

Film as Propaganda in America during WWII



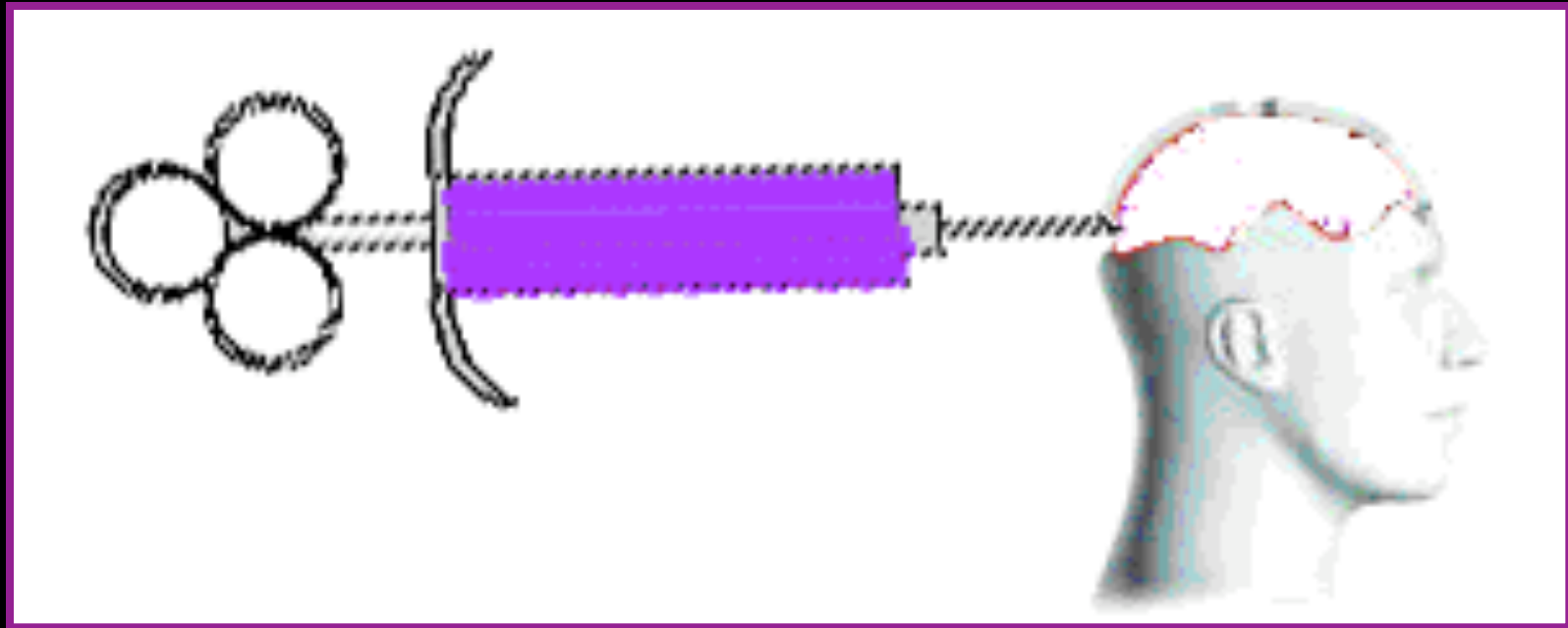
Overview

- Cinema as a hypodermic needle
- Cinema controlled by an invisible hand
- Cinema as propaganda
- Cinema restricted

“The Nation which controls the
cinema can control the
thought of the world.”

-A.P. Giannini

Hypodermic Needle Theory





Motion Picture Production Code (1934-1968)

- Hollywood's reputation as Sin City, need to clean up industry
- Self regulating industry censorship guideline
- Movies are a business and not art
- Enforced in 1934
- MPAA film rating system, end of the Production Code

Principles of the Production Code

- No picture shall be produced that will lower moral standards of those who see it. The sympathy of the audience should never be thrown to the side of the crime, wrongdoing, evil or sin.
- Correct standards of life, subject only to the requirements of drama and entertainment shall be presented
- Law, natural or human, shall not be ridiculed nor shall sympathy be created for its violation

War and political censorship

- The Dawn Patrol (1930)
- A Farewell to Arms (1932)
- Confessions of a Nazi Spy (1939)
 - First blatantly anti-Nazi film produced by a major Hollywood studio before WWII



