

*Approaching Recent World History Through Film: Context, Analysis, and Research*. Scott C. M. Bailey. London; New York: Routledge, 2021. 212 pp. \$49.95. eBook ISBN: 9780367280888.

Visual media inundates our world every day with moving images, ranging from series, feature films, and documentaries, to a few short seconds of TikTok or YouTube videos, making it one of the most prevalent ways people receive entertainment and information. Educators at all academic levels are often on the hunt for films to use in class on topics, searching for ways to make the historical importance of particular events even more poignant for students. Upon initial review of Scott C. M. Bailey's *Approaching Recent World History Through Film: Context, Analysis, and Research*, it is clearly evident this is a welcome pedagogical tool for teachers in the world history classroom because of the work the author does to analyze and contextualize the historical content of films. This book is far more versatile than that, however, as Bailey has also set out to provide an invaluable guide on how to use films as historical sources in research projects by equipping scholars with the analytical foundation to incorporate visual media into historical research methods.

Bailey is unequivocal in his conviction that using films as historical sources can help us come to a deeper understanding about the history of the long twentieth century (from the late nineteenth through early twenty-first centuries). Visual media can be a powerful way to engage students and provide a better understanding of historical events, societies, and cultures. This is especially true of foreign films, which can offer unique and often unfamiliar perspectives that enable students to explore societies and cultures much different from their own. Indeed, films can help students understand that history is not a single, universal narrative but rather, different interpretations can depend on the time, place, and perspective of the filmmaker. For instance, the Japanese anime film *Grave of the Fireflies* (1988) can provide students with a Japanese civilian point of view on the atomic bombing carried out by the United States in 1945. Films can also serve as a medium to explore historical events in an accessible and engaging narrative structure students may find more appealing than a textbook. Examples abound, from *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1930, 1979, 2022) as an example of the brutality and futility of the Great War to *Cuba and the Cameraman* (2017) that uses the director's collected footage to examine the effects of forty years of Fidel Castro's rule on the lives of everyday citizens. Instructors using films can foster critical thinking skills by comparing a film's depiction of events such as those in *Dunkirk* (2017) with textual primary and secondary sources, and encouraging students to consider such issues as bias, perspective, historical accuracy, and fact and fiction in historical films. Bailey's book is a vital resource in engaging students in this way.

Two key elements make the book particularly strong in its practical applicability: its global focus apparent in the selection of the films and its organization. An introduction defines important terms, discusses world historical interpretation, and identifies several of the conventions and assumptions that go along with different types of world history films. Delving further into analysis, Bailey also explores how to identify arguments in historical films and how to analyze their historical content and context. The conclusion provides ideas on incorporating films into historical

research and writing at any level; both chapters act as vital buttresses to the internal chapters detailing the selected films. Bailey arranges Chapters 2 through 7 into meticulously organized thematic sections which include seven to ten films each on historical biographies, global conflict, and war, with an emphasis on Japanese wartime experiences, colonization and decolonization, global mobility, mass violence and oppression, and political economy. This curation adds an additional layer of utility, steering readers toward crucially important or unique films, thereby elevating the book's pedagogical value. For each film, the author provides a standardized structure including the title in both its original language and English translation, a brief summary and analysis of the most important aspects of the film, contextual information, and suggestions on analyzing its historical content in educational settings. Moreover, Bailey offers many prompts for discussion, historical timelines relevant to the historical event, and suggestions for further reading. This structure and pedagogical content allow the text to be a field guide for educators seeking to integrate films into their curriculum.

Bailey received training as a world historian at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa, in the program then directed by Jerry Bentley, going on to teach world history, cross-cultural encounters, and Asian history through film in academic institutions around the world. His teaching experience and understanding of global processes, cross-cultural encounters, and comparative study, shows. Bailey approaches his subject matter seamlessly from the perspective of a world historian. Rather than leaning heavily toward Western films, this book offers examples of films from around the world, facilitating an inclusive approach to world history and providing material for instructors and students to consider when thinking about the intersection of historical narrative and perspective. This grounding in world history lends itself well to instructors assigning the book in whole or in part as an assigned text in a world history course or a film course.

Many of the films Bailey uses in the text will be familiar to historians and film buffs alike, from Charlie Chaplin's *Modern Times* (1936) to Oliver Hirschbiegel's *Downfall* (2004). Each chapter includes award winners, films that received critical acclaim, blockbusters, innovative releases, and groundbreaking documentaries along with less well known foreign titles such as the film shot on location exploring the effects of South African apartheid, *Come Back, Africa* (1959) or *The Blue Kite* (1994), banned by the Chinese government due to its critical treatment of the Cultural Revolution. The prevalence of streaming services means many of these films are far more accessible now than perhaps a decade ago. A review incorporating even the most notable titles from each chapter would fill pages of this journal. Indeed, the convenient filmography at the end of the book lists 97 films.

Bailey's strongest chapter is Chapter 5, focused on how films have portrayed global migration and immigration due to his analysis of mobility as a transformative experience. Considering the unprecedented scale of human mobility in the twentieth century, whether as the occupational or leisure travel of elites or those forced to migrate because of political or economic factors, it is an excellent topic for inclusion in the book. Among Bailey's curated titles for this chapter are *Dersu Uzala* (1975), made by Kurosawa Akira in collaboration with the Soviet Mosfilm to explore the representation of indigenous people on long distance journeys, in this case in the Russian Far

East at the turn of the twentieth century. Charlie Chaplin's *The Immigrant* (1917) also appears in this chapter, which the author uses to consider links between the historic immigrant experience and that of today. Thor Heyerdahl's *Kon-Tiki* (1951), based on his experiential research that proved ancient people could make long-distance sea voyages, and the incredible historical documentary *The Navigators: Pathfinders of the Pacific* (1983), are also included. Together, these two films not only explore the possibilities and expertise of ancient seafaring peoples but also encourage discussion about the change of historical and anthropological theories over time.

In conclusion, *Approaching Recent World History Through Film: Context, Analysis, and Research* is an indispensable resource for those interested in exploring intersections of film and world history. Its broad scope and practical design make it a must-read for educators and researchers alike, offering innovative ways to approach historical analysis and pedagogy. It can be an informative and entertaining reading assignment to students in a world history class, in a course on any of the primary topics covered in the book chapters, and especially in one that dedicates significant time to using film as an historical source. This book is also highly recommended for advanced high schoolers through graduate students intending to use film as part of a research project, film analysis, or interdisciplinary essay. Researchers will also find usefulness here, especially in Bailey's discussion of questions and ideas about critical film analysis of world historical events that can help foster innovative research project design and execution. This book is profoundly important to world history teaching and scholarship. It should exist on bookshelves next to Marnie Hughes-Warrington's *History Goes to the Movies: Studying History on Film* (Routledge, 2006) and Robert A. Rosenstone's *History on Film/Film on History* (Routledge, 2017).

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