

# NTQ Book Reviews

edited by Bella Merlin

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Roslyn Lander Knutson

## Playing Companies and Commerce in Shakespeare's Time

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

220 p. £37.50.

ISBN: 0-521-77242-7.

Theatre historians often refer to the two main theatre companies of Shakespeare's time (his own Chamberlain's Men and Edward Alleyn's troupe, the Admiral's Men) as arch rivals, but Knutson demurs. There was no existing business model for the burgeoning theatre industry, no actors' guild, and historians have likened the internal structure of the playing companies to that of the newly formed joint stock companies which also operated outside the guild structure and which allowed anyone with sufficient capital to buy a share. Knutson rejects this analogy and argues instead that the companies worked together much like an informal guild: they were not proto-capitalist, but retro-feudal.

Knutson's landmark work on the interrelated repertoires of playing companies (*The Repertory of Shakespeare's Company 1594–1613*) was necessarily based on informed speculation, and her model could be collapsed by refutation of any one of a great many assumptions. This time, she works disintegratively, arguing that *Histrionmastix* was not played at a commercial playhouse; that the 'little eyases' passage in *Hamlet* has nothing to do with the War of the Theatres of 1600–01; and that *Poetaster* and *Satiromastix* promote the business of playing. Evidence of the 'cut-throat rivalry' thus removed, Knutson offers counter-evidence: supposed rival actors named their children after each other; Jonson's killing of Gabriel Spencer did not make him unemployable even by Spencer's former fellows; and Richard Burbage owned the Blackfriars all the time its occupants, a boys' company, were supposed to be ruining his business at the Globe.

Theatre historians and advanced students of early modern culture and finance will find Knutson's scholarship meticulous and her new interpretation plausible, but not compelling. In fairness, the opposite view also is merely plausible, and the matter perhaps cannot be resolved with our scant evidence, almost all of which is contained in the cache of Henslowe/Alleyn documents which Edmond Malone found at Dulwich College.

GABRIEL EGAN

DOI: 10.1017/S0266464X03220108

Arthur L. Little, Jr.

## Shakespeare Jungle Fever: National-Imperial Re-visions of Race, Rape, and Sacrifice

Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000. 261 p.

\$45.00.

ISBN: 0-8047-4024-0.

Don't be misled: despite the (ironically) overheated rhetoric of the name-checking title, a jacket design which incorporates a caricature of Paul Robeson's Othello, a prefatory quote from Ntozake Shange's *for colored girls . . .* and an afterword which dwells upon the O. J. Simpson trial, this book deals only tangentially with the fraught history of Shakespearean racial representation in performance, film, and popular culture. Keeping his sights rigorously trained upon the early modern 'national-imperial' moment, Little explores the dynamic interaction of the three components of his subtitle through self-consciously virtuoso readings of *Titus Andronicus*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and *Othello*.

His habit of using homonymic straplines as chapter headings ('Witnessing Whiteness', '(Re)Posing with Cleopatra', 'Altar of Alerity') is symptomatic of a theoretically pyrotechnical writing style, which is often suggestive but also irritating. At the same time, the universalizing, faintly therapy-speak headline claim that 'every culture is a wound culture' sits oddly with the book's scrupulously historicist methodology.

Still, there is some provocative fun to be had here in Little's gymnastically inventive outing of Antony and Octavius Caesar, and the reading of *Antony and Cleopatra* in the context of the Anglo-Irish colonial enterprise is original and illuminating. If only it had extended its remit to address the continuing capacity of such fantasies to shape the cultural imagination, *Shakespeare Jungle Fever* might have lived up to the promise of its title.

ROBERT SHAUGHNESSY

DOI: 10.1017/S0266464X03230104

Andrew Hadfield, ed.

## The Cambridge Companion to Spenser

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

278 p. £13.95.

ISBN: 0-521-64570-0.

This collection contains thirteen specially commissioned essays by some of today's most respected

Spenserian scholars. Spenser's best known work, *The Faerie Queene*, does not dominate this volume since, of the four chapters which are devoted exclusively to literary texts, two consider his pastoral work and the shorter poems. That Andrew Hadfield is the editor of this collection points to the recent interest generated by a focus on the Irish context of Spenser's writing; Richard A. McCabe's essay, 'Ireland: Policy, Poetics, and Parody', is essential reading for the uninitiated in this area. Unfortunately, Spenser's prose tract *A View of the Present State of Ireland*, whilst discussed in particular essays, especially McCabe's, apparently did not merit individual consideration.

