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**The Representation of Jews and Muslims in Hollywood Movies: A
Comparative Study of Steven Spielberg's *Schindler's List* (1993) and
Edward Zwick's *The Siege* (1998).**

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Student's engagement (sworn statement)

I, Mr. Mourad MEZIANI, declare on my honor to have written this work without any external help nor have taken it from any other resources than those cited within. All the texts published or not, including electronic versions, are referred to as such. This work is not submitted to any other board of exam in a similar form whether in Algeria or abroad, at the university or at other institution, by me or by another.

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To the memory of my father,

To my mother,

To my wife,

And our beloved daughter, *Thanina*.

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Abstract:

The present dissertation is concerned with the analysis of the American representation of the Jews and Muslims respectively in Steven Spielberg's *Schindler's List* (1993), and Edward Zwick's *The Siege*. The study focuses on Hollywood recollection of the memory of the Holocaust, and its formulation of the Muslims as 'terrorists'. It also examines Hollywood role in shaping the American public consciousness around global major issues such as genocide and terrorism. Hollywood contends its engagement with the political sphere through its representation of the Jews as America's 'victimized others' and its portrayal of the Muslims as America's 'demonized others'. I have argued that both the 'victimization' of the Jews and the 'demonization' of the Muslims serve America's ongoing process of Americanization of the world. I define Americanization as America's will, through the appropriation of the Holocaust and terror, to project its fundamental values and expand its cultural, political and ideological influence worldwide. In other words, Americanization considers America as an omnipresent possibility which, through its assimilation of universal values as its own, aims at integrating the world into the American way of life. Furthermore, it implies America's moral, political and ideological responsibility (commitment) towards the defense and promotion of its founding ideals as part of its universal mission as articulated in its Manifest Destiny. The latter, represents the core of the American mythological identity and character which finds its perfect expression in America's unconditional support of Israel, and its blatant involvement with Arab-Muslim world. Israel represents an ideal view of America as a promoter of justice, whereas the Muslims as the consecration of America as proponent of freedom, promoter of democracy and peace.

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General introduction

Introduction:

*We grew up with the media age, from tender youth, the world as audiovisual spectacle has been our daily fare. Our coming of age was doubly transfixed, both by the century's grand struggles and by the incessant broadcast of images across the small screen.*¹

(Alain Finkielkraut, *The Imaginary Jew*)

My intent to write a Magister dissertation in American studies has not come randomly but after so much consideration and self-commitment. My first encounter with American literature happened some years ago. It was astonishing as well as amazing and is still encouraging me to go further with the study of the American mind through its literature, arts and media, and thereby, I hope, I will come to understand better what it means to be an American.

The subject of this work is of the greatest importance, not only for the understanding of the way Jews and Muslims are respectively represented in Hollywood movies *Schindler's List* (Spielberg, 1993) and *The Siege* (Edward Zwick, 1998), but also for the understanding of the real nature of human condition and knowledge of what it means to be subjected to the hegemonic American media industry.

Media studies have recently expanded considerably, and become almost the outstanding subject matter for every researcher or scholar whose aim is to transcend the traditional study of literary works, and shift to the study of culture in its broadest sense. These studies are primarily concerned with the interference and interconnectedness between the different kinds

¹ Alain, Finkielkraut, *The Imaginary Jew*, University of Nebraska Press, 1994, P.23

of arts, for instance how literature influences cinema and vice versa; or how literature serves as a raw material for the making of movies, and how the latter can enrich, help, contribute to a better understanding and reception of a given literary work. Besides, media studies consider the preponderant role of culture in shaping human consciousness, and responsibility towards major issues like violence, terror, memory, history, and the necessity of peace.

Much ink has already been spilled on the representation of the Jews and Muslims. For example, Michael Rothberg (2000), Anna Reading (2002), Barbie Zelizer (2001), Robert Fine and Charles turner (2000) put emphasis on the importance of the visualization of Holocaust as the core of the representation of the Jews. Zelizer considers the conditions under which the visualization works (cultural artifacts) while Turner and Fine examine rather the impact of the Holocaust, as an epitome of the extreme historical event, on human sciences such as philosophy and sociology. Rothberg is concerned with the preponderant role of the Holocaust, and its contribution in the shaping of western modern culture. As for Reading (2002), her book expands on the Holocaust connection to gender, culture and memory. She claims that the Holocaust is a complex system in which gender is interlinked with the culture of violence.

Similarly, the representation of Muslims has been the focus of a huge number of studies. Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1973) gives abroad survey of the major Western writings about the Orient in general and the Muslims in particular. It particularly draws attention to the role of the representation of the Muslims in shaping Western culture and identity as everything Islam is not. Arshad Khan in his *Islam, Muslims, and America* (2003) questions the conflicting relations existing between America and the Muslims. Yusef J. Progler (2005) is rather interested in the role of media coverage of Islam and the Muslims in expanding a wide range of stereotyped ideas among the Western popular culture.

Strikingly, the works do not extend to the analysis of differences in articulation existing between the representation of the Jews and that of the Muslims. The Jews are generally associated with trauma and victimization, whereas the Muslims are confined to criminality, and terrorism. These ethnic associations, though different in formulations, serve the same objective. They contribute to the enhancement of the general Western knowledge about the Orientals, and, thus, extend the American hegemony (domination) over the world through America's appropriation of the preponderant issues of violence and memory.

My work considers the way Hollywood translates into the screen both Laurence Wright's Story *The Siege*, and Thomas Keneally's novel *Schindler's List*. The screening gives insight into the importance of visualization of the Holocaust and terrorism. The latter plays an important role in shaping public opinion both American and international about the phenomenon of terrorism and Hitlerism with respect to two American ethnic groups the Muslims and Jews. My research paper aims at putting emphasis on the visualization as a mode of representation.

The visualization of the *Holocaust* and *terror* represents respectively the core of Jews, and Muslims representation. Through *Schindler's List* and *The siege*, the visualization becomes so prevalent and almost relevant to our understanding and recollection of the horrors and atrocities of World War II (*the Holocaust*), and of the attacks on the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York City and its aftermath.

This research is particularly interested in the stereotypical representation of the Jews and Muslims in two representative American films. It does not make a difference whether the stereotypes are positive or negative since its final aim is to show in what these ethnic stereotypes serve the construction of the American identity. In other words, these stereotypes are for the domestic and foreign consumption. They consolidate the idea of America as a land

of justice, security and democracy. Foreign for it guarantees influence of the American culture on the culture of other countries, and America's enduring role as a guarantor of peace in the world through its multiple engagement with the world's major conflicts. In this regard, Alon Confino in his *Collective Memory and Cultural History* (1997) argues that

*The crucial issue in the history of memory is not how the past is represented but why it was received or rejected. For every society sets up images of the past. Yet to make a difference in society, it is not enough for a certain past to be selected. It must steer emotions, motivate people to act, be received; in short, it must become a sociocultural mode of action.*²

The above quotation illustrates the relationship between history, culture, and society. In this relationship, representation plays a crucial role as a socio-cultural mode of action that initiates public debate, steer emotion, stimulates and invites people to act.³

My work expands on the issue of representation as a cultural, social, political, ideological and economic mode of constructing the “*Other*” in a way that fits America's cultural and mythological identity. It is concerned with homeland security, and its commitment towards global issues, such as fighting terrorism, preventing genocide and promoting world peace. The two films are viewed here as two ideological sites for the exploration of the correlation between Hollywood representation and the American need for appropriation or even assimilation of universal memory (the past), and handling human destiny (promoting democracy and world peace). As Philip Gourevitch expresses it so well: “In America...we recast the story of the Holocaust to teach fundamental American values.”⁴

From here follows the necessity of placing the concept of *Americanization* at the central focus. Americanization is a concept that sums up America's cultural and political involvement

² Alon, Confino. “*Collective Memory and Cultural History : Problem of Method*”. American Historical Review, 1997. In Dan, Stone. *The Historiography of the Holocaust*, Great Britain: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004. P.102

³ Ibid, P.102

⁴ Philip, Gourevitch. “*Behold Now Behemoth : the Memorial Museum :one more American theme park*”. Harper's Magazine, July 1993, P.56

in world history and historical events. According to Michael Berenberg, former director of the American Museum Research Institute, Americanization is a process of appropriation/assimilation of world history⁵.

My primary concern is not merely to put to the fore “*how*” Jews and Muslims are portrayed and articulated artistically in Hollywood movies, but rather scrutinizing, and proposing an in-depth analysis of how this representation serves America build its national identity, and shape its foreign policy. It is noteworthy that the reason underpinning the core of my research paper is to propose a comparative study between the Hollywood representation of the Jews in Steven Spielberg’s *Schindler’s List* (1993), and that of Muslims in Edward Zwick’s *The Siege* (1998). It focuses as much on the similarities as on the differences in articulation and formulation of the representation for the ideological purposes of the identification of the religious groups in and out group. It is also my objective to investigate closely the intimate correlation between America’s movie and television industry with its need to build a national mythological identity, and thus forge a national character and mind. In this regard, action movies like *The Siege* provides what Eric Lichtenfeld expresses it so well in the introduction to his book *Action Speaks Louder: Violence, Spectacle and the American Action Movie* (2007), “for more than three decades, the American action film has represented potent ideas of what America is- ideas that are founded on even more fundamental myths of what America has been.”⁶

America’s fundamental myths revolve mainly around the American idiosyncratic view of themselves, their philosophical outlook, and their peculiar duty to propound western Christian

⁵ Michael, Rothberg. *Traumatic Realism: The Demand of Holocaust Representation*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000. P.250

⁶ Eric, Lichtenfeld. *Action Speaks Louder: Violence, Spectacle, and the American Action Movie*. Middletown Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2007. P. 8

civilization. The ideology of expansionism is the controversial concept known as American Manifest Destiny. Richard Slotkin looks at this concept from a mythological perspective:

Myth is a way of thinking about and understanding the historical moment in which one lives-not an analytic but a symbol or poetic way of thinking, in which the telling of a story or fable provides an effective way of looking at things. Thus the studio-era Western addressed the beliefs and concerns arising from the nation's obsession with growth, progress, the conquest of nature, and the necessity of violence.⁷

Accordingly, this research considers that the two films as means of disseminating an American mythology. In *The Siege*, America is viewed as a frontier with a change in the antagonist. Instead of Indians, the enemy is the Muslim Arab.

The following questions will be the major sign posts of the research:

- How are Jews and Muslims represented in *Schindler's list* and *The Siege*, respectively?
- Why does this representation function as an anchor for American media industry?
- How does the representation of the Holocaust and terror function as a social mode of action intended to forge the American national character, and America's mythological culture?

The Holocaust and terrorism may seem at first sight to be diametrically opposed that no comparison is possible. Yet, looking at it more deeply, one realizes that Holocaust by association is linked to Hitlerism. Hitlerism is not far from terrorism in the sense that both are based on the use of terror. The relevance of the comparison becomes more apparent after the 9/11 crashing of the twin towers.

