
A High Contrast Portrait: Study of Visual Representations of the Sudeten Borderland in the Recent Czech Film and Tv Productions

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Abstract

A borderland is a special place, with its own mythology, its own timing and its own sense of borders. This is the place and symbol of power. A borderland is also a place of different tensions. The north-western borderland of the Czech Republic also known as the Sudetes has become a point of interest for the Czech cinema (both movies and tv series) in the recent years. The high contrast landscape of post-industrial areas, abandoned places and wild mountains seems to catch the attention of filmmakers searching for setting that would seem to be less obvious, more ambiguous and resemble a little bit a combination of Nordic Noir aesthetics with a flavor of Twin Peaks atmosphere. This paper analyses the newly created discourse on the Sudeten borderland through the tools of visual social semiotics on the example of the two recent Czech productions: a film *Schmitke* (2015) and a tv series *Pustina* (2016); and tries to track how this once almost forgotten borderland region became a popular background for the recent Czech tv and cinema productions, especially drama and crime. The main task of this paper is to answer the question: what kind of knowledge is that (discourse) and how is the borderland (visually) represented?

Keywords: social semiotics, visual analysis, discourse analysis, Czech cinema, borderland, Sudetes

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