

Abstract

This thesis presents the topic of a school experiment that simulated Nazi Germany. The main focus of the research is the analysis of two movies that were made based on the real story from 1967 in California. High school teacher Ron Jones tried to show his students the ease with which the young Germans voluntarily wanted to be part of the Hitler Jugend because they could not believe why would the Germans willingly do all the horrible things that led to the Holocaust. With the experiment of Ron Jones, they follow their leader equally blind, feel good to be part of their new Third Wave movement. This simulation is presented in two movies, *Die Welle* (2008) from Germany and *The Wave* (1981) from the USA. The aim of this thesis is to make an overview of the differences between these two versions of the story considering the relationship between the two nations with the topic. With help of theories made by Aleida Assmann about the traumatic past and the collective memory of a nation, I try to explain the different backgrounds of the movies. Furthermore, I point out the reactions to both the *Die Welle* and *The Wave*, which are influenced not only by the cultural and social environment, but also by the aesthetics of the movie, frame, music, and other technical aspects of the movie-making. The analysis of the movies proves the importance of the topic and the relationships of the younger generation with the past. Many schools now use movies as teaching material. Nevertheless, there are cases where the topic and the message of the story were not accepted in the right way. In Austria, the movie is now forbidden to be shown in schools, because some students tried to remake the experiment. This shows the fact that the younger generation has a very different approach to the past connected with the Nazi movement and the topic needs to be discussed as a warning and danger of this type of power.