America into the War

Pearl Harbor



- American neutrality over.
- Washington and Hollywood working together.
 - Unprecedented: the Production Code was used to self-regulate standards of morality

Government and Hollywood

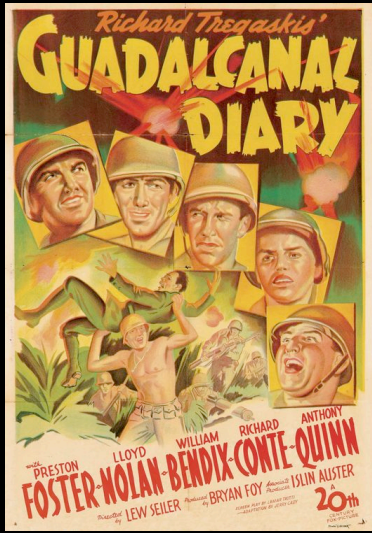
- President Roosevelt
- Office of War Information (1942-45)
- The Bureau of Motion Pictures (1941-43)
- Office of Censorship (1941)

“The Government Information Manual for the Motion Picture”

1. Will this picture help the war?
2. What war information problem does it seek to clarify, dramatize or interpret?
3. If is an “escape” picture, will it harm the war effort by creating a false picture of America, her allies, or the world we live in?
4. Does it merely use the war as the basis for a profitable picture, contributing nothing of real significance to the war effort and possibly lessening the effect of other pictures or more importance
5. Does it contribute something new to our understanding of the world conflict and the various forces involved, or has the subject already been adequately covered?
6. When the picture reaches its maximum circulation on the screen, will it reflect conditions as they are and fill a need current at that time, or will it be out-dated?
7. Does the picture tell the truth or will the young people of today have reasons to say they were misled by propaganda?

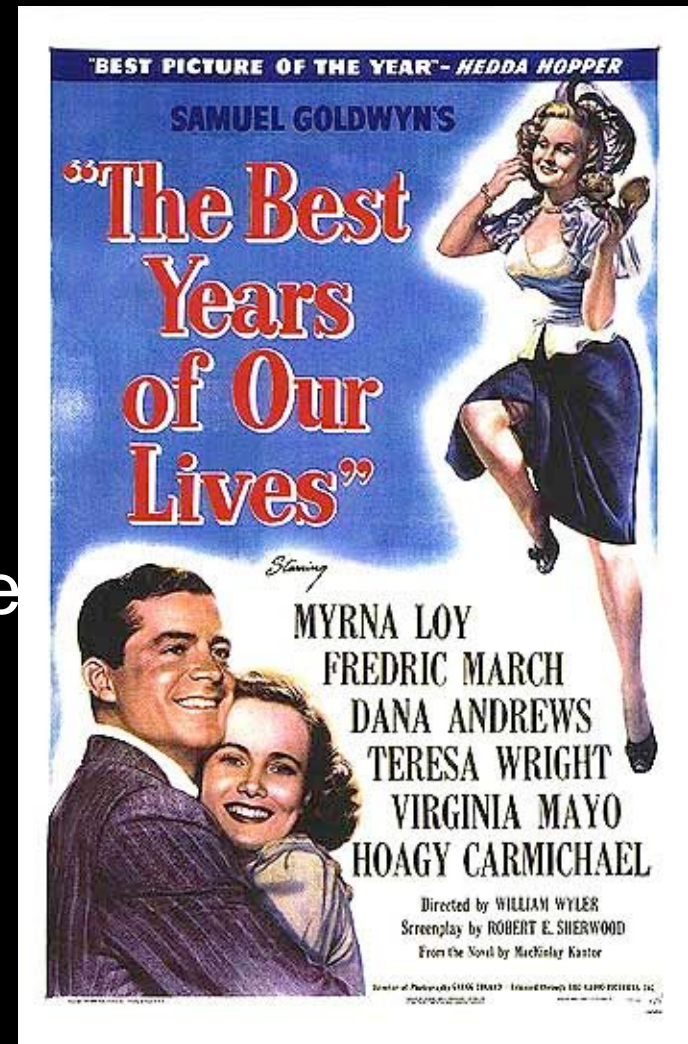
War Movies

- *Casablanca* (1942)
- *Guadalcanal Diary* (1943)
- *Air Force* (1943)
- *Objective Burma* (1945)



Films circulated after the war

- *The Best Years of Our Lives* (1946)
- “The screen’s greatest love story is the best film this year in Hollywood.”

