

From that point the book looks at political protests that took new directions, such as the reform of House of Commons elections. It also looks at the reasons why something like a French-style revolution did not occur in England. When the next generation of protesters concluded that the moral economy was never coming back, they tried to find ways of getting people sympathetic to the working classes into the House of Commons. Minimally that meant franchise expansion, which did begin in 1832. When it comes to the question of determining why a revolution did not happen, the author recognizes that such a task is quite tricky, but based on the available literature, does offer some tentative reasons including expanded private charitable work. An interesting omission is any discussion of the influence that the growth of Methodism had on English society. In fairness, that is about the only significant weakness in this thoughtful, well-balanced piece of secondary research.

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***Napoleon*. 2000. Written and directed by David Grubin. Produced by David Grubin Productions. Narrated by David McCullough. Approx. 4 hours on two tapes. Distributed by PBS Home Video and PBS Adult Learning Service. \$29.98. Order: shopPBS.com or 1-800-645-4727.**

PBS video histories are well-known classroom commodities for historians and educators, covering everything from Lewis and Clark to the Spanish American War, and yes even Napoleon. The production quality generally remains consistently high, and they always have a distinguished array of talking heads, i.e., historians and other authorities used to interject commentary, that elevates them above such programs as A&E's *Biography* where the Napoleon piece, narrated breathlessly by Jack Perkins, falls squarely into the Hollywood celebrity biography, the rise and fall of a star genre that populates so much of cable television these days. David Grubin's *Napoleon* is a joint French-American endeavor financed by Canal Plus in Paris, PBS, and the National Endowment for the Humanities. Grubin is not new to documentaries, having received Emmys and Writers Guild Awards for programs on Theodore Roosevelt, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry Truman, and Lyndon B. Johnson. He brings the same cinematic flair and vision to *Napoleon*.

In keeping with the style of the PBS documentary, Grubin skillfully uses familiar contemporary paintings by David, Gros, Ingres, and Goya, as well as less familiar etchings, engravings, Napoleonic memorabilia of all sorts, spectacular location shots from Corsica, Egypt, France, Elba, St. Helena, and of course the mandatory—certainly for Napoleon—battlefield shots and reenactments of Austerlitz and Waterloo. The visuals and musical themes are interrupted with “sound-bite” comments of British, French, and American academics, a distinguished lot that includes Alistair Horne and

the leading authority on Napoleon, Jean Tulard of the University of Paris. Oleg Sokolov of the University of St. Petersburg offers some unique insights into Napoleon's ill-fated Russian campaign of 1812 as well as giving the Russian perspective on Napoleon. Given the nature of the medium, comments have to be brief and catching to the ear, with no time for long analysis, yet there is actually much of substance that comes from the experts, although some of the American military historians clearly went over the top in their exuberance for Napoleon and the hyperbole of their animated expositions of his battle tactics. And somewhat surprisingly, the highly competent, but very over-exposed David Chandler of Sandhurst, veteran of many British military video documentaries, does not make an appearance. Bringing the whole story together—and story is appropriate here, because Grubin has structured the program as a biography of Napoleon, not an historical analysis (the celebrity biography genre of A&E dies hard)—is the deep baritone narration of David McCullough, giving the whole production a sense of sententious *gravitas*. Yet still, after viewing *Napoleon*, this reviewer has to agree that Grubin has created a captivating and alluring vision of Napoleon that leaves few events or battles out, and while anecdotal (we learn for instance that Napoleon's favorite campaign meal consisted of fried potatoes and onions), still offers some sophisticated insight into the man and his times.

Isser Woloch of Columbia University, who acted as a historical consultant to Grubin in the filming of *Napoleon*, also serving as an on-screen presence, wrote an article in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (November 10, 2000, pp. B18-B19) deriding the *auteur's* decision-making in the creation of this documentary. One would have to agree with him that Grubin “zeroes in on Napoleon's military ambition, leaving the emperor's civil legacy relatively unexplored.” But what would one expect from a mass-audience historical piece dealing with Napoleon? Woloch also pinpoints a historical consultant's frustration with many documentaries, not just *Napoleon*: “Grubin's on-screen commentators speak to particular issues but are not edited into *de facto* debates about interpretation.” Issues such as the Civil Code, conscription, and the campaign in Spain never really get vetted. Much is made of Napoleonic leadership, grandeur, and creativity, while the carnage and tyranny, not ignored completely, are certainly underplayed. And one can be certain that Napoleon's complicated sexual relationship with Josephine de Beauharnais receives a central focus with many bedroom shots and a shift to harp music, of which Woloch observes: “Connubial unions are one of Grubin's fortes; he previously offered a riveting exposure of the almost pathetic relationship between Harry and Bess Truman.” All of this leads Woloch to conclude that viewers “may be left wondering about the whys, and about the consequences” of this handsomely illustrated story of the rise of Napoleon “for the people of France and Europe.” All of this might be well and good, but until historians such as Woloch stop being consultants and talking heads, and start making documentaries themselves, directors such as David Grubin will continue to make the

choices they think will produce the best visual narrative, something that Woloch himself will have to readily concede, because that is what historians do in their own written texts and monographs.

Finally, documentaries such as *Napoleon* are still tied to some boring, dry narrative conventions. For instance, Grubin lifted directly from Sergei Bondarchuk's *Waterloo* (1970) the riveting, clicking boots image as Marshal Ney and the other Marshals of France arrive at Fontainebleau to tell Napoleon in no uncertain terms that he must abdicate. Indeed, the entire story of Napoleon's return from Elba, the Hundred Days, and the Battle of Waterloo itself was done much more dramatically (more expensively also), if sometimes histrionically, by Rod Steiger as Napoleon in a 1970 fiction film. In contrast, Napoleon's return gets a rather staid presentation in the documentary, something not unimportant to an MTV generation of high school and college students to whom history teachers will certainly direct this very useful and evocative, if somewhat skewed, and not particularly historically new or revisionist, account of Napoleon Bonaparte.

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John Davis. *A History of Britain, 1885-1939.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999. Pp. x, 241. Cloth, \$59.95; ISBN 0-312-22033-2. Paper, \$19.95; ISBN 0-312-22034-0.

Martin Pugh. *Britain Since 1789: A Concise History.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999. Pp. x, 244. Cloth, \$45.00; ISBN 0-312-22358-7. Paper, \$18.95; ISBN 0-312-22359-5.

These admirable surveys are written by scholars who have previously made singular contributions to the monographic literature of modern British history. Martin Pugh, Professor of Modern History at the University of Newcastle, is the author of works on David Lloyd George, electoral politics of the late nineteenth and twentieth century, and twentieth-century women's history. The Oxford historian John Davis has written heretofore on the politics of metropolitan London. Each is familiar with the major revisionist interpretations of modern British studies and incorporates recent monographic research into their respective works. Pugh is perhaps the more successful in integrating work in social history into his compact narrative, Davis more helpful in explaining the complicated twists and turns of economic and fiscal policies that bedeviled twentieth-century British governments. Nonetheless, each author assumes the centrality of politics and demonstrates its indispensability to narrative history.

Pugh's succinct overview is all the more useful for having originated in response to an Italian scholar's proposal for an introductory volume on modern British history for Italian students. Hence, the customary assumptions made by British scholars about