

Chapter 5

Images of Fairfax in Modern Literature and Film

Andrew Hopper

I

On the 400th anniversary of his birth, it seems an appropriate time to reach out beyond academia to consider how Fairfax has been presented to the public in modern times. A genealogical organisation, the Fairfax Society, celebrates and promotes his memory, whilst there are monuments that commemorate him at York Minster, the Bodleian Library and his burial place at Bilbrough. Yet the way in which Fairfax has been presented to the public in modern times has been less through academic research, museums and memorials, than through theatre, novels, biography, poetry and cinema. The production of these media has not always involved historians, and yet it ought to be historians' business to influence how historical characters are presented to the wider public. In recent times, as academic concerns for the quality of popular or public history have grown, historians have begun to engage more with visual media 'as both a competitor and a collaborator' in communicating the past to the public.¹ This chapter will examine how well-informed these popular images of Fairfax have been, and the motives underpinning their presentation of him to the public.

¹ I am grateful to all the contributors to the Fairfax 400 conference, and Ian Atherton in particular for discussion of recent images of Fairfax. I would also like to thank David McLoughlin for help in sourcing the stills from *Winstanley*. Robert A. Rosenstone, 'The reel Joan of Arc: reflections on the theory and practice of the historical film', *The Public Historian*, 25 (2003), 61–77 (p. 62).

The first problem encountered is that many of these images have been shaped by the colossus of Cromwell's memory which has dominated much of the public history of the civil wars. There are now more biographies of Cromwell than almost any other Englishman, with more than 30 appearing in the twentieth century alone, compared to a meager five for Fairfax.² The BBC phone and internet poll of 'Greatest Britons' conducted in 2002 ranked Cromwell at tenth. Cromwell's eventual position as head of state has blurred his rise to power so much that media today often casually assume Cromwell was parliament's leading general from the outset. For instance, Adam Hart-Davies, presenting the BBC2 television programme, 'What the Stuarts did for us', insinuated that the only way the public could be familiar with Fairfax was as one of Cromwell's lackeys: 'On his way to London in 1642 Black Tom Fairfax, one of Cromwell's henchmen, was robbed in his coach on the highway by Moll Cutpurse'.³ However, once we delve deeper, a more sophisticated, if limited popular memory of Fairfax can be identified in a variety of media going back to the Victorian period, including novels, poetry, theatrical productions, biographies and feature films. This chapter will examine some of these to gauge

² Clements R. Markham, *A Life of the Great Lord Fairfax: Commander-in-Chief of the Army of the Parliament in England* (London: Macmillan, 1870); M.A. Gibb, *The Lord General: A Life of Thomas Fairfax* (London: Lindsay Drummond, 1938); John Wilson, *Fairfax: A Life of Thomas Lord Fairfax, Captain-General of all the Parliament's Forces in the English Civil War, Creator and Commander of the New Model Army* (London: Murray, 1985); Andrew Hopper, 'Black Tom': *Sir Thomas Fairfax and the English Revolution* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007); John Rosenfield, *Rosenfield's Fairfax*, 2 vols, available electronically from <http://www.oakebooks.com/authors/Rosenfield>.

³ *What the Stuarts Did for Us*, 4 November 2002, BBC2, 8.30pm.

how changing representations of Fairfax have reflected broader transformations in English political culture.

II

The nineteenth-century's renewal of interest in the parliamentary cause, reflected by Thomas Carlyle's idolizing of Cromwell, thrust Fairfax into the background as worthy of little comment.⁴ Yet Fairfax was remembered in Yorkshire among his native antiquarians. In 1830 Norrison Scatcherd, a nonconformist descended from one of Fairfax's officers celebrated how it was still 'a matter of notoriety' that the people of the West Riding cloth towns 'detested the Royalists in these parts, and did them all the injury imaginable on their marches.'⁵ His contemporary, the Airedale poet John Nicholson, produced two editions of a play entitled *The Siege of Bradford* in 1821 and 1831, which celebrated Fairfax's defence of that town, depicting him exhorting his troops to resist the Earl of Newcastle's 'popish army' by appealing to memories of the Marian martyrs. Nicholson wrote the piece in opposition to Catholic Emancipation and as a celebration of the West Riding's Protestant identity, portraying Fairfax's soldiers as upholders of the Yorkshire values of commerce, industry and independence.⁶

⁴ Thomas Carlyle (ed.), *Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches, with Elucidations* (3 vols, London: Chapman and Hall, 1857), I, p. 163.

⁵ Norrison Scatcherd, *The History of Morley, in the Parish of Bingley, in the West Riding of Yorkshire* (Leeds: J. Heaton, 1830), p. 247.

⁶ John Nicholson, *The Siege of Bradford, with notes*, 2nd edn (Bradford: E. Keighley, 1831), p. 5; John Nicholson, *The Poetical Works of John Nicholson: The Airedale Poet, Carefully Edited*

Memories of Fairfax driven by oral history survived into the nineteenth century and among them was the recollection of Jacob Sands. Aged ninety in 1800, Sands claimed that his grandfather opened the gate for Fairfax at Oakwell Hall after the Battle of Adwalton Moor and offered him directions. Fairfax at some stage supposedly hid from royalist pursuers in ‘Black Tom’s well’ at Newton Kyme, and his ghost was said to gallop down the nearby avenue of trees. Around 1900, locals maintained the well was haunted, and, emulating the legend of King Arthur, that no one could be sure that Fairfax was really buried at Bilbrough.⁷ Yet even in his West Riding heartlands, the phrase ‘in Oliver’s days’ became a nineteenth-century byword for times of exceptional prosperity.⁸ Likewise, in Nicholson’s *The Siege of Bradford*, one character called Fairfax ‘Cromwell’s general’. Where Fairfax was remembered, it was often for having been misled and abused by Cromwell, a long-standing contention that went back to the 1650s. Within Fairfax’s native Wharfedale, one nineteenth-century poet lamented:

When Fairfax, with a patriot feeling strong,

from the Original Editions with Additional Notes and a Sketch of his Life and Writings by W. G. Hird (London: Simpkin, 1876), pp. xii–xv, 381, 384.

⁷ J.W. Walker (ed.), *Our Local Portfolio* (Halifax Reference Library: extracts from Halifax Guardian, 1856–62), p. 5; Harry Speight, *Lower Wharfedale* (London: Elliot Stock, 1902), p. 364; George Bernard Wood, *Yorkshire Villages* (London: Robert Hale, 1971), p. 122.