At its release in 1993, *Schindler's List* provoked controversial responses among preeminent critics, activists and politicians. Perhaps, the most controversial issue was that of the way

⁷ Richard, Slotkin; *Forward for Eric, Lichtenfeld. Action Speaks Louder: Violence, Spectacle, and the American Action Movie*. Middletown Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2007.

Jewish suffering was articulated through the movie's visualization of the Nazi genocide. The movie transcends Theodor Adorno's dilemma when he affirmed that "*writing poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric*"⁸. Adorno's idiosyncrasy calls into question the problematic of representation of the unrepresented, i.e. the unconceivable, at least for Adorno, to bring into light through the lens of a camera the horrors, atrocities, sufferings, and extermination of European Jewry during World War II. Claude Lanzmann makes the issue clearer when he writes: "unique in the sense that it [Schindler's List] erects around itself, in a circle of flames, a boundary which cannot be breached because a certain absolute degree of horror is intransmissible: to pretend it can be done is to make oneself guilty of the most serious sort of transgression."⁹

However, the movie's effect does not only transcend the notion of impossibility of representation, but goes ahead with its transgression, questioning the real nature of the Holocaust, mainly by putting more emphasis on survival than death¹⁰, on perpetrators rather than victims, and also on the triumph of humanism over barbarity. It is also noteworthy that Spielberg's film raises the problem of representation of the Jews through the portrayal of the Jewish experience of the Holocaust. It attempts to grasp the meaning of violence, and history for the sake of America's will to assimilate world history. The movie points to reassert America's commitment towards the fundamental values, such as liberty, justice and democracy following a long Cold War standoff with The Soviet Union.

Schindler's List is primarily based on Thomas Keneally's novel of the same title (1982). The latter recounts the true story of a Nazi German war profiteer, Oskar Schindler, who came to save the life of some Jews during World War II. Based on some Schindler survivors'

⁸ Theodor, Adorno. *Prisms*. Press Paper Edition, 1983, P.34

⁹ Claude, Lanzmann. *Holocauste, la Représentation impossible*. Paris: Le Monde, March3, 1994. And *Why Spielberg has distorted the Truth*. The Guardian Weekly, April9, 1994

testimonies, the novel's accurate dimension functions as a historical document that sheds light on perhaps one of the major untold episodes of the Holocaust, or the Nazi attempt to exterminate European Jewry during World War II.

According to some critics, the Holocaust tragedy becomes in Spielberg's movie a matter of heroism, on the part of Oskar Schindler the German *Herr Direktor (Mister Director)*. The protagonist's closeness, advocacy, and sympathy for the Nazi regime helps him establish a list of some Jewish men and women to run his flourishing business, but finally came to save their lives from imminent death and extermination in the concentration camps such as Auschwitz.

At the heart of the second movie lies the issue of terror. Zwick's *The Siege (1998)* is a story of New York City that comes to be besieged by Islamic terrorists staging a series of blind bomb attacks. These tragic events lead to the occupation of the city by the US army, interning Brooklyn's Muslim residents, and declaring martial law that restricts public and individual liberties.

In addition to the emphasis put on terrorism and counter-terrorism, the movie's concern revolves around the representation, and portrayal of Muslims as terrorists, and the potential threat to American interests and ideals. This portrayal led some Arab-Americans to protest against the film while it was in production, and again when it was released. On the international level, *The Siege* has been the target of some radical and militant Muslims who objected to the film through several protests/riots in some major Muslim capitals, and some acts of violence. Furthermore, Zwick's *The Siege* highlights the American growing phantasmagoria, and its need to represent the Muslims in a way that fits its cultural, economic, political, social and ideological interests as a nation with a definite mission to establish freedom, justice, and lead the world towards man's salvation.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989, the United States of America witnessed an ideological vacuum. With the release of *The Siege* in 1998, however, Hollywood contends its engagement/involvement with the political sphere, confirming and putting to the front the American new public enemies, the Muslims and the Muslim world.

Studying Edward Zwick's *The Siege* would, therefore, enhance our understanding of the formulation of the American representation of the Muslims. It gives an insight into America's ideal view of itself as a completely different entity from the Muslim world, its prevalent/relevant role in the Arab-Israeli enduring conflict, and its commitment to promote democracy and peace.

I have decided to approach my subject from a New Historicist point of view for many reasons. Firstly, both movies are concerned with the theme of representation of "*Others*" that come to be produced in the 1990's. Secondly, the decade is interesting for it evokes a turning point in the American political and ideological strategic orientations. The latter revolve around America's growing interests with history, violence, trauma, genocide, and terrorism. These universal concerns lie at the heart of America's Manifest Destiny, a concept that sums up America's divine and universal mission to lead the world to salvation. Thirdly, using the approach would help me understand the American historical process of transition from a mere theoretical and mythological concept of Manifest Destiny to an Americanization of world destiny. Fourthly, the fact that both films are from American-centered point of view suggests America's cultural, political, social, and even personal involvement with the Jews and Muslims. Fifthly, being products of Hollywood artistic imagination suggests America's cultural and media hegemony in the light of the 1990 geopolitical and geostrategic considerations following the collapse of the Soviet Union, and its need to reconstruct new ideological public enemies, Muslims and the Muslim World; as for the Jews, their visual

representation intends to appropriate universal history with American articulation. Finally, comparing both movies and the conditions of their production might help grasp the meaning of the American traditional identity and its ideal mythological view of itself as a godly chosen nation to lead the world to final salvation.

It is upon these premises that this research paper emerges. My work explores the codes of Hollywood artistic representation of the Jews and Muslims as a translation of the intimate American will to translate its theory of Manifest Destiny into an Americanization of the world, i.e. a metaphor of what America really is, and how its universal role would be.

I have divided this dissertation into three major chapters. The first one expands exhaustively upon the American historical transition from a mere traditional, theoretical and even hypothetical powerful nation to a more modern, practical, technological, imperial and hegemonic power. It also examines the process of appropriation/assimilation known as the *Americanization*, a concept that sums up America's growing cultural and political involvement/engagement in a variety of ways with world history and historical events. This chapter sets the stage for the fundamental concern that lies at the core of the dissertation's remaining chapters.

In the second chapter, much emphasis is given to the analysis of the American representation of the Jews in *Schindler's List* (1993). It examines the role of representation of the past in shaping the American collective attitude towards issues like violence, and genocide. It also considers how important the Holocaust is in reinforcing America's identity around the defense of liberty, justice, freedom, and the victims.

The third chapter examines the way Hollywood, through Zwieck's movie *The Siege* (1998), does articulate, understand, apprehend, and ultimately represent the Muslims. It also considers

the way the representation of the Muslims is a metaphorical translation of America's phantasmagoria, its ideological hegemonic will to dominate the Arab Muslim World, and build a national character and identity upon all what the Muslims are not.

As for the conclusion, it will balance between all the different concepts and articulations emphasized throughout the major steps of my investigation. To balance also means decoding the American codes of representation of the Jews and Muslims in the light of America's global strategic interests. Besides, the conclusion considers the necessity of reconciliation between America's ideal egocentric view of itself with the global new realities, and that of the Muslim world in particular.

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Chapter I

From Manifest Destiny to the Americanization of World Destiny

Introduction:

As already announced in the general introduction to this research paper, the following chapter is concerned with the American historical transition from a mere traditional, theoretical and even hypothetically powerful nation to a more modern, practical, technological, imperial and hegemonic superpower. It also puts emphasis on the process of appropriation/assimilation best known as the *Americanization*, a concept that sums up America's growing and enduring cultural and political involvement/engagement in a variety of ways with world history, collective memory, historical extreme events, and global strategic concerns and interests. These different issues would set the stage for the fundamental concerns that lie at the core of the dissertation's remaining two chapters.

The chapter is important for it revolves mainly around major issues such as the concepts of *Manifest Destiny*, *imperialism*, *Americanization*, and *hegemony*. These four important issues lie at the heart of America's attitudes towards the Jews, Muslims, and its interpretation of universal historical issues such as memory, violence, and terror. Furthermore, they would help grasp the meaning of the codes of American representation process through the focus on the concept of *Manifest Destiny*. The latter represents a main stream of thought that paves the way for a sophisticated, culturally elaborated, intellectually advocated, ideologically promoted, politically propagandized, and militarily applied, the most controversial notion known as the American *imperialism*.

The notion of American imperialism is intimately linked to the concept of Manifest Destiny. For John O'Sullivan, Manifest Destiny refers to America's duty to settle the new land, and extend the American authority over the whole continent through the annexation of new disputed territories with Britain, Spain, natives Americans, and France. O'Sullivan speaks of "the right of our Manifest Destiny to overspread and to possess the whole of the continent

which Providence has given us for the development of the great experiment of liberty and federated self-government entrusted to us.”¹¹

Clearly, the American imperialism first refers to the necessity of internal expansionism. After World War II, however, the concept concerns the American involvement with major world conflicts as part of America’s universal mission to establish “peace” and “democracy”. The involvement, best known as the *Americanization*, represents the core of American appropriation of universal issues such as memory, violence, terror, and ultimately America’s cultural hegemony over the world.

Besides, the dissertation is concerned with the analysis of the American hegemony, in a variety of ways, over the *Orient* since the subject matter of this paper examines the way Americans do represent the Jews and Muslims through the appropriation/assimilation, respectively, of the universal themes of the *Holocaust* and *terror*. It is also the subject matter, and primary concern of this chapter to examine the role of the issue of representation, mainly through Hollywood movies’ industry, both as a major pillar of the American cultural hegemony over the world, and as an anchor of the growing and enduring Americanization of world history and historical extreme events whenever America’s fundamental concerns, and its geostrategic interests are concerned.

Following its political independence, America has gone through a process that helped her to come to balance between its homeland issues of geographic expansion and the construction of its national mythological character (identity), and its universal duty to lead the world towards the establishment on earth of God’s natural and moral law of equality, and salvation of man

¹¹ John, O’Sullivan. Article appeared in his newspaper The New York Mornings News, 1945 (December 27). In Trevor, B. McCrisken. *Exceptionism: Manifest Destiny in Encyclopedia of American foreign Policy*, 2002, Vol 2? P. 62

(O'Sullivan, 1839)¹². This equilibrium is cunningly well expressed and embodied in an American philosophical, cultural, political and ideological concept best known as *Manifest Destiny*. The latter lies at the heart of the American mythological identity, and sets the stage for a controversial American involvement in variety of ways with universal concerns.

I/- America's *Manifest Destiny*:

As a result of religious persecution and wars, many European immigrants sought refuge, settled and established colonies in the New World (America). As Christians, the settlers managed to expand their influence, and control over the land with intimate conviction and faith that America is their Christian biblical promised land.

The American people having derived their origins from many different nations, the Founding Fathers of America managed to build a nation of many nations. In their Declaration of National Independence, they put emphasis on a set of human values (freedom, justice, and democracy), and paved the way for the establishment of a new political system. Principles like liberty, moral dignity, equality, justice, democracy and peace represent the core of this new cultural entity. The new political system is set to federate the American peoples, and organize them upon an ideal view of themselves as a nation with a definite responsibility and interests in the world.

