusion, Kim Paffenroth's interesting book contains chapters on each of the five zombie films that George A. Romero directed or influenced. The first section addresses Night of the Living Dead (George A. Romero, 1968), "Romero's First Look at Hell, Sin, and Human Nature;" the second Dawn of the Dead (George A. Romero, 1978), "Consumerism, Materialism, and the Fourth Circle of Hell;" the third Day of the Dead (George A. Romero, 1985), "Violence, Perverted Reason, and the Lower Circles of Hell;" the penultimate section looks at Dawn of the Dead (Zack Snyder, 2004), "Limbo and the Partial Victory of Reason and Virtue;" and the concluding section discusses Land of the Dead (George A. Romero, 2005), "The Deepest Abyss of Hell and the Final Hope." Paffenroth does not include the remake of Night of the Living Dead (Tom Savini, 1990) in his analysis since it is "too identical to the original to need further comment" (2) and only briefly comments on 28 Days Later… (Danny Boyle, 2002) and Shaun of the Dead (Edgar Wright, 2004).

The enormous terror that a world full of zombies presents is that it can become very difficult to distinguish between the living and the undead, and that this difficulty, in turn, creates a breakdown in those rules that maintained the human social contract. The scheme that prevented one human from hurting another because he would be harmed by the person he harmed is no longer at play in a world that Paffenroth describes as far worse than the scenario of a nuclear war or vampires becoming masters over the world (10). The norm would become to kill anything that moves (human or monster) and ask questions later. Moreover and most importantly, the zombie movie genre incorporates a very troubling proposition: the collapse of the social contract makes the living little better than the zombie. The zombies, after all, Paffenroth argues, are "exaggerated aspects of humanity" and "essentially primitive humans . . . without, or without much, reason and intellect" (11).
Each of the five chapters has an explanatory caption and follows a set structure: introductory comments, movie synopsis, analysis, and conclusion. The author's rigid paradigm leads to a predictability of conclusions and statements that tend to make the book sound preachy and, at some points, reveal the author's political leanings. It should be noted that the there is nothing wrong with the latter consequence, but the author runs the risk of going too far. For example, the benignly intended comparison of a world overrun by zombies and the destructive aftermath of Hurricane Katrina may lead to a negative, indiscriminate, and flawed conclusion.

