

## Modul

# HOLLYWOOD AND THE WORLD

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In recent years, there has been an ever intensifying public debate about the huge challenges confronting humanity, most notably the threat of global warming and demands for global justice. One of the preconditions for meeting these challenges, it has been argued, is what one might call global consciousness, that is the ability to conceive of, identify with and care for humanity as a whole. What role might Hollywood play in this? Hollywood films are seen all around the world, and they also draw on resources (people, source material, locations, finance) from many countries. What is more, they often tell stories about events affecting all of humanity. How do such films, then, relate to public debates about global challenges and to the ideal of a global consciousness? Do they approach these debates and this ideal from a narrowly American perspective? What is known about the impact of Hollywood films within and outside the US? Is Hollywood storytelling conducive to the idea of personal, social and political change? This workshop begins to address these questions with reference to some of Hollywood's biggest international hits of recent decades, notably James Cameron's *Avatar* (2009). While taking the analysis of Hollywood's global operations and of the themes and reception of particular films as a starting point, the lecture series also goes beyond the disciplinary framework of Film Studies, in particular by raising the issue of global ethics: What are our ethical responsibilities as film scholars and as citizens with regards to the global challenges of today?

**29 April 2011**

**Screening:** AVATAR, James Cameron 2009

After the screening, students should take notes on, the **following questions** which will be the focus of the first discussion session on 2 May:

- 1) What was your immediate response to the film just now, or on previous occasions (especially when you saw it for the very first time)?
- 2) How does the film's protagonist Jake Sully change in the course of the story, and why?
- 3) To what extent does the film explicitly foreground recognisable global issues; what are these issues; and which solutions does the film propose (especially through the way it ends)?
- 4) By doing an internet search, explore the responses of film reviewers, fans, environmentalists, political activists and academics to *Avatar*: To what extent do they make a connection between the film and real-life political issues?

**Workshop, 2 May**

9: 00 Lecture 1: "Hollywood and the World"

10.30 Coffee break  
10.45 Discussion of the above questions  
11.30 Lecture 2: "Film Studies and the World Today"  
13:00 Discussion  
13.30 The End

**Recommended literature:**

Rupert Read, "Avatar: A Call to Save the Future", *Radical Anthropology*, November 2010, pp.35-41

Peter Singer, *One World: The Ethics of Globalization*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004 (2nd edition), pp.150-95

**Recommended Film:** THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW, Roland Emmerich 2004

**Recommended literature:**

Thomes Lowe, Katrina Brown, Suraje Dessai, Miguel de Franca Doria, Kat Haynes, and Katherine Vincent, "Does Tomorrow Ever Come? Disaster Narrative and Public Perceptions of Climate Change", *Public Understanding of Science*, vol.15, no.4, pp. 435-57