

citizen-spectators in them. In doing so, films also call into question the standing, relevance, and even complicity of Hollywood as a social and cultural institution for negotiating mythologies of individual, media, military, and nation. What ultimately is suggested here is a thoroughgoing, intrinsic ambivalence pervading war cinema. Just as all jingoistic productions can be read against their grain to emphasize the horror, pretense, and arbitrariness of war, so putatively anti-war films, reliant as they often are on spectacles of carnage and destruction, can be approached as fantasies of militarization.

The first selection, by John Whiteclay Chambers, uses *All Quiet on the Western Front* to focus on the anti-war film as itself central to broader cinematic and cultural understanding of modern war. Charles Young, in the second piece, discusses brainwashing common to Korean War films and, by extension, a more general psychological threat or resistance in wartime. Tracking the widespread social resistance to Vietnam, David James, in the third essay, integrates the shifting relationship between film industry and society during the 1960s. The fourth piece revisits the late 1970s and 1980s, when, for Michael Ryan and Douglas Kellner, a renewed consolidation of militarization and state power emerged that turned on discourses of gender, race, and colonialism. Robert Burgoyne, in the fifth selection, offers an incisive reading of the racial issues in play in representing the Civil War on screen in the early 1990s.

All Quiet on the Western Front (U.S., 1930): The Antiwar Film and the Modern Image of War

JOHN WHITECLAY CHAMBERS II

More than any other American feature film in the interwar years, *All Quiet on the Western Front* (U.S., 1930) came to represent the image of World War I. In a poignant saga of the life and death of a sensitive young German recruit, the film vividly portrays the senseless horror of trench warfare on the western front. Explosive sound effects accompany powerful visual images—it was one of the first “talking” pictures—to produce an emotionally wrenching viewing experience. It directly contributed to the widespread revulsion against such slaughter and against industrialized mass warfare in general.

All Quiet on the Western Front became the classic antiwar movie hailed as a brilliant and powerful work of film art and widely imitated.¹ It achieved that classic status for historical and political reasons as much as for the cinematographic excellence with which it brought to the screen the war novel of embittered young German veteran and writer, Erich Maria Remarque.² For the film speaks to ideology and history as well as to art.

Half a century later, the very title remains highly evocative. It has emotional significance even for those whose understanding of World War I comes primarily from sepia pictures in history books. Now blended in public memory, the novel and film have come, like the young protagonist, the schoolboy-soldier Paul Bäumer, to symbolize the transformative horror of the western front. It is a horror that remains embedded in Western consciousness as a consequence of World War I.

The film was based on the tremendously popular novel *All Quiet on the Western Front* (in the original German, *Im Westen nichts Neues* [literally, Nothing New on the Western Front]). The book was a semiautobiographical work, based on Remarque's brief experience in the German army in the last years of the war. It was also clearly a product of the disillusionment that he and many other veterans felt about the war and about the dislocations of the postwar era.

The 1930 Hollywood version of Remarque's book was the result of the successful judgment of Carl Laemmle, an independent entrepreneur who had entered the industry by purchasing theaters and then expanding into distribution and finally into production, heading the Universal Pictures Corporation. *All Quiet on the Western Front*, directed by Lewis Milestone, starred both a young, relatively unknown actor, Lew Ayres, and a seasoned

veteran, Louis Wolheim.³ Ayres became personally identified with the film, for he perfectly captured the role of the protagonist, the sensitive, educated, young man, Paul Bäumer—the everyman trapped, corrupted, and destroyed by the horror of trench warfare. Like the book, the 1930 film continues to be available, now on videocassette. In 1979, an entirely new version, in color, was produced for television, starring Richard Thomas and Ernest Borgnine.

In August 1929, Laemmle rushed from Hollywood to his native Germany and acquired the film rights from the author.⁴ He put his twenty-one-year-old son, Carl Laemmle, Jr., the studio's new general manager, in charge of production of *All Quiet on the Western Front*.⁵ The younger Laemmle ("Junior," as he was called) hired Lewis Milestone as the director.

Born in Russia, Milestone had abandoned an education in mechanical engineering in Germany in 1913 at the age of eighteen and gone to New York City to pursue a career in the theater. He soon became an assistant to a theatrical photographer. When the United States entered World War I in 1917, Milestone enlisted as a private in the photography section of the U.S. Army Signal Corps. In the army, he first worked on training films in New York, then learned about editing at the film laboratory of the War College in Washington, D.C., where he worked with Victor Fleming, Josef von Sternberg, and a number of future luminaries in the motion-picture industry. Discharged from the army in 1919, Milestone became a U.S. citizen and soon moved to Hollywood. He worked as an assistant film cutter, a screenwriter, and, beginning in 1925, a director.⁶ In 1927, *Two Arabian Knights*, a tale of two fun-loving American doughboys, earned Milestone the Motion Picture Academy Award for Best Comedy Direction.