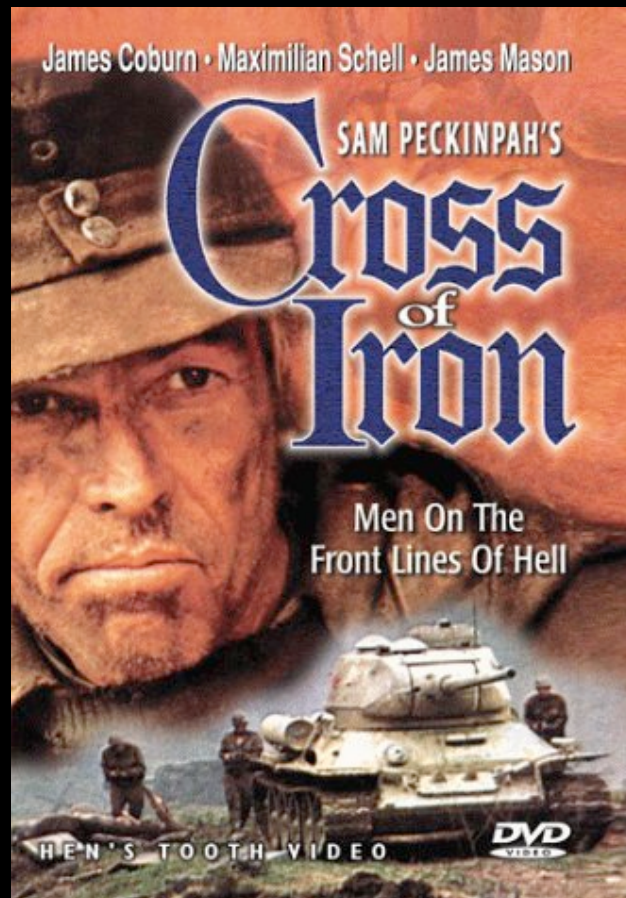


The Longest Day (1962)

- First film which depicts characters speaking in their native languages (German and Japanese)
- One of the first films which avoided using Nazi stereotypes, and instead depicted Germans as being more concerned with military matters.



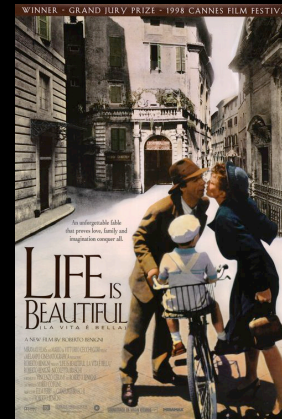
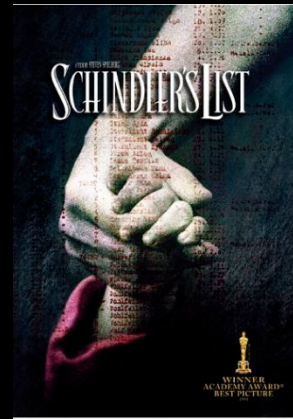
Cross of Iron (1977)



- First film produced post WW2 that told the story of the war from the perspective of a German soldier
- The main character is cynical about the war and even shows signs of humanity by trying to save an innocent boy from being shot by the soldiers.
- Depicts the aftermath of war and the guilt and horrible flashbacks endured by many soldiers by portraying the main character's personal torment after the war.

Mainstream modern films depict the Holocaust

- - Schindler's List (1993)
- -Life is Beautiful (1997)
- -Jakob the Liar (1999)
- -The Pianist (2002)



Finally, the Japanese are depicted in a mainstream film about WW2

-Letters from Iwo Jima (2006)

- Story of WW2 from the perspective of Japanese soldiers
- made in Tandem with “Flags of Our Fathers” which was meant to tell the story of war from the perspective of American soldiers
- Portrayed touching tales of soldiers sending letters to loved ones while at war, many of which were not received until long after the soldier’s death.
- displayed courage and heroism by the Japanese soldiers.



YOU WANT
SOME OF THIS?



PROTESTING:
IT'S JUST UN-AMERICAN!

A MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTRY OF HOMELAND SECURITY