As well as the crucial Irish context, there are chapters tracing, amongst other subjects, Spenser's biography, the classical influences on his writing, his position on religious matters, and his attitude to sexual politics, particularly in response to Petrarchan representations of women.

In general, a good balance has been struck between essays which contextualize Spenser's writing and those which focus on individual literary texts, and a particular strength of the collection is the tendency for each essay to focus on contextualizing via discussion of Spenser's writing. Each essay contains a useful 'further reading' section and a very usable index; this excellent collection is essential reading for any scholar working in the field of Spenser studies.

JOAN FITZPATRICK

DOI: 10.1017/S0266464X03240100

Jean Benedetti

**David Garrick and the Birth of Modern Theatre**

London: Methuen, 2001. 246 p. £20.00.

ISBN: 0-413-70600-1.

As soon as you start to explore the world and climate of theatre in the eighteenth century, the similarities in pioneering attitudes between David Garrick and Konstantin Stanislavsky (albeit a hundred years and two thousand miles apart) become apparent. It is no surprise, therefore, that practitioner-scholar Jean Benedetti has undertaken this biography. In general, Benedetti's book fulfils the expectations suggested by any biography, beginning with Garrick's humble origins in the Midlands and ending with a brief overview of his legacy to British theatre. Between birth and death, we cover the expected journey of love affairs with actresses including Peg Woffington, his political stands against managers (including Charles Fleetwood) to improve pay and conditions for actors, the riots provoked in theatres by plays of the time, and of course Garrick's astonishing launching of 'Shakespeariana' as part of the British cultural heritage. However, where the book really comes into its own (in comparison, for

example, with McIntyre's much-acclaimed biography) is in his study and analysis of Garrick's great roles and his profound contribution to the development of acting processes. Two chapters in particular are worthy of note: Benedetti's reading of reports on Garrick's acting in Chapter Five ('The Great Roles') is clearly influenced by his previous in-depth analysis of Stanislavsky and twentieth-century acting practices. Chapter Eight goes further with an articulate – and passionate – discussion of 'The Great Debate' as to whether actors should *feel* real emotions or *imitate* without sensibility. Benedetti's contextualizing of Aaron Hill, Diderot, and other observers of the time is incisive, and makes the book invaluable reading for practitioners and academics battling with this eternal dilemma.

While *David Garrick and the Birth of Modern Theatre* is not necessarily the most thorough and scholarly biography available, Benedetti's style is accessible. General theatre readers and students both of the eighteenth century and of acting processes will find the book immensely enjoyable and valuable in its overview. Given Benedetti's canon, I would have liked to have seen a greater interconnection of Stanislavsky and Garrick, a connection which is made only once overtly. Evidently Garrick's emphasis on imagination, observation, relaxation, given circumstances, emotion memory, and psycho-physical techniques prefigures many components of the Stanislavsky 'system' – as well, of course, as his overhaul of rehearsal practice, repertoire, ensemble, and theatre ethics.

While most contemporary acting students acknowledge the significance of Stanislavsky's legacy, few – I would suggest – know much of David Garrick's. Had an eighteenth-century 'Chekhov' developed alongside the pioneering actor-manager, perhaps Garrick's influence might be more widely understood. Benedetti's book certainly goes a long way towards promulgating that knowledge.

BELLA MERLIN

DOI: 10.1017/S0266464X03250107

Elissa B. Weaver

**Convent Theatre in Early Modern Italy:**

**Spiritual Fun and Learning for Women**

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

304 p. \$65.00.

ISBN: 0-521-55082-3.

This is a fascinating book that will be useful for students and researchers of Italian literature and theatre and for feminist theatre historians alike. Weaver contextualizes her study of Tuscan convent theatre with two chapters on the place and function of the Italian convent in fifteenth- to seventeenth-century society by examining the

fundamental change that the Council of Trent made to the enclosure of nuns, limiting their social and economic impact on Patrician families whose daughters populated the convents.