In the first section the central themes that the author explores are materialism and racism. However, Paffenroth suggests that interwoven into the film is an investigation of the universality and everlasting state of sin in humanity. In Christian terminology, this movie grapples with the question of original sin or the libido dominandi, "the innate 'lust for domination'" (42). Reason and modernity offer no hope to the movie's farmhouse survivors. Romero's 1978 project, dealt with in the second section, was created in an "America of enormous shopping malls, a fuel shortage, grinding urban poverty, abortion on demand . . . and a Cold War and racism still simmering and sickening our society" (46). As a result, American consumer culture suffers the brunt of criticism: materialism and consumerism having turned Americans into quasi-zombies "addicted to things that satisfy only the basest, most animal or mechanical urges" (55). The zombies and humans in the movie equally desire to get into the mall; both the living and the zombies are "insane and insatiable consumers" (57). As in the first movie Romero includes topics that Paffenroth assesses critically, such as sexism and racism. Although the director had touched upon the latter subject in his first movie, it is in his second movie that he handles it in more prominent ways and therefore makes it central to his storyline. In the third section, Day of the Dead is the subject of less social analysis and criticism. Instead, according to Paffenroth, the viewer receives abstract dialogue and wide-ranging reflection on the human condition. This movie seems to have everything in it: "a woman, a black man, and a drunken (nominal) Christian" (89) along with self-centered scientists and soldiers. Unlike the first two films, this one has a somewhat optimistic ending. The fourth movie, Dawn of the Dead, dealt with in its corresponding chapter, was not directed by Romero, but rather by Zack Snyder, who had no previous experience in theatrical productions. The change in director may explain why the characters seem to be less self-indulgent and immoral than those found in the first three movies. Indeed, Paffenroth suggests what the audience gets in Snyder's creation is probably the best-acted movie, which builds its story on genuine human relationships of love and trust (97). The change in director may also be responsible for the zombies appearing less human and more animalistic. Gone is the overlap between the living and the reanimated, and so the symbolism of human sinfulness. Snyder has transformed Romero's zombies from internal human reflections into external human threats. This is not to say that the "-isms" do not materialize in this movie. Racism, sexism, materialism, and homophobia all turn up in the movie. But instead of protracted critique on these items, Snyder focuses on the nobility of the certain characters, while admitting that all the characters in this movie have limitations and shortcomings (112). Romero's last contribution to this genre in 2005, Paffenroth notes, is not as philosophical as the Day of the Dead, or as frighteningly chilling as the first movie in the series. Nor is it as mordant as Dawn of the Dead. What Romero does offer to the viewer, Paffenroth posits, is the culmination of the evolution of the zombie. By this the author means that that tenuous equivalence between human and monster depicted in the first three releases is now concrete, unambiguous, and easily and quickly identified. While it is true that the "-isms" appear, they are now "more or less part of the background" (125).
In his concise concluding chapter, 'The Meaning and Future of Zombie Movies,' the author writes that the zombie movie genre delves deep into human nature and explores "hubris, ignorance, selfishness, violence" and "hatred" (133). Furthermore, as evidenced by the remake of *Dawn of the Dead*, there is flexibility in the critique that movies can make and this holds promise for the future of the genre. Paffenroth is not so gullible as to believe that the zombie genre will ever become part of mainstream Hollywood. Movies that are so violent, and at that same time so devastating in their social critique of American culture, can never become mainstream.
This volume aims to present lesser-known films and directors from the Balkans. The editor, a distinguished film historian, follows the idea of "connecting the disconnected space" (1). Contrary to theories that there is no such a thing as a unified Balkan culture, according to Iordanova Balkan cinema exhibits a remarkable thematic and stylistic consistency. It reflects the shared history and socio-cultural space between Christianity and Islam that has been interpreted differently: as a crossroads or bridge between East and West, and as a marginal border of European socio-cultural space. Although film experts from one Balkan country may know next to nothing about the cinema of the other countries -- and despite the cluster of mutually incomprehensible Balkan languages, as well as the historical belonging to different sides in the European political systems during the twentieth century -- this volume shows that it makes sense to talk about Balkan cinema as an entity because films from Balkan countries illustrate shared themes and sensibilities.

The choice of the twenty-four films discussed in the respective essays of film theorists, critics, and practitioners was guided by two remarkable ideas: first, to include the works of important, although internationally lesser-known, authors whose work is not only a significant artistic achievement but also presents important features of Balkan identity. The second idea behind this selection is to represent specific Balkan topics: the Ottoman period, the struggle during World War Two, village-to-town migration, diaspora, and displacement.

Five essays in the book deal with Greek films, Stella (Mihalis Kakogiannis, 1955); Ti ekanes ston polemo Thanasi/ What Did You Do in the War, Thanassi? (Dinos Katsouridis, 1971); Evdokia (Alexis Damianos, 1971); Petrina hronia/Stone Years (Pantelis Voulgaris, 1985); and I Earini synaxis ton agrofylakon/The Four Seasons of the Law (Dimos Avdeliodis, 1999). Four essays focus on Bulgarian films: Kradetzat na praskovi/The Peach-Garden Trespasser (Vulo Radev, 1964); Kozijat rog/The Goat's Horn (Metodi Andonov, 1972); Lachenite obuvki na neznayniya voin/The Unknown Soldier's Patent Leather Shoes (Rangel Vulchanov, 1979) and Mera spored mera/Measure for Measure (Georgi Djulgerov, 1981). Four Romanian films are dealt with: Pădurea spinzuraților/Forest of the Hanged (Liviu Ciulei, 1964); Mihai Viteazul/Michael the Brave (Sergiu Nicolaescu, 1970); Nunta de piatră/The Stone Wedding (Dan Pița and Mircea Veroiu, 1972) and Proba de microfon/Microphone Testing(Mircea Daneliuc, 1980). There are two Albanian films discussed, Kthimi i ushtrisë së vdekur/The Return of the Dead Army (Dhimitër Anagnosti, 1989) and Tirana Year Zero (Fatmir Koçi, 2001), and the nine remaining films are from the former Yugoslavia:Tri/Three (Aleksandar Petrović, 1965); Kad budem mrtav i beo/When I Am Dead and Gone (Živojin Pavlović, 1967); Rani radovi/Early Works(Želimir Žilnik, 1969); Valter brani
Turkey is missing in the overview because it features in another volume of the 24 Frames Series. The editor is aware of the fact that some specifically Balkan topics remain unrepresented, such as communist totalitarianism, Gypsies, and urban themes.

