# Contents

List of Illustrations  ix  
Preface  x  
Introduction: The Social and Cultural History of American Film  1  

## PART I  THE SILENT ERA  29

Introduction: *Intolerance* and the Rise of the Feature Film  29  
1  Silent Cinema as Social Criticism  
   Kay Sloan, “Front Page Movies”  31  
2  Silent Cinema as Historical Mythmaker  
   Eric Niderost, “The Birth of a Nation”  43  
3  The Revolt Against Victorianism  
   Lary May, “Douglas Fairbanks, Mary Pickford, and the New Personality”  52  
4  Primary Sources  63  
   *Edison v. American Mutoscope Company*  63  
   “The Nickel Madness”  65  
   *Mutual Film Corp. v. Industrial Commission of Ohio*  67  
   Fighting a Vicious Film: Protest Against *The Birth of a Nation*  69  
   Boston Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, 1915  69  
   Analysis by Francis Hackett  69

## PART II  HOLLYWOOD’S GOLDEN AGE  71

Introduction: Backstage During the Great Depression: *42nd Street*, *Gold Diggers of 1933*, and *Footlight Parade*  71  
5  Depression America and its Films  
   Maury Klein, “Laughing Through Tears”  75
Contents

6 The Depression’s Human Toll 82
   Peter Roffman and Jim Purdy, “Gangsters and Fallen Women”

7 Depression Allegories 91
   Thomas H. Pauly, “Gone with the Wind and The Grapes of Wrath as Hollywood Histories of the Great Depression”

8 African Americans on the Silver Screen 100
   Thomas R. Cripps, “The Evolution of Black Film”

9 Primary Sources 112
   The Introduction of Sound 112
   “Pictures That Talk” 112
   Review of Don Juan 113
   “Silence is Golden” 113
   Film Censorship 116
   The Sins of Hollywood, 1922 116
   “The Don’ts and Be Carefuls” 118
   The Motion Picture Production Code of 1930 119

PART III WARTIME HOLLYWOOD 129

   Introduction: Hollywood’s World War II Combat Films 129

10 Casablanca as Propaganda 133
   Randy Roberts, “You Must Remember This: The Case of Hal Wallis’ Casablanca”

11 Bureau of Motion Pictures Report: Casablanca 142

12 John Wayne and Wartime Hollywood 144
   Randy Roberts, “John Wayne Goes to War”

13 The Woman’s Film 163
   Jeanine Basinger, “When Women Wept”

14 Primary Sources 170
   US Senate Subcommittee Hearings on Motion Picture and Radio Propaganda, 1941

PART IV POSTWAR HOLLYWOOD 175

   Introduction: Double Indemnity and Film Noir 175

15 The Red Scare in Hollywood 179
   Peter Roffman and Jim Purdy, “HUAC and the End of an Era”

16 The Morality of Informing 187
   Kenneth R. Hey, “Ambivalence and On the Waterfront”

17 Science Fiction as Social Commentary 198
   Stuart Samuels, “The Age of Conspiracy and Conformity: Invasion of the Body Snatchers” (1956)
18 The Western as Cold War Film
Richard Slotkin, “Gunfighters and Green Berets: The Magnificent Seven and the Myth of Counter-Insurgency”
207
19 Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight
Eric Avila, “Film Noir, Disneyland, and the Cold War (Sub)Urban Imaginary”
219
20 Primary Sources
United States v. Paramount Pictures, Inc. (1947)
Hearings Regarding the Communist Infiltration of the Motion Picture Industry
US House of Representatives Committee on Un-American Activities, 1947
US House of Representatives Committee on Un-American Activities, 1951
The Miracle Decision
Joseph Burstyn, Inc. v. Wilson, Commissioner of Education of New York, et al. (1952)
234
235
235
235
238
PART V HOLLYWOOD AND THE TUMULTUOUS 1960s
Introduction: Bonnie and Clyde
241
21 A Shifting Sensibility
Charles Maland, “Dr. Strangelove: Nightmare Comedy and the Ideology of Liberal Consensus”
243
22 Films of the Late 1960s and Early 1970s
255
23 Reaffirming Traditional Values
Daniel J. Leab, “The Blue Collar Ethnic in Bicentennial America: Rocky”
264
24 Presenting African Americans on Film
Aram Goudsouzian, “The Rise and Fall of Sidney Poitier”
272
25 Coming to Terms with the Vietnam War
Randy Roberts and David Welky, “A Sacred Mission: Oliver Stone and Vietnam”
281
26 Primary Sources
301
PART VI HOLLYWOOD IN OUR TIME
Introduction: A Changing Hollywood
305
27 Feminism and Recent American Film
Aspasia Kotsopoulos, “Gendering Expectations: Genre and Allegory in Readings of Thelma and Louise”
309
28 Hollywood Remembers World War II 329
  John Bodnar, “Saving Private Ryan and Postwar Memory in America”

29 East Meets West 340
  Minh-Ha T. Pham, “The Asian Invasion (of Multiculturalism) in Hollywood”

30 Immigration at the Movies 354
  Carlos E. Cortés, “The Immigrant in Film: Evolution of an Illuminating Icon”

31 Movies and the Construction of Historical Memory 364
  Steven Mintz, “Movies, History, and the Disneyfication of the Past: The Case of Pocahontas”

Bibliography of Recent Books in American Film History 371
Index 395