

Long Ago and Far Away: Hollywood and the Second World War

Robert Fyne

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The Second World War was the greatest social, political, and economic upheaval of the 20th century. As a popular Hollywood subject, WWII still enthralls viewers six decades after Allied commanders affixed their signatures on the victory document in Tokyo Bay. Recreating flag-waving charges, frontal beachhead assaults, commando raids, and even home front heroics, these motion pictures_for better or worse_provide the primary learning experience for postwar generations. After scrutinizing hundreds of screenplays, Robert Fyne has written an in-depth study of World War II films, analyzing the different storylines, points-of-view, and contemporary events found in each. In Long Ago and Far Away: Hollywood and the Second World War, Fyne examines WWII films from 1941 to the present, explaining how the content and mood in these productions paralleled national mores and politics. Some titles are laudatory, even chauvinistic, while others are frivolous or sophomoric. Biographical screenplays both glorify and damn various leaders. Some films bombard viewers with horrific experiences, while others, such as goofy science fiction titles with their wraiths and flying saucers, seem inappropriate. Love stories are examined, as well as films revealing Japanese prisoner of war deprivations and Nazi concentration camp atrocities. From Above and Beyond to Zone Troopers and The Best Years of Our Lives to Flags of Our Fathers, this is a compelling look at how filmmakers have dramatized this pivotal period in history. For historians, movie watchers, or social commentators, Long Ago and Far Away, complete with an elaborate filmography, offers new information about Hollywood's diverse interpretations of the Good War.

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