As can be seen from the choice, this study pays special attention to the 1960s and 1970s. One reason is that recent films are better known internationally, but the more important reason is that this period is considered the most important period in the region's cinematic history (including the new Greek cinema of the early 1970s, the New Yugoslav film of the 1960s, and Bulgarian "poetic" cinema). Each essay opens with a brief synopsis of the film under discussion along with information about the director, the film school he belongs to, and his style. The social and political contexts that the films emerged in are outlined, giving readers easy access to the cinematic tradition of the respective countries. Another informative part of the book is its bibliography on general topics concerning Balkan cinema, as well as on the cinema of the respective countries.

The understanding presented in the introduction -- that, despite their differences, Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, Romania, and the countries that emerged from former Yugoslavia are all united by significant geographical and cultural elements -- is implicitly confirmed through the film discussions. It is argued that this culturally, historically, and linguistically complex space, wracked by conflicts and frequent political changes, has generated a fascinating cinema worthy of study.

This volume is an informative and inspiring read for researchers and students of not only Balkan cinema, but also of Balkan culture in general, because Balkan cinema is a challenging source of information about all aspects of Balkan history and culture. The Cinema of the Balkans represents a valuable addition to current research on the cinema of an area that has changed dramatically in recent decades.
Masculine Jealousy and Contemporary Cinema

By Candida Yates

Director in Action: Johnnie To and the Hong Kong Action Film By Stephen Teo

Director in Action: Johnnie To and the Hong Kong Action Film

By Stephen Teo


A review by Michael Brian Faucette, University of Kansas, USA

The need to re-think and re-examine how men function onscreen is of growing importance within film studies. Books by scholars such as Peter Lehman Masculinity: Bodies, Movies, Culture (London; New York: Routledge, 2001), Running Scared: Masculinity and Representation of the Male Body (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2007), and Steve Cohan and Ina Rae Hark Screening the Male (London; New York: Routledge, 1993) highlight why it is now important to focus on the presentation of men onscreen. According to these authors, questions of masculinity are important to consider in a post-patriarchal world because the belief that men and the male body equals power has come under attack as a result of progressive movements such as the women's rights movement, gay/lesbian movement, and civil rights. These movements challenged male power within spheres such as politics, the military and even filmmaking, areas once believed to be solely the realm of men. Two recent examples of contemporary scholarship that continue this focus on issues of masculinity are Candida Yates's Masculine Jealousy in Contemporary Cinema and Stephen Teo's Director in Action: Johnnie To and the Hong Kong Action Film.

Yates's book focuses on looking at how men in contemporary cinema can function as "a marker of the relationships between masculinity, fantasy and cultural change" (1). In short, for Yates, it is possible to analyse contemporary cinema as an example of the subtle complexities involved in any discussion of heteronormative masculinity. Furthermore, Yates makes the argument that issues of male jealousy and its effects on the formation of male identities have gone unnoticed. Thus she believes that in order to better understand masculinity and its importance within the socio-cultural sphere, that it is vital to look at what she terms as "psychosocial" issues, such as jealousy, through the lens of popular Hollywood
Yates recognizes that Hollywood is a dominant form of cultural production and that as a result many films attempt to reflect the society and the concerns of the people within that social order.

