

Film Review + Exercise Sheet

November 2020



Three Days of the Condor

When the CIA researcher Joseph Turner returns to his office from an errand, he finds all his co-workers shot dead. It is not long before he fears for his own life as he discovers that he is at the heart of a conspiracy. Sydney Pollack's film is a prime example of 1970s American paranoia thrillers. kinofenster.de recommend the movie for senior classes (Oberstufe).

Content

- REVIEW
- 03 **Three Days of
the Condor**
- EXERCISE SHEET
- 05 **Introduction to
the Film THE THREE DAYS
OF CONDOR**
- DIDACTIC/METHODOLOGICAL NOTE
 - EXERCISE SHEET
- 07 **Links**
- 08 **Legal Notice**

Review: Three Days of the Condor (1/2)



Three Days of the Condor

Robert Redford plays a CIA agent who suddenly does not know who he can trust. The 1975 paranoia thriller is a classic of the genre.

Joseph Turner works as an analyst for an obscure CIA unit in a clandestine office, where he reads international literature in search of hidden meanings, codes and other clues. One day, when he goes out to get lunch, he returns to find all his co-workers shot dead. As a CIA agent, one might expect him to be prepared for this kind of situation, but he cannot even remember his code name "Condor" when he puts in the emergency call. Finally, support arrives from the headquarter but he realizes that they want to kill him, too. Turner manages to escape by forcing his way into the apartment of a photographer named Kathy, whom he holds hostage while he works out what to do next. With Kathy's help, Turner uncovers a conspiracy that reaches up to the highest echelons of the CIA.

THE THREE DAYS OF CONDOR is one of a series of American paranoia thrillers made in the 1970s. As in THE PARALLAX VIEW (Zeuge einer Verschwörung, 1974) or MARATHON

MAN (Der Marathon-Mann, 1976) the focus of the film is on the alienation of a single person from an opaque and seemingly hostile world. The ubiquitous and invisible dangers of a conspiracy are expressed by means of telephoto shots, which isolate the protagonist in the picture and give the impression of surveillance. The unsettling feeling of being caught up in a massive conspiracy is amplified Sydney Pollack's film by the fact that certain dialogues take place off camera. We hear them like a constant echo behind wide-angle aerial views of Manhattan. The director uses music, on the other hand, in an antithetical manner: in contrast to the normal conventions of the thriller, the murderous attacks and frenetic chases are barely accompanied by suspense music, which creates the sense of almost mechanical procedures. The soundtrack, with its groovy funk music and feel-good rock, fills the gaps between these events and provides the atmos- >

Three Days of the Condor

USA 1975
 Thriller

Publication Date:

19 November 2020

Distribution Media: DVD/BluRay

Distribution: Studiocanal

Director: Sydney Pollack

Screenplay: Lorenzo Sempé Jr., David Rayfiel, based on a novel by James Grady

Actors: Robert Redford, Faye Dunaway, Cliff Robertson, Max von Sydow, John Houseman and others

Camera: Owen Roizman

Duration: 117 min, German version, original soundtrack, original soundtrack with subtitles

Format: Digital, Color, Cinemascope

Film Awards: Best feature film, David di Donatello Awards 1976: Best director and others

Official German Film Evaluation: From 16

Recommended Age Group: From 16

Recommended Grade: From 11th Grade

Themen: Manipulation, Fear/Anxiety, Corruption, USA, Alienation

School Subjects: English, German, Politics, Ethics, Music

Review: Three Days of the Condor (2/2)

pheric setting for the charismatic central character, played by Robert Redford, who is clearly conflicted: depending on the scene, he oscillates from bookworm to lover or perturbed victim to confident agent. This ironic basic tone, coupled with his portrayal as both a doubting and a dubious hero, who must resort to violence to capture his sole ally, is a departure from the conventional hero of a thriller story. This is another similarity between *THE THREE DAYS OF CONDOR* and other movies from the New Hollywood movement, which challenged the viewing habits of American cinema-goers in the 1960s and 1970s.