⁸ Alan Smith, ‘The image of Cromwell in folklore and tradition’, *Folklore*, 79 (1968), 17–19 (p. 20).

Was led by false, designing Cromwell wrong.⁹

It was Cromwell, not Fairfax, who stood in statuary or stained glass in the nonconformist chapels of Bradford, Leeds and Harrogate, the very neighbourhoods that had furnished Fairfax with his first recruits. Early nineteenth-century romantic Cromwellianism was embedded in Fairfax's home parish of Otley, where Walter Fawkes of Farnley Hall collected civil war relics that allegedly included swords belonging to Fairfax, Lambert and Cromwell, along with Cromwell's hat and Fairfax's wheelchair. Yet despite the first two being local men, it was Cromwell that Fawkes seemed most keen to commemorate, extolling that 'there are Cromwells in all lands and ages.'¹⁰

Fairfax's first biographer was a distant relative, the Victorian naval officer, explorer and civil servant, Sir Clements Markham. Born in Stillingfleet, within two miles of Fairfax's seat at Nunappleton, Markham revered his ancestor, showering Fairfax with praise. He rebutted those who criticised Fairfax for collaborating in the republic, asserting that Fairfax's delay in retiring arose from his selfless duty, arguing that if he had 'consulted his own ease... every personal consideration would have led him to throw up his command.' Markham argued that Fairfax's

⁹ Nicholson, *The Poetical Works of John Nicholson*, p. 365; Joseph Horsfall Turner, *Ancient Bingley* (Bingley: Thomas Harrison and Sons, 1897), p. 267; Lockwood Huntley, *The Fairfaxes of Denton and Nun Appleton* (York: Yorkshire Gazette, 1906), p. 11.

¹⁰ Blair Worden, *Roundhead Reputations: The English Civil War and the Passions of Posterity* (London: Allen Lane, 2001), pp. 248, 250, 306; M.L. Sharples, 'The Fawkes-Turner connection and the art collection at Farnley Hall, Otley, 1792–1937: a great estate enhanced and supported', *Northern History*, 26 (1990), 131–59 (p. 136).

notion of patriotic service endured under ‘whatever form of government the ruling powers might introduce’. He credited Fairfax with ‘unswerving uprightness’ and immunity to ‘extraordinary temptations’, with a life led ‘without a stain upon his honour’ or ‘taint of self-seeking’. Markham’s praising of Fairfax as the stoic and dutiful servant of the state utterly rebutted Fairfax’s entry in the *Biographica Britannica* published the century before which argued that these were the very qualities that had fallen to Fairfax’s ambition.¹¹

Within his lifetime, Markham’s biography helped to inspire Beatrice Marshall’s historical romantic novel *The Siege of York*, published in 1902.¹² Emulating the style of her mother, Emma Marshall, Beatrice had already written several historical novels aimed at a young audience. Historical romance was the most popular of literary genres, very much established at the centre of Edwardian fiction. As novels were becoming more affordable and reaching out to a mass audience, fiction became a key part of the emerging leisure industry. Their stories were costume dramas that moved history towards myth, framed around grand events and famous historical characters. That Fairfax and the civil war were ripe for such treatment is suggestive of his continued recognition among the public at the time.¹³ Marshall’s story is told through the eyes of a fictitious young lady, Heather Raine-court, who foresees that Fairfax was born for greatness when she first meets him, well before war broke out. Despite her royalist sympathies, she is on

¹¹ Worden, *Roundhead Reputations*, pp. 184, 242n; Markham, *A Life of the Great Lord Fairfax*, pp. 361–2, 385, 401.

¹² Beatrice Marshall, *The Siege of York: A Story of the Days of Thomas Lord Fairfax* (London: Seeley, 1902).

¹³ Sandra Kemp, Charlotte Mitchell and David Trotter (eds), *The Oxford Companion to Edwardian Fiction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. xv, 185, 269.

hand to bandage his wrist during his desperate escape from Bradford to Hull, considering him ‘too good for the Roundheads’. Marshall depicts a Fairfax dubbed ‘fiery Tom’ by his troops and as the leader of ‘audacious sallies with his levies of Denton and Nunappleton tenants against desperate odds.’ Romanticizing the nature of Fairfax’s leadership, as well as his relationship with his tenantry, she attributed the parliamentary triumph at Marston Moor to him, not to Cromwell. The royalist characters in the novel constantly admire Fairfax’s military prowess, grace and decency, lamenting his presence among the rebels. It is underlined throughout that the royalists would have fared much better if he had been among them. The novel ends by considering Fairfax’s supposed lack of political genius to be a positive attribute, but nevertheless depicts Fairfax’s rising in favour of General Monck in January 1660 as having ‘decided the fate of England.’¹⁴ Published during the Boer War, Marshall’s *Siege of York* was intended to praise a bygone military hero and thereby foster patriotic feeling in the young. Together Markham’s biography and Marshall’s novel would have gone some way to establish Fairfax within the Victorian ‘great men’ school of history.

Much of this traditional image of Fairfax remains in Lindsey Davis’s recent novel *Rebels and Traitors*. Here he is depicted with ‘intelligent brown eyes, set in a cheerful chin-up Yorkshire face, generously framed by waving brown hair.’ According to Davis, Fairfax had ‘obvious charisma’, but was ‘a diffident man, who had a genuine air of surprise at his sudden elevation’ to command the New Model. Again, his exploits were admired by the leading royalist character, Orlando Lovell. Reflecting on the defeat at Marston Moor, Lovell describes Fairfax as: ‘A sickly stubborn, crazily brave northerner. Armies have these characters, men who flare alight when action starts.’ Likewise, tales of Fairfax’s early exploits in Yorkshire, including his escape

¹⁴ Marshall, *The Siege of York*, preface and p. 13, 73–4, 132, 292.

from Bradford, helps inspire the parliamentary character, Gideon Jukes to want to join the New Model Army.¹⁵