She begins the book by discussing the effects of psychoanalytic film theorists such as Laura Mulvey on the discipline and how her ideas have impacted the ways in which other scholars have approached the idea of men onscreen and their power. Yates argues that a massive shift has occurred from the classical era of filmmaking to today, in that men onscreen are now portrayed as "less narcissistic, more nuanced, and complex" (4). She views this shift in filmmaking as an example of how Hollywood films are reflecting an image of masculinity in crisis. To substantiate this claim she offers a list of films that spans from the early 1990s, such as Basic Instinct (Paul Verhoven, 1992), to Brokeback Mountain (Ang Lee, 2005), the controversial queer love story of two cowboys. The crisis she identifies is connected to jealousy and the power wielded by a jealous subject.

The bulk of her argument is based on her interpretations of five case studies "of films released over the last two decades, where the depiction of male jealousy plays a central role in the narrative and where the male star represents a culturally significant and historically salient type of masculinity" (5). She looks at the male jealous images represented in the following five films: Taxi Driver (Martin Scorsese, 1976), A Perfect Murder (Andrew Davis, 1998), The End of the Affair (Neil Jordan, 1999), The Piano (Jane Campion, 1993) and Unfaithful (Adrian Lyne, 2002) and how male actors' roles as stars impact one's reading of the films and their performances. In her discussion of these five films and five stars she uses the concept of masculine jealousy and male quite interchangeably; however, she notes that she prefers to use the term masculine jealousy because "it highlights the relationship between masculinity and jealousy as a psychosocial and cultural construction that changes over time" (6).

Unlike many approaches to film studies which concern themselves with questions of authorship, genre, stardom or ideology, Yates makes a convincing argument that one area that has continually been ignored is the emotional impact of films on viewers and academics alike. The changing impact of emotions on representations of gender for Yates can be located within the films themselves as well as the cultural and critical responses to them. This is the primary reason she gives for using a psychosocial approach in her examination of these five films and their stars.

After laying out the broad foundations of her study, Yates divides the book up into two parts. The first part is an in depth discussion of psychoanalytic film theory and how it can be used to illuminate issues of masculinity, and especially her idea of masculine jealousy. She traces the work of psychoanalysts such as Freud and Lacan and their influence upon Screen theorists such as Mulvey. Yates acknowledges Mulvey's idea of the gaze was highly influential and valuable to film studies. However, like Steve Neale and others whose work focuses on masculinity, Yates understands that the idea of patriarchal masculinity as powerful and possessive is limiting and incomplete. In fact, Mulvey's theorization of men is based on the concept of uniformity and, as Yates acknowledges, this is impossible because masculinity by its very definition is a concept that is marked by pluralities of experience and understanding.

The second part of the book is the real meat of her argument. In this section she analyzes the five aforementioned films and how they handle the depiction and construction of male
jealousy onscreen. One technique she describes to represent male jealousy onscreen is that of the *jealous mise-en-scène*. Yates does provide a cursory definition of this term; however this is one of the weaknesses of her book and her argument. Throughout her discussion of the five films she uses this term at length, yet in no case does she provide the reader with a complete understanding of how she uses the word or its overall importance to the structure of her argument.

She begins the second part by looking at *Taxi Driver*, a film well known for its savage portrayal of alienation and male angst. Yet for Yates, the film functions "as a critique of chivalric noble jealousy, exposing its violent underpinnings through the depiction of Travis's paranoid desire to save the woman from the evil third party" (75). In order to make this claim about the film she positions it in its historical context by looking at the reviews for the film from the period as well as discussions of Robert DeNiro's status as a star.

