

Nazi Propaganda and the 1930 Berlin Film Premiere of “All Quiet on the Western Front”

Authors : Edward C. Smith

Abstract : Historical narration in literature and film is an act that necessarily develops and deforms history, whether consciously or unconsciously. Such “translation” suffers or thrives depending on its historical context and on the ability of the artist/artists to make choices that enhance or diminish social and political reality. This “translation” and its challenges is examined from within the historical and political context of the 1930 Berlin film premiere of “All Quiet on the Western Front,” a film based on Erich Maria Remarque’s 1928 best-selling novel. Both the film and the novel appeared during a period in which the “aestheticization” of reality predominated. This was an era in early 20th-century European society in which life was conceived of as innately artistic and structured like an art form. The emergence of this modern consciousness, one in which memory and history surrendered their former authority, enabled conservative propaganda of the period to denounce all art that did not adhere conceptually to its political tenets, with “All Quiet” becoming yet another of its “victims.”

Keywords : documentary and propaganda film, film and TV audiences, international literature in film studies, popular culture and film

Conference Title : ICCFMS 2015 : International Conference on Communication, Film and Media Sciences

Conference Location : Montreal, Canada

Conference Dates : May 11-12, 2015