It is upon these premises that the American journalist and diplomat John L. O'Sullivan (1813-1895), elaborated his concept of *Manifest Destiny*. The latter sums up O'Sullivan's ideal view of America's future as a hegemonic, imperial, everlasting, great and free leading nation under God's providence. Furthermore, the concept sets the fundamental principles and set the basic

¹² John, O'Sullivan, *The Great Nation of Futurity*. The United States Magazine, 1939. In Thomas, Inge. *A Nineteenth-century American Reader*. Washington, D.C: United states Information agency, division for the Study of the Unites States, 1995, P.7

pillars for his ideal idiosyncrasy about America's future and destiny, a concept best known as *Manifest Destiny*.

In his essay entitled *The Great Nation of Futurity* appeared in the United States Magazine in November 1839, O'Sullivan seems urging the American people to take and assume their "historical" and even "divine" responsibility to fulfill God's will through the establishment on earth of universal freedom and salvation of man.

Speaking of America's future, O'Sullivan firmly contends:

We are the nation of human progress, and who will, what can, set limits to our onward march? The far-reaching, the boundless future, will be the era of American greatness. In its magnificent domain of space and time, the nation of many nations is destined to manifest to mankind the excellence of divine principles; to establish on earth the noblest temple ever dedicated to the worship of the Most High-the Sacred and the True...its congregation a Union of many Republics, comprising hundreds of happy millions, calling, owning no man master, but governed by God's natural and moral law of equality, the law of brotherhood-of "peace and good will amongst men."¹³

John O'Sullivan's language vividly expresses the *Zeitgeist* (spirit of the era) of the 19th century America, that of national optimism, the construction of a national mythological/cultural character, the rise of enduring intellectuals and philosophers best known for their outstanding ideas. Through their writings, they provide explicit support of what lies at the heart of the American *Manifest Destiny*. This concept was largely discussed among imminent writers and philosophers. At the homeland level, it implies the American people's peculiar responsibility to settle and populate the new land, promote the Anglo-Saxon Civilization and expand the Christian faith among the native inhabitants of the new continent. Furthermore, the period coincides with the urgent necessity to annex new territories in the West following

¹³ John, O'Sullivan, *The Great Nation of Futurity*. The United States Magazine, 1839. In Thomas, Inge. *A Nineteenth-century American Reader*. Washington, D.C: United states Information agency, division for the Study of the Unites States, 1995, PP.1&2

Louisiana Purchase (1803), and wars against Britain, Mexico, and the Native Americans (Indians). The impact of the Frontier on the American character is preponderant and relevant. As Frederick Jackson Turner writes:

American social development has been continually beginning over again on the frontier. The perennial rebirth, this fluidity on, American life, this exception westward with its new opportunities, its continuous touch with the simplicity of primitive society, furnish the forces dominating American character...Moving westward, the frontier became more and more American.¹⁴

Turner's words are significant for the understanding of the real nature of the American character. Through the experiences of the frontier, this character is intimately linked to the wilderness, regeneration, and geographic expansion.

At the universal level, *Manifest Destiny* refers rather to the American divine mission to lead the world towards the establishment of a democratic Christian new order based on God's natural law of equality, justice, democracy and peace among men as O'Sullivan suggests.

Throughout the 19th century and until the beginning of the 20th century (the First World War, 1914)), however, the United States of America was to witness *isolationism* both at the political and cultural level for a variety of reasons. Among the latter, geographic expansion, the multiple enduring wars with the native Indians, the construction of a national identity from a variety of ethnic, racial and cultural backgrounds, interest groups, and lifestyles were principally at the heart of America's most primary focus and challenge for almost more than a century and a half.

During the course of America's national construction, the Civil War was perhaps the most critical moment in its ongoing history. The war not simply challenged the most fundamental principles upon which the young American nation was built, but even threatened its national

¹⁴ Frederick. Jackson, Turner. *The Significance of the Frontier in American History*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1892, P.1

cohesion and geographic unity along with the enduring issue of slavery that separated the North from the South ideologically, socially, economically and politically. The issue of slavery not only brought about the Civil War, but even challenged the most fundamental American values such as liberty, equality and justice upon which the declaration of American national independence is largely based.

It was until the end of the World War II (1939-1945) that America began to assert itself as a world growing superpower with its involvement in the major European conflict militarily, culturally, ideologically and economically. Indeed, it was its first fundamental act towards putting publically, and officially end to its isolationist policy that kept her long enough aloof from world major events, and at the margin of universal history.

II/- Towards a Manifest American *Imperialism*:

Senator Albert J. Beveridge in his address to the American Senate on 9 January 1900 asserts that

*It is elemental. It is racial. God has not been preparing the English-speaking and Teutonic peoples for a thousand years for nothing but vain and idle self-contemplation and self-admiration. No! He has made us the master organizers of the world to establish system where chaos reigns. He has given us the spirit of progress to overwhelm the forces of reaction throughout the earth. He has made us adept in government that we may administer government among savage and senile peoples. Were it not for such a force as this the world would be relapse into barbarism and night. And of all our race He has marked the American people as His chosen nation to finally lead in the regeneration of the world. This is the divine mission of America, and it holds for us all the profit, all the glory, all the happiness possible to man. We are the trustees of the world's progress, guardians of its righteous peace.*¹⁵

Senator Albert J. Beveridge's words that came fourteen years before the first major world (World War I) conflict in which the United States of America would play a major role,

¹⁵Albert, J. Beveridge. Address to the American Senate, January 1900. In Thomas, Inge. *A Nineteenth Century American Reader*. Washington, D.C: United states Information Agency, Division for the Study of the United states, 1995, P. 2

vehemently express the political assimilation of the American concept of *Manifest Destiny*. His address to the American Senate is nothing else than a translation of the historical, philosophical, religious, popular and cultural mythological thoughts into the political sphere. This appropriation/translation, thus, constitutes the premise upon which the American foreign agenda and policy would be fundamentally based, a policy that is ideological if not utopian as Charles Turner puts it: “*Any attempt to mobilize a morphological style of thought within the political sphere, and with it ‘political myth’, was either ideological or utopian.*”¹⁶

Therefore, the American involvement in the second major world (World War II) conflict marks the beginning of the ongoing American involvement with historical events, asserting America’s hegemony and its ongoing leading role in handling and making universal history.

According to Dr. Yannis A. Stivachtis of Virginia State University, hegemony “describes the leadership of one state over others in an international order.” For him, it relies on power that is authoritative but “takes a primarily consensual form”.¹⁷ He comments on the American hegemony, and distinguishes three crucial facets:

*First, although the U.S. as a hegemonic power must have substantial material power resources, its hegemony is ultimately a reflection or form of social hierarchy, based on its status and recognition. Second, hegemony is an institutional type of international order, one in which generally recognized procedural and substantive norms cement social hierarchy, diminishing the need for coercion and exploitation on the part of the U.S. that would destroy its authoritative power. Third, hegemony is founded on the negotiation of identities and interests.*¹⁸

The above three points are crucial, and illustrative. In fact, America is an internationally recognized as a powerful nation with substantial natural, cultural, and human resources. Its

¹⁶ Charles, Turner & Robert, Fine. *Social Theory After the Holocaust: Open Behind: Myth and Politics*, Chapter 12. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000, P. 248

¹⁷ Yannis A. Stivachtis. “*American Hegemony and International Order*”. Research Institute for European and American Studies (RIEAS). www.rieas.gr

¹⁸ Yannis A. Stivachtis. “*American Hegemony and International Order*”. Research Institute for European and American Studies (RIEAS). www.rieas.gr

liberal, democratic and constitutional institutions give her legitimate authority, and right to play a leading role in the world. Thus, her leadership comforts its national identity with definite global strategic interests, witness its enduring involvement with world major conflicts and issues since WWII.

In fact, the aftermath of the World War II witnessed the emergence of the United States of America as a worldly military, economic and cultural power that would shape universal history, but also as an imperial power that led to multiple world conflicts. As a powerful military force and as a hegemonic cultural and ideological super powerful nation, America readjusts its foreign policy since the end of America's isolationist idiosyncrasy and policy that lasted for decades.

American foreign policy is controversial. The policy's tendency to interfere and intervene in world major issues, whether to defend America's global strategic interests or impose its ideological, and ideal vision of itself and the world has led to multiple wars such as the Vietnam War, the Korean, and more recently in Afghanistan and Iraq. The intervention is such that it translates an Americanization of global concerns as described by the former director of the American Museum' Research Institute, Michael Berenbaum.¹⁹ The military interventions in Korea and Vietnam inaugurated the beginning of the ongoing American imperialism, along with the cultural hegemony. The latter is sustained by Hollywood film industry that contributed to the shaping of the American customs, fashions and values.²⁰

The role of Hollywood film industry is preponderant. Not simply it provides vivid description of the American customs, traditions and way of life, but it translates the American cultural and mythological view of the world. The view reflects key elements of the American character and identity for Hollywood is concerned with the way of interpreting issues like

¹⁹ Michael, Rothberg. *Traumatic Realism: The Demand of Holocaust Representation*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000. P.250

²⁰ William, Hoynes ; David, Croteau ; Stefania, Milan. "*Media/Society: industries, images, audiences*". SAGE, P.233

history, and violence...etc, from an American point of view. Put this way, Hollywood plays a key role in the ongoing Americanization of world major issues through asserting America's domination of global film markets.

In my dissertation, Americanization would be the subject of investigation under the theme of representation of the “*Others*”, mainly the Jews and Muslim as highlighted, formulated and articulated respectively in Hollywood movies’ Spielberg’s *Schindler’s List* (1993), and Zwick’s *The Siege* (1998). These two films provide emphasis concerning the importance of film genres, mainly feature and action, in the construction of collective consciousness and creation of the American public myth(s) as Richard Slotkin puts it:

*Film genres were not only categories of production; they also roughly responded to key strains or elements in public myth. Myth is a way of thinking about and understanding the historical moment in which one lives-not an analytic but symbolic or poetic way of looking, in which the telling of a story or fable provides way of looking at things. Thus the studio-era western addressed the beliefs and concerns arising from the nation’s obsession with growth, progress, the conquest of nature, and the necessity of violence.*²¹

In addition to Hollywood role in advertising major elements of American public myth and culture, the aftermath of WWII witnesses its engagement with the political sphere. Hollywood manages, throughout the Cold War, to provide a positive view of the role of America’s military actions to counter Communism. Through films, Hollywood not simply screens what America is, but how her mission in the world would be. Thus, it plays a significant role as a medium between public myth and the general political sphere.

For Charles Turner, a professor of sociology at the university of Warwick:

*The problem of where to place myth in relation to politics is compounded by the absence of consensus on the broader relationship between knowledge, political power and society.*²²

²¹ Richard, slotkin. Forward for Eric, Lichtenfeld’s *Action Speaks Louder : Violence, spectacle, and The American Action Movie*. Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2007, P. xi.