She cites the edicts of numerous Church officials who sought to control the visible participation of nuns in theatrical activities which were held in public, particularly at Carnival time, and demonstrates how ineffective these edicts were, with lay audiences and instances of cross-dressing in particular still being reported in the eighteenth century. Weaver examines the texts of several male authors who wrote for convent performances, but her primary focus is on the writings of professed nuns, analyzing a large number of anonymous texts as well as the plays of Antonia Pulci, Beatrice del Sera, Raffaella de' Sernigi, Maria Clemente Ruoti, Annalena Odaldi, Maria Constanza Ubaldini, Clemenza Ninci, and Cherubina Venturelli. Her treatment of these writers is often all too brief (although the tantalizing plot summaries will provide useful starting points for future scholars), and this breadth, rather than depth, is one of the book's main weaknesses.

Weaver's central thesis that convent drama was performed with pedagogical intent as well as providing a welcome 'relief valve' for bored nuns is also stretched at points. This is partly because the texts are not studied in their performance contexts, and although she makes passing references to music, dancing, costumes, and sets, these need further analysis.

Weaver has avoided studying the forms of spirituality and sexuality found in convent women, and a lack of feminist theory leads her to conclude that all convent writers accepted the dominant ideology of the society and produced misogynist texts. This will no doubt be re-examined by those who follow in her footsteps, but this book does bring a wonderful panoply of women writers, painters, and musicians to general attention, and demonstrates the existence of a thriving female theatre tradition in Early Modern Italy.

KATE MATTHEWS

DOI: 10.1017/S0266464X03260103

David George

**Theatre in Madrid and Barcelona, 1892–1936:  
Rivals or Collaborators?**

Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2002. 235 p.  
£40.00.

ISBN: 0-7083-1737-5.

This study offers an engaging theatrical overview of the period from 1892 to 1936 by concentrating on developments on the stages of Madrid and Barcelona. As such, it is a valuable redress to previous studies which tend to concentrate almost exclusively on the Madrid scene. George argues for an approach which moves beyond viewing

the theatrical cultures of Barcelona and Madrid as antagonistic, and provides ample evidence of the complex webs of association existing between the theatre scenes of both cities. The introduction justifies the choice of period and maps out the socio-political context in which the figures to be discussed were working. We are given both a sense of the cities as urban centres and a valuable prologue to the industrial development of Barcelona, Catalan nationalism, and the industrial unrest which rocked the city in the early decades of the twentieth century.

Introductory material is provided on the theatrical infrastructure of both cities. Subsequent chapters chart the collaborative ventures between practitioners in Madrid and Barcelona. Chapter Two begins with a fascinating evaluation of the coverage of Catalan theatre in Madrid-based publications, explaining reasons for the sparse coverage of Madrid theatre from correspondents based in the Catalan capital. It examines joint ventures between cities, beginning with the dramatist Angel Guimerà and moving on to the artist-playwright Santiago Rusiñol.

The focus then shifts to Adrià Gual, perhaps the most important Spanish director of the first decade of the century. Martínez Sierra's links with practitioners in Barcelona are also explored, as is the influence in Madrid of Catalan or Catalan-trained/influenced stage designers (Fontanals, Burman) and of the playwrights Grau and Marquina. Chapter Three continues with the process of reappropriating academically 'neglected' theatrical figures in its evaluation of the actors Enric Borràs and Marguerita Xirgu. Their trajectories are viewed through the prisms of their work in Madrid, and George provides a valuable dissection of how their Catalan identities were reconstructed in Madrid as they turned to a Castilian-language repertoire. This throws up valuable issues around nationalist tensions and how they were played out in the cultural field.

The later chapters turn to the reception of certain key dramatists/companies in both cities. In Chapter Four, the focus is on foreign theatre, with the reception of Ibsen throwing up interesting questions around cultural stereotyping and the section on Kaiser indicating a wider impact of expressionist dramaturgy in Spain than previous critics have suggested. The impact of Catalan drama is assessed in Chapter Five, which begins with a discussion of Guimerà's seminal *Terra baixa*, charting its premieres in Madrid and Barcelona in 1896 and 1897 respectively.

Enric Borràs's legendary 1904 Madrid season of predominantly Catalan works is detailed with a meticulous account of the different press responses. Comprehensive accounts of *Els vells*, *El mistic*, and *El geni de la comedia* are provided. The chapter concludes by delineating certain dramatists, like Josep Maria de Sagarra, Carles Soldevila,

and Josep Millàs-Raurell, who, while popular in Barcelona, failed to gain the same degree of acclaim in Madrid.

