Valantin, Jean-Michel. *Hollywood, the Pentagon and Washington: The Movies and National Security from World War II to the Present Day*. London: Anthem, 2005. 159pp.

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Hollywood, the Pentagon and Washington seeks to examine the relationship between national security debates and mainstream North American cinema. To this extent, US foreign policy, homeland security, and the industrial foundations of the movie business are incorporated into Valantin's analytical framework and we are provided with an evaluation of the relationship between what is dubbed "national security cinema" and the "national security State." What is meant by "national security cinema" seems to be any film which features war, terrorism, or the secret service, and as such, due to the large amount of source material that is covered because of this indistinct definition, there is a disappointing lack of sustained critical engagement with specific film texts. For example, Valantin seems on the verge of detailed discussion of *The Longest Day* (1962) and *Star Wars* (1977) at different points in the book, but seemingly rejects the opportunity for close analysis in order to concentrate on the wider picture. Of course there is nothing wrong with covering the wider picture if the argument is fresh and original. To this end, Valantin does have some strong points which underscore his specialism as a scholar of strategic studies. For example, he emphasises that the Gulf War is hard to negotiate cinematically due to the political and ideological basis on which it was fought – "to compensate the crisis of the American strategic system's hegemony in the Middle East." Consequently, as he continues, this makes it "impossible to portray by creating heroes without clearly denying the reality of the situation." Although this echoes what Marita Sturken, Marilyn Young, and Susan Jeffords (amongst others) have said about the complex processes of recuperation and processing which are applied to Vietnam narratives in order to render them coherent and "make sense" of the war, it is refreshing to see an analysis which stresses the interlinking of politics and cinema, and which infuses popular cultural productions with a strategic relevance.

On the down side however, since Valantin is a strategic and sociological specialist, the one glaring omission from his framework is any film theory. This, combined with a near total absence of close analysis of any films beyond their plots and narratives, and a lack of engagement with specifically cinematic techniques, lends the impression that film is part of any number of interchangeable textual forms. Combined with the fact that the text is littered with numerous spelling mistakes (surely most people would know it is "Darth Vader" not "Vador"?) and typographical errors, it implants the notion that this volume has been rushed out to capitalise on the heightened interest in war, film and national identity in the wake of the invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan and the release of films such as *We Were Soldiers* (2002) and *Jarhead* (2005).

Valantin's research regarding the wider frameworks and political context in which Hollywood operates is clear, concise, and intelligently managed, and his conclusions regarding the future path of "national security cinema" in his reading of *Alexander* (2004) plainly opens up the possibilities for further research. The book therefore provides a decent overview of the relationship between US foreign policy, security strategy, and the North American film industry throughout the second half of the twentieth century and beyond, but the disappointing lack of close and sustained analytical engagement with specific film texts and of contextualising film theory is a clear impediment to the success of Valantin's argument.