²² Charles, Turner & Robert, Fine. *The Social Theory of the Holocaust*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000, P. 247

In fact, the absence of consensus makes more complex the understanding of how America succeeds its historical transition from a mere abstract, theoretical and mythical entity to a more hegemonic and imperial nation. It is of high importance, however, to acknowledge the intimate relationship existing between myth and politics.

Myth lies at the heart of the political agenda for it gives the general orientations of how policies would respond concretely to the general social accumulation of universal knowledge of any given human society, and the need to stand as an enduring entity at the heart of human destiny.

In his book *The Birth of Tragedy* (1866), Friedrich Nietzsche, a German philosopher (1844-1900), stressed the importance of myth in the construction of a collective memory and consciousness when he firmly and convincingly asserts that

*...every culture that has lost myth has lost, by the same token, its natural, healthy creativity. Only a horizon ringed about by myths can unify a culture. ..Nor does the commonwealth know any more potent unwritten law than the mythic foundation which guarantees its union with religion and its basis in mythic conceptions. Over against this, let us consider abstract man stripped of myth, abstract education, abstract mores, abstract law, abstract government; the random vagaries of the artistic imagination unchanneled by myth...Man today, stripped of myth, stands famished among all his pasts and dig frantically for roots, be it among the most remote antiquities. Let us ask ourselves whether our feverish and frightening agitation is anything but the greedy grasping for food of a hungry man. And who would care to offer further nourishment to a culture which, no matter how it consumes, remains insatiable and which converts the strongest and most wholesome food into history and criticism.*²³

Friedrich Nietzsche's words seem stunning, clear and potent for their great emphasis on the importance of myth. His conception of myth is, at a large extent, a truthful witness of human individual and collective consciousness. Besides, it not only recollects the human need for enduring, common founding myths, but reconsiders myth's preponderant role in shaping

²³ Friedrich, Nietzsche. *The Birth of Tragedy*. New York: Doubleday, 1996, PP.136-137

human comprehension, and apprehension of cultural, political and social realities. For Nietzsche, myth represents the core of human individual and collective conscience and existence. In the above quotation, he speaks of *origin; culture; horizon; force of imagination; union; foundation; education; mores; law and government* which only based on myth can guarantee people's "*natural, healthy creativity*" which "*converts the strongest and most wholesome food into history and criticism*". We may, thus, easily notice how in Nietzsche's parlance or language, *history* refers preponderantly to people's utilization of myth to create collective memory, history, culture, identity and manifest destiny; whereas *criticism* refers to evolution (progress/ civilization) for it implies a real and effective reevaluation of individual and communal knowledge, perception and orientation of the world, which is intended to shape political and social actions and attitudes.²⁴ However, one crucial question remains unanswered. What is the relationship existing between the American Myth and its enduring imperialism?

American myth, as articulated by America's most prominent philosophers and intellectuals through their formulation and conceptualization of the notion of "*Manifest Destiny*" stands at the midst of the American controversial and widely decried enduring foreign policy which, by the end of World War I in 1918, puts to the front the new concept of *American imperialism*.

The concept of imperialism does fit the American cultural, political and ideological orientation since the end of its isolationist policy with its involvement in World War II. America's victory in world war and the weakening of her nineteenth century rivals have made of her the uncontested leader of the presumably free world. The US not simply has influence not only on Western Europe, but also on South-East Asia countries including Japan and the Korean peninsula. With massive military presence, cultural, economic and political influence,

²⁴ Robert, Fine & Charles, Turner. *Social Theory after the Holocaust*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000, PP.237-238

it has succeeded in sustaining its hegemonic position through waging wars in Vietnam, Korea, and Afghanistan, all intended to contain the growing influence of Communism in some geostrategic areas in the world such as Asia, Latin America, Middle East, and Western Europe.

The American hegemonic position manifests itself through political, economic and military pressure or aid. In Western Europe, through the Marshal Plan, America asserted its political, ideological and cultural influence. It assumed the leadership in Western Europe. It did not only seek for the recovery of the Western part of Europe destroyed by the war, but the defense of the recovered countries against Soviet Communism.

Edward Said stresses on the intimate relationship existing between America's specialness (peculiar responsibility) and imperialism. He writes:

...so influential has been the discourses insisting on American specialness, altruism and opportunity, that imperialism in the United States as a word or ideology has turned up and only rarely and recently in accounts on the United states culture, politics, and history. But the connection between imperial politics and culture in North America, and in the United States, is astonishingly direct. American attitudes to American 'greatness', to hierarchies of race, and the perils of other revolutions (the American Revolution being considered unique and somehow unrepeatable anywhere else in the world), have remained constant, have dictated, have obscured, the realities of empire, while apologists for overseas American interests have insisted on American innocence, doing good, fighting for freedom.²⁵

Said succeeds in putting to the fore the interconnectedness between culture, history, and politics. For him, American imperialism sums up America's commitment towards its manifest destiny. It is a direct translation of its "universal mission" to take the leadership of the western world, extend its cultural and ideological influence. Imperialism is, for America, a clear manifestation of its political hegemony.

²⁵ Edward, Said. *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Vintage Books, 1994, PP.8-9

With regard to the Orient, Said suggests that American imperialism came just to complete the geopolitical, geostrategic and ideological vacuum following the French and British disengagement from the Orient, notably from the Middle East. With respect to this, he writes: “...*the American Oriental position since World War II has fit quite self-consciously, in the places excavated by the two earlier European powers*”²⁶

Said’s description of the American substitution for France and Britain as a new imperial nation is of the greatest importance, for it puts emphasis on the premises upon which American imperialism in the Orient is established. The “Oriental position”, as Said suggests, responds rather to the American need to position itself in the Middle East, a strategic region with which America establishes definite vital interests necessary for meeting its global agenda.

Speaking of Henry Kissinger’s essay entitled “*Domestic Structure and Foreign Policy*”, Said describes how in the former US Secretary of States’ words: “*the United States must manage its behavior in the world under the pressures of domestic forces on the one hand and of foreign realities on the other.*”²⁷

Kissinger’s words illustrate the interconnectedness existing between America’s growing economic and industrial strength, and its will to become the major Western power, i.e. perpetuating the western hegemony, handling and appropriating world destiny.

The aftermath of the WWII witnessed a great change in the geopolitical and geostrategic landscape. The United States of America emerged as a victorious worldly powerful leading nation; witness its involvement in a variety of ways with world history and historical events. The conflict was to witness America’s military involvement in which it asserted its military force, its leading political role, its liberation of the peoples of Europe from the Nazi regime,

²⁶ In Edward, W. Said, *Orientalism*. London: Penguin Books, 2003, P.4

²⁷ Ibid, P.46

promoting “democracy”, and reaffirming its commitment towards “world peace”. The latter represents a rhetoric with which America justifies its involvement in world major issues.

It is interesting, however, to notice to what extent the concept of American imperialism is perhaps the most controversial concept in the history of the United States of America. The controversy concerns not simply its blatant political consequences worldwide, but rather translates the historical, cultural and philosophical transition from a mere religious myth, that of *Manifest Destiny*, to a more political, ideological and even dogmatic appropriation of universal history, collective memory and historical extreme events, best known as *Americanization*. The latter stands at the core of American articulation/formulation of America’s ideal view of itself as a great leading new mythological and political entity; it is what constitutes the fundamental basis of what American imperialism aims at: the assimilation of universal values as purely American ones.²⁸

The championship of universal values finds its perfect translation in the American appropriation of democracy and freedom. Indeed, American imperialism is fundamentally based on America’s peculiar responsibility to promote democracy and freedom both domestically and abroad. With regard to that responsibility, the American involvement is often activated when American strategic interests are at stake²⁹.

Therefore, American imperialism as an attitude and action whose aim is to assert America’s hegemony is ultimately an expression of the American appropriation of universal issues to defend its strategic concerns. The latter provide America opportunities to give visibility to its national identity as a defender of freedom and democracy.

²⁸ Huntington, Samuel. *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996, P.305

²⁹ Edward, W. Said. *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Vintage Books, 1994, PP.8-9

Perhaps, the most prominent example of the existing relation between American imperialism and America's global interests is the American blatant engagement in the Middle East, and Asia. The Cold War gives insight into imperialism as a matter of political identity and ideology, whereas in the Middle East it is concerned with cultural identity, and economic considerations.

III/- Americanization:

The American *Manifest Destiny*, as a philosophical concept largely advocated by the most prominent American philosophers and thinkers of the nineteenth century is ideologically and politically appropriated. The concept serves forging the American character, asserting America's universal mission, and the consolidation of the country's national cohesion around the necessity of Americanizing the continent, and the world.

As such, it paves the way for the domestic imperialism, through the annexation of new territories. In the 19th century, the annexation of Louisiana, Texas, New Mexico and others, not simply helps geographic expansion, but provides America the possibility to become a multicultural nation. Americanization first stands for a policy of integration of immigrants and new annexed peoples. The integration encourages people to embrace the American customs, way of life, and values³⁰.

With the American involvement in World War II, however, Americanization starts having important controversial ramifications. The involvement helps extend the American cultural, political, and ideological influence by the force of ideas and example³¹. The concept provides the general strategic political, cultural and ideological orientations of America's domestic and foreign strategic policies.

³⁰ Sherrow O. Pinder. *The Politics of Race and Ethnicity in the United States: Americanization, De-Americanization, and Racialized Ethnic Groups*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, PPP.30&52&53

³¹ W. T. Stead. *The Americanization of the World, or The Trend of the Twentieth Century*. New York: Horace Markley, 1901, P.437

Moreover, the aftermath of the conflict provided America the opportunity to extend its hegemony over Western Europe, and in some parts of the world. Through military presence, actions (wars), and economic aids, America succeeds in implementing liberal and capitalist regimes. The latter not simply helps America containing the advance of communism, but represent important economic perspectives for the American companies to acquire new markets.

The rapid industrialization of the American economy provided a surplus of manufactured products, creating jobs, and assuring domestic social and political stability. Furthermore, the surplus contributes in flooding the world markets with American brands. These brands are considered as part of the ongoing Americanization of the world's economy. They not simply brought the American companies huge profits, but assured the diffusion of the American culture through diffusing the American ideas, customs, way of life, and values.

It is interesting to note the correlation existing between politics, economy, and culture. Americanization, thus, comes to balance between America's need to build its nation upon a set of principles of liberty, freedom and democracy, and its ideological responsibility to diffuse those principles worldwide. Americanization, therefore, is an ideological process of appropriating and diffusing American values by using politics, economy and culture.

According to the former director of the American Museum's Research Institute, Michael Berenbaum, Americanization stands for the American appropriation/ assimilation of historical knowledge of world major events involving American global strategic interests. Besides, it describes America's engagement with universal conflicts and challenges such as wars, genocides, ethnic cleansing, democracy, terrorism, human rights and peace³². All these global strategic human issues are, of course, articulated according to the American values, or from

³² Michael, Rothberg. *Traumatic Realism: The Demand of Holocaust Representation*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000. P.250

the point of view of America's ideal view of itself as God's chosen nation to lead the world towards peace, progress, prosperity, and ultimately save the human race from the gates of hell.