Alongside depictions of his military ability and gentlemanly conduct, Fairfax has developed a reputation as a preserver. This is ironic considering the destruction wrought by his armies, and provides a sharp contrast to Cromwell's folkloric image as a destroyer.¹⁶ The story that the Fairfax family saved York Minster from destruction is rooted in the archives of the corporation. After York's surrender, in July 1644, the corporation thanked Lord Ferdinando Fairfax with 'a butt of sack and a tunn of French wine' for 'the great love and affection he hath shewed to the Citty.' The surrender articles prohibited the defacement of churches and left the administration of justice to the city's magistrates.¹⁷ Ferdinando was celebrated in verse for saving York Minster from 'the Caledonian Boar.'¹⁸ The ninth article of surrender stipulated that the incoming parliamentary garrison needed to be two thirds Yorkshiremen, and the thirteenth pledged that no churches would be defaced or plundered.¹⁹ Sir Thomas was held to have saved the Minster's windows by removing them for safekeeping after York's surrender. In 1700 Samuel Gale praised Sir Thomas for this 'Honourable and Noble Act', while James Torre concurred in 1719 by lauding the 'generous and tender regard' of Lord Fairfax, for 'his saving

¹⁵ Lindsey Davis, *Rebels and Traitors: An Epic Novel of the English Civil War* (London: Arrow Books, 2010), pp. 213, 272–3.

¹⁶ Smith, 'The image of Cromwell', 23, 26, 38; *The Observer*, 27 February 2005.

¹⁷ City of York Archives, House Books B36, fos. 102–3.

¹⁸ BL, Additional MS 11,743, fo. 21r.

¹⁹ *A Copy of the Articles for the Surrender of the City of Yorke, July the 16.* (London, 1644), pp. 6–8.

the City, as well as its Cathedral'. In 1932 the twelfth baron Fairfax unveiled a tablet commemorating this in York Minster's Chapter House. Sir Thomas ensured that Roger Dodsworth was permitted to transcribe the monastic records in St Mary's Tower, York, before that building was exploded, and this too was celebrated in Marshall's novel.²⁰

Sir Thomas is also remembered as 'merciful and civilized' for saving Oxford's treasures after its surrender, for which his name is commemorated on a monument in the Bodleian Library. John Aubrey reflected that Fairfax took better care of the Bodleian than the royalists did. In 2003, *The Guardian* newspaper contrasted Fairfax's care for cultural treasures at Oxford's surrender with the recent American capture of Baghdad.²¹ For all these reasons, Fairfax is often depicted as cultured, restrained, moderate and decent, a preserver rather than destroyer, and to some degree as aloof from revolutionary politics. His monuments at the Bodleian, York Minster and Bilbrough church applaud this supposed moderation and integrity. In 1808 the editor of Lucy Hutchinson's memoirs, the Reverend Julius Hutchinson, considered that these values would 'distinguish Fairfax to the end of time', and that his resignation dashed hopes for a settled republic that 'would have rendered the nation great and happy'.²² This rosy image of Fairfax's

²⁰ Julie Spraggon, *Puritan Iconoclasm during the English Civil War* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2003), p. 192; Peter Wenham, *The Siege of York, 1644*, 2nd edn (York: William Sessions, 1994), pp. 92–3, 118; Thomas Gent, *The Ancient and Modern History of the Famous City of York* (York: Thomas Hammond, 1730), pp. 54–5; Marshall, *The Siege of York*, p. 233.

²¹ Bodleian Library, MS Aubrey 8, fo. 60r; Bodleian Library, MS Fairfax 32, fos. 145–46; Markham, *A Life of the Great Lord Fairfax*, p. 445.

²² Lucy Hutchinson, *Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson, Governor of Nottingham Castle and Town*, ed. Rev. Julius Hutchinson (London: Longman, 1806), pp. 315–6n.

moderation, gentility and decency has proved enduring among his biographers and admirers but it sits uneasily alongside royalist depictions of him as the dull, brutish general who was too cowardly or incompetent to prevent the King's death.²³

III

During the mid-twentieth century, Fairfax 'the great man' was developed into an emblem of patriotic Englishness and liberal politics. His next biographer was the Yorkshire-woman Mildred Ann Gibb whose 1938 book *The Lord General* showered praise on the Englishness of Fairfax's virtues: his military ability, gentlemanly conduct and discomfort with politics. Gibb's adoring tone is neatly captured in this passage, very much setting the tone of what was soon to follow with Churchill's 'Few' and the Battle of Britain:

During the first stages of the war in Yorkshire, [Fairfax] was quickly credited with almost supernatural powers; peasants and townsfolk took heart when the news spread abroad that 'the Rider of the White Horse' was coming to their relief, and the psychological effect of his fame upon the enemy was incalculable... It was this spirit, this legend almost, which kept Yorkshire from falling during the early part of 1643. The forces were too unevenly

²³ Sir James Digby Legard, *The Legards of Anlaby and Ganton: Their Neighbours and Neighbourhood* (London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co, 1926), p. 77; Stuart E. Prall (ed.), *The Puritan Revolution: A Documentary History* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968), p. 310; Graham Edwards, *The Last Days of Charles I* (Stroud: Sutton, 1999), p. 185.

matched for Fairfax to have a sporting chance in any encounter... this makes his prolonged and finally successful resistance something of a miracle.²⁴

Gibb, who also wrote a biography of John Lilburne, saw Fairfax as standing for the supposed English principles of fair play and sympathy for the underdog. Ann Hughes has characterized Gibb as part of an 'older generation of radical and liberal historians', comparable in views to H.N. Brailsford.²⁵

Gibb's biography helped to inspire another novel by the famous and award-winning author of historical fiction, Rosemary Sutcliff.²⁶ Sutcliff, whose sympathies clearly lay with the parliamentarians, first published *The Rider of the White Horse* in 1959, taking the title from a civil war pamphlet that drew from Revelation 19:11 to celebrate Christ's conquering power alongside Fairfax's first victories.²⁷ By then she had already written a favourable portrayal of Fairfax in her children's novel *Simon*, only six years earlier.²⁸ In *The Rider* Sutcliffe undertook to depict the Fairfax household from the eve of war until Sir Thomas's southward departure to

²⁴ Gibb, *The Lord General*, p. 40.

²⁵ M.A. Gibb, *John Lilburne the Leveller, a Christian Democrat* (London: Lindsay Drummond, 1947); Ann Hughes, 'Gender and politics in Leveller literature', in Susan Dwyer Amussen and Mark Kishlansky (eds), *Political Culture and Cultural Politics in Early Modern England: Essays Presented to David Underdown* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), p. 162.

²⁶ Gillian Avery, 'Rosemary Sutcliff (1920–1992), writer', *ODNB*.