*Theatre in Madrid and Barcelona* is an extremely valuable study of a period all too often reduced to its major Castilian-language dramatists – Garcìa Lorca and Valle-Inclán. The scope is wide, engaging with both known and unknown figures. The theatrical worlds of Madrid and Barcelona have all too often been treated as separate entities. Here a comparison serves to illustrate the richness of each. I can think of no study in the English- or Spanish-speaking world which attempts such a task. Drawing on archival material and going back to primary sources, George deconstructs some commonly held myths to provide a compelling and cohesive account of the interaction between the country's two most important urban theatrical cultures.

This is an indispensable volume for postgraduates and academics working in the area. The useful synopsis of each play focused on should ensure that readers unfamiliar with the works will gain much from the detailed analysis provided by George, and English translations of all play titles and quotations should ensure a readership which goes beyond Hispanists.

MARIA M. DELGADO

DOI: 10.1017/S0266464X03270109

*Syed Jamil Ahmed*

**In Praise of Niranjan: Islam, Theatre and Bangladesh**

Dhaka, Bangladesh: Shahidul Islam Bizu, 2001.

310 p. £40.00.

ISBN: 984-8120-29-7.

*In Praise of Niranjan* is a trip round the wilder and distant shores of theatre anthropology in the company of a master guide and explorer. Jamil Ahmed's first book, *Acinpakhi Infinity*, was the result of a breathtaking expedition through the width and depth of Bangladesh in search of existing indigenous forms of theatre and surviving practitioners of forms recently made extinct. As such, it was a major contribution to the cultural richness and history of Bangladesh and to any possible methodology for theatre anthropology.

Not content with locating and listing the indigenous forms, Jamil Ahmed went to a great deal of trouble to classify the eighty different genres, relating them to each other and viewing them in a continuum that ran from their possible historical origins and to their relevance today. *In Praise of Niranjan* draws upon the original research in approaching such questions as the very possibility of Islamic theatre existing in the face of fundamentalist proscription. In doing so, he ventures beyond the boundaries of Bangladesh to survey the differing theatre phenomena of the Muslim

world, tackling ideological problems arising in Bangladesh from the opposition of a concept of national identity based on shared language and an identity based on a fundamentalist insistence on religion.

Drawing on the cultural history of Bangladesh and its affinity with the other areas of Bengal, which has provoked a rich diversity and interaction of religious and cultural forms, the author addresses the question of what forms of theatre have relevance to past heritage and present circumstances. Not content with simply discussing this, the final section details two projects: one based on the common Islamic historical story of the Imams Hasan and Hossein and the massacre in Karbala, and one based on the common heritage, both Islamic and European, of the *Thousand and One Nights*. In detailing both these projects, Jamil Ahmed is meticulous in exposing both the strategies and practical solutions to the problems which arose, and this raises general questions of creating theatre in our time, worldwide. The book is not an easy read, but the considerations that it raises go beyond considerations of Bangladeshi and Islamic theatre to impinge on everything we do in making theatre.

CLIVE BARKER

DOI: 10.1017/S0266464X03280106

*Vreneli Farber*

**The Playwright Aleksandr Vampilov: an Ironic Observer**

Middlebury Studies in Russian Language and Literature, Vol. 25. New York: Peter Lang, 2001.

225 p. \$56.95.

ISBN: 0-8204-5171-1.

The work of the Russian playwright Aleksandr Vampilov (1937–72) has received scant attention in the West, both on stage and in critical literature. Farber's book, which bills itself as 'the first study in English of Vampilov's writings', is thus a welcome arrival – both for those with a specific interest in Russian literature and for those interested in theatre generally. For the most part, the study is devoted to insightful analyses of the themes and structure of Vampilov's plays, in part designed to illustrate her assessment of Vampilov as an innovator in Soviet drama – a playwright whose work subtly undermined the literary and cultural norms of the time, reflecting with uncanny prescience the subsequent decline of Soviet society.

Alongside her discussion of the completed plays, Farber examines Vampilov's earlier prose works and monologues, and provides brief biographical details. In the final chapter, she gives a general overview of the themes and stylistic devices common to his plays and discusses the difficulty in ascribing a precise definition to his theatrical style. In addition, the work includes a



detailed notes section and index, a comprehensive bibliography, and suggestions for further reading.

