

Focus in Militainment as Revealed in film in THE SEDUCTION OF WAR

MILITAINMENT: War as entertainment.

Resource: *MILITAINMENT, INC.:* [MILITARISM AND POP CULTURE](#) 2:02:54

The film is broken down into nine sections, each between 10 and 20 minutes in length, allowing for in-depth classroom analysis of individual elements of the wide-ranging phenomenon. These sections are: Spectacle; Clean War; Techno-Fetishism; Demonization; Reality TV; Sports; Toys; Video Games and Dissent.

From mediaed.org:

Militainment, Inc. offers a fascinating, disturbing, and timely glimpse into the militarization of American popular culture, examining how U.S. news coverage has come to resemble Hollywood films, video games, and "reality television" in its glamorization of war. Mobilizing an astonishing range of media examples - from news anchors' idolatry of military machinery to the impact of government propaganda on war reporting - the film asks: How has war taken its place in the culture as an entertainment spectacle?

And how does presenting war as entertainment affect the ability of citizens to evaluate the necessity and real human costs of military action?

The 55-page [transcript of the documentary](#) is available.

Resource: [TOYS \(film\)](#)

Grant Munro (star of Neighbours) 7 mins. NFB, 1966.

Summary: This excellent stop-motion animation takes a dark look into the war toys often given to children at Christmas time. Starting off as harmless objects, the toys quickly take on the gestures of real soldiers, mimicking the actions and penalties of a real war. This critical commentary on war and glamorized violence creates a real and frightening battle.

When Grant Munro (star in NFB film *Neighbours*) made this brilliantly animated film, there was heated societal debate about war toys and their effect on children. When one looks at the film now, one can see its current relevance to a discussion about video games.

We filmmakers always think our films are totally clear. But, in fact, viewers bring their own beliefs and history to the films they watch. Imagine Grant Munro's dismay when he received the following letter. "I saw your film entitled 'Toys'.... Where did you get those marvellous war toys? My children are now so disappointed in their Christmas presents. The gifts they received can't compare with the great creations you employed. Please advise me of where you purchased these ingenious war toys. Birthdays are coming and I do want to get some."

Questions:

- Review the film. Identify, from your perspective, the most effective segments. What did you think when you saw the children's faces as they watch "the war"?
- Do you think that playing with war toys or video games that feature war is harmful? Stage a debate, deliver a passionate plea, or write an opinion essay.

Resource: [HOLLYWOOD AND THE WAR MACHINE](#) 47 mins.

The program Empire, on the Al Jazeera network, examines the symbiotic relationship between the movie industry and the military-industrial complex. The guests are Oliver Stone, the eight times Academy Award-winning filmmaker; Michael Moore, the Academy Award-winning filmmaker; and Christopher Hedges, an author and the former Middle East bureau chief of the New York Times.

Questions:

- What is behind the love affair between Hollywood and the Pentagon?
- What control does the Pentagon exert over film makers?
- Discuss the following statements from this documentary:
 - "These (war) films make the American people more war-like."
 - "War is sacred."
 - "Racism sells."
 - "Nationalism is a disease."
 - "Give a kid an automatic weapon and it takes him 4 days to become god."
- How does Michael Moore explain that anti-war films are not popular?
- What does he mean by "war pornography"?
- What criticisms are levelled at the acclaimed film, *The Hurt Locker*, which won 6 Academy Awards including Best Picture?