

CALL FOR PAPERS

“War Myths: Heroes and Anti-Heroes in Fiction and Documentary Films”

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

This area, comprising multiple panels, will explore all aspects of the mythical underpinnings of the construction of heroism in war and combat in fiction, propaganda, and also documentary films. The discussion will include, but is not limited to, the ways in which these mythical motifs in war film narratives are used to justify specific ideological positions, shape the understanding of past and current military conflicts, support political agendas and institutions, and influence collective memory by providing images of heroism from past wars.

In this context, the debunking of war myths is particularly relevant. Thus, papers that explore the creation of myths about heroism in war and war heroes in media, their propagation in diverse cinematic forms, their reception among different audiences, and in different historical and political contexts are especially welcome. Of further interest are the ways in which these myths are deconstructed in specific cinematic genres (such as anti-war films and documentaries) or subverted by various humorous strategies (such as parody, grotesque, spoof, or exaggeration) in both humorous and non-humorous genres.

This area is also interested in highlighting issues related to racialized and gendered codings of heroism and their connection to myth-making processes: the establishing and questioning of male heroism in combat; the heroism of women in the context of war; and the different strategies used to represent male and female heroes in war narratives. Papers that explore such heroic mythmaking in various national cinematographies are also particularly welcome.

Possible topics include, but are not limited to, the following:

- * 9/11: Myths about the loss of innocence
- * Propaganda and mythmaking about recruitment: Visual representations of war heroes in government films
 - * The Great War and its heroes (*Passchendaele*, *The Red Baron*, *Merry Christmas*)
- * War and peace, and the end of heroes: *All Quiet on the Western Front*
- * Heroism as nation: Creating myth in WWII
- * Gender myths in war films: Female warriors in Hollywood narratives
- * Rosie the Riveter: Myths of women on the home front
- * *Hurt Locker*: Kathryn Bigelow, female authorship, and the male desire for combat
- * Documentary films on war: Anti-heroes and the deconstruction of myth
- * Bursting the bubble: Abu Ghraib and the lack of heroism
- * Heroism and race (*Miracle at St. Anna*, *Glory*, *Letters from Iwo Jima*)
- * Disillusioned myths and forgotten war heroes: *Born on the Fourth of July*

- * The military unit as hero (*9th Company*)
- * Surviving war: Myths about fighting the odds
- * Spielberg and myth: Fighting the war in the jungle and WWII (*Saving Private Ryan*)
- * Acts of compassion: Myths of human kindness and civil heroes (*Schindler's List*)
- * The Cold War and the myth of the necessity of combat
- * Flawed war heroes: Stanley Kubrick and the anti-war film (*Full Metal Jacket*)

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:
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