

CALL FOR PAPERS

“Science-Fiction Myths: Travels through Time and Space”

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

Films that depict travel through time and space captivate us with tales of the past, the future, the distant, and the alien. These stories are shaped, however, not just by scientific principles, but by complex mythologies that reflect our collective anxieties. How fragile is “our” history? A seemingly trivial change to the past—a dropped book in *Back to the Future*, an act of kindness in *The Butterfly Effect*—can sweep away the present and replace it with something far worse (or far better). How do the alien forms of distant worlds beckon us (with a new Earth in *Titan A.E.*) or disappoint us (with pale imitations of Earth in *Firefly*) or terrify us (with the upside-down society of *Planet of the Apes*)? How do space- and time-travel myths give shape to our fears—of loving the wrong person, of leaving home forever, of being forgotten, of entering a foreign world? How do these myths give shape to our hopes—that the future is ours to shape, that the universe is full of wonders, that human experience might transcend time and space?

This area, comprising multiple panels, will treat all aspects of the mythological underpinnings of space and time travel in science-fiction films and television programs. Papers that explore how such myths are played out in science fiction from outside the US and UK are especially welcome. Possible topics include, but are not limited to, the following:

Nomads: Cold Sleep, Relativity, and the Loneliness of Space Travel
Generation Spaceships and the Ship-as-World (e.g., *Alien*, *Pandorum*)
Time Travel and “Fixing History” (e.g., *Quantum Leap*, *12 Monkeys*)
Love, Sex, and the Time Traveler (e.g., *Back to the Future*, *Somewhere in Time*)
Who Are You?: Myth and Identity in Space and Time Travel
Paradoxes in Time Travel: Killing Grandpa, and Other Bad Ideas
Just Like California: “Alien” Worlds and Space Travel as Tourism
Galactic Empires: Rome with Spaceships?
The Human(oid) Void: Myths of First Contact (e.g., *Star Trek*, *Babylon 5*)
Homeward Bound: Myths of the Lost Earth (e.g., *Battlestar Galactica*, *Firefly*, *Wall-E*)
Wormhole Diplomacy: Bridging Cultural Spaces

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 e-mail your 200-word proposal by June 1, 2012:

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