

Abstract

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Beyond Postmodern Political Satire

In 2015, the German filmmaker David Wnendt released his political satire *Er Ist Wieder Da* (EIWD); a multi-layered attack on the logic of contemporary popular media culture and the rising populist tendencies. The mockumentary is an adaptation of a book published in 2012 by the German-Hungarian Timur Vermes (1967) under the same title. The film depicts Adolf Hitler waking up in the 21st century, easily making his way up the political ladder due to the sensationalist media drives. The mockumentary shows the dubious role of postmodern media culture in the dark, but all too familiar, fascist tendencies in contemporary Germany.

Scholars like Lisa Coletta (2009), Jeffrey Jones and Geoffrey Baym (2010), and Attilee Dalene (2012) argue that satire in our postmodern society has lost its healthy societal function. Today's postmodern media culture is dominated by hyper-reality and pastiche; a blurring between the real and the fictional, between politics and entertainment. While it is precisely this distinction that allowed media satire to ridicule and change the public and political sphere.

This paper argues that EIWD is an exemplary case of how satire might deal with the reflexive nature of satire in postmodern society. EIWD provides an immanent critique by blurring the real and fictional universe itself. While infotainment thrives on making fun of politics, EIWD shows that things are no longer amusing when they get too ridiculous. The mockumentary awakens its viewers to their surrounding political dangers by using real footage and showing real consequences in order to initiate social change.