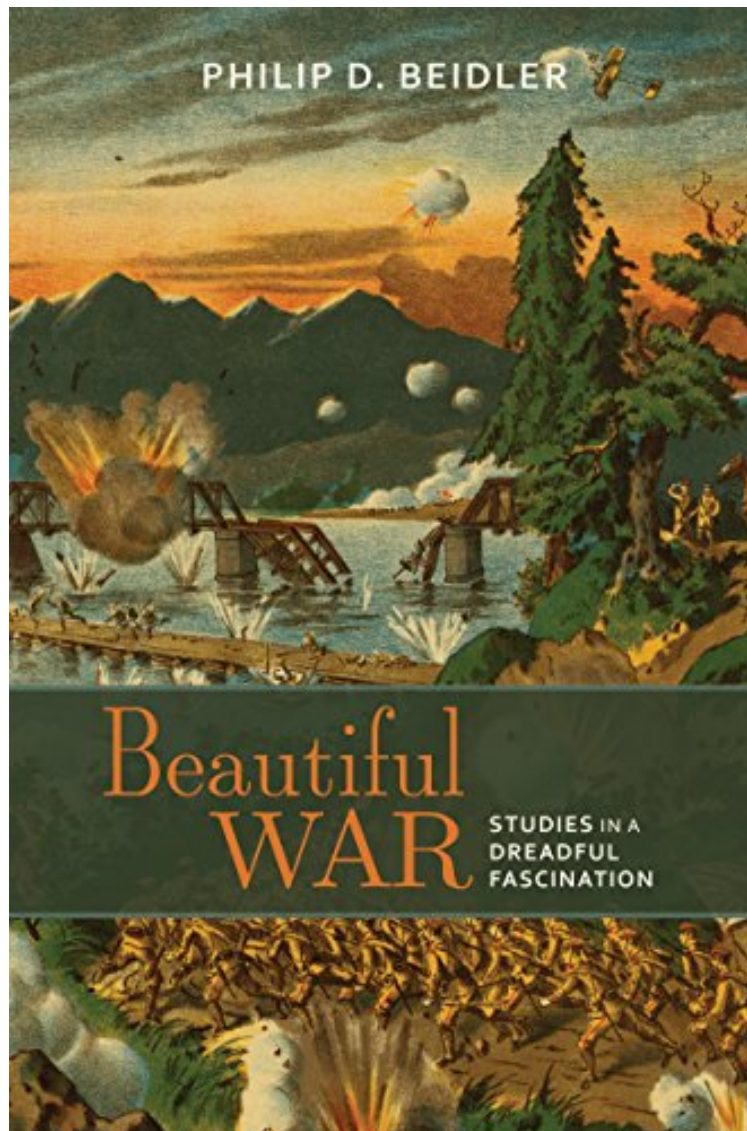


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## Beautiful War: Studies in a Dreadful Fascination

*Philip D. Beidler*

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**Philip D. Beidler : Beautiful War: Studies in a Dreadful Fascination** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Beautiful War: Studies in a Dreadful Fascination:

Beautiful War: Studies in a Dreadful Fascination is a wide-ranging exploration of armed conflict as depicted in art that illustrates the constant presence of war in our everyday lives. Philip D. Beidler investigates the unending assimilation and pervasive presence of the idea of war in popular culture, the impulses behind the making of art out of war, and the

unending and debatably aimless trajectories of war itself. Beidler's critical scope spans from Shakespeare's plays, through the Victorian battle paintings of Lady Butler, into the post-World War I writings of F. Scott Fitzgerald and Virginia Woolf, and up to twenty-first-century films such as *The Hurt Locker* and *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*. As these works of art have become ubiquitous in contemporary culture, the many faces of war clearly spill over into our art and media, and Beidler argues that these portrayals in turn shift the perception of war from a savage truth to a concept. *Beautiful War* argues that the representation of war in the arts has always been, and continues to be, an incredibly powerful force. Incorporating painting, music, photography, literature, and film, Beidler traces a disturbing but fundamental truth: that war has always provided an aesthetic inspiration while serving ends as various and complex as ideological or geopolitical history, public memory, and mass entertainment. *Beautiful War* is a bold and vivid account of the role of war and military conflict as a subject of art that offers much of value to literary and cultural critics, historians, veterans, students of art history and communication studies, and those interested in expanding their understanding of art and media's influence on contemporary values and memories of the past.

"In his 'Conclusion,' Beidler writes that wars now seem endless and art will always be made from them, but someone else will have to explain it. He has had enough. He is through. Goodbye to all that. To which I can only say: Thank you for your service." —The Tuscaloosa News