America's concern with universal history corresponds to its global political and cultural orientations, and responds to its need to externalize and give strategic visibility to its mythological identity. This need for appropriation of world history is expressed with great insight through the Americanization of one of the most unique, dramatic and perhaps most tragic extreme event that shaped Western history during World War II, the *Holocaust*.

The *Holocaust* stands at the heart of the American global strategic concerns. It represents the epitome of the growing American appropriation of world history and collective memory. Philip Gourevitch analyses this American assimilation of the *Holocaust*, and calls into question its intimate relationship with the American values. Philip highlights this when he affirms that: in America...we recast the story of the Holocaust to teach fundamental American values.³³

As a tragic extreme event that shaped a world conflict, the Holocaust provides useful information concerning the American attitudes towards the issue of genocide. It not simply puts to the fore the fundamental values upon which the American nation is built, but stresses America's peculiar responsibility to promote democracy, prevent genocides, implement justice, freedom, and its enduring commitment towards the security of Israel.

Gourevitch's words are illustrative of the ongoing process of Americanization of the Holocaust. The juxtaposition between the Holocaust and the American values tells us a great deal about the assimilation of the Jewish suffering as a part of America's cultural, political,

³³ Philip, Gourevitch. *Behold Now Behemoth: The Holocaust Memorial Museum, More American Theme Park*. Harper's Magazine, July 1993, P.56

and ideological duty to defend the victims, and, hence, a justification for its involvement with world conflicts.

Michael Rothberg describes this assimilation saying:

This major event in European history [Holocaust] is assimilated to the official version of the American heritage primarily through a stress on the role of the United States army in liberating some of the concentration camps and defeating Nazi Germany. School groups and tours who enter through the Fifteenth Street entrance pass through Dwight D. Eisenhower Plaza, dedicated in honor of the general and the allied forces. An engraved stone reads 'Victorious in battle, they brought the third Reich to an end, encountered its concentration camps, liberated the survivors and bore witness to the Holocaust.' On the exterior walls of the Hall of Remembrance that bounds the Plaza are engraved quotations from Eisenhower and Presidents Bush and Reagan. The effect of this introduction is to place the Holocaust squarely within U.S. military and political history.³⁴

Rothberg's words express clearly how Americanization functions. It is a process of assimilation of the Holocaust through the appropriation of European history into the official American consciousness (American heritage). The Americanization, thus, considers the moment when America takes possession of Western destiny as part of its western responsibility to liberate Europe from Nazi regime, save the European Jewry from the concentration death camps, and lead the "free world".

Furthermore, Americanization considers the appropriation of world history through putting emphasis on the relevant/prevalent role of America as a champion of freedom, liberator and savior of the victims (Jews). Accordingly, the Americanization of the Holocaust is a matter of military involvement, and a political assimilation of memory (*bear witness*) into the American heritage, i.e. assimilating the Holocaust considers the American preponderant role, and its commitment towards the promotion of its fundamental values (peace, freedom,

³⁴ Michael, Rothberg. *Traumatic Realism: The Demands of Holocaust Representation*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000, P. 252

democracy...etc.) in the light of world challenges such as wars, genocides, ethnic cleansing, and terrorism.

The Americanization of the Holocaust opens new perspectives for America. Liberating Europe from Nazi Germany permits also the appropriation of the European oriental heritage (Orientalism or the European cultural, intellectual, political, historical and ideological involvement with the Orient). Similar to the Holocaust, the Orient, mainly the Muslim world, is squarely within the American military and political agenda.

The Americanization of the Holocaust is the American tendency to incorporate the victimization of the Jews into the American public consciousness. The incorporation paves the way for America's enduring and unconditional support for Israel as a Jewish political entity, and occupying military power in the midst of a region already on the verge of imminent and inevitable social explosion, the Middle East.

America's political and military support for Israel epitomizes the Americanization of the Holocaust. Its commitment towards Israel's security leads to conflicting relations with the Muslims. The conflict is military, cultural, political and ideological. America's involvement with the Muslims sums up the American apprehension of Islam as the "*other culture*" which is fundamentally opposite to the American values. The opposition brings about wars and mutual misunderstanding.

The global war on terror is perhaps the perfect illustration of the ongoing Americanization of terror as part of America's new global orientations. Terrorism, as a universal concern, provides useful justification for American imperialism. With the collapse of the Soviet Union along with its "evil communism" in 1989, witnessed the birth of America stands as a major world power. America extends its political, ideological, and cultural influences worldwide. Through military actions, multinational companies flooding the world markets with American

brands, the world becomes gradually Americanized. The spread of ideas, commercial exchanges, expansion of Capitalism and democracy is synonymous with globalization. The concept is synonymous with Americanization³⁵ for a variety of reasons.

The political, cultural and ideological hegemony of the United States plays significant role in standardizing the American culture, ideas, way of life, and values worldwide. Perhaps, the most significant illustration of the existing link between Globalization and Americanization is the preponderant role of Hollywood media and movie industry.

IV/- Hollywood movie industry:

The most perfect illustration of the growing Americanization is perhaps the way Americans do represent the Jews and Muslims through Hollywood movies (films), television, and cultural artifacts. The visualization of the *Holocaust* and *terror* represents the basis for Jews' and Muslims' representation. Therefore, this visual representation becomes almost relevant to our recollection of the horrors and atrocities of World War II (*the Holocaust*), and apprehension of the attacks on the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York City and its aftermath (war on terror).

Barbie Zelizer's *Visual Culture and the Holocaust* (2001) explores the Western fascination, especially American, with the extreme historical events, trauma, catastrophe, violence and evil. Speaking of the history of western epistemology, he keenly puts emphasis on its preponderant interest in visual representation, and convincingly argues that

*One is struck by the extent to which western epistemology has always been ocular-centric or vision-based. With 'the seen' taken as a primary ground of knowledge in western thought, 'seeing' has become in many cases a metaphor for perspective.*³⁶

³⁵ Manfred, B. Steger. *Globalization: Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003, P. 101

³⁶ Barbie, Zelizer. *Visual Culture and the Holocaust*. London: The Athlon Press, 2001, P.2

As a major Western power, the United States of America managed through artistic cultural artifacts especially films (movies) to sustain its leading role in world politics as well as cultural and intellectual hegemony over the world. Through the lens of Hollywood's cameras, the world discovers not simply the visual testimonies and effects of historical extreme events such as the *Holocaust* on human collective conscience and memory, but it contributes preponderantly in providing more insights into the nature of such a global strategic concern as terror or terrorism.

The importance of this visual representation lies in the fact that it puts to the front the way America, through Hollywood's media industry, handles these two crucial issues in such artistic, spectacularly industrial and economic modes that fit what Claude Lanzmann explains as *Hollywood's fictional substitution for real history*³⁷.

In this regard, Eric Lichtenfeld emphasizes the intimate correlation existing between America's movie and television industry, mainly Hollywood, with its need to build a national mythological identity, and thus forge a national character and mind. Eric argues that

*For more than three decades, the American action film has represented potent ideas of what America is- ideas that are founded on even more fundamental myths of what America has been.*³⁸

Therefore, it is clear that Hollywood stands not only as the leading American Movies' industry but represents the core of its global assimilation of universal history and human collective memory. Through Hollywood artistic cultural artifacts, mainly movies (films), the United States succeeded in containing and even entertaining the homeland public and collective conscience with the general assumptions that assimilating the Holocaust is a translation of their American universal duty to implement justice, promote democracy and

³⁷ Ibid, P.30

³⁸ Eric, Lichtenfeld. *Action speaks Louder: Violence, Spectacle, and the American Action Movie*. Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2007, P.8

freedom. In other words, a metaphor of their national identity, and their universal expectations and will to sustain their cultural hegemony over the world through their appropriation of the most fundamental human noble values such as liberty, human rights, justice, peace and democracy as a purely and elementary American major pillars.

The growing importance of Hollywood movies' industry as an American, and even universal epitome of visual representation of world history and historical extreme events can be understood as an American interpretation of world history as its own. This interpretation goes along with the American articulation and formulation of their ideal view of themselves. Thus, with Hollywood, America as a new leading nation stands at the midst of an existential dilemma which calls for Americans to come a balance between their particularity (America's need to assert itself as a new different cultural and political entity), and universalism (its enduring appropriation of the most noble human values such as liberty, justice, progress...etc.)

This dilemma is put forward on one hand through the American struggle for political and cultural independence, building a completely different nation, creating a new cultural entity, and forging a national character based on purely American values such as liberty, equality, and justice. On the other hand, America's involvement with universal conflicts and major world events often challenges those American ideals, and puts at stake the American values whenever America's global interests are concerned.

Likewise, one is also struck by the extent to which the Americanization of the *Holocaust* has led to a controversial Americanization of terror as the core of American representation of the *Muslims*. The representation results from the growing American involvement with the *Orient* after the French and British disengagement, but also from the American enduring support for Israel as a colonial state in the Middle East.

It is clear, then, that the Americanization of the Holocaust, mainly through Hollywood representation of the Jews, does influence (inflict) greatly on the American foreign policy in the Middle East, and ultimately on the American articulation and formulation of the Orientals in general, and particularly the Muslims through Hollywood's visualization of terror. Thus, Hollywood plays a strategic role as America's most efficient vehicle of its fundamental values, but also functions as a cultural, political, ideological, physical and abstract translation of America's articulation and formulation of world history.

Likewise, by giving visibility to America's inner representation of the Jews and Muslims through its visual representation of the Holocaust and terror, Hollywood, as a worldly major media industry, confirms its intimate connection with the political sphere, and thus shifts from its mere artistic, cultural and even economic function, to a more ideological role in the service of the American hegemonic imperial enterprise.

Therefore, the concept of *Americanization* is a modern interpretation and translation of America's mythological concept of *Manifest Destiny*. An interpretation, which through Hollywood, contributes highly in sustaining America's cultural hegemony over the world, and thus asserts America's imperial power.

V/- America and the *Holocaust*:

The role of America in WWII was preponderant. Its involvement helped free the peoples of the old continent, Europe from the grip of Nazi Germany. The American military engagement put an end to Nazi supremacy by defeating the German Army, and liberating the Jews from imminent death in the concentration camps. This liberation of Europe surrounded America with the aura of liberators, and asserted the role of America as a great nation with definite strategic interests in the world.

Moreover, the horrors and atrocities of the war, and with the death toll involving myriads of peoples from all around the world provided America the opportunity to affirm its fundamental principles (freedom, justice, and democracy), and consolidate its commitment towards world peace and stability.

What makes the uniqueness of World War II is obviously not the Nazi attempt to revive and rebuild a mythological powerful German empire. It is rather the attempt to execute an ethnic cleansing through the extermination of the Jews from the face of the earth using technological tools, and scientific methods to execute innocent peoples involving women and children at an industrial scale. The Nazi death camps provoked international indignation. The liberation of the Nazi extermination camps by the American and Soviet armies provides images and testimonies of what the Nazi euphemism known as the *Final Solution* really mean, and what the German barbarity really was.