Despite the objections of the younger Laemmle, Milestone hired Ayres, who was only twenty years old and largely unknown, for the starring role of Paul Bäumer.⁷ Although inexperienced, Ayres had many of the qualities Milestone sought: he was handsome, earnest, intelligent, and somewhat broodingly introspective. Without a well-known actor in this leading role, the audience effectively saw the young soldier protagonist as a kind of everyman. Ayres's relative lack of experience was balanced by the veteran actor Wolheim, who personified Katschinsky (Kat), the knowledgeable, cynical, but compassionate oldtimer. It is Katschinsky who instructs the young recruits about how to try to survive in the deadly chaos of the front.

For the task of converting Remarque's novel into a screenplay for what the industry then referred to as a "talker," Milestone drew on a group of capable writers. Contrary to many accounts, playwright Maxwell Anderson was not responsible for the dramatic treatment; he simply wrote the first version of the dialogue.⁸ Creating a chronological screenplay to replace the episodic form of the novel, Milestone and his associates helped give structure to a war-film genre: one that follows a group of young recruits from their entry into the military, through basic training, to the battlefield. In this case, the film begins with the young men together in the schoolroom just before they rush off to enlist, encouraged by their chauvinistic teacher, Kantorek, who shames them into enlisting and calls on them to become "Iron Men" of Germany.

The film, like the novel, emphasizes the war's senseless human waste, especially the waste of youth. The camera graphically illustrates the breakdown of romantic ideas of war, heroism, and defense of the nation in the squalor of the trenches and the brutality of combat. One by one, the young men are lost; finally death takes the veteran Katschinsky and shortly thereafter Paul himself. (Remarque ends his novel by stating that when Paul's

body is turned over, "his face had an expression of calm, as though almost glad the end had come.")⁹

Milestone and his crew paid particular attention to the brutality and senselessness of war on the western front and to the sharp divergence between civilian and military society, between home front and battlefield. Civilian society is characterized by the strident chauvinism of influential males such as Paul's father and schoolteacher, or by the intense anguish of helpless women such as his mother and sister. In the training camp and at the front, civilian youths are transformed into soldiers. They form cohesive male fighting groups, bands of brothers. But the male bonding is not simply as a band of warriors but also, under the shock and pain of the war, as a family—caring, nurturing, even doing domestic chores—but a family without women.

The few women in this film have smaller roles. They, too, are victims. On home leave, Paul finds food in short supply, his mother ailing and out of touch with reality. At the military hospital, nurses and other medical personnel are overworked and unsympathetic. The book has little romantic interest, but Hollywood felt the need for some women and sex in the film. Indeed, one of the promotional posters used in the United States featured a pretty young French woman clearly alluring to the German schoolboy-soldiers as well as to potential ticket buyers. In a French village behind the German lines, three young women are so famished that they are willing to exchange sex for the soldiers' food rations. Although the book mentions this episode only briefly, Milestone expanded it into an important and moving sequence.

New motion-picture technology—sound equipment and more mobile cameras—gave "talkers" a distinct new feeling. Like many of the posters, paintings, and other art of the postwar period, film took on a new harder, sharper, more brutal aura. Milestone brought the brutal reality of the war to this picture. Together with his cinematographer, Arthur Edson, the director used a combination of fast-moving sight and sound to heighten the impact of the violence of industrialized warfare. The two men built a number of powerful images: the pock-marked landscape of no man's land; flashes of artillery fire on the horizon; wisps of smoke and gas; soldiers climbing out of trenches and rushing into machine-gun fire and exploding artillery shells; bodies lying crumpled on the ground, hanging on barbed wire, or being hurled into the air by artillery blasts.

One of Milestone's most acclaimed—and imitated—photographic devices was a long, fast, parallel-tracking shot (moving sideways like a crab) along a German trench while maintaining its focus on the attacking French infantrymen. The shot was possible because Milestone mounted Edson's camera on a giant wheeled crane so it could be rolled along behind the trench. In the film, for nearly a minute of uninterrupted camera movement, the picture travels rapidly along at eye level as machine-gun bullets mow down charging French *poilus*. When sound was added, the metallic staccato of the machine guns helped audiences believe they were *hearing* the authentic sounds of battle.