²⁷ BL, Thomason Tract E88(23), *The Rider of the White Horse and His Army, Their Late Good Success in Yorkshire* (London, 1643).

²⁸ Rosemary Sutcliff, *Simon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1953).

command the New Model Army in January 1645. With tremendous affection, she romanticized Thomas and Anne as the central characters, depicting Thomas as tragically unable to return the love of his unattractive, yet fiercely devoted wife. Sutcliff concluded with Thomas opening his heart and admitting he should be very lonely without Anne's love, yet still remaining unable to requite it in full. Sutcliff also echoed Gibb's description of Fairfax as a man born to inspire resistance against hopeless odds. In the novel, his soldiers revere him and feverishly imagine that his arrival in doomed Bradford, 'Thy Mercy in the Morning', after the catastrophe on Adwalton Moor, will somehow prove their deliverance. Yet Sutcliff's Fairfax is also physically infirm, deeply scarred by war and enfeebled by his fevers and wounds. He also regrets the factional divisions within parliament's cause, and mourns the loss of a perceived common purpose in the fight against kingly tyranny.²⁹ Bernard Ingham shared the sentiments of Sutcliff's novel in his recognition of Fairfax as an icon of Yorkshire patriotism. Ingham's criteria for selection into his fifty all-time 'Yorkshire Greats' were 'gritty determination', 'wilful refusal to give up', and 'sheer bloody-mindedness', all considered Yorkshire qualities that Fairfax possessed in spades.³⁰

IV

It was against these images that Marxist-influenced representations of Fairfax followed in the 1960s. These challenged the idea of Fairfax as a conservative, moderate parliamentarian, determined upon the preservation of the old establishment. The first was the novel *Comrade*

²⁹ Rosemary Sutcliff, *The Rider of the White Horse* (1959, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1967), pp. 142–3, 316–18.

³⁰ Bernard Ingham, *Yorkshire Greats: The County's Fifty Finest* (Skipton: Dalesman Publishing, 2005).

Jacob by David Caute.³¹ Caute studied the English Revolution at All Souls, Oxford, under Christopher Hill and Lawrence Stone. He became a distinguished left-wing intellectual who edited an anthology of Marx's writings and helped popularize Bertolt Brecht's ideas about drama. His works endeavoured to integrate history, politics and art.³² *Comrade Jacob* focused on Gerard Winstanley and the colony of Diggers on St George's Hill in 1649. With Fairfax as a representative of a repressive landowning order, a negative portrayal of his character might be anticipated. Yet Caute's portrayal of Fairfax remains the most intriguing and subtle yet in any piece of historical fiction.

The first chapter sets out a well-informed and believable portrayal of Fairfax's troubled mental state in spring 1649. Caute's Fairfax has a remote demeanour, daydreaming of his anticipated retirement whilst being hectored into action against the Diggers. He is depicted as deeply fatigued, both mentally and physically from his civil war. He is also shown to be isolated, nurturing resentment of Cromwell and Ireton, as well as an intense dislike of Lady Fairfax's Presbyterian ministers. In these circumstances, Fairfax develops an unlikely admiration for Winstanley's leadership and a compassion for the poor conspicuous in an aristocrat. Consequently Winstanley's opponents, the local landowners and the minister, Parson Platt, consider Fairfax to be 'notoriously libertarian'. Caute's Fairfax is angered by Platt's offer of congratulations for crushing the army mutiny at Burford, a perceptive touch that neatly reflects

³¹ David Caute, *Comrade Jacob* (London: Deutsch, 1961).

³² Raimund Schäffner, 'The re-emergence of the Diggers: David Caute's *Comrade Jacob*', *Literature and History*, 16 (2007), 3–5.

Fairfax's mixed feelings and different perspective on the affair from Cromwell.³³ Caute also portrayed Fairfax as sharing Cromwell's view of Charles I, although being too loath to admit it.³⁴

Caute's prose develops a sensitive appreciation of the dilemma Fairfax faced with Winstanley and the Diggers, torn between his conscience and sense of duty.³⁵ His quandary was an unwelcome reminder that Edward Stephens, an MP excluded by Pride's Purge, had compared Fairfax to Pontius Pilate and here Caute casts Fairfax in a similar role, considering the regicide as 'a crime against man and God.'³⁶ Fairfax is also shown to be unperturbed by Winstanley and Everard's infamous refusal to remove their hats in his presence. He visits St George's Hill and declines the landowners' repeated solicitations to disperse the Diggers, refusing to consider them a threat to the peace. He even gains Winstanley's trust. While his officers speculate on his replacement, Fairfax is depicted as troubled and uncertain about how to deal with the Diggers, with the whole affair doing much to 'symbolize his predicament.' This was a contemplative, pragmatic general, weary with the political face of religious fervour, and whose hierarchical

³³ Ian Gentles, *The New Model Army in England, Ireland and Scotland, 1645–1653* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), p. 349.

³⁴ Caute, *Comrade Jacob*, pp. 25, 30, 99.

³⁵ Schäffner, 'The re-emergence of the Diggers', 11–12.

³⁶ BL, Thomason Tract, E536 (38), *A Letter of Advice, from a Secluded Member of the House of Commons, to His Excellency, Thomas Lord Fairfax, to Admonish him of the Kings Danger, his own duty, and the sad Consequence of Oppression and Tyranny*, 30 December 1648 (London, 1649), p. 5; Caute, *Comrade Jacob*, p. 8.

world-view had been shaken by the radicalism unleashed by war.³⁷ As he had been during the regicide, Fairfax is eventually bypassed by Parson Platt who secures an order from the Council of State for the Diggers' dispersal.³⁸

Comrade Jacob inspired a play of the same name by Caute's friend John McGrath in 1969, which became the opening production of the Gardner Arts Centre at the University of Sussex.³⁹ Yet Caute's novel is now best known for inspiring the feature film *Winstanley*, produced and directed by Andrew Mollo and Kevin Brownlow respectively.⁴⁰ They received a small grant of £17,000 from the British Film Institute but the production took eight years to make as it was reliant on a cast of unpaid amateurs. The film was unique in that it attempted a 'history from below' approach focused on the lives of ordinary people. It also privileged attempted historical accuracy, what Brownlow called 'getting it right' over dramatic and marketing necessities. Jerome Willis, the only professional actor in the film, played the part of Fairfax, keeping his portrayal faithful to the Fairfax of Caute's novel. His performance of a patient and restrained Fairfax carried genuine conviction and neatly demonstrated the persistent lenience of Fairfax to the Diggers attested in numerous primary sources.⁴¹ Fairfax responds to Parson Platt's admonishment of the Diggers with: 'Perhaps the greater villains are the envious

³⁷ Schäffner, 'The re-emergence of the Diggers', 11–12; John C. Tibbetts, 'Kevin Brownlow's historical films: *It Happened Here* (1965) and *Winstanley* (1975)', *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, 20:2 (2000), 227–51 (p. 240).

