

Editor's Choice

Virginia Woolf and War: Fiction, Reality, and Myth. Mark Hussey, editor. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1992. Pp. 273. \$29.95.

A few months before her fatal self-immersion in the River Ouse near her Sussex home in 1941, Virginia Woolf recorded this barely coherent, but almost unbearable, vision in her diary:

Oh I try to imagine how one's killed by a bomb. I've got it fairly vivid—the sensation: but cant see anything but suffocating nonentity following after. I shall think—oh I wanted another 10 years—not this—& shant, for once be able to describe it. It—I mean death; no, the scrunching & scrambling, the crushing of my bone shade in on my very active eye & brain: the process of putting out the light,—painful? Yes. Terrifying. I suppose so—Then a swoon; a drum; two or three gulps attempting consciousness—& then, dot dot dot (2 Oct 40)

In an ambiguous projection (“I suppose so”) of the annihilation of the wellspring of her art, Woolf, at the most intimate and personal level, represents the direct impact of war on her body. But, as she recognizes, war's destructive power goes even beyond her own ability to either fully sense or fully express it. The effort can only trail off in the abyssal ellipsis of “dot dot dot.” We might designate this as Woolf's own Morse code signaling inevitable oblivion in the Blitzkrieg, that indiscriminate aerial bombardment she heard every night while lying in bed. Woolf's final months on earth were consumed by this terror; having succumbed to madness during one World War, she was both unwilling and unable to endure the horrors of yet another.

Woolf's brilliantly creative life and tragically despairing death could not have happened without the two World Wars. Mark Hussey's critical anthology, focusing on her complex and evolving responses to war, is a necessary and welcome addition to recent correctives to Woolf's ill-deserved reputation, promulgated by New Critics and British socialist commentators, as a politically and historically disengaged High Modernist. Even recent feminist critics like Elaine Showalter have continued to articulate this version of Woolf as either unwilling or unable to "accommodate the facts and crises of day-to-day experience" in her work (qtd. in Hussey 237). Aside from the personal sufferings Woolf owed to war, a personal intensity which suffuses her literary production, the 15 contributors to Hussey's book remind all interested Woolf readers and scholars that war's social and cultural implications formed a crucial, and consistent, component of her fictional output.

Woolf's literary achievement spanned the two World Wars, from her first novel, *The Voyage Out* (1915), to her last, *Between the Acts* (1941). As Hussey puts it in his introduction, "Reading Woolf as a war novelist marks out a new trajectory for her fiction" (5), situating even her seemingly most abstract novels such as *The Waves* (1930), as Judith Lee does so persuasively, in an ethics-based critique of militarism. Reading *The Waves* as a novel about the warfare which sustains imperialism, Lee probes "the profoundly if paradoxically social nature of Woolf's mysticism" (199). Woolf emerges, therefore, as a substantively materialist critic, fully engaged with the historical and social implications of war in very specific ways. Often it is by subtle indirection, as in such early works as *Jacob's Room* (1922); but increasingly, war provided an overt structuring presence to her later works, as Patricia Cramer points out in her useful analysis of that still woefully underrated novel, *The Years* (1937). Hussey's anthology establishes that it is Woolf's critique of systematized male domination and violence (in both the domestic and political realms) which lends her entire corpus of fictional work an encompassing unity of vision and insight. Collaborators Nancy Topping Bazin and Jane Hamovit Lauter put it succinctly in their essay, "To read Virginia Woolf's fiction intelligently, the reader must recognize fully the extent to which war

shaped her vision and the reasons why it had such an impact" (14). This anthology of criticism admirably succeeds in doing just that.