Milestone and Edson drew on their experience in silent films to create appropriate visual imagery and movement. They shot the battle scenes with more maneuverable silent cameras, adding sound effects later. Outdoor dialogue scenes, however, were made with cameras and microphones. Edson had been hired partly because he had developed a quieter camera whose whirr would not be picked up by the microphone.

As cinematographer-historian George Mitchell has observed, Edson used lighting and camera angles to particular effect.¹⁰ He employed a low-key light level to emphasize the

drama of the recruits' first nighttime barbed-wire duty and later to provide a claustrophobic effect of sustained artillery bombardment on the shell-shocked boys in their dugout. In one of the most important scenes—the shell-crater sequence—Edeson used a subtle but realistic lighting style to mark the passage from day to night to day again. At night, flashes of artillery fire light up the shell hole and its two occupants. With the morning light, a close-up reveals the dead French soldier's face, his eyes open and staring, as a wisp of smoke, a remnant from the battle, drifts into the frame. The camera cuts to Paul's anguished, pleading face. Thus the horror and remorse of individual killing is brought directly to the audience.

Universal worked to give an authentic World War I appearance to this historical drama, particularly since it was filmed in southern California, not northern France. Studio purchasing agents obtained actual French and German army uniforms as well as scores of tools, packs, helmets, rifles, machine guns, and even six complete artillery pieces. The focus on authenticity was in the visual details. As such, for example, the film illustrates the change in German army equipment during the war, from the initial spiked leather headgear (*Pickelhaube*) to the more practical steel helmets (*Stahlhelm*).

In the battle scenes, Milestone and Edeson produced some of the most effective pictures in the film. During the major attack sequence following the artillery bombardment, Edeson's main camera, mounted on a large crane, travels over the trenches as the German troops pour out of their dugouts and into position. It is joined by five other cameras shooting from different angles as French infantrymen charge toward the trenches and the mobile camera. Stern-faced German machine gunners open fire. The French are mowed down. Later in the editing room, Milestone repeatedly cut these shots with increasing brevity and speed. A hand grenade explodes in front of a charging *poilu*. When the smoke clears, all that remains is a pair of hands clutching the barbed wire. In the trench, Paul turns his face away in sickened revulsion. As the remaining French soldiers reach the trench, they lunge at the Germans with bayonets in hand-to-hand fighting. The Germans counterattack, but are temporarily halted by French machine guns. After taking the first line of French trenches, the German soldiers are ordered back to their own lines before the French can counterattack. The battle ends in a stalemate, each side exhausted and back in its original position.

Sound made action films such as *All Quiet on the Western Front* so powerful—the impact of music, the realism produced by the sound of rifle fire, the staccato rhythm of machine guns, and the deafening roar of exploding artillery shells. Milestone jolted his audience right onto the battlefield by simultaneously bombarding their senses and their emotions.

Milestone created powerful images of war for the public, but how did he, after having spent the war years in the United States, know the reality of combat? Milestone believed it had come from the year he spent in Washington, D.C., in the U.S. Army Signal Corps during World War I. There he had become quite familiar with photographic images of the war. As Milestone recalled in an interview published in 1969, "having examined thousands of feet of actual war footage while stationed at the Washington, D.C., War College during the war, I knew precisely what it was supposed to look like."¹¹ A decade later, he drew on that background in re-creating the battle scenes near Los Angeles. This is wonderfully suggestive phrasing by Milestone: what war was *supposed* to look like. He had never personally seen a battle or a battlefield. What he did was to draw on his experience with documentary photographic representation of the battlefield to create the "reality" for his dramatic representation of battle and the battlefield. He seems not to have questioned whether he

was drawing on the illusions created by Signal Corps photographers, who were able to photograph battlefields only *after* the actual fighting.

The theme of disillusionment is heightened in *All Quiet on the Western Front*. The meaninglessness of the war is accentuated by having the front-line German soldiers discuss the fatuous nature of the official justifications from Berlin. However, it is most dramatically personalized in one of the key scenes of the film, the shell-crater scene. In the midst of battle, Paul, panic-stricken and hiding in a shell crater in the middle of no man's land, mortally stabs a French soldier who had leaped into the crater. While the Frenchman slowly dies, Paul begs his forgiveness, concluding that they are after all comrades forced to kill each other by the brutal mechanics of war. This certainly represents another powerful theme: all men are brothers.