Particularly praiseworthy is Farber's discussion of the literary, political, and social context in which Vampilov's plays were written – Krushchev's 'thaw', followed by the period of stagnation under Brezhnev. Farber sets out well the literary and cultural trends of the day and considers how Vampilov both conformed to and reacted against the prevailing cultural mood. She also considers the influence of earlier playwrights – particularly Chekhov and Gogol – on his work. Where the study disappoints – perhaps inevitably in a work so comprehensive in its breadth – is the depth of argument. This impression is compounded by the frequent, and sometimes intrusive, use of sub-headings within each chapter (in Chapter Two, for example, the reader is faced with a single paragraph on 'Resemblances to Chekhov', two paragraphs on 'Vampilov Anticipates the Generation of the 1960s', four paragraphs on 'Vampilov's Journalistic Writing', and so on – a pattern that is repeated throughout the book).

Although the detailed analyses of the plays serve to counteract this (largely stylistic) fault, too often Farber makes a generalized statement about some aspect of Vampilov's work and then moves on, leaving the reader seeking more detailed comment. Also lacking – perhaps strangely, given Farber's experience of theatre – is any discussion of the plays in performance. Indeed, there is little treatment of the plays as 'plays' rather than as works of literature. That said, such omissions do not detract from Farber's thoughtful and accessible analyses of Vampilov's major plays, and one would be remiss not to recognize the value of her study in bringing attention to a playwright who deserves greater appreciation in the West.

KATE SEALEY RAHMAN

DOI: 10.1017/S0266464X03290102

Claire Sponsler and Xiaomei Chen  
**East of West: Cross-Cultural Performance  
and the Staging of Difference**

New York; Houndsmills: Palgrave, 2000. 230 p.  
£30.00.  
ISBN: 0-3339-4691-x.

This is a collection of wide-ranging but disparate essays written by academics at nine different American universities. The subjects of the essays take in contemporary concrete poetry, Gregory of Tours' *Histories*, the interplay of western drama and local traditions in Korea and China, performance of the 'strange and exotic' in Renaissance Europe, *King Kong* in Johannesburg, and *Carmen* from Mérimée to the 1960s.

The editors assert that 'the essays all in the end concur as to both the inevitability and – perhaps

more surprisingly – the utility of cross-cultural exchange'. This emphasis is welcome, since so much recent discussion of the subject seems to assume that inter- or cross-cultural exchange in theatre is something new. Marvin Carlson makes the point eloquently in his essay, 'The Macaronic Stage': drawing on examples that range across the whole history of western drama, from Aristophanes onwards, Carlson argues that a central function of theatre has always been to confront the 'other' and to give that 'other' a voice, frequently in a language different from the one spoken by the audience addressed.

Carlson writes well and his essay is especially good when he picks examples of performances where the use of more than one language challenges the received wisdom about particular texts (as, for example, the Haifa *Waiting for Godot*, in which Vladimir and Estragon both spoke Arabic, whereas Pozzo spoke Hebrew, thus challenging the notion that Beckett's text is impervious to political readings). He might have done better to speak of the 'polyglot' stage, since his point is that theatre has always spoken many languages.

After Carlson's contribution, the others are much more specialist, reading more like journal articles. There is much fascinating material here, but it fails to hold together. Nevertheless, the book's emphasis on a new direction for cross-cultural analysis is welcome and, as the editors write, it 'does not exhaust the possibilities for further work'.

DAVID BRADBY

DOI: 10.1017/S0266464X03300107

Albert Wertheim

**The Dramatic Art of Athol Fugard:  
from South Africa to the World**

Bloomington; Indianapolis: Indiana University  
Press, 2000. 273 p. \$17.95.  
ISBN 0-253-33823-9.

As Wertheim points out in his Introduction, Athol Fugard would surely have to be included in any short list of the world's leading living playwrights; and yet, because he is South African and because his drama over many years has repeatedly explored issues specifically provoked by the apartheid system, his work has more often than not been considered and judged mainly or even exclusively in that context. The thesis of this book, intimated by its subtitle, is that, however profoundly Fugard's art has been bound up in the local particularities of apartheid, he should nevertheless be viewed as a genuinely global writer, who 'often uses the South Africa he knows so intimately as a setting for more universal examinations of human life, human interactions, and the powers of art'. Wertheim's objective is to provide a straightforward, chronological discussion of the

issues in Athol Fugard's plays and the dramatic methods he has used to present them. In this aim he is largely successful, with detailed analyses of Fugard's *oeuvre* from the earliest plays up to the time of writing that will certainly be useful for a wide readership.