Moreover, many of Hussey's contributors, such as Karen L. Levenback and Patricia Laurence, make a wholly convincing case for Woolf as one of this century's preeminent theorists of war in the polemical non-fiction works which also spanned the length of her career, from "War in the Village" (1918) to *Three Guineas* (1938) and beyond (as in the 1940 essay "Thoughts on Peace in an Air Raid," a significant statement which is bafflingly ignored by all of Hussey's contributors). Writing from feminist and historicist perspectives, many of the essayists here underscore Woolf's commitment in her non-fiction to defining the relationship between domestic violence in the private realm and mass-scale violence on the public field of battle. Laurence, in particular, in "The Facts and Fugues of War," reiterates Woolf's thesis that war was the "bridge" which connects the "tyranny and servility of the private house," as Woolf expressed it in *Three Guineas*, with the political tyranny of Europe's fascist warmongers. Laurence's essay is especially useful in analyzing the specific contemporary mass media images of the 1930s which reinforced the idea of war as the connecting "bridge" in Woolf's formulation. As Judith Lee argues, we can now see, as Woolf's detractors have not, the continuity between her fiction and her polemical writings: Lee, Laurence, and Bazin and Lauter all emphasize Woolf's relentless scrutiny of the causes of war inherent in patriarchy. In short, this valuable anthology insists that, in Hussey's unequivocal words, "all Woolf's work is deeply concerned with war" (3), an insistence which leads many of his contributors to give us some marvelous new insights into Woolf's life and works.

To end with just one example, Roger Poole's brilliant reading of war in *To the Lighthouse* sheds light on the stylistic device in the "Time Passes" chapter of bracketing in parentheses the bluntly matter-of-fact narrative of traumatic events in the Ramsay family during the Great War. Poole connects these passages to the banal and systematized communication by soldiers according to pre-formatted responses on the Field Service Postcard (a dehumanizing and bureaucratic form of communication, as Paul Fussell points out in *The Great War and Modern Memory*). Poole offers a way of understanding Woolf's "Modernist mimesis" (87) as it

was inspired by the experience of war; the novel, as all her works do, reflects upon, and critiques, the power of modern warfare to refuse and annihilate common humanity. Hussey's anthology effectively reminds us that while Woolf's body could not withstand the cruelty of war, her body of work lives on as a powerful rebuke to war and those who make it.

D. A. Boxwell

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Recommended Reading

Patriotic Culture in Russia During World War I. Hubertus F. Jahn. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995. Pp. 229. \$39.95.

Russia was not the only nation to suffer a catastrophe during World War I. But the effect of societal meltdown on the subsequent Russian revolution is still a vital question, considering the long shadow cast by communism over the twentieth century. Hubertus F. Jahn explores this question in compelling fashion with a fascinating cultural history, charting the rise and fall of Russian patriotism during the first few years of the Great War. He sets himself the task of measuring patriotism through "popular entertainment and mass culture" (5) to show how people from all classes gradually lost vital interest in the war. Along the way, the reader is introduced to antique postcards, old photos and film posters, and is provided a ringside seat at circuses featuring lady wrestlers and pigs dressed as generals. Mr. Jahn proves an insightful guide throughout, foregoing theoretical discussion in favor of interesting anecdotes and simple, convincing elucidation. And he shows exactly what the common soldier was fighting for at the outset, how that initial inspirational

light faded, and then re-ignited into a new flame that makes Lenin's revolution understandable.

Just as trench warfare consisted of generals fighting the previous war, artists initially celebrated popular patriotic sentiment through media grounded in previous centuries. Thus, the traditional "lubok", or woodcarving with an easily understood message, was pressed into service as in previous wars. Prints depicted knightly Russians thrashing villainous Germans, a message that held constant even as the lubok style was adopted by Kazimir Malevich and his fellow Futurists, or used as the basis for new media such as photographic postcards. Jahn also uses these simple propaganda vehicles to show how the advent of new technologies—the submarine, zeppelin and airplane—was incorporated into art even as tacticians were struggling to understand the role of these new weapons on the battlefield. Indeed, one is reminded of the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, prompting Afghans to weave designs of Russian armored personnel carriers and AK47 machine guns into their rugs. And Jahn helps the reader to decipher the satiric messages of these illustrations; in one picture, the Turkish sultan is shown seated in a galosh, which is a Russian idiom for finding oneself in a tight spot. But the author also points out how escapist fantasies replaced graphic images of battle after the first year of war. This escapism, asserts Jahn, reveals a split "not between high and popular culture but between the state and a society that had lost all interest in the war" (83) that was now going badly.