The most unforgettable scene is the final one. On a quiet day shortly before the Armistice, Paul is killed by a French sniper's bullet as he reaches out to touch a butterfly just beyond the trench. Milestone juxtaposes the fragility and beauty of life against imminent death by means of ironic sound effects (a soldier's harmonica plays softly in the background) and by visual cross-cutting among shots of the French rifleman, Paul, and the butterfly. The camera focuses on a close-up of Paul's hand reaching out across the parched, lifeless earth to embrace life—the butterfly, which is also a symbol of Paul's lost innocence and youth, a reminder of his adolescent, butterfly-collecting days. But instead of life—death: the sharp crack of a rifle, the spasmodic jerk of Paul's hand, which slowly relaxes in death. The harmonica suddenly stops. The sensitive, young, schoolboy-soldier has become just another corpse in the trenches. It is, according to one observer, "one of the screen's most powerful, well-remembered moments."¹²

All Quiet on the Western Front was immediately hailed for its aesthetic excellence and trenchant realism. It officially premiered at New York City's Central Theater on April 29, 1930, a few days after opening at the Carthay Circle Theater in Los Angeles. Hearst's New York *American* reported that the film had played "before an audience stunned with the terrific power of stark, awful drama." The *New York Times* agreed that the spectators had been "silenced by its realistic scenes." "It is far and away the best motion picture that has been made . . . talking or silent," asserted the *New York Telegraph*.¹³

The film was a phenomenal financial success. "A money picture," reported *Variety*, the entertainment industry's weekly newspaper.¹⁴ It actually cost \$1.5 million to produce, a major sum for a motion picture at that time, and nearly double the \$900,000 projected cost estimates. Universal was so embarrassed by the overrun that it publicized only \$1.2 million.¹⁵ Within two weeks after the premiere, however, it was evident that the studio would more than recoup its investment, even in the worst economic slump of the Great Depression. *All Quiet on the Western Front* broke box-office records and showed to sell-out crowds in city after city throughout the spring of 1930. . . .¹⁶

The success of *All Quiet on the Western Front*, the book and the film, convinced other studios to produce antiwar motion pictures. Two made in 1930 were particularly noteworthy both for their intrinsic merit and for their demonstration of the international nature of the phenomenon: *Journey's End* (Britain, 1930) and G. W. Pabst's *Westfront 1918* (Germany, 1930). Although James Whale's sound-film rendition of English veteran Robert C. Sherriff's play proved highly popular with British audiences and American critics, its lack of battle scenes limited its mass appeal in America. More comparable to Milestone was Pabst, whose artistry

and "near documentary realism" were widely recognized and whose antiwar film based on the novel *Vier von der Infanterie* (Four Infantrymen) drew large audiences on the European Continent.¹⁷

From its first showing, *All Quiet on the Western Front* was recognized as a powerful emotional force for opposition to war, particularly modern industrialized mass warfare. Its message received support from many pacifists, liberals, and moderate socialists throughout Europe and, to some extent, in the United States as well.¹⁸ But there was also considerable hostility to the film in many countries. Some cultural critics decried its horrifying images and its "vulgarity." Military and political opponents argued that it distorted and demeaned the patriotism and heroism of soldiers of all nations and that it undermined nationalism, military defense, and the ability to wage war. They considered it subversive pacifist propaganda.

German sensibilities had been evident in reactions to Remarque's book, which had been vehemently denounced by conservative nationalist opponents of the fledgling Weimar Republic. Consequently, the initial German-dubbed version prepared by Universal, finally released in December 1930, had included, with Remarque's consent, a number of cuts to obtain the approval of the Berlin Censorship Board. These cuts were not concerned with aspects controversial in other countries—others had objected to the use of earthy language and latrine scenes, the oblique bedroom scene of Paul and a young French woman, or the scene of Paul stabbing a French *poilu* to death—but with the image of Germany and the German army. Thus Universal, in the initial German version, deleted scenes showing the recruits beating up their tyrannical corporal, Himmelstoss, a symbol of Prussian militarism; soldiers starving for food and eating ravenously; soldiers blaming the Kaiser and the generals for the war; the grim use of the boots of a dead comrade to show the loss of one soldier after another; and Paul's return to his former school and his antiwar remarks there.

Although *All Quiet on the Western Front* played to packed theaters in the United States, Britain, and a number of other countries, it was banned in Germany, first, for a time, by the Weimar Republic and then permanently in 1933 by the Nazi regime.¹⁹ The German-dubbed film, which had opened to the general public in Berlin on December 5, 1930, almost immediately led to Nazi street demonstrations and theater disruptions.

