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*From Larocca David*

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# THE PHILOSOPHY OF WAR FILMS

EDITED BY DAVID LARocca



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**From Larocca David : The Philosophy of War Films (Philosophy Of Popular Culture)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Philosophy of War Films (Philosophy Of Popular Culture):

Wars have played a momentous role in shaping the course of human history. The ever-present specter of conflict has made it an enduring topic of interest in popular culture, and many movies, from Hollywood blockbusters to

independent films, have sought to show the complexities and horrors of war on-screen. In *The Philosophy of War Films*, David LaRocca compiles a series of essays by prominent scholars that examine the impact of representing war in film and the influence that cinematic images of battle have on human consciousness, belief, and action. The contributors explore a variety of topics, including the aesthetics of war as portrayed on-screen, the effect war has on personal identity, and the ethical problems presented by war. Drawing upon analyses of iconic and critically acclaimed war films such as *Saving Private Ryan* (1998), *The Thin Red Line* (1998), *Rescue Dawn* (2006), *Restrepo* (2010), and *Zero Dark Thirty* (2012), this volume's examination of the genre creates new ways of thinking about the philosophy of war. A fascinating look at the manner in which combat and its aftermath are depicted cinematically, *The Philosophy of War Films* is a timely and engaging read for any philosopher, filmmaker, reader, or viewer who desires a deeper understanding of war and its representation in popular culture.

"LaRocca offers a synoptic anthology of essays that brings to our attention how war films can provoke contemplation and meditation because of the ways that such films inevitably focus on the mortality and vulnerability of human beings. The essays, written by an outstanding array of international scholars, work out various ways in which the genre can compel our thinking to become philosophical. This collection of essays constitute a significant contribution to not only the philosophy of the war film, but also to philosophy of film itself." Daniel Flory, Montana State University

"War is a pervasive condition, a constitutive part of human experience. The war film genre is extensive and multiform. It is no surprise, then, that war films are provocations to philosophical thought. This important and timely edited collection has an extensive introduction that seeks answers to vital questions: What sort of a phenomenon is a war film? What do we think we mean when we speak of a war film? What are war films for? Can war as such be represented by film? The essays that follow illuminate myriad ethical, aesthetic, epistemological and ontological issues as they related to a broad range of representations of war." Guy Westwell, Film Studies, Queen Mary University of London

"The philosophical reflections compiled in this book look at war films from a variety of perspectives. I commend editor David LaRocca for bringing together scholars who each, in different ways, engage the interdisciplinary mission of the inquiry into how war is depicted on screen. What is the philosophy of film, and then, of war films specifically? Do war films harbor a philosophy of death, violence, love - or does philosophy enrich the understanding of the cinematic of war? *The Philosophy of War Films* explores these questions and many more, connecting the reality of war with the art of filmmaking." Mieke Bal, University of Amsterdam

"This volume offers rich and deeply thought-out consideration of the representation of war on film and of the ways filmic and now digital representation is deeply entangled with how we experience and think about war (up close or at a distance) in actual life. The book reaches back in film history but is especially provocative on war and its representation in the last decade the situation we are living with now. The essays are fresh and surprising, showing the whole subject of war and film to be far more interesting, complex, and disturbing than in the standard thinking about war genre films that we are used to." Charles Warren, Boston University

About the Author David LaRocca is visiting scholar in the Department of English at Cornell University and lecturer in value theory and film in the Department of Philosophy at the State University of New York College at Cortland. He is the author of *Emerson's English Traits and the Natural History of Metaphor* and editor of *The Philosophy of Charlie Kaufman* and Stanley Cavell's *Emerson's Transcendental Etudes*.