Yates takes on those who have interpreted the film as an example of the right wing anti-feminist backlash that emerged in the 1970s. In fact she argues that one of the positive aspects of the films is that it "challenges the kind of traditional macho images of men, where narcissistic masculinity is naturalized and represented unproblematically" (77). Travis Bickle's instability of emotions, actions, and mental state can, according to Yates, be read as positive examples of masculinity shifting in society and within Hollywood filmmaking. This shift in performance she argues is linked to the emergence of a new type of Hollywood leading man who in some cases represented the experiences of a hard-life of the streets; experiences which she notes were felt by the reviewers at the time, and which continue to inflect contemporary American understandings of masculinity.

Yates seems unable to find other films from the late 1970s and 1980s that support her argument and she therefore moves into a discussion of the 1998 Michael Douglas film *A Perfect Murder*. Douglas's role as a masculine icon is one that is marked by contradictions. He is the son of one of the classical era's prime examples of virility in such films as *Spartacus* (Stanley Kubrick, 1960) and *Champion* (Mark Robson, 1949). However, he is better defined now as "a symbol of embattled American middle-class masculinity" (92).

In this film, a re-make of the masterpiece *Dial M for Murder* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1954) Douglas exudes masculine jealousy. More important, for Yates, is the impact of Douglas's own personal life, reflected in the types of roles he chooses to play. She charts his progression in this type of role from *Fatal Attraction* (Adrian Lyne, 1987) to the insecure middle-aged white man in *Falling Down* (Joel Schumacher, 1992). One of the most fascinating insights that she offers about Douglas occurs when she explains that his "apparent capacity to convey a certain woundedness, also presents a more complicated picture of the range of identifications he is able to evoke" (94). This discussion of range underpins her entire reading of his star status and performance as the cuckolded husband in the film.

Yates considers issues of nationalism and their effect in the formation of "Britishness" in her discussion of *The End of the Affair* in chapter seven. This chapter seems to consider the current discussion first generated by Stephen Crofts and Andrew Higson about the nature of national cinemas and their impact on the citizenry. She connects the nation to questions of masculinity, jealousness, and cultural heritage. As in previous chapters, she first discusses the star persona and possible historical links to other stars.
In this case she is looking at Ralph Fiennes and his connection to a long line of British male leads who present English masculinity onscreen as "an intense, tortured, emotional sensibility," an image which she points out is mediated by the concerns of the nation and its need to sell itself as separate and unique entity (109). In keeping with this need to differentiate one, she briefly discusses the idea of the British "heritage film" and argues that *The End of the Affair* can be read against that model because Jordan does not celebrate British history and instead paints it in very bleak and monochromatic tones.

She concludes her argument about the validity and importance of considering male jealousy in contemporary cinema with a discussion of *The Piano* and *Unfaithful*. She then ends the book with a call to arms for academics and people to begin re-thinking how masculinity functions and more importantly how images of men can impact the culture at large.

Stephen Teo's book *Director in Action: Johnnie To and the Hong Kong Action Cinema* also draws upon issues of masculinity. However the primary focus and value of this, the first monograph on contemporary Hong Kong filmmaker, Johnnie To, is to argue that Johnnie To is an auteur. Like Tom Gunning, who revitalized the concept of auteurism in his book *The Films of Fritz Lang* (London: British Film Institute, 2000), so too is Stephen Teo here in his discussion of Johnnie To. However, unlike Gunning, Teo offers a reading of auteur that combines the concept with that of genre. The main question that his book seeks to answer is: "how does a director make use of and transcend the limitations of genre to make films of his own wishes and design" (1). Teo's question and approach to auteurism could be applied to other discussions of cinema and alternative directors, which demonstrates just one of this books many valuable assets to film studies. More broadly the book illustrates how an in-depth analysis of the style and industrial model of film industries can enhance the understanding and interpretation of films. However, its real value lies in its attempt to lay bare the realities of the contemporary Hong Kong film industry and its precarious relationship to mainland China.

