

Smallman is opening up a potential new pathway for research. (Although, as his own book reveals, such social histories can be blocked by the non-cooperation of the military itself!)

Some aspects of Smallman's argument are demonstrated better than others. For example, Chapter 7 is very good in showing the development of an intelligence and terror apparatus that was used inside the military itself to root out dissent. Smallman is also insightful on the programmatic preferences of the internationalist officers who won the internal battle by 1954. However, he is less illuminating about the link between internationalist military officers and the *União Democrática Nacional* (UDN or Democratic National Union), the chief civilian party in favor of the internationalists, and he also has little direct evidence of corruption. One also wishes that he had provided a few more links between 1954, when he essentially ends his story, and the coup of 1964 – to posit a general connection is plausible, but a lot happened over those ten years, and the direct impact of the events he analyzes on the coup is left rather unexplored. In addition, some words about the endurance of nationalism within Brazil's military might have been useful. For example, the ESG was widely seen as a center of intellectual resistance to neoliberal economic reform in the 1990s, and the majority of military personnel apparently voted for Lula in the presidential elections of 2002. This suggests that the internationalist/nationalist split that Smallman diagnoses in the 1950s still exists, in a different form, in the Brazilian military today.

This reader found several minor errors in the text – for example, it should be Delegacia (not Delegacion) Especial de Segurança Política (3); Ilha Grande is an island offshore of Angra dos Reis, and is not in the bay of Rio de Janeiro (93); and it should be Escola Superior de (not da) Guerra (107). Nevertheless, this book is well researched and written and offers suggestive insights to scholars interested in the origins of authoritarian rule, civil-military relations, and Brazilian political history. Smallman engages with a variety of other scholars in defense of his own lively interpretation of the development of the Brazilian army, and the book deserves a wide readership and careful attention.

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Anthony Chase, *Movies on Trial: The Legal System on the Silver Screen* (New York: The New Press, 2002).

For those of us who are not trained legal professionals, habitual criminals, or serial plaintiffs, films and television series about the law and its processes provide most of the images that shape our understanding of these issues. This is particularly the case in American theatres and households, where motion pictures and

legal dramas appear at times to be continually informing the viewer, accurately and inaccurately, about the rules and procedures of the legal system that affects his or her daily behaviour. Viewing the law as “a moral and political system, not just a regime of rules,” Anthony Chase’s analysis of the so-called “legal genre” of film in *Movies on Trial: The Legal System on the Silver Screen* includes not just the run-of-the-mill courtroom drama, but the entire legal system as presented on the silver screen in the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. The author’s general aim is to determine how these films fit into American history and politics, and in particular, how they influence the legal values and assumptions of the American people.

Like other scholars interested in film as a socio-cultural source of legal knowledge, Chase is troubled by the lack of a clearly defined legal genre. His attempt to formulate a less ambiguous definition is one of his central preoccupations. Is it possible to inventory films that deal with legal issues using a distinct genre similar to science fiction, horror, mystery, or melodrama? The problem, according to Chase, is that unlike these genres, there are few rules or boundaries accepted by legal scholars that set the parameters for such a category. This has produced a sub-discipline of legal scholarship where some scholars, including J.L. Breen and T.J. Harris, require the presence of a trial for a film to be considered part of the legal genre, while others, like D.A. Black, prefer a definition so broad that one is hard-pressed to name a film that would be excluded. Falling somewhere in the middle, Chase believes that “a definition of the legal genre should be located . . . between trial films (too narrow) and every commercial film ever made (too broad)” (169). Thus, the films analysed in *Movies on Trial* include those focused on a central trial, as well as many that depict lawyers and clients, the average citizen, the courts and other institutions “grappling with legal issues and conflicts, cases, and statutes, or the politics of the rule of law itself” (170). The result, an admirably broad sample of films organised in thematic chapters addressing such areas as liberal constitutionalism, criminal law and its processes, civil law, and international law.

The most interesting and thought provoking chapters address themes that have remained relatively untouched by American filmmakers. Why, for example, have so few films been produced dealing with the foundational history of the United States, and in particular, the American Revolution? One of the few explanations Chase offers is that the Anglo-American “special relationship” presents a challenge filmmakers cannot overcome, that being, the portrayal of one of America’s staunchest allies as the primary villain or antagonist of the story. He cites British filmmaker Hugh Hudson’s *Revolution* (1985) as one of the only serious treatments of the event, whereas most American films contribute “little to our understanding of American political and constitutional foundations”(35).