The Holocaust, as a calamity, stands as an extreme event that calls into question the moral and political responsibility of America as a world leading superpower. The Americans not simply liberated the Jews from the death camps, but “bore witness” of the extermination through the political and ideological appropriation of the event as one of the major achievements of their democracy (military action), and fulfillment of their ideals (asserting America’s universal mission).

Speaking of the American tendency of Americanizing the *Holocaust*, Michael Rothberg writes:

*No longer simply a challenge to European modernity, the Holocaust is now beginning to function as an anchor of American modernity, part and parcel of postmodern culture and economics, and central to the political landscape of global political power.*³⁹

³⁹ Michael, Rothberg. *Traumatic Realism: The Demands of Holocaust Representation*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000, P.222

The words expressed in the above quotation illustrate the global strategic importance of the *Holocaust* as a crucial issue during and in the aftermath of World War II. The Holocaust epitomizes the interconnectedness existing between history, collective memory, economics (industry of entertainment), and politics. It underlines the importance of recollecting history in shaping collective memory. Using cultural mediations (visual representation) sustain the memory of the Holocaust, forge public consciousness, and serve the political sphere ideologically. With the Holocaust, the American global political ambitions find its justification for its assimilation helps asserting its leading role as guarantor of “peace and justice” in the world.

For the United States of America, the *Holocaust* represents more than just a simple historical key element of modernity inherited from old Europe; it constitutes the core of its own conceptualization, formulation, articulation, and even appropriation of that modernity. For Michael Rothberg, the uniqueness of the Holocaust provides America significant elements for a critical self-understanding of modernity which, through Hollywood, finds the expression of its economic and political conditions⁴⁰. Furthermore, the Holocaust constitutes the general American critical discourse on modernity. The discourse can be understood as America’s attempt to expiate western civilization of its blatant and direct responsibility in the war that brought about mass destruction, death and genocide, i.e. despite America’s military victory over Nazism, it fails in preventing the Holocaust.

The American appropriation of the Holocaust as a universal epitome of human suffering, trauma, violence and human tragic experience of the extreme is an attempt to project America’s *Manifest Destiny* onto the world. This appropriation is preponderantly present in Hollywood representations of the Holocaust known as screen memories. Perhaps, one of

⁴⁰ Ibid, P.9

Hollywood's outstanding and stunning movies representing the *Holocaust* is Steven Spielberg's *Schindler's List* (1993), which artistically and spectacularly provides us vivid descriptions and memories of the horrors and atrocities of World War II through the representation of the Jewish suffering and experience of Nazi *Final solution* or the death camps. The movie also provides us much of the economic and political conditions of its production, the social reception of a historical extreme event, the public appropriation of trauma, and the ability to create a collective memory (myth).

Considering the American appropriation of the *Holocaust*, Miriam Bratu Hansen, a professor in Humanities at the University of Chicago, states that

the screen memories of the Holocaust could be read as a part of an American discourse on modernity, in which Weimar and Nazi Germany figure as an allegory of a modernity gone wrong. The continued currency of these mythical topoi in the popular media may indicate a need for America to externalize and project modernity's catastrophic features onto another nation's failure and defeat- so as to salvage modernity the American way. This would give the American public's penchant for allegories of heroic rescue a particular historical and political twist in that it couples the memory/fantasy of having won the war with the failure to save the Jews. In any case, if Schindler's List functions as a screen memory in this or other ways, the pasts that it may at once cover and traverse cannot be reduced to the singular, just the Americanization of the Holocaust cannot be explained by fixating exclusively on its ideological functions. That the film touches on more than one nerve, appeals to more constituencies than a narrowly defined identity politics would have it, could be dismissed as an effect of Hollywood's marketing strategies in blockbuster era. But it could also be taken as a measure of the film's ability to engender a public space, a horizon of at one sensory experience and discursive contestation.⁴¹

According to Miriam Bratu Hansen, the intimate correlation existing between ideology, politics, and visual representation (Hollywood) constitutes the American critical discourse on modernity. The Americanization of memory epitomizes this discourse. It is a paradigm that constitutes the American manifest and enduring appropriation of the *Holocaust* as the world's benchmark for the understanding, apprehension and knowledge of the real nature of all

⁴¹ Barbie, Zelizer. *Visual Culture and the Holocaust*. London: The Athlone Press, 2001, P.148

historical extreme events involving the world's most strategic issues such as genocide, and ethnic cleansing. The Hollywood visualization of the Holocaust, mainly through Spielberg's *Schindler's List* (1993), attempts to revive and revivify the memory of the Jewish sufferings so as to "engender a public space, a horizon of at once sensory experience and discursive contestation". In other words, the Americanization of the Holocaust, as part of the Americanization of memory, stands for a social, political, and ideological mode of action.

The Americanization of the Holocaust revolves around the necessity of an American reevaluation of the western knowledge of universal history, and a conceptualization of modernity as progress (Western modernity's failure to prevent the Holocaust). Put this way, the importance of the appropriation lies in that it constitutes a critical and complex focal point that reveals much of America's global strategic orientations. The Americanization not simply provides America the opportunity to expiate western moral and political decadence (its direct responsibility in the genocide), but foregrounds the American values as universally acceptable for they are capable of federating peoples, preventing genocides, and promoting peace and democracy. As Michael Rothberg puts it: *Whether Americanization [of the Holocaust] is condemned or condoned, it needs to be recognized as an open-ended possibility, as subject to negotiation as democracy itself.*⁴²

If Americanization of the Holocaust is similar to democracy, as Michael Rothberg suggests, it will be difficult to justify its latent ideological intentions, its political and social consequences for democracy calls for transparency and consensus. It is true that the appropriation opens new possibilities of more cultural and political implication of the United States, but its blatant support for Israel, as a direct consequence of that assimilation, is subject to controversy which

⁴² Michael, Rothberg. *Traumatic Realism: The Demands of Holocaust Representation*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000, P.254

calls not simply for negotiation but rather for a redefinition of the American global responsibility towards justice, peace and democracy in the world.

America's attitudes towards the *Holocaust* largely transcend the mere historical, sociological and psychological attempt to understand/apprehend the real nature of human condition subjected to the extreme, but sums up the political and ideological appropriation of Jewish experience of trauma (genocide/death camps) to meet both American values, and their latent ideological imperial agenda.

With the establishment of the Jewish state as an enduring political and cultural entity in the Middle East (Palestine), American appropriation/assimilation of *Holocaust* as a global strategic concern reaches its climax. Indeed, Israel as a Jewish state not simply constitutes a homeland (shelter) for the persecuted Jews in Europe, but translates the American direct political and ideological attitudes towards the Muslims as part of the enduring Western involvement with the Orient. The American unconditional support for Israel responds to America's formulation and articulation of the Jews as eternal victims (of the Holocaust) subjected to a traditional ideological and cultural hostile Muslim world. The Americanization of the Holocaust engenders controversial and conflicting relationship between America and the Muslims.

VI/- America, Muslims and terror:

The relationship between America and the Muslims is made of conflicting interests. The latter are military, cultural, religious, political and ideological. The American involvement with the Muslims can be put in the logic of Orientalism for it is based on American global strategic interests in the Orient (Middle East). Said sheds light on this:

It [Orientalism] meant and means being aware....that one belongs to a power with definite interests in the Orient, and more important, that one belongs to a

*part of the earth with definite history of involvement in the Orient since the time of Homer.*⁴³

In fact, America is a leading superpower that belongs to the Western civilization with a long history of cultural and ideological involvement with the Orient. Its hegemony over the West provides her the opportunity to appropriate the European oriental heritage, mainly French and British, whose colonial consequences on the Muslims are manifest.

The American effective involvement with the Orient(als), and mainly with Muslims, can be rooted back into the 20th century, following the French and British disengagement with their respective former Muslim colonies in the Middle East, mainly Palestine, Jordan, Syria, Egypt and Iraq. Unlike the French and the British Orientalism (direct colonialism), the American Oriental attitudes evolve from America's political interference with Muslim affairs, and its engagement with Arab-Israeli conflict, to a more recent military interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan following the tragic events of September 11th.

The 1990s is a crucial period in the history of America. The decade witnessed a great change in the American global political and ideological agenda following the collapse of the communist threat. For America, the collapse of the Soviet Union engendered an ideological vacuum. The aftermath is relevant to the American Muslim relationship for it translated the American quest for a new public enemy. The Muslims, as a different cultural and religious entity, represent the mortal enemy and a menace to the American ideals (democracy, freedom...etc.). Sherrow O. Pinder makes this clear when he writes: The nation of Islam, even before 9/11, was placed on the [US] government's list as a dangerous organization.⁴⁴

⁴³ Edward W. Said. *Orientalism*. London: Penguin Books. 2003, P.11

⁴⁴ Sherrow O. Pinder. *The Politics of Race and Ethnicity in the United States: Americanization, De-Americanization, and Racialized Ethnic Groups*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, P.101

Similar to the Communists, Muslims serve as America's "anti-others". Through Hollywood movie industry, they are foregrounded as a threat to the American values (freedom, democracy...etc.), and as all what Americans are not. Negative images and stereotypes represent the core of American representation of the Muslims. Therefore, the role of Hollywood represents an ideal vehicle for increased negative images of Muslims and Islam in the American public opinion. Yusef J. Progler underlines this:

*Negative images of Arabs and Muslims in the 20th century are closely linked to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Prominent American scholars...have consistently found connections between stereotypical images of Arabs in American media culture since the establishment of Israel on the land of Palestine in 1948.*⁴⁵

In fact, the American enduring support for Israel, as part of the Americanization of the memory of the Holocaust, contributes to forging stereotypical images of the Muslims as terrorists. The Muslims not simply represent a threat to the American strategic interests in the Middle East, but serves as a justification for America's imperialism as part of its universal responsibility to promote its fundamental values.

The American commitment towards the security of Israel, its strategic ally in the region, paves the way for the representation of Muslim resistance as acts of terror. The latter represents the core of American representation of the Muslims. The representation is a matter of interpreting Muslim historical, social, religious and political reality in the light of America's political and ideological global agenda. The interpretation translates America's ideal view of itself (forge the American character and identity) as a completely different cultural entity from all that may constitute the fundamental character and values of the Muslims. The American representation of the Muslims responds to the American need to deliberately juxtapose the Muslims as barbaric, cruel and terrorist with the Americans as rational, progressive, modern, naturally moral and peaceful, i.e. the barbarity and terrorism of

⁴⁵ Yusef J. Progler.: *Islamic Imagery and American Policy*. In *Covering Islam: challenges & opportunities for media in the global village*. Singapore: Ed. Syed Farid Alatas, RIMA & KAF, 2005, P.65

the Muslims function as a justification for the Americanization of terror (fighting global terrorism). The American war on terror is a pillar of America's universal responsibility to promote peace and democracy (promotion of the American values).

