

CALL FOR PAPERS

“America’s Pantheon: Superheroes and Sports Heroes 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

Deadline: June 1, 2012

Sports films and superhero films have been two of the most durable film genres in the 21st century. Part of their success has been due to their reliance on myth, tapping on myths both ancient and inherently American, while establishing new heroes for American culture. When Roy Hobbs hits the towering home run to win the pennant in *The Natural* (1984), it was not accidental that the film referenced myths, from King Arthur to *The Odyssey*. America’s pantheon of mythic heroes also includes the superhero universes. Indeed, the Marvel and DC universes of characters are the closest thing America has to the Greco-Roman deities. Any papers related to film and television texts that deal with sports and superheroes are welcome.

This area, comprising multiple panels, welcomes papers exploring film and television texts of sports heroes and superheroes, as well as their confluences, intertextualities, and interrelationships. Possible topics include, but are not limited to, the following:

Superheroes:

- *“Original” superheroes in film (*The Incredibles, Unbreakable, Darkman, Meteor Man*)
- *Superheroines in film and TV (*Wonder Woman, Supergirl, Birds of Prey*)
- *African-American superheroes (*Steel, Spawn, the Blade series*)
- *Superheroes on the small screen (*Batman, Lois & Clark, Smallville*)
- *Children’s animated television series (*Captain Planet and the Planetees, X-Men*)
- *Motion comics and transmedia hybridity
- *Superhero parody (*Mystery Men, Superhero Movie, Hancock*)
- *Auteurs and the superhero film (Tim Burton, Christopher Nolan)
- *Pre-1950 superhero serials (*Adventures of Captain Marvel, The Phantom*)
- *Postmodern challenges to the superhero myth (*Watchmen, Heroes, Kick-Ass*)

Sports:

- *Biographical sports documentaries (*Unforgivable Blackness, Tyson*)
- *Sports films and myth (*The Natural, Rocky, Rudy*)
- *Sports documentaries and the “American Dream” (*Hoop Dreams*)
- *Sports documentaries and American identity (Ken Burns’s *Baseball*)
- *Sports on the margins (*Dodgeball, Balls of Fury, The Wrestler*)
- *Sports biopics (*The Pride of the Yankees, The Stratton Story*)
- *Sports heroes and ethnic pride (*The Life and Times of Hank Greenberg*)
- *Boxing biopics (*Gentleman Jim, Raging Bull, The Hurricane, The Fighter, Ali, Cinderella Man*)
- *Racial reconciliation in sports films (*Remember the Titans, Invictus, The Blind Side*)
- *Disney’s construction of sports myth (*The Rookie, Invincible*)
- *Women’s sports on film (*A League of Their Own, Bend It Like Beckham*)

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 to:

Zachary Ingle

Area Chair, 2012 Film & History Conference

“America’s Pantheon: Sports Heroes and Superheroes in Film and Television”

University of Kansas

Email: ztingle@ku.edu