Representatives of the German military and the War Ministry had already issued protests against the film for portraying German soldiers as ridiculous, brutal, and cowardly.²⁰ Now Nazi propaganda leader Joseph Goebbels took his brown-shirted toughs to the streets, directing a number of violent protests and demonstrations against what he characterized as "a Jewish film" filled with anti-German propaganda.²¹ Inside the theaters, Nazis released snakes and mice and set off stink bombs.²² Although both the Board of Censors and the government of Chancellor Heinrich Brüning denied that they were influenced by the Nazi demonstrations, the decision to ban the film was correctly seen as a capitulation to the right, including the Nazis. Pabst's antiwar film, *Westfront 1918*, produced in Germany, was being shown in many theaters without any disturbances or demonstrations. The Nazis had used the American film to force the issue, and they had won. Hailed in Germany by the nationalist press—Goebbels's newspaper called it "Our Victory"—the censorship decision was, nevertheless, denounced by most liberals and socialists there and throughout the West.²³

The Brüning government's decision was vigorously attacked by the left-wing Social Democrats in Germany, but they were unable to lift the ban until late the following year. By

June 1931, Universal Pictures was willing to make concessions to gain access to Germany, with 5,000 theaters the second-largest market in Europe. The Board of Censors lifted the general ban in September 1931 after Universal had agreed to eliminate the scene of Corporal Himmelstoss's cowardice at the front as well as Paul's panic in the graveyard attack, and Paul's contrition for having stabbed the French soldier to death. The shortened film (cut by nearly 900 meters, or approximately 33 minutes) played with great success in Germany through early 1932. Indeed, in 1931 and 1932, *All Quiet on the Western Front* was the sixth most popular film in Germany.²⁴

Nazi-inspired censorship of the film had a lasting impact long after the debate in Germany in the 1930s. Indeed, it apparently had a long-term effect on the film and its showings in many countries. In its eagerness to enter the German market, Universal Pictures had agreed to delete offensive scenes not only from the film shown in Germany but from all versions released throughout the world.²⁵ Thus the versions of Milestone's *All Quiet on the Western Front* seen by millions of viewers in many countries for years thereafter were versions "sanitized" to please the German censors in 1931.

The history of the various versions and releases of *All Quiet on the Western Front* from 1930, to the present, as reconstructed in part by film scholar Andrew Kelly, demonstrates that Universal Pictures was as responsive to national sensibilities and political constraints as it was to economic opportunities in the international marketplace.²⁶ The film was banned entirely in Italy, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia. Austria, also under pressure from the Nazis, followed Germany's lead. The version shown in France (beginning in October 1930) did not contain the scenes of French women entertaining German soldiers and had a drastically cut shell-crater scene in which Paul kills the French soldier. Paris banned this and other antiwar films in 1938—the eve of World War II. . . .²⁷

Milestone's version of *All Quiet on the Western Front* had enormous impact. Its ideological message contributed to political debate about war and isolationism in the 1930s and later. And in its most lasting impact, it helped to shape public images and attitudes about trench warfare, about World War I, and, to some extent, about modern war in general. It also had an undeniable impact on the motion-picture industry. It encouraged directors to shift away from static, stage-like "talking pictures" and instead to combine sound with open, fluid, visual movement. Milestone's long tracking shots were widely and specifically imitated. Of broader and deeper influence was his effective combination of sight and sound to produce a new realism that became one of the most influential concepts of Hollywood in the 1930s.²⁸

No wonder, then, that pacifists, antiwar activists, and isolationists—in the 1930s and in subsequent decades—have regarded the film as a powerful antiwar and antimilitary device. Its many subsequent rereleases (in 1934, 1939, and 1950)²⁹ and the creation of an entirely new version in 1979 both reflected and contributed to such tides of sentiment in the United States and perhaps elsewhere. Indeed, Lew Ayres was so affected by his role and by the antiwar sentiment of the 1930s that he became a conscientious objector in World War II; at first refusing to be a soldier, and only after much public censure, agreeing to serve as an unarmed medic in the Army Medical Corps.

Most important, *All Quiet on the Western Front* helped shape subsequent public perceptions of the nature of trench warfare and of World War I. In part, this was because the book and the film, the latter with its visual images matching—even exceeding—the inner power of Remarque's writing, were part of the outpouring of antiwar memoirs and novels of the period

that recast and bitterly articulated the failure of the Great War in the story not of battles won but of individual lives lost—and lost for naught.