The representation of Muslims does not simply function as an anchor of the American ideological and political enterprise (sphere), but also lies at the heart of the American media industry for it gives us the opportunity to have full insights into the way America, mainly through Hollywood movie industry, manages to shift from the merely abstract representation of the Muslims to a visual and more effective portrayal, and artistic articulation/formulation of the Muslims that help shaping the American public conscience (the construction of a national character and identity), and meet its hegemonic position in the global media, political and ideological environment.

Conclusion:

The American fundamental principles, as highlighted in America's *Declaration of National Independence*, constitute not simply the pillars upon which the American nation is built, but its aura, influence and power. The American Manifest Destiny epitomizes America's peculiar responsibility to project its values onto the world. This responsibility to promote freedom and democracy, has led to controversial involvement with world major concerns.

America's imperialism sums up the controversy. It not simply puts to the fore America's military strength, but asserts its cultural, political and ideological hegemony over the world. With the Americanization, America succeeds in its historical transition from a mere traditional, theoretical and even hypothetical powerful nation to a more modern, practical, technological, imperial and hegemonic superpower. America's growing and enduring cultural and political involvement, in a variety of ways, with the Holocaust (Jews), and a global strategic concern such as terror (Muslims) is a mere concretization of its historical and

mythological concept of Manifest destiny. Through Hollywood movie industry, Americanization finds a strategic ally, and a perfect vehicle of the ongoing American assimilation of world history (the memory of the Holocaust), and appropriation of global terror (global war on terrorism) as part of its universal mission to promote its values worldwide.

Through Hollywood visualization of the Holocaust and terror, America demonstrates its involvement with the Jews and Muslims. The Americanization of the Holocaust and terror revolves around the representation of the Jews and Muslims respectively. The representations, though different in articulation and formulation, are complementary for the American association of the Muslims with terror and barbarity is nothing less than a justification for associating the Jews with victimization (the Holocaust).

Americanization justifies the American involvement in the Middle East and elsewhere. The Americanization is a truthful witness of the American need for a founding and enduring common consciousness. It translates a successful attempt to credit the American values and character with a universal mission which, through the appropriation of the Holocaust (Jews) and representation of terror (Muslims), finds its illustrative expression.

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Chapter II

The Representation of Jews in Steven Spielberg's *Schindler's List* (1993)



**The Representation of Jews in Steven Spielberg's
Schindler's List (1993)**

Introduction:

The following chapter is primarily concerned with the ways Americans, through Hollywood media movie industry, do formulate, articulate and represent the Jews. It considers Steven Spielberg's portrayal of the Jews, through his visualization of the *Holocaust*, in *Schindler's List* movie (1993). Furthermore, it aims at shedding light on the politics of Americanization of memory of the Holocaust as articulated through Hollywood artistic devices used by Spielberg (symbolism and metaphors).

In this chapter, I intend to explore Spielberg's Americanization of the Holocaust to sustain the position of Hollywood as an institution within America's hegemonic, political and ideological culture. I will put emphasis on the role of the movie's representation of the Jewish trauma in awakening the American public interest in the issues of memory, genocide, and the necessity of America's Manifest Destiny. In this examination, the meaning of the Americanization of memory will be defined in the light of Spielberg's appropriation (interpretation) of the major themes surrounding the Holocaust such as death, survival, and salvation of the European Jewry. I want to consider the ways these three issues are represented.

Additionally, the chapter examines the preponderant role of the Americanization, through Spielberg's representation of the Jewish experience of the Holocaust, in the construction of a universal knowledge (memory) useful for the forging of the American mythological identity. Consequently, I will expand on the American need to invest the Jews with a sense of victimization central to America's ideal view of itself as a nation and people with a definite mission and interests in the world.

I have decided to divide the chapter into three major sections. First, the chapter starts questioning the position of *Schindler's List* within Hollywood studio, known as Schindler's

effect. I will, therefore, examine the reason underpinning Spielberg's choice to adapt cinematographically one of the unknown episodes of WWII, the life-saving of the European Jewry, Oskar Schindler; and the controversies surrounding Hollywood Holocaust representation, that is to say the Americanization of the Holocaust (trauma) through the use of spectacle and entertainment to meet both economic and political agenda. Second, I will expand on the stylistic features surrounding Spielberg's exhaustive use of metaphors and symbolism to represent the Jewish close experience of death, trauma, extermination and survival. Third, I will define Spielberg's understanding of Jewish salvation in the light of the American Manifest Destiny. I will then, explore the American need for a "victim other", through the visual victimization of the Jews, to assert America's values, identity, and justify its global agenda.

Throughout the investigation, I will make appeal to new Historicist approach to investigate, through Spielberg's *Schindler's List*, the American growing interest in memory, history, and trauma in the light of the 1990s cultural, political and ideological context. The approach will help me grasp the meaning of Steven Spielberg's Hollywood artistic features (use of symbolism and metaphors) to convey meanings, and the forging of a sense of American public consciousness around issues like genocide, and the necessity of collective memory (social mode of action).

I/- Americanization of memory of the Jewish trauma in *Schindler's List*:

Schindler's List is certainly not the first film to deal with the Nazi attempt to exterminate the European Jewry during WWII. Numerous movies, such as Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah* (1985) and others have already tackled the issue of the Holocaust. Spielberg's movie occupies a central position in the American cultural and political debate. As a Hollywood commercial product, its release in December 1993 provoked controversial responses among imminent film

critics, cultural and political observers. The reception is divided between approval and indignation. Approval is due to the fact that it succeeds in awakening public interests in memory of major historical events, witness its commercial and social success. As for indignation, it is mostly the result of the preponderant questions surrounding the way Spielberg manages to bring the Jewish trauma into the realm of Hollywood visual representation.

Schindler's List was released in a critical moment in the U.S. history. The collapse of the Soviet Union was synonymous with the end of the Communist threat which Hollywood, through action movies, asserts its engagement with America's ideological and political sphere (Cold War). The Aftermath witnessed the rise of America as a unilateral superpower with an ideological vacuum. Spielberg's movie, therefore, comes to shift Hollywood focal point from Communism to the exploration of trauma (Holocaust), violence, catastrophe, and a growing interest in history and memory for, as Rothberg explains, "Exploring the recent fascination with the Holocaust means exploring a more general contemporary fascination with trauma, catastrophe, the fragility of memory, and the persistence of ethnic identity".⁴⁶

The year 1993 is of the highest importance. The importance was such that it was named "the year of the Holocaust". The year coincides with the inauguration of the American Holocaust Memorial Museum in April, and the release of *Schindler's List* in December⁴⁷. According to Michael Rothberg "the Year of the Holocaust...seems to establish a link of remembrance between the past and a substantial duration in the present."⁴⁸

I think that '*the year of the Holocaust*' not simply establishes strong ties between the past and the present, but it succeeds in transforming both past and present into a subject of

⁴⁶ Michael, Rothberg. *Traumatic Realism: The Demands of Holocaust Representation*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000, P.3

⁴⁷ Ibid, P.222

⁴⁸ Ibid, P.184

Americanization, i.e. they become part of the American cultural and political heritage. With *Schindler's List*, the transformation, as Michael Rothberg suggests, takes the form of “a large dynamic Holocaust commodification, both as quintessential example of Hollywood ‘product’ and as the source of some bizarre ‘tie-ins’⁴⁹.”

The film is concerned with the recollection of the Jewish trauma. For Cathy Caruth, “trauma is an encounter with another, an act of telling and listening, a listening to another’s wound, recognizable in its inter-subjective relation⁵⁰.” The challenge for Spielberg is then, how to visualize the “telling and listening” (history), using the appropriate codes, to give the event a sense of an American subjectivity, that is to say to Americanize it through the lens of Hollywood cameras, with its cultural artifacts.

Perhaps, one of the most striking examples of Americanization in *Schindler's List*, is Spielberg’s reconstruction of trauma⁵¹. The reconstruction takes the form of codification of the Jewish experience of violence, death and survival into a regular pattern, i.e. everything in the movie contributes in the life-saving of Schindler’s Jews as a successful war enterprise. The codification aims at creating a single sense of traumatic experience in the public consciousness. In other words, it provides a set of information intended to convey particular meanings around the issue of the Holocaust.

In fact, while the movie is principally shot in black and white, he manages to portray a little girl in a red coat. According to Spielberg: *It [Holocaust] was as obvious as a little girl wearing a red coat, walking down the street, and yet nothing was done to bomb the German rail lines. Nothing was being done to slow down ... the annihilation of European Jewry*⁵².

⁴⁹ Ibid, P.244

⁵⁰ Cathy, Caruth. *Unclaimed Experience : Trauma, Narrative and History*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996. In Barbie, Zelizer. *Visual Culture and the Holocaust*. London: The Athlone Press, 2001, P.222

⁵¹ Michael, Rothberg. *Traumatic Realism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000, PP.232-243

⁵² Schickel, Richard. *Steven Spielberg: a retrospective*. New York: Sterlin, 2012, PP. 161-162



Figure1: Beauty and innocence are not a...



Figure2: protection against cruelty and death.



Figure3: Death of an innocent



Figure4: Witnessing the girl's death

Therefore, Spielberg's recollection of trauma is always a matter of a manifest present (obviousness of the Holocaust) which calls on both individual and communal responsibility and action. He seems to be suggesting that memory is not simply a matter of remembering, but also of recovery. *Schindler's list*, thus, provides America and the world sufficient knowledge (memory) and meanings around the atrocities of the Holocaust. The knowledge serves as a lesson of avoidance useful for understanding current world human crisis, i.e. it considers the role of America in the immediate global historical and political environment. The obviousness of the Holocaust (Jewish trauma) goes hand in hand with the American manifest assimilation of its memory.

The reconstruction of the Jewish trauma represents the focal point of Spielberg's Americanization of the Holocaust, that is to say the reconstruction of history the American way. *Schindler's List* managed to revivify the Memory of the Holocaust, so as to put forward the American moral, historical and political responsibility, past and present, towards the Jewish destiny. Miriam Bratu Hansen, a professor in Humanities at the University of Chicago, writes:

*More than ideological, the fascination with the Holocaust could be read as a kind of screen allegory behind/through which the nation [America] is struggling to find a proper mode of memorializing traumata closer to home*⁵³.

Miriam Bratu Hansen puts to the fore the preponderant role of Hollywood in America's national struggle to recover the Jewish trauma. *Schindler's list* contributes in appropriating the event through projecting its effects onto the American collective consciousness using Hollywood artifacts.

Again, Miriam Bratu Hansen writes:

*Schindler's List is and remains a Hollywood product. As such it is circumscribed by the economic and ideological tenets of the culture industry, with its unquestioned and supreme values of entertainment; its fetishism of style and glamour; its penchant for superlatives and historicist gap at any and all experience ('the greatest Holocaust film ever made'); and its leveling, and trivializing effect on everything it touches*⁵⁴.