Teo positions To's films within the framework of the international art house circuit and globalization. He notes that:

To's work in the genre of the action film was undertaken in a period of steady decline (1997-2005) in the Hong Kong film industry as Hong Kong itself was beset with economic and social malaise following reunification with China in 1997. (1)

Teo's insight thus aligns To's work with that of other contemporary Hong Kong filmmakers like Wong Kar-wai and Stanley Kwan, who collectively celebrate the island's sense of independence and distinctive cultural experiences.

Teo explains in the introduction that To's reliance on the action genre "gave him the space to build interesting narratives around his main narrative concerns which are cinematic but also social and political" (2). This is an extremely valid point to make because as Teo proves throughout his book, To uses the conventions of the genre to critique and illustrate the political and social problems of Hong Kong and its citizens with regards to their relationship with the mainland. Hong Kong has been and continues to be a crucial site of finance in the world, and in many respects is marked by a sense of uber-consumerism and capitalism, elements which To incorporates into his films and in some cases inflect the construction of his films.
Teo understands that filmmaking is a global enterprise and one in which directors borrow and re-appropriate elements from other genres, and filmmaking styles, especially those of Hollywood. Thus Teo is able to make the claim that "To's films could be regarded as 'urban Westerns,' with the 'urban' denoting the determinate space of action [...] while the Western in itself denotes its own determinate space in the American frontier" (4). Here Teo is drawing from Thomas Schatz's ideas about space in film to illustrate the ways in which Johnny To makes use of 'space' and its limiting qualities in the construction of his narratives and filmic techniques. By drawing upon a theory of space that was originally intended to explain the codes of Hollywood genre films, Teo is able to illustrate two subtle points about Johnny To as a filmmaker. First, that he is like many filmmakers before him, influenced by Hollywood, even as he attempts to resist the effects of Hollywood filmmaking. Second, that the actual spaces crafted within films not only provide the viewer with a sense of place, they also function as locations for conflict and action.

Action, according to Teo is the key term that must be considered when discussing Johnny To and his status as an auteur. This focus on action allows Teo to closely analyze the effects of gunplay and depictions of guns in To's films. Teo argues that "To's gunfire action films are certainly male-specific and emit homosocial and homoerotic pleasure as a natural part of what Richard Dyer calls 'the masculine structure of feeling in the action film'" (7). These ideas are the foundation for the entire book and, more importantly, connect Teo's work on auteurism with the recent interest in masculinity onscreen.

Teo refers to Johnny To's auteur status as an element of 'the auteur function.' This is a radical re-thinking in how film studies can approach the idea of power relations between directors, producers, actors, and the studios themselves. For example, Teo states that:

[T]he question with which I am occupied is not who or what causes genre, rather it is the question of the outcome of the synchronic combination of the shifting elements which I epitomize as the binary positions and functions of director and genre. (14)

Thus for Teo the idea of directorial authority is problematized because as he argues about Johnny To "an auteur is an idiosyncratic artist" (17).

Like Steve Neale, Teo argues that a more effective way to discuss genre is as an element of constraint within filmmaking. This approach allows Teo to examine Johnny To's entire career in both television and film, as a director and as a producer while also connecting him to the industrial model of the Hong Kong film industry. In fact, Teo seems to be arguing that by closely analyzing Johnny To's career in Hong Kong, one can get a better sense of how the Hong Kong system of filmmaking functioned in the past and more importantly how it is struggling to limp along in the twenty-first century.