³⁸ Caute, *Comrade Jacob*, pp. 76–83, 101, 208–9.

³⁹ David Caute, 'Looking back in regret at *Winstanley*', *The Guardian*, 17 October 2008.

⁴⁰ Schäffner, 'The re-emergence of the Diggers', 18.

⁴¹ Hopper, *Black Tom*, pp. 111–12.

inhabitants hereabouts who pull up the Diggers' barley before the first green shoots have appeared.' A particularly effective scene was during Fairfax's visit to St George's Hill when the Diggers responded to his presence with respect and awe, an unfeigned reaction drawn from the amateur actors because they had seen Willis on television. Willis had been the only professional actor contacted who was prepared to work for the Equity minimum and to fit in with the production's weekend shootings. He took on the role as a passion project, attracted to the role of Fairfax but also to the unusual nature of the production and its commitment to historical accuracy.⁴² Willis also recaptured something of Caute's Fairfax's jaded attitude to Cromwell; when Winstanley requested that the Diggers receive army protection, he responded wryly: 'It is God's army Mr Winstanley, did not General Cromwell say so?'

Figure 5.1, Caption: Jerome Willis as Fairfax in the film 'Winstanley' (Courtesy of BFI, The Kobal Collection).

The film was received warmly in France, but many English historians had been unenthusiastic about involvement.⁴³ The exception was Christopher Hill who hailed it as 'meticulously accurate' in its 'imaginative reconstruction' of everyday seventeenth-century life. On the film's completion in 1975 he wrote a glowing appreciation of it which remains the only

⁴² Christopher Durston, 'Winstanley', in Susan Doran and Thomas S. Freeman (eds), *Tudors and Stuarts on Film* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2009), pp. 240–3; *It Happened Here Again*, documentary produced by Patrick W. Lui and directed by Eric Mival (1976).

⁴³ Ian Christie, 'History from beneath', *Sight and Sound*, 19:8 (2009), 84.

film review published in *Past & Present*.⁴⁴ Much of the dialogue was lifted out of the novel, but also from Winstanley's own writings, giving the language a very authentic feel. Brownlow's admiration for Winstanley as a forerunner of modern socialism comes across strongly.⁴⁵ Yet Caute so disliked the way that Brownlow and Mollo, influenced by the New Left, had downplayed how mysticism and religion drove Winstanley's thinking that he withdrew his name from the film's credits. Looking back in 2008, he conceded that it was a remarkable film, but one that had divorced Winstanley from his historical context. He concluded that his admiration of it 'remains somewhat rusted by regret.'⁴⁶ *Winstanley* has sadly been considered 'too arcane for the general public', with Mollo and Brownlow's disregard for 'the formulas of mainstream entertainment' ensuring its lack of popularity.⁴⁷ In 1999 Brownlow reflected: 'We wanted to see what would happen if we made an austere, correct, accurate historical film. Well, we now know – nobody would go see it!'⁴⁸

Christopher Hill's classic, *The World Turned Upside Down*,⁴⁹ was published the same year that *Winstanley* was released, and these works were major influences on two dramas performed during the 1980s: Roger Howard's *The Siege*, first performed at Colchester Mercury Theatre in 1981 and Don Taylor's play, *God's Revolution*, first broadcast as a radio serial in

⁴⁴ Christopher Hill, 'The film Winstanley', *Past & Present*, 69 (1975), 132.

⁴⁵ Tibbetts, 'Kevin Brownlow's historical films', 239.

⁴⁶ Caute, 'Looking back in regret at Winstanley'.

⁴⁷ Schäffner, 'The re-emergence of the Diggers', 19.

⁴⁸ Tibbetts, 'Kevin Brownlow's historical films', 251.

⁴⁹ Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas During the English Revolution* (Harmondsworth, 1975).

1988. Both were English Civil War dramas, written by Left-leaning playwrights that celebrated the democratic ideas of the Levellers and army radicals. Howard's play, written when fears of nuclear war were running high, focused on characters struggling for freedom during the terrible conditions within besieged Colchester in 1648. Howard's cast were the fictitious pro-parliamentarian Goodwin household. Fairfax is depicted as a wily, ruthless commander determined to end the siege quickly by denying the merchants free passage out, but offering to buy their cloth if they press the garrison to surrender. Fairfax sends pamphlets into Colchester announcing the defeat of the Scots, rendering further resistance futile. Although the characters suffer as a result of Fairfax's harshness, his decision to execute Lucas is vindicated by the servant Ebenezer who announces triumphantly 'Sir Charles Lucas and a couple of other scum are to be shot.'⁵⁰

Taylor's *God's Revolution* portrays Fairfax in much more depth. Taylor was of working-class stock and a socialist passionate about the English Civil War. He attended Oxford during Hill's time there in the 1950s.⁵¹ Taylor was familiar with Fairfax as he had previously written the radio play *At Nunappleton House* about Andrew Marvell, first broadcast in 1970. In *God's Revolution*, Taylor featured Fairfax's role in relation to the events of 1647–9. Nigel Anthony played a Fairfax dominated by Bernard Hepton's Cromwell and hampered by a debilitating stammer. Fairfax's aristocratic identity was stressed by Anthony deploying an upper-class rather than a Yorkshire accent. Cromwell is presented as steering Army Council meetings, pulling the

⁵⁰ Roger Howard, *The Violent Irruption and Terrible Convulsions of the Siege during the Late Lamentable Civil War at Colchester in the Year 1648* (Colchester: Theatre Action Press, 1981), pp. 10–12, 25, 28.

⁵¹ Philip Purser, 'Obituary: Don Taylor', *The Guardian*, 20 November 2003.

strings behind a dithering Fairfax. When Fairfax protests that he had promised not to attack the mutineers at Burford, Cromwell overrules him and authorizes an assault out of military necessity. However, once the mutiny is suppressed, in the Court Martial scene, Fairfax demonstrates his stoic forbearance by silencing Cromwell's objections to letting Corporal Church speak. When Church voiced his criticisms, Fairfax's response suggested a troubled conscience over what had occurred: 'Thank you Corporal Church. My back must be broad enough to carry these burdens you lay upon it.'⁵² A revealing private confrontation between Fairfax and Cromwell follows. When Fairfax bemoans, 'What shall I do? I hate these dissensions and respect these men', Cromwell pushes him with: 'We must be obeyed, Lord General, or we are nothing.' Cromwell is depicted as wanting the mutineers utterly discredited as well as broken, while Fairfax's concept of leadership is portrayed as at odds with Cromwell's: 'I expect men to follow me because of what I am, not because I have a gun to their chests. When that time comes I would rather go home.' In this way, Fairfax's weariness and yearning for a country retirement are established, echoing part of the successful characterization of the man as portrayed in *Comrade Jacob* and *Winstanley*. Taylor developed the play into a novel with the same title in 1999.⁵³

V

⁵² Don Taylor, *God's Revolution*, BBC Radio production of twelve episodes, first broadcast from 7 October to 23 December 1988. The serial was repeated on BBC Radio 4 Extra, 4–19 October 2010. I would like to thank Ian Atherton for bringing this valuable serial to my attention.

⁵³ Don Taylor, *God's Revolution: A Novel of the English Civil War* (London: Penguin, 1999).

Many academic historians have discarded film as a media for serious historical argument, some after having experienced dispiriting moments of attempted collaboration. It is often assumed that the objective of cinematic history is to entertain, not to educate or challenge audiences. Consequently, historians have struggled to identify common, agreed criteria from which to evaluate a film, and some have unfairly expected them to ‘make their interpretations conform to scholarly standards’ or be like books transferred to the big screen. Academic historians have even set out to make comparisons that are routinely unfavourable between history on film and written history.⁵⁴ Notwithstanding these considerations, it has to be conceded that depictions of Fairfax in more commercial film-making than *Winstanley* have fared less well. The British horror film *Witchfinder-General* included Patrick Wymark in a brief cameo role as a Cromwell fresh from victory at Naseby, but with Fairfax nowhere to be seen.⁵⁵ Writing Fairfax out of civil war filmmaking in favour of Cromwell as a more widely recognizable character is unfortunate because, as Thomas Freeman has observed, historical films ‘reinforce and perpetuate, if not actually create, myths about the past that are very difficult to shift or dislodge.’ This is so important, because film and television have replaced schooling and textbooks as the main way that most of society learns about the past.⁵⁶ This view finds strong support in the USA, where

⁵⁴ Robert Brent Toplin, ‘Cinematic history: where do we go from here?’, *The Public Historian*, 25 (2003), 79–91 (p. 90); Rosenstone, ‘The reel Joan of Arc’, 63–5; Marnie Hughes-Warrington, *History Goes to the Movies: Studying History on Film* (Oxford: Routledge, 2007), pp. 5, 9.

⁵⁵ *Witchfinder General*, produced by Louis M. Heyward, Philip Waddilove and Arnold L. Miller, and directed by Michael Reeves (1968).

⁵⁶ Thomas S. Freeman, ‘Introduction: it’s only a movie’, in Doran and Freeman (eds), *Tudors and Stuarts on Film*, p. 11; Hughes-Warrington, *History Goes to the Movies*, p. 1.

more of the public are known to experience historical themes through movies than through books or museum visits.⁵⁷ So although it is the job of filmmakers to make historical individuals intelligible to modern audiences, when they deliberately fictionalize and grossly distort their roles it is not enough for them to claim artistic license or condemn historians' objections as pedantic.⁵⁸

Fairfax's reputation was savaged in the film *Cromwell* directed by Ken Hughes and released in 1970 in which Fairfax was a minor supporting role played by Douglas Wilmer. Richard Harris played Cromwell as a superhuman titan who won the civil war virtually single-handed and shouldered the Protectorate thereafter with a line that does much to sum up the film: 'Dear God give me the strength to do it alone.' John Morrill has praised the film because, notwithstanding the many inaccuracies which he dutifully identifies in the film, he feels that Harris communicates Cromwell's self-belief and religious fervour effectively. In spite of its unnecessary errors, Morrill sees the film as following a core narrative 'that does testify to historical events.'⁵⁹ Yet as Freeman has observed when filmmakers alter the historical actions of individuals for dramatic purposes, they are in effect saying that these individuals do not matter.⁶⁰ This is a shame for the other parliamentary characters in the film. When they appear it is usually to demonstrate that they are wrong-headed, corrupt, cowardly or incompetent. Wilmer's

⁵⁷ Shelley Bookspan, 'History, historians and visual entertainment media: towards a rapprochement', *The Public Historian*, 25 (2003), 9–13 (p. 10).

⁵⁸ Freeman, 'Introduction: it's only a movie', p. 11.

⁵⁹ John Morrill, 'Oliver Cromwell and the civil wars', in Doran and Freeman (eds), *Tudors and Stuarts on Film*, p. 211.

⁶⁰ Freeman, 'Introduction: it's only a movie', p. 9.

Fairfax rebukes Cromwell for chastising the king in a Privy Council scene set in 1641. He is then shown leading the parliamentary cavalry to defeat at Edgehill, a battle from which he was absent. He is depicted as present at Naseby, but only as Cromwell's subordinate. In 1646, Fairfax implores Cromwell to return from Cambridge to prevent the disbanding of the New Model Army. The purpose of all these fictions is to aggrandize Cromwell. Fairfax colludes in Cromwell's purge of treacherous MPs but refuses to sign the king's death warrant. In a subsequent scene he then attempts to bribe Cromwell with £40,000 to spare the king's life. He is then depicted as presiding over the Rump, and moving that it might sit for a further three years without re-election, when Cromwell marches in, declares Fairfax a traitor and throws out all the MPs. The film's depiction of Fairfax as weak, fearful and uncertain, is clearly intended to provide a dramatic contrast to Cromwell's vision, strength and resolution.⁶¹ Despite so much of Fairfax's part in the civil war being fictionalized by the filmmaker, this portrayal of their relationship is firmly rooted in the historical notion that Fairfax was merely Cromwell's unwitting stooge. This perception arose from contemporary newsbooks and retrospective commentators as wide apart as Richard Baxter, Denzil Holles and Sir Philip Warwick.⁶² This is why admirers of Fairfax felt him to have been violated by the film, because its depiction of Fairfax was partial but plausible from this viewpoint. After all, this very image was cast into a silver medal in the Netherlands during 1650, possibly to satirize Fairfax's retirement; it depicted Cromwell as a devil and Fairfax as a fool.⁶³

⁶¹ *Oliver Cromwell*, an Irving Allen production directed by Ken Hughes (1970).