In an educational context the film may be regarded as a starting point from which to address conspiratorial structures in 1970s American politics, which came to light as a result of events such as the Watergate scandal or the “Family Jewels” affair. The mysterious backgrounds to the assassinations of John F. and Robert Kennedy and the human rights activists Malcolm X and Martin Luther King in the 1960s also exacerbated public perceptions of political insecurity which allowed paranoia thrillers to establish themselves. In the subjects of politics and ethics, the film can be used to analyze how conspiracy narratives gain traction and to address modern phenomena such as the QAnon movement. In German and English classes, a critical treatment of the female protagonist’s character would be worthy of consideration, in that she seldom acts outside her role as object of romantic interest or as a simple plot vehicle. Last, but not least, the music of the 1970s plays a major role in Pollack’s film, so that a music class could discuss the connections between musical patterns and the portrayal of a film character.

Author:

Hannes Wesselkämper, 19 November 2020

Translation:

Don Mac Coitir

Aufgabe: Die drei Tage des Condor / Didaktisch-methodischer Kommentar

HINFÜHRUNG ZUM FILM DIE DREI TAGE DES CONDOR (USA 1975, REGIE: SYDNEY POLLACK) für Lehrerinnen und Lehrer

—

Fächer:

Deutsch, Englisch, Geschichte, Politik

Altersempfehlung:

ab 16 Jahre, ab 11. Klasse

Lernprodukt/Kompetenzzuwachs: Die Schülerinnen und Schüler verfassen eine Filmkritik. In den Fächern Englisch und Deutsch liegt der Fokus auf dem Schreiben, in den Gesellschaftswissenschaften auf der Analysekompetenz. Fächerübergreifend erfolgt die Vertiefung filmästhetischer Mittel.

Didaktisch-methodischer Kommentar:

Der Politthriller aus dem Jahr 1975 basiert auf dem Roman „Die 6 Tage des Condor“ von James Crady. Die Annäherung an den Film des Regisseurs Sydney Pollack erfolgt über die Sichtung der Anfangssequenz (00:00:00 bis 00:10.30).

Anschließend werden Kriterien der Filme der „New-Hollywood“-Bewegung erarbeitet und diese in Bezug auf DIE DREI TAGE DES CONDOR angewendet. Diese Zuordnung erfolgt unter anderem, weil der Film mit Publikumserwartungen und Genrekonventionen bricht und staatliche Autoritäten infrage stellt. In Kleingruppen werden politische und nachrichtendienstliche Affären in der USA der 1970er-Jahre recherchiert und präsentiert sowie der Einfluss der historischen Ereignisse auf das Thriller Sub-Genre „Paranoia-Kino“ diskutiert. In diesem Zusammenhang bietet es sich an zu diskutieren, warum damalige nachrichtendienstliche Konspirationen und aktuelle Verschwörungs-Narrationen nicht vergleichbar sind.

Eine Übersicht zu aktuellen Verschwörungsmethoden bietet folgender Artikel der bpb: <https://www.bpb.de/lernen/projekte/270429/reichsbuerger-mondlandung-reptiloide-flacherde>.

Die Ergebnisse der unterschiedlichen Arbeitsschritte zu DIE DREI TAGE DES CONDOR werden in einer Filmkritik zusammengefasst.

Autorin:

Hanna Falkenstein, 19.11.2020

Exercise: Introduction to the Film The Three Days of Condor

INTRODUCTION TO THE FILM THE THREE DAYS OF CONDOR (US 1975, DIRECTED BY SYDNEY POLLACK)

BEFORE VIEWING THE FILM:

- a)** Watch the starting sequence (Timecode: 00:00:00-00:10.30) of the film THE THREE DAYS OF CONDOR.

In class, articulate your expectations on the film: what genre does the film belong to and when is the plot set? Refer in your reasoning to the plot, locations, settings and costumes.

- b)** The film is regarded as a „New Hollywood“ movie. Discuss in class what you already know about the movement. Expand your knowledge using the kinofenster.de glossary (<https://www.kinofenster.de/lehmaterial/glossar/new-hollywood/>) and the information on the Website (<http://filmlexikon.uni-kiel.de/index.php?action=lexikon&tag=det&id=272>). Describe the criteria that characterize „New Hollywood“ movies in terms of form and content by using your own words.

WHILE VIEWING THE FILM:

- c)** Divide into groups and analyse the portrayal of the main character, Joseph Turner, the central conflict in the film, and which cinematic and narrative elements of the movie allow it to be categorized as „New Hollywood“. Write down bullet points immediately after viewing the film.

