



America in Literature and Film: Modernist Perceptions, Postmodernist Representations

Ahmed, Dr Elbeshlawy

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Utilizing Lacan's psychoanalytic theory and Žižek's philosophical adaption of it, this book brings into dialogue a series of modernist and postmodernist literary works, films, and critical theory that are concerned with defining America. Ahmed Elbeshlawy demonstrates that how America is perceived in certain texts reveals not only the idealization or condemnation of it, but an imago, or constructed image of the perceiver as well. In turn, texts which particularly focus on demonstrating how other texts about America communicate an untrustworthy message themselves communicate an unreliable message, inventing and reinventing a series of imagos of America. These imagos refer to both idealized and deformed images of America constructed by the perceivers of America.

The first part of this book is concerned with modernist perceptions of America, and includes discussion of Adorno, Benjamin, Kafka, D. H. Lawrence, as well as Emerson and Seymour Martin Lipset. The second part is dedicated to postmodernist representations of America, focusing on texts by Edward Said, Ihab Hassan, Susan Sontag, David Shambaugh and Charles W. Brooks, and films including Lars von Trier's *Dogville* and D.W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation*.

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