The war as depicted on stage shows this same discouragement over time. Initially, audiences were treated to dramatic reenactments of combat, and the patriotic fervor informing the action was suitably abstract. Soldiers went to the front for tsar, motherland, and the slavie fraternity. This high-flown sentiment was barbed with easily understood satire. Circuses devised allegorical skits using pigs dressed as German generals, and women wrestlers conveyed a subtext of war as primal sporting event. But the call to defend an abstract slavie brotherhood wore thin as combat losses mounted; Lev Tolstoy mocked this motive nearly a half century earlier as the last refuge of the feckless Vronsky in *Anna Karenina*. Furthermore, tsarist censors quickly objected to the lampooning of German royalty on the grounds that it might trigger a backlash

against their own masters in St Petersburg, a fear which illuminates the vulnerability of Nicholas II. Even the women wrestlers, Jahn points out, unintentionally highlighted the shortage of men caused by the war. So the traditional sentiment and the reliable punchline were no longer working, and only a new ideology could infuse the old forms with new life. It would require a Vladimir Mayakovsky to once again put theatrical allegory to effective use. Perhaps fittingly, with his fantastical *Mystery-Bouffe* he wrote the new Communist myth of creation.

Jahn shows that this was clearly a time when rough and ready inventiveness catered to each particular audience. Propaganda cars toured the front lines showing primitive movies produced at the rate of one a day by Moscow studios; Lenny Bruce-style standup comedians satirized the war for urban intellectuals; dance nightclubs featured floor shows under faux palm trees and blue moons to lull bourgeois audiences into a denial of war's reality. (An interesting comparison might be made with Cuban extravaganzas cooked up for Soviet bureaucrats in Havana during the late 1980's as the Russian empire disintegrated.) Jahn reveals popular culture in all its garishness, "crude and sensationalist" (168), going for the belly laugh with all the desperation of a knockout blow in a Petrushka puppet show. No more Chekhovian dissection of the psyche; supercharged patriotic tableaux vivants featuring casts of hundreds now predominated, along with movies overripe with schmaltz and easy sentiment. But again, such mass entertainment could not paper over growing disaffection with a moribund regime. The old values were failing on every front, and traditional tools for drumming up patriotic fervor, even the nationalistic operas of Glinka and Mussorgsky, no longer worked their magic.

Patriotic Culture works best when painting a picture: the circus, for example, where "ordinary people crowded the galleries and swarmed out to the street during intermission" while "the bourgeois and aristocratic visitors . . . promenaded through carpeted hallways, viewed exotic fish in aquariums, and sipped champagne at the buffet" (86). And the author's colorful portrait of the "estrada," a peculiarly Russian form of folk variety show, convincingly demonstrates the diversity, sympathy, and broadbased popularity of that medium. Inevitably the individual reader might wish the

author to have explored a particular point further. For instance, Jahn simply notes the popularity of tearoff calendars showing famous generals, but it would be interesting to know if there was a connection in the popular mind with similar calendars celebrating Orthodox saints. Sometimes his categories, such as dividing posters into three motifs of traditional heroes, soldiers at work, and needed war materiel, aren't particularly edifying. And occasionally the author's prose is a bit stuffy; the "phenomenon of cultural convergence under the influence of a unifying patriotic stimulus" (183) simply means that everybody supported the war effort. But these are lapses few and far between. What we receive is well-reasoned proof, with vivid support, of how popular culture reflected a major change in the concept of patriotism held by Russians from every class. Whether soldier or minister, we see Russians switching allegiance away from the abstract concepts of empire and Pan-Slavism, to a non-ideological identification with their fellow countrymen. Lenin, with his unambiguous call for peace, land, and bread, would not be far behind.

