CALL FOR PAPERS
“Storytelling 101 - History as Myth on the Big Screen”
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

Cinematic history raises many important questions about the relationship between fact and fiction: When does history become myth, and when does myth become legend? Does a romanticized view of history distort the reality it is trying to convey, or in capturing the “spirit” of history, does it teach history in ways that mere fact cannot? What is the impact of motion pictures on our understandings of history, and on historical memory? And what of the lives of the individuals it portrays? Elizabeth I, Henry VIII, Marie Antoinette, and Cleopatra are just a few of the historical figures who have attained mythic status through their romanticization on the big screen. Does cinematic history promote a tendency toward mythologizing historical figures?

This area will explore questions around whether, and in what ways, the storytelling method used by filmmakers may serve to distance audiences from their own history by making it simply a story. In the ongoing debate among historians as to whether history on film is a viable source of learning, film is often criticized for not being historically accurate and for creating what Marnie Hughes-Warrington has called a “Nostalgic Utopia.”

Possible topics might include, but are not limited to:

-Royalty as myth, Marie Antoinette, (Coppola, 2006), The Other Boleyn Girl (Chadwick, 2008), Elizabeth (Kapur, 1998)

-The debate over history and film; does film have a tendency to create ‘nostalgic utopias’ instead of portraying true events? Life is Beautiful, (Benigni, 1997)

-How do we understand history on film? Does it promote new interests in History by mythologizing figures and events? Pearl Harbor (Bay,2001), Titanic (Cameron, 1997)


-Is it better to learn of historical figures through film or through literature? Why? Public Enemies (Mann, 2009), Ned Kelly (Jordan, 2003), Donnie Brasco (Newell, 1997)

-Can major historical events be portrayed in a simple storytelling fashion? Saving Private Ryan (Spielburg,1998) Life is Beautiful (Benigni, 1997) , Pearl Harbor (Bay, 2001), Titanic (Cameron, 1997)

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:

Kathryn Morey, Area Chair, 2012 Film & History Conference
“Storytelling 101 - History as Myth on the Big Screen.”
Lancaster University
Email: k.morey2@lancaster.ac.uk