

## CALL FOR PAPERS

### “Myths R Us”: Nationality in Film and Television

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

September 26–30, 2012

Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA

[www.filmandhistory.org](http://www.filmandhistory.org)

**Deadline: June 1, 2012**

The process of nation-building often relies on myth. Benedict Anderson famously contended that nations are “imagined political communities,” social constructions that exist only when a significant number of people consider themselves to be part of a nation or behave as if they have formed one (1983, 6). The idea of America, for example, is deeply entwined with the fantasies of the American Dream, the myth of the frontier, and American exceptionalism. Our mythologies define us, establishing boundaries between “us” and “them.”

How do film and television create, revise, and challenge mythologies of nation and nationality? Do they exploit or succumb to national myths? How do colonialism, imperialism, and migration factor in myths of national identity? In an era of increasing transnationalism, is the idea of national cinema itself a myth?

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

Founding Myths, Myths of Founding (e.g. *The New World, 1776*)

Mediating Folklore and Tall Tales

Favorite Sons and Daughters: National Heroes on Screen

Embodying the Nation (e.g., Uncle Sam, Lady Liberty, John Bull)

Landmarks of National Mythology (e.g., Mount Rushmore, the Eiffel Tower, Big Ben)

Naming the Nation (e.g., *Team America, This Is England, Captain America*)

The Special Relationship: Myths of International Relations (e.g., *Love Actually, Cars 2*)

Propaganda as National Mythmaking (e.g., *Triumph of the Will, Why We Fight*)

Mythic Nations (e.g., Fredonia in *Duck Soup*, Genovia in *The Princess Diaries*)

Demythologizing the Other: Expatriates and Cultural Tourism (e.g., *An Idiot Abroad*)

Myth Busters: Contesting Constructions of National Identity

National vs. Transnational Film and Television

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:

Elizabeth Rawitsch, Area Chair, 2012 *Film & History* Conference

“Myths R Us”: Nationality in Film and Television

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