In this thought-provoking and well-researched book, Hubertus Jahn clearly demonstrates that "Russians had a pretty clear idea whom they were fighting in the war, but not for whom and for what" (173). Among the many illustrations in this book is a photograph of a Russian general, a figure who might have been seen at a charity event featuring the conventionally comforting sounds of a military band. With his glassy stare and broad moustaches, however, the general presents to the modern eye a Monty Pythonesque image, a Victorian authority figure about to fall off his pedestal from the weight of his own jaw. After reading Jahn's account, one feels that pre-revolutionary Russians ultimately shared the same view of that general as we do today.

—Howard Swartz
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Briefly Noted

Titus Andronicus: Critical Essays. Philip C. Kolin, editor. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1995. Pp. 518. \$75.00.

Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* details the fall of a Roman military hero who succeeds on the front but fails at home. In *Titus Andronicus: Critical Essays*, editor Philip C. Kolin shares the Roman's inconsistent performance, though certainly not to such an extreme degree. Kolin plainly states that his collection of essays will give "a survey, by no means exhaustive, of some of the most significant criticism of *Titus*" (14). He admits that his volume is "primarily concerned" with twentieth-century criticism (9), yet he manages to insert some snippets of significant earlier criticism, including Edward Ravenscroft's oft-quoted (especially in these essays) 1687 pronouncement that *Titus* "seems rather a heap of rubbish than a structure" (375).

However, *Titus* was "extremely popular on the Elizabethan stage" (41), and in the intervening centuries, critics have tried to account for this fact by moving their focus from apologizing for Shakespeare and/or doubting his single hand in the play to examining the play itself. Hence, Kolin treats us to essays by such critics as Eugene M. Waith, Leslie A. Fiedler, Carolyn Asp, David Bevington, and Jan Kott that re-evaluate the play based on rhetoric, "gender, race, sexuality, and violence" (13), among other topics.

Kolin divides his volume into two major parts: the first called "*Titus Andronicus* and the Critics" and the second "*Titus Andronicus* on Stage." Because *Titus*, after Shakespeare's time, has rarely been performed, the second part is only about one-third as long as the first. Nevertheless, this collection succeeds in convincing the reader that *Titus* has been unjustly neglected and that the play merits serious re-consideration. The section dealing with stage history includes essays on international performances (as well as photographs) and shows that successful productions have ranged

from the graphic to the symbolic. It also highlights Peter Brook's landmark 1955 production, starring Sir Laurence Olivier, which is credited with reviving interest in the play.

Notwithstanding Kolin's accomplishment in making these articles accessible, there are some drawbacks. For example, the volume has no index or Latin glosses, and the essays written specifically for this collection do not even adhere to the same format. (Some have "Works Cited," while others do not, etc.) More importantly, the earliest criticism only dates back to 1896 and the earliest stage history to 1687. Surely, Francis Meres or Ben Jonson (to name only two) could have been at least excerpted to give readers the views of Shakespeare's contemporaries in their own words. In addition, quite a few typographical errors interfere with the quality of the essays.

Although regrettably none of these articles concentrate on the military qualities of this warrior/hero, this collection (and this play) should still interest those scholars studying war and literature in the English Renaissance. Despite its shortcomings, all in all, this collection is a valuable one, if only for the fact that it points out the sparseness of *Titus* criticism. Kolin has performed well in the face of such adversity.

—Kathi A. Vosevich
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Walt Whitman's America: A Cultural Biography. David S. Reynolds. New York: Knopf, 1995. \$30.00.

The past ten years have seen a renewed interest in what Walt Whitman described as the lunar light of his poems, the ways in

which *Leaves of Grass* reflects the “light” of the culture in which it was written. David Reynolds’ *Walt Whitman’s America: A Cultural Biography* may very well be the culmination of this scholarly trend, for while previous studies have focused on Whitman’s politics, sexuality, working-class loyalties, and immersion in print culture, the comprehensiveness of Reynolds’ work both benefits from and supersedes that of his predecessors. Like Whitman’s own expansive poetic self, the book’s discussion of 19th-century America “contains multitudes,” and its subjects range from Horace Mann’s theories of education to the emergence of an American school of acting with Junius Brutus Booth’s performance of *Richard III*.

Although relatively brief, Reynolds’ treatment of the Civil War provides a valuable perspective on Whitman’s personal and literary responses to the conflict. Throughout the 1850s, the poet feared the Union’s break-up, and as scholars have frequently illustrated, the early editions of *Leaves of Grass* attempt to resolve the various moral and constitutional dilemmas facing ante-bellum America. With the outbreak of war, however, Whitman became an enthusiastic supporter of the Union cause, believing, like Lincoln, that such a trial would purge the nation of its iniquities. Poems such as “Beat! Beat! Drums!” and “First O Songs for a Prelude” celebrate the war’s capacity to meld America’s individual citizens into a regimented, national whole.

Where Reynolds’ work is most valuable, however, is in his discussion of the two years Whitman spent in Washington DC during the war. After learning that his brother George had been wounded at Fredericksburg, Whitman traveled south to find him, thus beginning the poet’s ten-year residence in the nation’s capitol. Bringing oranges, candy, and small gifts of money, Whitman was a tireless visitor to the army’s hospital wards, offering comfort to wounded Union soldiers and even assisting their doctors and nurses. Many of the letters Whitman wrote home for these soldiers survive today, and they provide a compelling record of the poet’s literally becoming the voice of his people. While Whitman’s loving devotion to many of these young men has provoked much inquiry into his sexuality, Reynolds provides an important context for understanding how intense same-sex friendships were widely

prevalent in 19th-century America, particularly during the Civil War.

Equally significant is the way in which Reynolds explores Whitman's engagement with sensational accounts of the war in newspapers, magazines, photographs, and novels. Having visited the front lines, as well as the hospital wards, Whitman maintained a tireless fascination with intimate and, indeed, lurid accounts of battle. " 'I never cease to crave more and more knowledge,' " he wrote his mother from the front in 1864, " 'of actual soldiers, & to be among them as much as possible' " (423). As Reynolds suggests, this hunger would later surface in the detailed descriptions of wounds and body parts in *Drum-Taps* and the extensive sections on the war in the prose memoir *Specimen Days*.

Readers of *War, Literature, and the Arts* may very well leave *Walt Whitman's America: A Cultural Biography* craving "more and more knowledge" of Whitman's life during the Civil War. What they will most certainly find, however, is that Reynolds' discussion is a rich and substantial offering.

—David Haven Blake
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A Son at the Front. Edith Wharton. Illinois: Northern Illinois University Press, 1995. Pp. 223. \$15.

Although most famous for her novels of 19th-century New York Society, *House of Mirth* and the Pulitzer Prizewinning *Age of Innocence*, Edith Wharton earned an equally impressive reputation for her relief efforts during World War I. Her extensive work with refugees of Belgium and France garnered her an

appointment as an officer of the French Legion of Honor. *A Son at the Front*, first published over 70 years ago, is the product of Wharton's wartime experiences behind the battle lines. In one of the ironic twists of the novel (and there are several), World War I itself isn't the focal point of the novel; rather, the focus is on the people left behind, the immediate and extended families who wait anxiously for word from their sons on the battlefields. The novel brings us closer to their experiences through the story of artist John Campton, an American expatriate living in Paris, as he copes with the prospect of his son and only child, George, facing battle: "A son in the war. The words followed Campton down the stairs. What did it mean, and what must it feel like, for parents in this safe denationalized modern world to be suddenly saying to each other with white lips: A son in the war?" (40). This question, then, is the central issue of the novel, and it's a question which invades Campton's life and the "careless prewar world" of Paris (99). The effect is poignant, even pathetic, as this artist finds himself limping—literally and figuratively—through his days, struggling to deal with the prospect, then the inevitability, of war and his ambivalent feelings about America's role in the European conflict. Unable to find solace, as others do, in engulfing himself in wartime relief efforts, unable to find a market for the bourgeois portraits he paints, unable even to care for his own rented rooms in the absence of his housekeeper, Campton is physically and mentally displaced in wartime Paris. He can focus his fading energy only on one thing: an obsessive need to prevent his recklessly ambitious soldiers from serving at the front lines.

Like the Parisians, we catch glimpses of the war only through personal accounts told by returning wounded soldiers, anxious village gossip, terse dispatches, and George's infrequent communications to his father and mother, she now divorced from Campton and remarried to an influential banker. In this montage of life behind the battlefields, arguably the strong point of the novel is the evolving, tenuous relationship between Campton and the stepfather banker, as they, in their mutual love for George, must forge new rules of paternal relationships. Besides examining complex human relationships, Wharton's novel is also a story about human suffering, from the horrific (a doctor, back from the front,

drained of emotion, relates how he amputated his own son's legs) to the melodramatic (the belabored revelation of George's relationship with an older, married woman). It's not the war at the forefront of this world: it's the battle of life at the rear, as those left behind face the "slow dragging lapse of hours and days to . . . wait on events inactively" (193).

Initially drawing harsh criticism and only recently back in print, *A Son at the Front* has been labeled Wharton's "antiwar" novel—a charged label the novel neither seeks nor deserves. If the novel is indeed "antiwar," then it is so only in its revelation of the suffering of soldiers and noncombatants alike. Ultimately, Wharton has painted a moving landscape addressing modern warfare, nationalism, the role of the artist, parental obligation, and family bonds.

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Secret Army , Secret War. Sedgwick Tourison. Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1995. Pp. 424. \$29.95.

Towards the end of WWII, Allied intelligence officials found themselves in the enviable position of literally being able to control the flow of information into German hands. Through a masterful program of counter-espionage, double agents, and mis-information, the Allies duped the Nazis with ease. Almost twenty years later, the American intelligence community again found itself in a similar situation. This time, however, instead of being the "dupers," they in fact became the "duped." Between the years 1961 and 1968, the US Army's Studies and Operations Group (SOG), working closely with the CIA, developed and implemented Plan 34-A—the covert

deployment of Vietnamese Commando teams to strategically important locations in North Vietnam. The purpose of this operation was to conduct small scale interdiction/sabotage missions, intelligence gathering, and recruitment of local population sympathetic to the South. The mission failed dismally.

Of the over 500 agents parachuted behind enemy lines, only a handful successfully evaded capture for more than two weeks. Often, they found themselves parachuting into a well-planned and inescapable ambush. Most surrendered, some attempted evasion—all were captured or killed. Many of the team's radio operators, faced with a choice between capitulation and death, became willing pawns of the North Vietnamese Intelligence operatives. Forced at gunpoint to send the dis-information concocted by Hanoi, these operatives convinced the SOG of the viability and utility of Plan 34-A.

With the cessation of hostilities came the end of the teams' usefulness to the North. Consequently, the teams found themselves imprisoned, not as prisoners of war, but as spies. The US, unwilling to admit to the existence of such an extensive spy network (especially one which failed so abysmally) disavowed any knowledge of the various teams. The teams languished in various Vietnamese prisons for over twenty years before their release.

Secret Army, Secret War details the experiences of these team members before, during, and after their confinement. Utilizing information garnered from recently declassified government documents—documents that are even now being used in Senate debate rooms by Senator Bob Kerry to help get legislation passed which will force the US government to honor its contracts with the more than 200 surviving members of these teams, and pay them their due—as well as extensive personal interviews, Tourison recreates and explains the entire situation in amazing detail. So much more than an account of yet another series of failed missions, this work provides the reader with tales of personal valor in the face of seemingly insurmountable odds. These little-known, unsung heroes finally receive the recognition they so richly deserve. *Secret*

Army, Secret War is a must-read for anyone who considers themselves a student of the Vietnam War.

—Steven W. Legrand
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Culture and Entertainment in Wartime Russia. Richard Stites. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995. Pp. 215. \$15.95.

This anthology of scholarly articles provides surprising insights into Soviet cultural propaganda during the Great Patriotic War. Jeffrey Brooks, author of the classic cultural study *When Russia Learned to Read*, documents the unexpected anti-Stalinist slant to many columns printed by the official Communist party newspaper in his contribution "Pravda Goes to War." In the same vein, Louise McReynolds' article "Dateline Stalingrad" explains how war correspondents Ilya Ehrenburg and Vasily Grossman spoke directly to their readers' thirst for truth with graphic accounts of violence at the front. And Robert A. Rothstein looks at popular songs in "Hometown, Home Land and Battlefield" to show a lyrical emphasis by songwriters who sidestepped the official call for collective sentiment. Sometimes even government efforts to control information are shown to be counterproductive: "Radio Moscow" by James von Geldem notes that Stalin's exhortations to the fledgling partisan movement initially went unheard due to an earlier order to confiscate all radios. In certain cases, of course, party efforts seem to have been effective, as Harold B. Segel's "Struggle of Drama" meticulously documents only the occasional glimmer of originality seen on stage during the war. Likewise, "Black and White" by Peter

Kenez insightfully analyzes how film makers struggled to provide drama despite censors who forbade even a single kiss to remain in a love story. But original and subversive material wasn't always desirable even by the audience; in "Frontline Entertainment," editor Richard Stites contributes a lively comparison of Soviet popular entertainers with America's USO productions. Providing a view of the opposite end of the cultural spectrum is Harlow Robinson's "Composing for Victory" which focuses on the wartime tribulations of Sergei Prokofiev and Dmitri Shostakovich. In an account punctuated with refreshing behind-the-scenes anecdotes, Robinson notes that Shostakovich's fabled Seventh Symphony, long portrayed as an anti-Nazi paean, was actually inspired by hatred of Stalin. Rounding out this anthology are two thought-provoking articles, "On the Making of Heroes, Heroines, and Saints" by Rosalinde Sartori, and "The War of Remembrance" by Nina Tumarkin, bringing this epic subject up to date. These two studies view the images of the Great Patriotic War through the eyes of the present generation in Russia, where the apotheosis of partisan heroine Zoia Kosmodem'ianskaya is deconstructed, and Russian hooligans use wartime gravemarkers for target practice. The book contains a good selection of documentary photos illustrating, among others, Argyrios K. Pisiostis' article on poster propaganda "Images of Hate in the Art of War" and takes advantage in several instances of newly released archival material. The contributors succeed in turning an analysis of this rarely discussed topic into a performance where the reader may see not only a patriotic, but also a remarkably subversive—and entertaining—spectacle taking place.

—Howard Swartz
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The Oxford Companion to World War II. I.C.B. Dear and M.R.D. Foot, editors. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1995. Pp. 1343. \$60.00.

Reporting World War II: Part One: American Journalism 1938-1944 and Part Two: American Journalism 1944-1946. New York: Library of America, 1995. Pp. 1882. \$35.00 each.

My War. Andy Rooney. New York: Times Books, 1995. Pp. 318. \$25.00.