AFTER VIEWING THE FILM:

- d)** Tauschen Sie sich über Ihre Sichtungseindrücke im Plenum aus: Was hat Sie besonders überrascht und/oder berührt? Haben sich Ihre Vermutungen aus Aufgabe a) erfüllt?
- e)** Along with a partner, characterize the protagonist Joseph Turner. In doing so, refer back to your notes from exercise c). Present the results of your work to the whole class..
- f)** In class, collect and compare the criteria that define this movie as belonging to New Hollywood.
- g)** In the 1970s, numerous political and espionage scandals shook the confidence of the American public in state institutions. Divide into groups and carry out research on the “Watergate” scandal (**Group A**) and the „Family-Jewels“ investigations (**Group B**). Use the following articles as starting points for your research:

Group A:

zeit.de: Richard Nixon und die Watergate-Affäre (<https://www.zeit.de/1992/25/richard-nixon-und-die-watergate-affaere>, kostenlose Registrierung notwendig)

Group B:

spiegel.de: CIA-Geheimakten bestätigen US-Mordplan gegen Castro (<https://www.spiegel.de/panorama/mafiaaktion-enthueellt-cia-geheimakten-bestaetgen-us-mordplan-gegen-castro-a-490885.html>)

sueddeutsche.de: Die CIA verfasst Handbücher für gezielte Tötungen (<https://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/politische-morde-blutige-botschaften-von-ganz-oben-1.4177375-2>)

- h)** Present the results of your work. Discuss the circumstances surrounding the events and the Cinema of Paranoia as a new sub-genre of the Thriller. (<http://filmlexikon.uni-kiel.de/index.php?action=lexikon&tag=det&id=3496>).
- i)** Working alone, compose a film review of THE THREE DAYS OF CONDOR (www.kinofenster.de/lehmaterial/methoden/eine-filmkritik-verfassen/). Include references to the New Hollywood movement and the Cinema of Paranoia.

Links

Links

➤ StudioCanal: Informationen zum Film
https://www.studiocanal.de/dvd/die_drei_tage_des_condor-limited_steel-book_edition-4k_ultra_hd

➤ Jump Cut: Filmkritik und Interview mit Sydney Pollack, 1976 (engl.)
<http://www.ejumpcut.org/archive/onlinessays/JC10-11folder/PollackMcGilligan.html>

➤ Lexikon der Filmbegriffe:
Paranoia-Kino
<https://filmlexikon.uni-kiel.de/index.php?action=lexikon&tag=det&id=3496>

Read more

➤ Zeit der Enthüllungen – Aktuelle Politthriller (Einführungstext vom 04.11.2019)
<https://www.kinofenster.de/themen-dossiers/alle-themendossiers/dossier-aktuelle-politthriller/dossier-aktuelle-politthriller-einfuehrung/>

➤ Vom Gangsterfilm zum Thriller – Eine kurze Geschichte des Kriminalfilms (Hintergrund vom 24.06.2009)
https://www.kinofenster.de/filme/archiv-film-des-monats/kf0907_0908/vom_gangsterfilm_zum_thriller/

Legal Notice

8
(8)

LEGAL NOTICE

kinofenster.de – Sehen, vermitteln, lernen.

Herausgegeben von der Bundeszentrale für
politische Bildung/bpb
Thorsten Schilling (v.i.S.d.P.)
Adenauerallee 86, 53115 Bonn
Tel. bpb-Zentrale: 0228-99 515 0
info@bpb.de

Redaktionsleitung:

Katrin Willmann (bpb, verantwortlich),
Kirsten Taylor

Redaktionsteam:

Karl-Leontin Beger (bpb, Volontär),
Ronald Ehlert-Klein, Jörn Hetebrügge,
Sarah Hoffmann (bpb, Volontärin)

Autor:

Hannes Wesselkämper

Autorin Arbeitsblatt:

Hanna Falkenstein

Übersetzung:

Don Mac Coitir

Layout:

Nadine Raasch

Bildrechte:

© Studiocanal GmbH 2020

© kinofenster.de / Bundeszentrale für politische
Bildung 2020