⁶² Hopper, '*Black Tom*', p. 213.

⁶³ British Museum, 1879, 1107.1, The devil Cromwell and the fool Fairfax (Netherlands, 1650).

This portrayal of Fairfax, much echoed in the film *Cromwell*, was challenged by a major new film released in 2003. With a budget of £13.5 million it was the first piece of cinema to place Fairfax in the central, starring role. It restored Fairfax to his true historical role as Lord General and portrayed Cromwell as his deputy. Initially entitled *Cromwell and Fairfax*, after recurring financial difficulties it was eventually released with the more dramatic title *To Kill a King*.⁶⁴ Dougray Scott played Fairfax as the hero character, the voice of pragmatism, moderation and reason, with the drama focusing on his troubled relationship with Cromwell. This was an interesting premise and Scott put conscientious effort into researching the historical Fairfax. Despite his scorn for the film itself, John Morrill conceded that Scott ‘makes something of the part of Fairfax, not the ditherer of too much historical writing, but a man who oscillates between two courses of action, and who believes like a just man in the German Army in the 1930s that it is better to grit one’s teeth and seek to mitigate abuses of power, than wash one’s hands and walk away.’⁶⁵ Yet ultimately, Scott’s Fairfax was straight-jacketed once again by being defined in response to Cromwell. Fairfax stands as the only man who can restrain the excesses of Tim Roth’s increasingly violent and psychopathic Cromwell. In return Roth’s Cromwell idolizes Fairfax but is jealous of his superior social class and his beautiful wife, played by Olivia Williams. Here a standard Hollywood trope was employed to enhance the audience’s interest; the Fairfaxes appear as a glamorous couple threatened by the political storm around them.⁶⁶ This was surely intended to shore up the audience’s identification with Fairfax as the

⁶⁴ *To Kill a King*, screenplay by Jenny Mayhew and directed by Mike Barker (2003).

⁶⁵ Morrill, ‘Oliver Cromwell and the civil wars’, in Doran and Freeman (eds), *Tudors and Stuarts on Film*, p. 215.

⁶⁶ Toplin, ‘Cinematic history’, p. 89.

hero of the film; a less conventionally attractive actress for the role was clearly out of the question. Here the filmmakers were disinterested in contemporary evidence, admittedly that of hostile satirists and royalist contemporaries, that depicted Lady Fairfax as unsightly and obese. Likewise, Lady Fairfax is portrayed as having royalist sympathies and being implicated in a plot for the king's escape. Her actual political position as a Presbyterian parliamentarian opposed to regicide in January 1649 was evidently considered too complicated for the film to communicate.⁶⁷

The film took enormous liberties with history, abandoning any attempt to be guided by historical evidence, or even the spirit of historical evidence, recently argued to be important criteria for an effective historical film.⁶⁸ Roth and Scott portrayed the two men as largely devoid of religious fervour, with Roth's Cromwell as an unbalanced maniac that descends into a caricature of how a modern revolutionary is supposed to behave. The film hoped thereby to craft an exciting, dynamic narrative of a modern revolution recognizable as such to a younger, mass audience. Its greatest weakness was that the screenplay was written by an ill-informed novice, an English graduate whose idea of what constitutes a revolution revolved around large numbers of gibbeted corpses adorning royal palaces. In an interview in *The Times* on 20 May 2000, she revealed that she had learnt to write screenplays from a £10 book.⁶⁹ Yet the film had merely

⁶⁷ Hopper, 'Black Tom', pp. 199–201.

⁶⁸ Natalie Zemon Davis, 'Movie or monograph? A historian / filmmaker's perspective', *The Public Historian*, 25 (2003), 45–8 (p. 47).

⁶⁹ Morrill, 'Oliver Cromwell and the civil wars', in Doran and Freeman (eds), *Tudors and Stuarts on Film*, p. 213.

followed the objective of most historical films in its pursuit of relevance to a modern audience: to ‘make the past accessible by collapsing it into the present.’⁷⁰

The film also seems miscast in allowing two short Scotsmen to play the imposing Englishmen Cromwell and Fairfax, while Rupert Everett, an Englishman who towered over them was cast as the dwarfish Scot, Charles I. Scott struggled to find any meaning in his dialogue; while Fairfax gets plenty of screen time, the writing is such that he comes across as easily led and bereft of anything significant to say. The film’s credits claim that it was ‘based on history’, but with ‘certain characters and events combined and fictionalized for dramatic purposes.’ Yet after the king’s execution, the plot becomes so far-fetched and inexplicable that this claim evaporates, with all connection to historical discourse severed. Ultimately, the film was neither based on history nor warmly received. *The Sunday Telegraph* lamented ‘Cromwell turned into comic book villain’, suspecting that Roth’s portrayal was calculated to appeal to American audiences. Philip French echoed in the *Observer Review* that the political ideas in the film were ‘weakened by making Fairfax so reasonable and attractive and turning Cromwell into a snarling totalitarian monster.’⁷¹

Yet, through Fairfax’s dilemma the film attempted to raise an important political question: how far should one collude in revolutionary events if one aims to bridle or moderate their impact? In a very botched way, the film at least tried to communicate something of value about the process of modern revolutions. It might also be appreciated for thinking that the

⁷⁰ Rosenstone, ‘The reel Joan of Arc’, p. 69.