The recent commemoration of the 50th anniversary of World War II not only revived well-deserved recognition for the men and women who greatly served their nation and the world, it also instigated the long-overdue publishing of many books on that war as well. *The Oxford Companion to World War II*, another installment in their series on a range of topics, is an excellent tool for both the scholar and war history buff alike. The book is organized and fact-based like an encyclopedia, though unlike most books of this type, it is also written like a narrative, at times telling the story of this epic conflict with skillful and compelling writing. For example, the entry that covers the battle for the Heurtgen Forest, a battle that despite (or because of) its terrible losses has provoked very little historical coverage, provides the facts, but also gives a sense of the tragic human costs the engagement transacted. The following passage from this entry demonstrates my point:

The area was thickly laced with mines, barbed wire, and concealed pillboxes with interlocking fields of fire, and among the dark, damp, thickly-wooded forest the Americans lost all their normal advantages of mobility, fire power, and technological superiority. It became an infantry slogging match in which accurate German mortar and artillery fire, bursting at treetop level, had devastating [sic] results. (546)

Besides being well written (although the copy editing is less than perfect), this text also has detailed, understandable maps and graphs that clearly explicate the military and statistical reality of the war, while the book's well-chosen, at times even heart-rendering, photographs aptly convey the human.

The Library of America's publication of a quality sampling of American journalism from World War II is an excellent book as well. Although the book covers only journalism, there is nothing pedestrian about the quality of the writing. Some of the writers anthologized here includes many of the great literary and cultural figures of this century which is, more than anything else, indicative of the unity this war brought to our culture, unity which may never be experienced in our society again. Everyone—including leading intellectuals—chipped in on the war effort. Gertrude Stein, Martha Gellhorn, Edward R. Murrow, William L. Shirer, E. B. White, Ernie Pyle, James Agee, John Hersey, Bill Mauldin, John P. Marquand, John Steinbeck, and Ernest Hemingway are examples of the contributors. As one would expect from such a group, the quality of writing is absolutely first-rate. Martha Gellhorn, who is regrettably better known to the public as the third wife of Hemingway than for her own work, has six articles reprinted in these anthologies (five more than her Nobel-Prize winning husband). As anyone who is familiar with her work knows, she writes with an eye for fetching details. In "The First Hospital Ship," she observes that

There was nothing to do now but wait. The big ship felt empty and strange. There were 422 beds covered with new blankets; and a bright, clean, well-equipped operating room, never before used; great cans marked "Whole Blood" stood on the decks; plasma bottles and supplies of drugs and bales of bandages were stored in handy places. Everything was ready, and any moment we would be leaving for France. (151)

Although novels concerning the World War II experience, such as Norman Mailer's *The Naked and the Dead* and James Jones' *From Here to Eternity*, have received the most literary recognition thus far, this collection of journalism also deserves recognition and its place on the shelves of the Library of America—which has traditionally preferred fiction writers and poets. In what was a pre-television world, the written words of these journalists largely shaped the images and understanding of an anxious, home-front audience with much more depth and a stronger sense of drama than is now done in our sound-bite age. Although today we have the

advantage of speed, breadth of news coverage, and a vicarious, you-are-there titillation that television provides, the 1940s instead offered an experience that was much closer to literary than anything else. Thus, the overall effect of reading these two volumes was as moving for me as any work of fiction I have read about this world event.

Although he is rightfully not included in the Library of America collection of World War II journalism, Andy Rooney, best known as the curmudgeon on the weekly CBS news show, *60 Minutes*, has published what was for me a surprisingly interesting account of his own war effort as an accidental reporter for *Stars and Stripes*. Rooney sums up his reportorial method for the newspaper that the soldiers themselves read:

It was probably true . . . that by both temperament and intellect I was better equipped to write feature stories. Hard-news accounts of the action on a broad front would have been censored, and none of our soldier-readers wanted to be constantly reminded by gruesome details of battle that they might buy it the next day. (225)

As a front-line reporter, Rooney was present for many of the main events during the Allies' crusade to defeat Nazi Germany. Although this book is not at all scholarly in its analysis of these events, it is an entertaining, easy-to-read memoir—rich with gossipy anecdotes—of another eyewitness observer of that war in Europe.

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