Miriam Hansen's stress 'trivialization' is illustrative. Trivialization does not aim at lessening the importance of the event, but rather functions as a Hollywood codification whose objective is knowledge, memory and meanings. The trivialization is concerned primarily with what Judith E. Doneson's describes as Hollywood tendency towards the universalization, democratization, vulgarization and popularization of the Holocaust⁵⁵. In *Schindler's List*, the

⁵³Miriam Bratu. Hansen. "Schindler's List is not Shoah : Second commandment, Popular Modernism, and public Memory". In Barbie, Zelizer. *Visual culture and the Holocaust*. London: The athlone Press, 2001, P.147

⁵⁴ Ibid, P.130

⁵⁵ Judith E. Doneson. *The Holocaust in American Films*. New York: The Jewish Publication society, 1987, P.119

trivialization contributes to render the memory of trauma accessible for large public audiences to forge both personal and collective consciousness, and awareness. Furthermore, the public becomes actor rather than spectator by dint of engagement, especially when it comes to universal issues such as ethnic cleansing, genocides, the persistence of violence, wars and the possibility to make peace.

The most illustrative example of this vulgarization/democratization is Spielberg's long emphasis on the children being separated from their mothers, and the disintegration of Jewish families. According to Anna Reading:

*In American films the Jewish dimension of the Holocaust is superseded by the telling of the story in a way that emphasizes that this could have happened to any ordinary American family.*⁵⁶

Moreover, the tendency towards democratizing the event aims at creating a symbiosis between the Americans and the Jews. The universalization recalls the American general sense of goodness, sympathy and generosity (virtues) which finds its perfect expression in Spielberg's characterization of the protagonist whose personal virtues recall the American fundamental values.

The second prevalent example of Americanization, in *Schindler's List*, is certainly the general characterization of Oskar Schindler. Anna Reading questions even Spielberg's choice for Schindler, a German Nazi member. For her, the choice is significant for it revolves around the American global ideological interests:

Yet why Schindler? There were many other 'heroes' and 'heroines' who saved the lives of Jewish people. Irena Sendler, for example, championed the cause of the Jews before the Holocaust and risked her own life many times, rescuing over 2500 Jewish children from extermination, as Joe Steinberg's (1995) latest study shows (pp. 24–6). But Sendler, as a Pole, as a resister and as a woman, I would suggest, is not the right kind of 'hero' for Spielberg and American

⁵⁶ Anna, Reading. *The Social Inheritance of the Holocaust: Gender, Culture and memory*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002, P.95

*audiences: with the reconfiguration of alliances after the War, West Germany – and after 1989 the reunited Germany – was a US ally; while Poland, east of the Iron Curtain and part of the Soviet orbit in the Cold War, was the enemy.*⁵⁷

The protagonist's characterization provides significant information concerning the enduring Americanization in *Schindler's List*. Oskar Schindler represents the American dream. His closeness with the ordinary American makes him come to balance between his greed for money and his humanity (morality), i.e. the conciliation between business and good morality (virtue). Like an ordinary American, Schindler comes out of nothing, and succeeds in becoming prosperous (rich) thanks to his ability to conciliate opportunity (war), and good virtue (presentation). For a large American public audience, the closeness facilitates the identification with the character's financial success, and his successful act of liberation of the European Jewry.



Figure5: Schindler's role

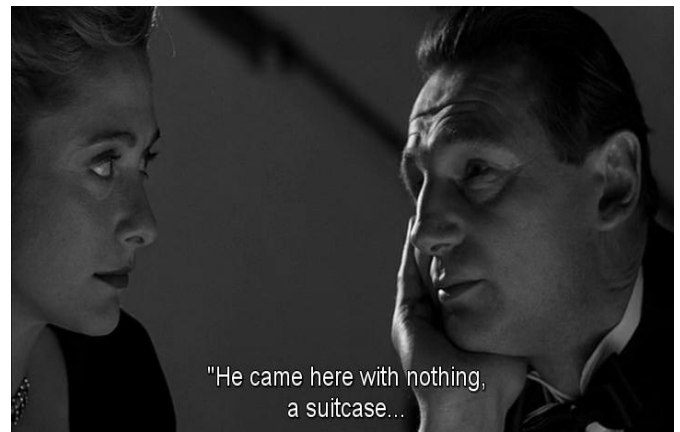


Figure6: Schindler's success story

The prevalent role of Schindler in the life-saving of the Polish Jewry is an allegory of the role of Americans as liberators during WWII. He recalls, thus, America's universal responsibility towards the victims (Jews). Through abstract values such as goodness, generosity, freedom, rescue, justice, sympathy...etc, embodied in Schindler, America finds the expression of its founding principles. Similar to Americanization, Schindler, through his successful attempt to

⁵⁷ Ibid, P.96

save over 1000 Jews, plays significant role in standardizing the American founding values such as freedom, democracy, justice and peace.

Furthermore, the movie's overall stress on survival is nothing less than Spielberg's emphasis on the goodness of the American involvement with world major conflict. The Americanization of the Holocaust, as an American process of appropriating the memory of the Jewish trauma, is implicitly highlighted through Oskar Schindler's appropriation of the Jews. In one of the most telling sequences, Schindler yells: "These [Jews] are mine". For Anna Reading: "The narrative...invites us to see Schindler as a go(o)d father, protecting 'his people'".⁵⁸



Figure7: Jewish owner



Figure8: Jewish gratefulness

Moreover, Spielberg's emphasis on survival is intended to enhance the idea that where the German Nazi values are concerned with death, the American ones are rather concerned with the celebration of life (survival, rescue). The contrast serves putting to the fore the righteousness of the American involvement with world major events, and its current responsibility towards handling the memory of the Holocaust.

Similar to Schindler's protective attitudes, the Americanization of the Holocaust, through Spielberg's film, takes the form of visual representation. The latter intends to handle the

⁵⁸ Ibid, P.99

memory of trauma, find the appropriate ways of codifying it, and, finally, transmit it to a large public of post-Holocaust American generation. Spielberg's version of the Holocaust is a way of assimilating the event into the American contemporary history, i.e. the significance of the event is no longer part of European history, but a fundamental issue in the ongoing Americanization of world history. The Americanization tends to assimilate the event to forge a position in the global cultural and political environment in which Schindler's List plays significant role. As Michael Rothberg writes:

In The Year of the Holocaust, understanding of the Nazi genocide becomes not only Americanized but ultimately globalized. As the "uniqueness" of the Holocaust becomes more difficult to maintain in a media-saturated culture, the Holocaust itself begins to function differently within the competing narratives of European and American history. No longer simply a challenge to European modernity, the Holocaust is now beginning to function as an anchor of American modernity, part and parcel of postmodern culture and economics, and central to the political landscape of global political power.⁵⁹

Overall, *Schindler's List* represents more than an attempt to visualize the Jewish experience of death. It presents significant elements of the ongoing American need to project its values through the appropriation of the memory of the Holocaust. Americanization thus, finds its expression in Hollywood artistic representation of the Jews. Through representation, Americanization translates a process of democratization, vulgarization, and globalization of the event which credits America with an aura of global hegemonic superpower.

II/- Representation of the Jews in Schindler's List:

With respect to the uniqueness of the Holocaust, as an epitome of Jewish experience of trauma in WWII, Elie Wiesel, a Holocaust survivor, vehemently writes:

⁵⁹ Michael, Rothberg. *Traumatic Realism: The Demands of Holocaust Representation*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000, P.222

*...the Holocaust transcends history...the dead are in possession of a secret that we, the living, are neither worthy of nor capable of recovery...the Holocaust? The ultimate event, the ultimate mystery, never to be comprehended or transmitted.*⁶⁰

It is upon the premises of the above quotation and others that Spielberg's *Schindler's List* emerges. The movie not simply transcends the 'ultimate mystery of the event', but succeeds in appropriating its history (memory) by bringing it into the realm of Hollywood visual representation. Spielberg's version of the Holocaust considers the recovery of the 'secret of the dead' through recalling the secret of the survivors' experience of death and survival (Schindler's Jews).

The film is concerned with the issue of representation. Visual representation of the Holocaust represents the core of Spielberg's formulation of the Jews. According to Barbie Zelizer:

*Visual representation is always at some level concerned with transformations, and the visuals of the Holocaust have been recycled, reclaimed, and refashioned to fit the codes and conventions of the mode of visual representation that is at hand. Yet each depends in some sense on our familiarity with an aesthetic through which we first saw visual evidence of Nazi atrocity.*⁶¹

This section considers both the transformations and the elements of aesthetics through which Spielberg manages to represent the Jews. In *Schindler's List*, the visual representation is an attempt to Americanize the Holocaust through Spielberg's articulation of death and survival of the Jews. The articulation is set to convey significant images and ideas concerning the way Americans do represent the Jews. The Americanization considers Spielberg's challenge to elucidate the American understanding of the Jewish relationship with death and life. It ultimately puts to the fore America's responsibility to perpetuate the memory of the Holocaust.

⁶⁰ Quoted in Robert, Fine & Charles Turner. *Social Theory after the Holocaust*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000, P.27

⁶¹ Barbie, Zelizer. *Visual Culture and the Holocaust*. London: The Athlone Press, 2001, P.3

II/-1- Death:

Death is a crucial issue of the Holocaust. Understanding the Jewish trauma depends on the way the Jewish experience of death is articulated and recollected. The articulation helps understand the American apprehension of the Jews as a religious group.

The beginning of the film is worth considering. It starts picturing an ordinary Jewish family including men, women and children around a table on which two candles burn. For Spielberg "to start the film with the candles being lit ... would be a rich bookend, to start the film with a normal Shabbat service before the juggernaut against the Jews begins."⁶²



Figure9: Ordinary Jewish Family



Figure10: Sinister train

Picturing an ordinary Jewish family celebrating Shabbat is intended to create a sense of compassion in the public audience. As already mentioned in the previous section, it aims at putting forward the American moral and historical responsibility towards the Jewish plight (see page 4&7). Spielberg's recollection and articulation of death translates a redeemed responsibility, i.e. the American failure to save the Jews from imminent death during WWII, is Spielberg's present responsibility to recollect, through vulgarization and democratization, the Jewish traumatic experience of death.

⁶²Anne, Thomson. "Making History: How Steven Spielberg 'Schindler's List to Life'". Entertainment Weekly, January 21th, 1994. Retrieved October 16th, 2013

The most striking example of the vulgarization is Spielberg's association of death with the sinister figure of the train, the same train that symbolizes the American awareness of the Nazi extermination camps, and its historical failure to bomb the rails leading to Auschwitz. The train comes suddenly and violently disrupting the serenity and harmony of a Polish Jewish family. It symbolizes the disintegration of the entire European Jewry which *Schindler's List* is committed to reconstruct, or at least to bear witness.

As a modern means of transportation, the symbolism of the train comes to remind every ordinary American that the Holocaust "seems less a unique event isolatable in the past than an omnipresent possibility."⁶³ The symbolism provides the possibility of identification with the victims' sufferings. The identification takes the form of an acquaintance with the traumatic event, an acquaintance similar to the everyday act of taking a train to work or home. Figure 15, illustrates the certainty of death which Auschwitz epitomizes. