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WAR AND SOCIETY

Abstracts

Tracy E. Bilsing, *Mors ab Alto*: The Dangerous Power of Women's Images in Second World War Nose Art

The depiction of women's images on military aeroplanes became popular during World War II when soldier-artists were informally commissioned to paint pictures on planes in order to personalise the machines for the crews who flew in them. The most famous images are of playful, obviously sexualised women whose illustrated presence on the planes provided the troops with, among other things, reminders of home. Despite criticism from feminist scholars for its objectification of the feminine, nose art is a complex cultural icon which has its roots in ancient history and which appropriates sexuality as a specific form of female power during a predominantly masculine event.

Frank D. Casale, W. D. Ehrhart and the Extremes of Foreign Policy, Ideology, and the American Hegemony

In the years following the Vietnam War, we have seen and heard many conflicting images and stories about the meaning and importance of the conflict. Television shows such as *China Beach*, and movies like *The Deer Hunter* and *Forest Gump* have radically re-imaged the war and the events surrounding it. However, when we compare this modern-day myth-making, much of it engineered in Hollywood and the editorial press, with much of the literature produced by *veterans* of the war, a startling insight becomes apparent. While the popular media seems intent on repackaging the meaning of the war, the literature of the veterans seems intent on exploring the meaning of the war and defining the effect the war had on American consciousness. The extreme experience of the war (heavily and graphically depicted in these novels and poems) clashed with the preconceived notions of these writers and produced drastic shifts in their consciousness. Thus, their literature of extreme foreign policy provides an insight into how extreme material practice can radically transform ideology, and how a dominant hegemony must respond by attempting to contain and neutralise any such radical articulation. This paper, through a close reading of *Passing Time*, explores the American hegemony and its mythmaking around the Vietnam War, investigates how extreme material practice can transform a subject's ideology, and examines how these Vietnam-Veterans-turned-writers attempted to understand their ideological changes through the textualisation of their experience.

damning indictment of the conduct of the war as a whole. The still more sobering conclusion to be drawn from the text, however, lies in its portrayal of the media influences on the war. The article therefore locates Herr in relation to the field of journalism and media in general: the omnipresence and pervasiveness of media representations of war implicate *all* spectators as complicit in the violent spectacles they consume.

Martin H. Folly, Seeking Comradeship in the "Ogre's Den:" Winston Churchill's Quest for a Warrior Alliance and his Mission to Stalin, August 1942

British Prime Minister Winston Churchill's first meeting with Soviet dictator Josef Stalin in August 1942 is one of the least discussed of the Second World War summit meetings. This paper argues that it set up the parameters for what turned out to be the war-winning alliance. Churchill went to Moscow to tell Stalin there would be no invasion of Europe from the west that year, but more significantly, this paper argues, to build a relationship with Stalin based upon a shared comradeship, focusing narrowly on the task of victory and eschewing more contentious political issues.

Rosemary Haskell, War and Writing in the Undergraduate Literature Classroom: Modal Analysis and the Destabilisation of the Soldier's Heroic and Idyllic Worlds

In a second-year university literature course for the general student, use of a type of formalist criticism involving the modal paradigms epic and romance, gothic, and pastoral, enabled students to analyse and evaluate the nature of war and the personal experience of combat with considerable acuity. The soldier's combat relationship with his enemy, with his fellow-soldier, and his links with the civilian world he has left and to which he must return, form the centre of this account. A description of how modal analysis was used reveals the complexities, ironies and connections within and between these important facets of war and the war experience.

Daniel Keyes, *The Big Lebowski*: The First Gulf War and Masculinity

Hollywood has produced a handful of films that have dealt with the first Gulf War. The Coen brothers 1997 cult film the *Big Lebowski* might seem an unlikely choice for a Gulf War film; however, this film re-creates 1991 Los Angeles to comment on the Gulf Waf4(t) 0.002 4(nd)]f. -0nall A,b-1(s)-(e ie)-4(a)6i(s)1r aslb-1(A)5irlthm(r)5(a)6(n)2(A)2(nm M)1(