



The Representation of the American Presidency in Recent Hollywood Movies

Marie Axland

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Thesis (M.A.) from the year 1998 in the subject American Studies - Culture and Applied Geography, grade: 1,0, LMU Munich, 300 entries in the bibliography, language: English, comment: Ausgezeichnet mit dem Münchner Amerikanistenpreis für Beste Magisterarbeit , abstract: In Hollywood film history, the U.S. president has had many images - a brave leader, an incompetent fool, a lovable hero. One thing is for certain: No matter what era, Presidents, whether fictional or real, are frequent fodder for filmmakers. After Vietnam and the revelations of Watergate, however, the number of films with presidential portrayals steadily decreased, and the depictions that did appear generally cast a corrupt or inept Chief Executive. It is therefore more than surprising why filmmakers today have decided to produce such an incredibly large number of films as compared to the last two decades. Presidents have been portrayed as minor characters in dozens of Hollywood films, either for inspirational purposes or simply to keep the plot moving. Lately, not only the number of President films has increased significantly, but there is also a clear tendency to let the Presidents move towards center stage, and they are now often pictured as the protagonists. This phenomenon opens up a whole range of questions: How are the Presidents depicted? Is there a certain trend in the portrayals? Or are those portrayed all different from each other? Are there differences or similarities to older characterizations? What does this tell us about Hollywood's view of the Presidency? Has it suddenly changed? And what are the reasons for such a sudden boost in the number of films? By taking a closer look at a selection of Hollywood productions, this paper provides an attempt to find answers to these questions. Of the string of fictional Presidents that American filmmakers have recently created, some are more loathsome than their real-life counterparts, others more heroic. Both types seem designed to connect with a

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