

student interest and classroom discussion. Today's students may relate less enthusiastically to the more overtly political sections. In any case, neither book is sufficient alone.

Northern Essex Community College

Elizabeth J. Wilcoxson

Clayton R. Koppes and Gregory D. Black. *Hollywood Goes To War: How Politics, Profits and Propaganda Shaped World War II Movies*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990. Pp. x, 374. Paper, \$12.95.

We, and especially our students, are living in an increasingly visual age. Film and television, entertainment videos and those for instruction, video games, computer displays, and virtual reality simulations are almost a natural part of our high-tech daily lives in this last decade of the twentieth century. Naively, we have accepted this mediation of our existence without any real preparation or critical evaluation of its growing impact. It has become a significant aspect of our evolution into post-modernism. Yet, we often look without seeing, watch without comprehending, and, consequently, react without thinking.

Although there has been considerable historical scholarship on the uses of media for the support of totalitarian regimes like Nazi Germany, the Soviet Union, and Maoist China, there has been comparatively little done on the utilizations and effect of this media in freer societies. One such recent work which has now appeared in a paperback edition is *Hollywood Goes To War: How Politics, Profits and Propaganda Shaped World War II Movies* by Clayton R. Koppes and Gregory D. Black. The authors are well-qualified to treat this important topic: Koppes is an endowed professor of history and humanities at Oberlin College, and Black is a professor of communications at the University of Missouri, Kansas City.

As its subtitle indicates, this book is more than a film history. It is a thorough consideration of the impact of government influence plus industry self-censorship on American filmmaking during the Second World War (1939-1945) when Hollywood produced an estimated 2,500 pictures. After reading this fascinating volume, it becomes clear that the film industry's efforts during these years were fully integrated into the American war effort.

With strong government urging and strict censorship, developed and enforced by a "tight corporate oligarchy," wartime films quickly went beyond merely boosting morale and stimulating patriotism to blatant propaganda. While this was done largely in response to the demands of an all-out war, the Hollywood moguls never lost sight of the bottom line, grasping the opportunity to expand their vertical control over the industry and to increase their profits by giving the viewing public what it wanted to see and eventually came to expect.

The authors begin with the state of the industry in 1939 and trace the unfolding of these trends to the war's conclusion. In the process, many now-classic films from early efforts like *The Great Dictator* and *Sergeant York* to later ones like *Mrs. Miniver* and *Guadalcanal Diary* are discussed in detail. Such films darkly sharpened the images of the German and Japanese enemies while remaking those of America's British, Soviet, and Chinese partners in the name of Allied solidarity.

Hollywood Goes To War is clearly and concisely written, making it a very readable mix of American wartime, corporate, and film history. Although it is thoroughly researched and documented in notes and a bibliographical essay, an appendix, containing a chronological listing of the major films discussed would nevertheless be helpful. This book will appeal to anyone interested in the American homefront effort during World War II and in war films. It can be particularly useful for teachers who wish to understand better the effects of propaganda on a free society during times of crises. It will help them explain some of those vintage films they

might be using in their classes. Finally, the book will be useful in helping teachers to understand the impact of commercial visual media on their students in general.

The University of Texas at Arlington

Dennis Reinhartz

William H. Chafe. *The Unfinished Journey: America Since World War II*. New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991. Second edition. Pp. ix, 537. Cloth, \$35.00; Paper, \$17.95.

This is an updated edition of a popular text by the noted Duke University historian William H. Chafe. The original 1986 volume closed with the re-election of Ronald Reagan; the second edition carries the reader through the presidential campaign of 1988. Chafe's new material depicts a beleaguered Reagan hard pressed by the Iran-Contra scandal, the abortive nomination of Robert Bork to the Supreme Court, and a weakening American economy, who, consistent with his legendary luck, nevertheless manages to rehabilitate his reputation with the INF Treaty with the Soviets and an almost miraculous thaw in the Cold War. Still, Reagan comes across as little more than an "acting" president, a simple, if committed ideologue playing a role others have carefully scripted for him. The Gipper, as Chafe portrays him, calls to mind Mark Twain's comment that the only two traits essential for success in life are confidence and ignorance. George Bush fares no better in Chafe's account of the 1988 election, in which the candidates ignored substantive issues without treating voters to any particular elegance of style. Chafe decries the decline in the length of the average sound bite from 45 seconds in 1980 to nine seconds in 1988. Anything less, he suggests, and campaigns might well be airing only subliminal messages, but, he writes, "in a sense, that was the whole point of the Willie Horton ad."

One should not expect sympathetic treatments of Reagan and Bush. *The Unfinished Journey* is dedicated to "the beloved community," Chafe's term for the contemporary liberals and reformers who fought to end racial segregation, to win equal rights for American women, and to stop the war in Vietnam. Chafe, as he explains his approach, uses "the categories of race, class, and gender as a gauge to measure change and to understand what has occurred in our society." Chafe's preoccupation with the victories and failures of liberalism produces a less methodical coverage than that found in the ordinary text, and allows for some distortion. The politics of the conservative 1950s receive perfunctory treatment. Chafe skillfully describes the struggle for the Democratic presidential nomination in 1968, but says much less about the Republican contest, although it produced the eventual winner, Richard Nixon. A careless student reader might conclude that the New Left outnumbered the Silent Majority. Chafe, to be sure, makes no such claims, and for the most part he manages to combine successfully the new social history with traditional political and diplomatic history. There are two strong chapters on the origins and early years of the Cold War; Chafe argues persuasively that anti-Communist paranoia effectively throttled liberal impulses in the 1950s. There is also an excellent chapter on the civil rights movement, and a lively, if overly sympathetic, section on John F. Kennedy.

Chafe writes well, with an eye for the telling fact, as his figures about the shrinkage of the sound bite suggest. We learn, for example, that the wrestler Gorgeous George was actually a patient at New York's Bellevue psychiatric hospital. We also learn that by the mid-1980s, the interest on the national debt equalled the combined budgets of the departments of Labor, Commerce, Education, Agriculture, and five other major departments. Unfortunately, Chafe also repeats the old canard that President Eisenhower insisted on making every decision on the basis of a one-page memorandum. Despite the occasional lapse, however, *The Unfinished Journey* remains one of the two or three best surveys available on recent American history.