

CALL FOR PAPERS

“Bunnies, Bars, and Stews”: Myths of 1950s-1970s Cultural History in the Popular Present”

An area of multiple panels for the Film & History Conference on “Film and Myth”

September 26-30, 2012

Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA

www.filmandhistory.org

Deadline: June 1, 2012

Contemporary producers of film and television seem eager to take on the post-World War II period, from the 1950s through the 1970s. Perhaps spurred on by the popularity of *Mad Men*, now approaching its fifth season, the 2011 television fall lineup featured series such as *Pan Am*, about international flight attendants (then known as "stewardesses") at the beginning of the commercial jet age, and NBC's short-lived *The Playboy Club*, which featured a behind-the-scenes look at the original Chicago "gentlemen's" club that brought Hugh Hefner's magazine to life. The time appears right to capture the era in all its popular culture glory.

How are we to understand films and programs such as these? Are they products of cultural history, transmitting perceptions garnered from reputable primary and secondary sources, or are they powerful purveyors of a mythic past, whose narratives reflect and shape the stories we tell about ourselves? In what ways do their iconic representations of “bunnies, bars, and stews” serve to overwrite or subvert other portrayals of the era?

This area, comprised of multiple panels, aims to examine how contemporary filmmakers represent the three decades following World War II, politically and culturally. Especially welcome are papers that explore the ways in which films and television programs seek to support or subvert existing myths about the post-war history of the United States, and consider how these films reflect issues of sexism, racism, and homophobia during this period.

Questions for consideration may include, but are not limited to:

- In what ways does each of these post-war decades come with its own set of myths and sense of nostalgia? Are certain time periods more prone to myth making or myth-busting?
- How might these contemporary depictions confirm, distort, highlight, or resist historical narratives of the post-war period?
- How might these narratives reinforce or subvert stereotypical representations of gender, class, sexuality, race, etc.? Are the myths dependent upon these stereotypes?
- How might we compare television versus film depictions of a given post-war decade or event?

- Is it possible for depictions of little known stories from post-war history to avoid the binary of myth creating vs. myth breaking?

Proposals for complete panels (three related presentations) are also welcome, but they must include an abstract and contact information, including an e-mail address, for each presenter. Please email your 200-word proposal by June 1, 2012:

Carney Maley

Area Chair 2012 Film & History Conference

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