

Departments of Political Science and what they have to say about the state of play in an important area of constitutional law reflects this background.

As in most collections, the chapters vary in quality. It has to be said, however, that the work collected is of a very high standard. No one seriously interested in the work of the Supreme Court will want to ignore it. The general reader will also find material that is useful. Worthy of special note is the contribution of the editor, David Ryden, who offers us a superb analysis of the campaign finance problem in addition to his introductory and summary chapters. Other significant contributions include a marvellous essay, written from a conservative perspective, by Bradley A. Smith on plebiscites in which he discusses *Romer v Evans*, and the chapter by Nancy Maveety that assess the record of the Rehnquist Court. But every reader will find something stimulating. Because I am interested in affirmative action and the politics of multiculturalism, for example, I very much appreciated Stephen E. Gottlieb's evaluation of *Kiryas Joel* in which the Court was asked to allow New York to create a separate school district specifically to accommodate its Hasidic community.

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Ian Scott, *American Politics in Hollywood Film* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), 184 pp., £15.95, ISBN 0748612467.

This is a good book on an important topic. Not only does it carefully describe and analyse a large number of Hollywood films on American politics, it also provides brief discussions of relevant film theories. As a result, the book might be quite useful in undergraduate courses where the instructor wants to provide a gentle entry point for students to film theory while also engaging them in debates about American politics.

Chapter 1 is devoted to an exposition of theory. Chapter 2 introduces the reader to a number of films of the 1930s and 1940s that have been forgotten in an effort to put classic films like *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* and *Citizen Kane* into historical context. Chapter 3 focuses on films that deal with electoral campaigns. Chapter 4 deals with 'conspiracy films'-including most of Oliver Stone's work, but also films like Francis Ford Coppola's *The Conversation*, Alan J. Pakula's *All the President's Men* and Sydney Pollack's *Three Days of the Condor*. Ian Scott discusses these films as part of the larger genre of action thrillers, but also does a good job of parsing their political messages. Chapter 5 focuses on political biographies, particularly on films about specific presidents like *Wilson*, *Sunrise at Campobello*, *JFK* and *Nixon*. Chapter 6 deals with the strange satirical political films of the 1990s like *Wag the Dog*, *Bob Roberts* and *Primary Colors*. The book lacks a concluding chapter.

The argument put forward in this book is that Hollywood 'has served to ground many of the fundamental principles and beliefs of the nation into the consciousness of its citizenry through symbolic as well as pedagogic means'. More negatively, the author argues that Hollywood 'has somehow been complicit in the simplification of the democratic debate' (p. 3).

Scott notes that Hollywood uses existing myths/symbols to make filmic statements. In most Hollywood films about US politics, liberal use is made of important monuments. In *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*, for example, the Lincoln Memorial is used to symbolise integrity in democratic leadership. The colossal but benign image of Lincoln is associated with 'triumph in the face of adversity, with sacrifice, and with preservation of the republic in a time of great upheaval'. In Oliver Stone's movie *Nixon*, there is an important scene in which Richard Nixon debates with anti-war protesters at the Lincoln Memorial.

Another theme highlighted by Scott is the frequent plot element of 'betrayed values'. In films like *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*, *Citizen Kane*, *The Candidate*, *Primary Colors* and *Bulworth*, one of the key characters is portrayed as having betrayed his or her own core values during the film. The film then explores how that character deals with self-betrayal.

Undergraduate lecturers might find this book useful in a course on American politics that also screened some of the more important films. Students might be put off a bit by the constant references to articles by (to them and to most other readers) relatively unknown specialists in film theory and analysis in obscure journals. However, I found this to be only a little distracting and certainly not fatal. I would recommend the book both for scholars and for use in undergraduate courses.

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