



Lea Wohl (Ph.D. Candidate)

On Scholarship as Visiting Research Assistant (2011)

Email: lea.wohl_at_uni-hamburg.de

Conferences Attended

"Jewish Identities in Contemporary Europe": A Conference at the Institute of Germanic & Romanic Studies, University of London, 11.4.-13.4. 2011, oral presentation: "Dani Levy's Film Narrations: a Map of the 'Minefield' of the Contemporary German-Jewish Relationship"

And after the Holocaust? Depictions of Jewish Characters and Jewish Life in German Feature Films after 1945

The research project in the field of media studies deals with the depiction of Jewish characters in German feature films. Based on the assumption that the specific depiction of the Jewish film characters, the themes and conflicts they are connected to as well as the filmmakers who contribute the representations are revealing for the very complex and complicated German-Jewish relationship after the Holocaust, the Jewish film characters of about 50 films will be analyzed.

The conception for the systematic analysis of Jewish film characters who appear in the German film and television landscape after 1945 proceeds from the impression that by now the Holocaust is represented in German film and television but that Jewish life and Jewish characters almost exclusively appear in that context and seldom in the context of the time after 1945.

Object of the analysis are German feature films from both cinema and television whose plots take place after 1945. Film and television are understood as ciphers for social tendencies which have to be deciphered or decoded in the images, the meanings, and the subtexts of the analyzed films.

The dissertation project traces what kinds of Jewish characters appear in German films, how they are depicted and which themes and stereotypes they are connected with. Thereby it

should be extracted how Jewish life in Germany after 1945 is understood, how present it is and which perceptions, stereotypes, and resentments exist on that score/ concerning this matter. Moreover it is necessary to consider who contributes the filmic depictions of Jewish characters, thus influencing the existing images of Jews in Germany as well as positioning himself in the discourse about the German-Jewish relationship. The differentiation of Jewish and non-Jewish perspectives, of self-images and public images might be revealing, yet conclusions have to be drawn cautiously since neither the Jews living in Germany nor the non-Jewish majority are homogeneous groups. Therefore, the question which picture “the Germans” draft of “the Jews“ resolves itself.

The aim of inquiry lies in the way the Jewish characters are depicted, which genres they appear in at what time, which filmmakers show them and which topics and issues they are connected with.