In particular, he gives substantial attention to his less well known, post-apartheid theatre, including *Playland*, his part in the devising of *My Life*, and the two plays in which he has revealed his desire to experiment with autobiographical form, *Valley Song* and *The Captain's Tiger*. Unsurprisingly, Wertheim builds his argument that Fugard is a 'global' dramatist on his proclivity for Camus's brand of existentialism, which has its dramatic counterpart in Fugard's Beckettian qualities, alongside his more agit-prop political plays like *Statements* and *Sizwe Bansi*.

More particularly, Wertheim is interested in exploring the fact that the word 'acting' has both theatrical and political connotations: 'Theatre is a place to enact both realities and dreams, and it is thus a microcosm and a possible model for the world beyond the playhouse doors. If all the world's a stage, then the stage and the *acting* and *performance* it witnesses can also be played out in the world.' This leads into an excellent discussion of what is surely one of Fugard's finest plays, *The Blood Knot*, in which Wertheim cogently argues that Fugard uses the elements of theatre themselves to create political awareness.

It would have been beneficial if Wertheim had developed his thoughts about the importance of 'acting' in Fugard's work more consistently and thoroughly in his analyses of the other plays. Had he done so, the depth and scope of his sympathetic engagement with Fugard's drama would have been less liable to shade into critical indulgence. It is fair enough that he wants to make the case for the strengths of Fugard's drama, even where, as with *Dimetos* or *A Place with the Pigs*, the plays have generally been judged failures. But while he is well aware of critical reservations, Wertheim tends to downplay or even ignore the reasons for them.

Especially unsatisfactory is his refusal to engage fully with the kind of political criticism of Fugard that he draws attention to in his Introduction, acknowledging (rather lamely) only that it has some value in making us aware of what is absent from his drama. Too often, his enormous admiration for his subject leads him into an over-fulsome appraisal that misses the opportunity to take on the 'political' critics of Fugard on the grounds that he himself proposes – that theatre may not only be used as a rhetorical instrument to make political statements, but that the theatrical itself is a large part of what we conceptualize as 'reality' and is therefore inescapably entangled with politics by its very nature.

BRIAN CROW

DOI: 10.1017/S0266464X03310103

Gary R. Edgerton and Peter C. Rollins, ed.

**Television Histories: Shaping Collective Memory in the Media Age**

Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2001.

383 p.

ISBN: 0-8131-2190-6.

There are sixteen essays in this consistently interesting and informative collection on (mainly American) television's factual and fictional treatments of history. The book is organized into four sections, and includes a useful selected bibliography. Edgerton's introduction outlines 'seven general assumptions' that frame the collection. These contend the following points: that television is 'the principal means by which most people learn about history today'; that television history has become big business for the industry; that television 'strongly influences' how history is seen in the wider culture; that television history utilizes 'presentism' (looking backwards to re-frame current concerns).

Connected issues addressed include the idea that there is a widespread desire for a 'useable past' that will inform present and future; that the collective memory is often composed of images from that useable past; and that 'television as historian' has been a means of escape from the occasionally restrictive practices of the professional historian.

Inevitably somewhat variable in quality, the essays are never less than engaging – even when dealing with unfamiliar material. Mimi White's analysis of the revisionist history present in two popular series (*Young Indiana Jones Chronicles* and *Dr Quinn: Medicine Woman*) enables one to see the point even when one has not seen the shows. Rollins's own thoughtful piece on the 1952 *Victory at Sea* series resonates powerfully post-11 September – he notes an American propensity to 'become trapped by our reverence for World War II as a crusade for freedom'.

Essays on Dutch and Israeli television vary the American focus, but seem a little token. Perhaps it is simply that a collection is needed demonstrating the similarities and differences between treatments of history in dominant anglophone television cultures and equally developed but partially colonized national cultures world-wide. The collection's central idea, however, is exciting and unifying: television history is a discourse, a construct constantly subject to change, layered like a palimpsest (or like a holographic representation, as suggested by one contributor), and collectively negotiated by its makers and audience. This book will appeal to those engaged in the analysis of the ever-hybridizing formats of television documentary and history.

DEREK PAGET