

## **Abstract**

### **Death on Film: A Motif Study with a World Cinema Perspective**

Döden på film: En motivstudie med världsfilmsperspektiv

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This dissertation is an empirical study of the motif of death on film from a world cinema perspective. The goal is to contribute to the understanding of a broad and diversified subject of high relevance to people in many different cultures and contexts.

The theoretical framework draws on a conceptualization of death as a necessary condition for the formation of human cultures and the development of man as a cultural being. Methodologically, the empirical material is treated as a special kind of knowledge. With inspiration from the French philosopher Gilles Deleuze and his ways of using cinema to develop new philosophical concepts, the films in this study are analysed not only to illustrate or contemplate over death, but also to obtain a different kind of knowledge.

The empirical film analysis is organized in five chapters, each focusing on a cluster of motifs of death. The analysis is divided into the following blocks: "Death figures and afterlife"; "Death shows and metaphysical romances"; "Battles against terminal illnesses"; "Suicide and euthanasia"; and "The circle of life and death". In the concluding chapter, the cumulative results of the analysis of the five motif clusters are discussed from a comparative world cinema perspective.

One of the main conclusions of the study is that there are different expressions of "death consciousness" that can activate an awareness of time related to a special concept of death. The awareness of time, originated in different visual artefacts and fictions, seems to be the main key to understand how human culture can help us deal with our mortality.

**KEYWORDS:** death as a motif, thanatology, world cinema, afterlife, metaphysical romance, near-death experiences, terminal illness, cancer, aids, suicide, circle of life, reincarnation.