

Public Abstract

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The thesis Staging Hitler Myths deals with the depiction of Adolf Hitler in contemporary German film. The movies the analysis focuses on are the melodrama *Der Untergang* [Downfall, 2004] and the tragic comedy *Mein Fuehrer, Die wirkliche wahrste Wahrheit ueber Adolf Hitler* [Mein Fuehrer. The truly truest truth about Adolf Hitler, 2007]. Starting from the critical reviews concerning these two movies and the current depiction of Hitler in short clips and cartoon shows such as *Family Guy* and *The Simpsons*, I argue not only that Hitler is a frequent matter of depiction, but also that the depiction strategies vary from medium to medium. While the Hitler figure in cartoon shows is mostly detached from the historical background, in feature film he cannot be detached from it. The representation of the history of the Third Reich influences the overall interpretation of the Hitler figure. In the cartoon shows, Hitler is usually used as a side laugh and his figure is not developed, but in feature film a closer representation of Hitler takes place that often tries to depict the real Hitler. Since the historical person Hitler was right from the beginning staged by the Nazi propaganda machinery, there is not much proof of the private person Hitler. In my thesis I argue that the two examples I picked are representing a notion of what the directors consider a deeper insight on the private person Hitler. I will show that this is not an accurate depiction of the historical person, but more an interpretation and a staging of a Hitler myth. To proof this thesis, I will analyze the depiction of the Hitler figure, its interaction with other characters in the films and the staging and representation of history in film.