⁷¹ Elizabeth Day and Chris Hastings, ‘Cromwell turned into comic book villain’, *The Sunday Telegraph*, 26 January 2003; Philip French, ‘You and whose New Model Army?’, *The Observer Review*, 18 May 2003.

character of Fairfax was worth portraying and that Fairfax's more moderate position merited vindication. Considering the destructive impact of the hugely successful film *Braveheart*, John Morrill has pointed out that the commercial failure of *To Kill a King* has proved a good thing for communicating the English Revolution responsibly as public history.⁷² However, this failure has not served Fairfax well, rendering further cinematic treatment of him on this scale highly unlikely for the foreseeable future. Indeed, in the 2008 series for Channel 4, *The Devil's Whore*, Fairfax was not even mentioned, and the leading parliamentarians opposed to Cromwell were restricted to those with more impressive revolutionary credentials: Thomas Rainborough, Edward Sexby and John Lilburne.⁷³ This neglect may not prove a disservice while the film industry continues to court validation from historians but at the same time seeks to keep them at arm's length, regarding them suspiciously as 'glorified fact-checkers' and 'truth police'.⁷⁴

The most recent portrayal of Fairfax has been on the stage, where he was played by Simon Kunz in Howard Brenton's play *55 Days* which premiered at the Hampstead Theatre from 18 October to 24 November 2012.⁷⁵ The play dramatized the period between Pride's Purge of 6 December 1648 and the king's execution on 30 January 1649. Brenton is an established socialist

⁷² Morrill, 'Oliver Cromwell and the civil wars', in Doran and Freeman (eds), *Tudors and Stuarts on Film*, p. 216.

⁷³ *The Devil's Whore*, a Channel 4 television series written by Martine Brant and Peter Flannery and directed by Marc Munden (2008).

⁷⁴ Daniel Blake Smith, 'The (un)making of a historical drama: a historian / screenwriter confronts Hollywood', *The Public Historian*, 25 (2003), 27–44 (p. 44).

⁷⁵ Howard Brenton, *55 Days* (London: Nick Hern Books, 2012). I would like to thank Jason Peacey for bringing this play to my attention.

playwright, influenced by Bertolt Brecht, whose works have frequently utilized historical themes to prompt us into examining the present. Despite the interjection of a fictitious private meeting between Cromwell and Charles I where the former pleaded the king spare himself execution, critics praised the play for having provided a sympathetic portrayal of the Revolution's impact on our modern democracy as well as capturing the dignity of the king in his last days. Kunz's portrayal of a judicious Fairfax shrinking from the uncharted territory of regicide also impressed, as did that of Abigail Cruttenden as Lady Fairfax.⁷⁶ Unlike in *To Kill a King*, Brenton ensured that his characters were deeply infused with religious beliefs, and his script's employment of fictionalized moments was not aimed at glamourizing particular characters, but at the illumination of historical truths.⁷⁷

Brenton's Fairfax is an exhausted general, equally exasperated with his Presbyterian enemies in Parliament, the intractable nature of the king and the insubordination of radicals within his army's ranks. Although idolized by his troopers, one of whom says 'I tell you that man has the wrath of God within him', he is clearly pushed along by events. His reliance upon Cromwell is stressed from the outset, with Brenton inventing a scene where Fairfax himself gallops off to Pontefract to recall Cromwell back to London. The complex nature of Fairfax's dilemma is well communicated by the script, with Fairfax entrusting Cromwell to steer a passage through the crisis that will not end in regicide. He is brought round to thinking that the trial will shock the king into seeing reason and help forge a new style of limited monarchy, a position

⁷⁶ Michael Billington, '55 Days – review', *The Guardian*, 25 October 2012; C. Spencer, '55 Days, Hampstead Theatre - review', *The Telegraph*, 25 October 2012.

⁷⁷ Sarah Hemming, 'Questions of faith', *The Financial Times*, 6 October 2012.

adopted by Cromwell right until the final sentence is passed.⁷⁸ Here Brenton showcases his familiarity with the recent historiography around the king's trial that argues the king's fate was not sealed until the last moment, with the king repeatedly being offered a way out, and many commissioners favouring alternative sentences.⁷⁹ Brenton's Lady Fairfax is depicted equally effectively, showcasing Brenton's familiarity with the newsbook literature of January 1649 that depicted her as quoting the exhortations of Pontius Pilate's wife, as well as being horrified by a dream of Lord Fairfax's head being brought to her bedchamber. Unlike her husband, she foresees the regicide and much of Cromwell's rise to power thereafter, warning Thomas prophetically: '“God's Englishman.” That is so dangerous.' The drama of Anne's supposed disruption of the king's trial is also capitalized upon, an opportunity overlooked in *To Kill a King*.⁸⁰

VI

Multiple and contrasting images of Fairfax have emerged from literature, film and fiction. While the military hero, Yorkshire patriot and 'great man' proved powerful representations until the mid-twentieth century, more recent depictions of Fairfax have concentrated on 1649 and showcased his anxiety, indecision and fragility. The focus on Fairfax has clearly shifted from his military triumphs of the 1640s to his supposed political shortcomings, contemplating explanations for his retirement and eclipse by Oliver Cromwell. These depictions of Fairfax matter for how the civil wars and revolution are perceived by the public, so historians ought to be

⁷⁸ Brenton, *55 Days*, pp. 13, 27–32, 47, 75, 89.

⁷⁹ Sean Kelsey, 'The trial of Charles I', *English Historical Review*, 118 (2003), 583–616; Sean Kelsey, 'The death of Charles I', *Historical Journal*, 45 (2002), 727–54.

⁸⁰ Hopper, 'Black Tom', p. 197; Brenton, *55 Days*, pp. 42–4, 68.

concerned with how such popular media communicate historical characters to modern viewers and readers. Rather than dismissing film and historical fiction as ‘unworthy of serious analysis’, this chapter’s engagement with recent representations of Fairfax by playwrights, novelists and filmmakers has demonstrated that despite a growing familiarity with the primary sources there remains much diversity and not a little uncertainty over how to interpret the English Revolution to the public, and Fairfax’s role within it.⁸¹ On this basis, it is clearly the depictions of Sir Thomas Fairfax inspired by the British Left, such as *Comrade Jacob* and *Winstanley* that stand out as the most well-informed, intriguing, multi-layered and sensitive. That they refrain, despite their political stance, from presenting Fairfax as an unthinking, upper-class tool for suppressing a revolution is a striking modern legacy for the man. Instead, they offer a more nuanced and complex depiction of his character which appreciates something of the extraordinary circumstances of 1649 and the dilemma thrust upon him. While they also remain partial, historically flawed and far from objective, they do constitute a well-informed and thoughtful attempt to historicize Fairfax’s part in the English Revolution for a wider audience with a depth and rigour that has been unmatched by similar media since.

⁸¹ Freeman, ‘Introduction: it’s only a movie’, pp. 15, 25.