The popularity of *All Quiet on the Western Front* and some other antiwar films may also be due in part to more oblique reasons. Despite their so-called realism and their brutal images, the antiwar films of the 1930s about World War I may, as historian Jay M. Winter has suggested, actually have helped masses of people take the chaos and horror of the war and mentally organize them in a more understandable and manageable way. Most of these motion pictures, after all, focus on the surface of events, on action, on melodrama, usually even including some romance, or at least on a bit of comedy. In mythologizing the war (re-creating the conflict in a form more understandable and acceptable than the complex and chaotic event itself), such films offer a way to organize and contextualize events that are themselves fragmented and traumatic. They serve to “help people to bury the past and help people recreate it in a form they can accept,” according to Winter.³⁰ In more generic terms and in a longer time frame, antiwar action pictures, from *All Quiet on the Western Front* to the anti-Vietnam War film *Apocalypse Now*, offer many viewers both the moral solace of a strong, antiwar message and the emotional appeal of an exciting, action-filled adventure.³¹

Regardless of how World War I is understood, it is clear that in cinematographic terms, the enduring public perceptions of the image of trench warfare were established in the 1930s. No single motion picture was more influential in fixing that visual representation than this one. After *All Quiet on the Western Front*, the “reality” of trench warfare in the public mind was a “reality” constructed in Hollywood.

Notes

- 1 See, for example, Martin Gilbert, *The First World War: A Complete History* (New York: Holt, 1994), p. 535; and Michael T. Isenberg, *War on Film: The American Cinema and World War I, 1914–1941* (London: Associated University Presses, 1981), pp. 30, 132, 138. Historical studies of the film’s place in the larger political and cultural history of the period have been few and largely fragmentary—for example, Andrew Kelly, “All Quiet on the Western Front: Brutal Cutting, Stupid Censors and Bigoted Politicos, 1930–1984,” *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 9, no. 2 (1989): 135–50; Jerold Simmons, “Film and International Politics: The Banning of *All Quiet on the Western Front* in Germany and Austria, 1930–1931,” *Historian* 52, no. 1 (November 1989): 40–60; and Richard A. Firda, “All Quiet on the Western Front”: *Literary Analysis and Cultural Context* (New York: Twayne, 1993), pp. 92–106. In a class by itself is Modris Eksteins, *Rites of Spring: The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age* (London: Black Swan, 1990), pp. 368–97. A useful anthology is Bärbel Schrader, ed., *Der Fall Remarque: Im Westen nichts Neues: Eine Dokumentation* (Leipzig: Reclam-Verlag, 1992). An earlier, if longer, version of this chapter appeared as John Whiteclay Chambers II, “All Quiet on the Western Front’ (1930): The Antiwar Film and the Image of the First World War,” *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 14, no. 4 (October 1994): 377–411.
- 2 On his early life, see Christine R. Baker and R. W. Last, *Erich Maria Remarque* (London: Oswald Wolff, 1979), pp. 5–17.
- 3 *All Quiet on the Western Front* (Universal Pictures, 1930). Original sound version is 138 or 140 minutes, black-and-white (a silent version with synchronized music and sound effects ran longer). Carl Laemmle, Jr., producer; Lewis Milestone, director; George Abbott, Maxwell Anderson, and Del Andrews, screenplay; C. Gardner Sullivan, story editor; Arthur Edson, director of photography; George Cukor, dialogue director; and David Broekman, music. The cast included Lewis Ayres (Paul Bäumer), Louis Wolheim (Katzinsky), George “Slim” Summerville (Tjaden), John Wray (Himmelstoss), Raymond Griffith (Gerard Duval), Russell Gleason (Müller), Ben Alexander (Kemmerick), Arnold Lacy (Kantorek), and Beryl Mercer (Mrs. Bäumer); in the silent version, Zasu Pitts (Mrs. Bäumer); Marion Clayton (Miss Bäumer); and Yola D’Avril (Suzanne).
- 4 “Confers on New War Film,” *New York Times*, August 11, 1929, p. A8.
- 5 “Mr. Laemmle Returns [from Germany]. Universal’s President Discusses Film *All Quiet on the Western Front*,” *New York Times*, October 6, 1929, sec. 9, p. 8.
- 6 Lewis Milestone and Donald Chase, “Milestones” (typescript of unfinished autobiography in the Lewis Milestone Collection, Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, Los Angeles [cited hereafter as Milestone Papers]); Joseph R. Millichap, *Lewis Milestone* (Boston: Twayne, 1981).
- 7 See the somewhat differing accounts of Ayres’s selection in the interview with Lewis Milestone, in Charles Higham and Joel Greenberg, *The Celluloid Muse: Hollywood Directors Speak* (Chicago: Regnery, 1969), pp. 152–54; and William Bakewell, *Hollywood Be Thy Name* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1991), pp. 71–72.
- 8 See, for example, Millichap, *Milestone*, p. 39. Maxwell Anderson acknowledged a less important role (Anderson, interview, May 10, 1956, Columbia University Oral History Collection, New York).
- 9 Remarque, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, p. 291.
- 10 George J. Mitchell, “Making *All Quiet on the Western Front*,” *American Cinematographer* 66 (September 1985): 34–43.
- 11 Milestone, interview in Higham and Greenberg, *Celluloid Muse*, p. 151. He told this story many times.
- 12 Mitchell, “Making *All Quiet on the Western Front*,” p. 42. Milestone tried several different endings during production. See mimeographed copies of the shooting script, November 20, 1929, Remarque Papers, Series I, Folder 4; and the continuity script, undated, Film Studies Center, Museum of Modern Art, New York City.
- 13 Excerpts in an advertisement by Universal Pictures, *Variety* May 7, 1930, pp. 36–37.
- 14 [No first name given] Sime, Review of *All Quiet on the Western Front*, *Variety*, May 7, 1930, p. 21.
- 15 For the \$1.2 million publicized figure, see *ibid.* The projected estimate was \$891,000, according to “Estimated Cost Sheets,” December 9, 12, 1929; the actual cost was \$1,448,863.44, “Final Cost Sheet,” May 7, 1930 (*All Quiet on the Western Front* file, Universal Pictures Collection, Doheny Library, University of Southern California, Los Angeles).
- 16 “Disappointments on [West] Coast Last Wk [sic]—‘Western Front’ Made Big Showing, \$22,000 at \$1.50 Top,” *Variety* April 30, 1930, p. 9; “Only ‘Western Front’ at Over Capacity \$21,957, in \$2 Central,” *Variety*, May 14, 1930, p. 8.
- 17 On Whale’s film based on the R. C. Sherriff play, see D. J. Wenden, “Images of War 1930 and 1988 *All Quiet on the Western Front* and *Journey’s End*: Preliminary Notes for a Comparative Study,” *Film Historia* 3, nos. 1–2 (1993): 33–37. On Pabst’s film, see Michael Geisler, “The Battleground for Modernity: *Westfront 1918* (1930),” in *The Films of G. W. Pabst*, ed. Erich Rentschler (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1990), pp. 91–102.

