



Celluloid Mushroom Clouds: Hollywood And Atomic Bomb (Critical Studies in Communication and in the Cultural Industries)

Joyce Evans

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Celluloid Mushroom Clouds is a historical account of how the movie industry responded to specific economic and political forces over the postwar years. Joyce Evans investigates the transformation of the imagery associated with atomic technology found in Hollywood film produced and distributed between 1947 and 1964. Incorporating qualitative and quantitative research methods, over 90 films are analyzed in terms of their historical context and the context of film production and distribution. The industry-focused approach presented in the book views cultural production as a material process unfolding under specific economic, political, and cultural conditions and emphasizes the “pressures and limits” of production that are inscribed in cinematic texts. The study illustrates in concrete detail how the cinematic texts negotiated by audiences are produced in highly concentrated industries and are constructed as a result of often contradictory determinants. These determinants work to shape the texts produced by encouraging, for example, the production of particular genres and by privileging a specific set of images over others. Evans argues that through these images, Hollywood articulated a limited critique of the Cold War ideology, which it also helped to create. She concludes that Hollywood’s overall ideological effect has been to restrict the discursive means available for defining social reality.

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