



Hitler konstruieren: Die Darstellung Hitlers in deutschen und amerikanischen historischen Spielfilmen 1945-2009

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Even though there is a large number of films, in which Hitler is portrayed, these films contribute little towards an analysis of the portrayal of the NS dictatorship. Dealing with the reconstruction of the Nazi past in these films, film critics focus mostly on the authenticity or the ridicule of Hitler. For them, each new film is another shot at the reconstruction of the past. The research deals with the depiction of Hitler in movies from three countries between 1945 and 2009. The three countries include the United States, where since 1941 movies have produced a plethora of Hitler images, The Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic, where movies were produced in which Hitler was largely absent from the scenic recreation of Nazism. Through a systematical deconstruction of images it will be demonstrated how different cultural perceptions created specific images of Hitler, which in turn shaped our thoughts, feelings and knowledge about this person. Within this deconstruction of the Hitler images, it will become obvious to what extent the image of Hitler as cultural-historical “product” transmits social views, values, and myths and represents at the same time a mirroring of the society. My work is based upon case studies which are the starting point for a comparison of several movies. This study focuses on the form and context for the production of these movies and the shaping of the memory of Hitler created by these movies. Based upon significant points of social and cinematographic transitions, my study is divided into three distinct time periods: the first period extended from 1945 to 1961; the second period from 1961 to 1989 and the third time period from 1989 to 2009. Two interviews with experts, twelve analysis factors, and the transcription of each film are the empirical basis for my study. In the first period films have a tendency to deconstruct the Hitler myth from the 1930’s and 1940’s. The films portray the myth and try through the dialogues, the choreography, and the selected actors to destroy it. In the second period movies generally aim to just depict the Hitler Myth as it appeared as an imitation of the National socialistic portrayals. The third period distinguished itself from the second period primarily through the reorientation in the construction of the mythos Hitler. Through the comparison, I am able to highlight the peculiarities in the depiction of Hitler in movies from these three countries. In German movies, Hitler appears as a part of Germany, while in American movies Hitler is the foreign enemy to Germany. The conclusion offers a survey of the

developments in the representation of Hitler in movies from 1945 until 2009 across the three countries.

Movies are more than mere fictional depictions. They are instrumental in forging a relationship between real experiences and imagined ones. In this study, I focus on the cultural-study approach to research representations of terror in post-9/11 films produced in three countries: Germany, Israel, and the United States. The purpose of the study is to analyze and conceptualize terrorism on the basis of its imaginary depictions in each of the countries under discussion. I chose to deal with fictional depictions, since fictional depictions serve as interesting points of reference, since, by their nature are less committed to and less burdened by the responsibility to remain within the confines of the actual events than are retellings of those events. It will be interesting to analyze the specific images that reflect the cultural imaginings of terror in each country. I will suggest that conceptions of terrorism in each of the societies in question stem from the particular country's specific experience with terror as well as from a social-political motivation for self-definition, in which the collective, as a heterogeneous unit, is reflected as a homogenous entity.