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Don DeLillo's "Underworld": The artful reality of simulacra

Otmar Lichtenwörther

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Diploma Thesis from the year 2002 in the subject American Studies - Literature, grade: ÿ (1), University of Graz (Institute for American Studies), language: English, abstract: Underworld (1997), DeLillos elfter Roman, ist bis dato sein ehrgeizigstes Projekt. In diesem 827-seitigen Nachruf auf den Kalten Krieg vereint und verdichtet er viele der Themen seiner schriftstellerischen Karriere: Verschwörungstheorien und Formen der Paranoia, atomare Bedrohung, das Spannungsverhältnis zwischen fiktionalem Erzählen und Historiographie, die Fragmentarisierung der grands récits, Onomastik und die Macht der Sprache; der Einfluss des Films, des Fernsehens und der Werbung auf unsere alltägliche Wirklichkeitswahrnehmung wie auch auf künstlerisches Schaffen, Jean Baudrillards Simulakrum; Gewalt und die unterschwellige Faszination, die die Medienberichterstattung über Naturkatastrophen, Terrorakte, Serienmörder, Amokläufer, Flugzeugabstürze und dergleichen auf uns ausübt; Sport; Homophobie, der Konsumwahn und die Macht des multinationalen Kapitals; Kunst und die Frage, ob subversive Kunst, Kunst die gesellschaftlich noch etwas bewegen kann, in einem soziokulturellen Rahmen, den wir grob mit den Begriffen Postmoderne oder Spätkapitalismus umreißen können, noch möglich ist; und schließlich noch Müll als empirisches Faktum und als große historische, psychoanalytische und ästhetische Metapher. Eine Metapher, die fast jeden Aspekt des Romans in sich vereinigt. Müll ist im buchstäblichen Sinne und als Metapher nahezu allgegenwärtig und dient in der Diskussion der vielschichtigen und weitverzweigten historischen, politischen und ästhetischen Implikationen von Underworld als allumfassendes Bild. Der aus unser aller Alltag wohlbekannte Begriff des Recycling, und Containment, ein Wort, das etwa im Begriff „Müllcontainer" schon längst Bestandteil auch der deutschen Sprache ist, bilden dabei das Grundgerüst dieser Betrachtung.

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