In the second chapter he examines To's films from the period of 1988-1997: *Cheng shi te jing/The Big Heat* (Johnny To, 1988), *Dung fong saam hap/The Heroic Trio* (Johnny To, 1993), *Xian dai hao xia zhuang/Executioners* (Johnny To, 1993), *Wu wei shen tan/Loving You* (Johnny To, 1995) and *Shi wan huo ji/Lifeline* (Johnny To, 1997). With each of these films Teo offers an extensive analysis of the cinematic techniques, themes, and genres that Johnny To was working in at the time. In each of the films discussed, Teo argues that, besides there often being gunplay employed as a site of action, there is another theme which he connects to a more broad reading of To as a director. That theme is the idea of physical impairment and
how it affects Hong Kong citizenry. Likewise, in each of these films there is an element of modernization and professionalism on display with images of skyscrapers, the streets, firemen, cops, and even criminals. Teo ends the chapter with a statement that is extremely valuable in understanding the nature of Johnny To's outlook on the world. In fact he argues that "the characters in To's films are defined by the kind of violence and destruction which in the end redeems them […] this is the mythical violence that manifests heroes as gods, and the divine violence that expiates guilt and brings redemption" (63). Teo's reading here of To's films as narratives of redemption, provides yet another example of how Hollywood impacts filmmaking practices as well as the interpretative stances used by film scholars.

The third chapter of the book examines Johnny To as a producer and director. In 1996 he founded his own company, Milkyway Image. Teo argues that To's signature or "feel" can be located in many of these films, despite the fact that he did not direct most of them. To created the company to continue making films his own way and, in the process, Teo argues he effectively shaped the careers and styles of some of Hong Kong's newest crop of directors, such as Patrick Leung. The idea behind the company and the films was to revitalize the industry in the face of the looming handover. However, Teo points out that "the films were box-office failures. In retrospect they look more like arthouse pictures and less convincing as commercial products" (98). Within all the films, that Teo analyzes he recognizes an overreaching sense of fatalism, a quality that he connects to Johnny To, more so than the young directors working for him.

The fourth chapter focuses on the growing awareness of the importance of Johnny To within Hong Kong and in the international film circuit. In this chapter Teo analyzes five of To's most important films of the 1990s and the early part of the twenty-first century: Cheung fo/The Mission (Johnny To, 1999), Chan sam ying hung/A Hero Never Dies (Johnny To, 1998), Am zin/Running Out of Time (Johnny To, 1999), PTU (Johnny To, 2003) and Daai si gin/Breaking News (Johnny To, 2004). Teo notes that To would receive the Best Director prize at the Hong Kong film awards in 2000 for The Mission, a film which Teo analyzes extensively and correctly connects to To's contemporary directorial efforts such as Fong juk/Exiled (Johnny To, 2006) and Hak se wui/Election (Johnny To, 2005).

Within his discussion of this selection Teo once again uses the lens of masculinity to analyze the films, their characters and the level of action created by the conflicts depicted onscreen. He argues that "the male protagonist is the consistent model and reference point of heroic fatalism" (103). This idea of heroic fatalism is for Teo one of the defining characteristics and themes of all of To's screen output.

By far the most insightful and useful chapter of the book is Teo's postscript, in which he examines some of To's more well-known contemporary work: Hak se wui/Election (Johnny To, 2005), Hak se wui yi wo wai kwai/Election II (Johnny To, 2006) and Fong juk/Exiled (Johnny To, 2006). In his discussion of these films, Teo points out two factors that must be taken into account when trying to analyze and interpret Johnny To's films: the prolific nature of his filmmaking and his more subtle philosophical approach to masculine violence. "To seems to be saying that even without the relatively modern technology of guns [in the two Election films swords are used instead of guns] men can use whatever is at their disposal to kill" (183). Thus it seems that unlike Hollywood, which constantly relies on guns and gunplay to display power and masculinity, To recognizes that perhaps one of the innate qualities of masculinity is violence.
Equally important in discussing these three films is how To approaches the effects of globalization and the shadow cast by communist China over the post-colonial remnants of the nation represented by places like Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Macau. Thus what appear on the surface to be simple exercises in genre and gunplay become philosophical meditations on the concepts of power, tradition, and freedom. In the end, as Teo eloquently argues, perhaps the most useful approach to looking at Johnny To as a filmmaker would be to consider him as someone who is trying to subvert genre and masculinity by working within the confines of its very space.

Together these two books illustrate positive and reflective approaches to re-thinking what film studies considers to be of scholarly value and demonstrates that any discussion of gender relations that omits the problems of masculinity is limiting.