- 18 Modris Eksteins, "All Quiet on the Western Front and the Fate of a War," *Journal of Contemporary History* 15, no. 2 (April 1980): 355.
- 19 Simmons, "Film and International Politics"; Heiko Hartlief, "Filmzensur in der Weimarer Republik. Zum Verbot des Remarque-Films *Im Westen nichts Neues*: Eine Fallstudie im Geschichtsunterricht der gymnasialen Oberstufe," *Erich Maria Remarque Jahrbuch* 3 (1993): 73–82.
- 20 U.S. Ambassador, Germany to Secretary of State, December 17, 1930, received January 3, 1931, in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1931* (Washington, D.C.: Department of State, 1931) vol. 2, pp. 309–10. (Hereafter cited as FRUS)
- 21 Diary entries, December 5–12, 1930, Joseph Goebbels, *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels: Samtliche Fragmente*, ed. Elke Fröhlich (Munich: Saur, 1987), vol. 1, pp. 641–45.
- 22 "Fascist Youth Riot as All Quiet Runs," *New York Times*, December 9, 1930, p. 17.
- 23 "Unser der Sieg! [Our Victory!]," *Der Angriff* December 15, 1930, p. 1; Guido Enderis, "'All Quiet' Banned by Reich Censors," *New York Times*, December 12, 1930, p. 12; *New York Times*, [editorial], "Commercialism and Censorship," December 13, 1930, p. 20.
- 24 Simmons, "Film and International Politics," pp. 58–59; U.S. Ambassador, Germany, to Secretary of State, September 12, 1931, in FRUS, pp. 316–17; see also "Top 10 Films in Germany, 1925–1932" [table], in Joseph Garncarz, "Hollywood in Germany: The Role of American Films in Germany," in *Hollywood in Europe: Experiences of a Cultural Hegemony*, ed. David W. Ellwood and Rob Kroes (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1994), pp. 123–24.
- 25 U.S. Ambassador, Germany, to Secretary of State, September 12, 1931, FRUS, p. 316.
- 26 Andrew Kelly, "All Quiet on the Western Front: 'Brutal Cutting, Stupid Censors, and Bigoted Politicos, 1930–1984,'" *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 9, no. 2 (1989): 135–50.
- 27 Although some studies claim that the film was not shown in France until 1963, a silent version with French intertitles (and perhaps some simulated sound effects) opened there in October 1930. In December 1930, the German-dubbed sound version with French sub-titles brought the full impact of the battle scenes as well as the dialogue to enthusiastic French audiences. Apparently it was not until 1950 that a French-dubbed dialogue sound version was released. See "A l'Ouest, rien de nouveau vient d'être présenté à Marseille," *La Cinématographie française*, no. 624, October 17, 1930, p. 197; Fernard Morel, "Le Cinéma doit préparer la paix; on doit détaxer les films de ce genre," *La Cinématographie française*, no. 625, October 25, 1930, p. 49; "La Foire aux films," *L'Humanité*, November 23, 1930, p. 4; Emile Vuillermoz, "Le Cinéma: 'A l'Ouest, rien de nouveau,'" *Le Temps*, December 27, 1930, p. 5; and, for the rerelease, Henry Magnan, "Le Cinéma: 'A l'Ouest rien de nouveau' Durable chef-d'oeuvre," *Le Monde*, December 30, 1950, p. 8.
- 28 Millichap, *Milestone*, pp. 24–25; see also Michael I. Isenberg, "An Ambiguous Pacifism: A Retrospective on World War I Films, 1930–1938," *Journal of Popular Film and Television* 4, no. 2 (1975): 98–115.
- 29 Copies of the scripts for the 1930, 1934, and 1939 releases are in the New York Film Censor Records, New York State Archives, Albany New York. I am indebted to Richard Andress, archivist, for providing these.
- 30 Jay M. Winter, *The Experience of World War I* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 328.
- 31 Milestone himself went on to direct a number of war and antiwar films, among them *The General Died at Dawn* (1936), *The Purple Heart* (1944), *A Walk in the Sun* (1946), *Halls of*