Chase mentions other possible explanations without elaborating on them. For example, the heroes and the mythology that surround the American

Revolution, and the institutions created in its wake, are not questioned to any great extent by the American people, filmmakers included. Instead, subsequent events, such as the civil war between the states, are measured against the ideals it is believed the Revolution represents. It is also possible that revolutionary movements in general are considered too politically sensitive. While the events and the principles that spawned the United States were themselves intensely ideological and revolutionary, American society throughout its subsequent history has been intensely counter-revolutionary, particularly during the twentieth-century characterised by relentless confrontations between the American-led western world and other opposing and seemingly incompatible political systems. Imagine, for example, an American filmmaker in the late 1940s or early 1950s summoning the nerve to address seriously – critically or even sympathetically – the ideological foundations of American society.

Likewise, international law has not been as popular a cinematic subject as criminal or civil law. Why is this? Certainly the popular culture of a given country is usually focused inward rather than outward. Yet it is curious that American filmmakers, citizens of one of the most forceful national advocates and architects of international law and its structures, have had so little interest in its portrayal through film. Chase offers little in explanation here except to remark, “The tenacious survival of the doctrine of sovereignty and its accompanying list of rights exclusive to states ... has prejudiced many against the idea of international law as *law*” (126). It is also possible, however, that the plethora of interpretations of international law held by Americans, including liberal-internationalism, conservative-internationalism, humanitarian-internationalism, unilateral-internationalism, and so on, makes the concept a difficult and confusing one for filmmakers to address. One should also remember that filmmakers and the studios employing them want to make money with their films, and it has yet to be shown that American audiences are clamouring for features uncovering the workings of the World Bank or UNESCO.

Are the “righteous” and even “cathartic” deaths of murderers and rapists at the hands of Dirty Harry Callaghan the images that inform audience conceptions of the average American police officer, or is it the more benign character present in other films? Both appear to have an equally significant influence on most viewers, leading to what lawyer and best-selling novelist Lisa Scottoline describes is an “almost complete merger of fiction and reality when it comes to the law” (159). Chase deals with the issue of cinematic realism in the book’s closing section, asking: “What does realism mean within the context of legal cinema?” (171) It is impossible to expect audiences to gain a realistic picture of the legal system through film, he insists, firstly, because the films themselves are often inaccurate in their portrayal of the issues, and secondly, because audiences lack a basic understanding of the legal system and remain “within a shadowy half world of legal knowledge and legal ignorance.” “Movies are made, exhibited, and

experienced by audiences within that half world, a universe of light and dark” (173). Through his examination of many films dealing with constitutional, criminal, civil, and international law, Chase concludes that while they provide a legal narrative to the audience, it is “a different *kind* of narrative, a different impression of the legal system than conventional legal narrative, the language of lawyers and courts.” The “visualization of legality” can be more or less true, but it is impossible to “argue that movies are simply a mirror held up to a system of blind justice, providing one more authorized account . . .” (180).

Whether or not a realistic image of the American legal system is a reasonable goal for filmmakers, the fact remains that their productions provide some of the most powerful, if not *the* most powerful images that inform the audience’s view of the system. This begs an important question that Chase chooses not to address in much detail: Should commercial filmmakers be expected to portray the American legal system in its pure form, or when it comes to the law is there still room for fiction? Aside from the minor criticisms above, however, Chase’s extensive and well-written analysis offers much of interest to serious scholars and movie-buffs alike. In particular, *Movies on Trial* presents a well-argued case for the study of the legal genre of film as an essential means of gauging how people understand the rules, regulations and procedures of the American legal system.

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Marc Edge, *Pacific Press: The Unauthorized Story of Vancouver’s Media Monopoly* (Vancouver, New Star, 2002).

The relationship between academia and the popular press has never been an easy one. Academics complain that journalists lack rigor. Editors complain that academics cannot write. Pity the poor PhD who tries to write a scholarly book in a journalistic style. The result is usually an unhappy marriage: not rigorous enough for scholars, not engaging enough for the general public.

Marc Edge’s advisors likely warned him about this when he set himself the task of writing the history of Vancouver’s two dominant newspapers, but unfortunately, *Pacific Press: The Unauthorized Story of Vancouver’s Media Monopoly* succeeds in being both dull and sensationalist. Not only is it filled with clichés, it lacks the narrative structure to draw a reader along.

It is too bad, because Edge chose a great subject. Vancouver is infamous for its lack of media diversity. Today, both the *Vancouver Sun* and the *Vancouver Province* are owned by CanWest Global. This means that the Aspers, according to a recent Department of Canadian Heritage report, control more than ninety-five percent of the city’s newspapers. They also own Vancouver’s two biggest tel-