Missing Action: POW Films, Brainwashing and the Korean War, 1954–1968

CHARLES YOUNG

The 1963 film *The Great Escape* (John Sturges, United Artists, US) is arguably the most exciting prisoner of war (POW) film ever made. Even if you have not seen the film, you have probably seen clips of Steve McQueen's motorcycle jump. McQueen is fleeing on a motorcycle from a World War II German prison camp. Soldiers close in from all sides, but McQueen uses an earthen embankment as a jump and just barely clears a 10 foot barbed wire fence. He is eventually recaptured, but repeated escape attempts fortify his spirit and inspire others who do get away.

The Great Escape is an archetype of the POW genre. POW camps are built in a heroic region of the cultural landscape, a place where natural motorcycle ramps abut barbed wire fences and where no-one gets dysentery. This adventure formula dominates every group of POW films except one: those set in the Korean War. The daring breakout is a defining element in *Stalag 17* (Billy Wilder, Paramount, US, 1953), *Von Ryan's Express* (Mark Robson, Twentieth Century Fox, US, 1965) and *The McKenzie Break* (Lamont Johnson, United Artists, US, 1970). The genre took on a new life in Vietnam POW/missing in action (MIA) films such as *Missing in Action* (Joseph Zito, Cannon, US, 1984), where commandos go back to free cinematic prisoners left behind at the end of the war. Valor comes so easily to the American POW that he can pause for jokes, such as in the long-running television series *Hogan's Heroes*. If it is a film set, the purpose of bars and wire is not to confine, but to provide something to escape through.

Almost invisible in prison camp adventures is the subject of collaboration. Informing and betrayal are fixtures of real incarceration; cooperation varies, but no-one gives just name, rank and serial number. The Hollywood image of captivity has such a hold on the imagination that it is difficult to counter, but in internal military documents, name, rank and serial number is known to be a myth. After Korea, the Army could not find 'any' former POW who gave only name, rank and serial number.¹ Because humans are mortal, they try to satisfy their captors. Resistance is common, even valorous, but rarely obstreperous. Most prisoners choose life and quietly cooperate as little as they think they can get away with.

Collaboration is ignored in POW films set in World War II and Vietnam; they feature the brave but rare event of escape and skip the compromises of everyday survival. *Stalag 17* came close, but its informer turned out to be a German spy educated in America, not a real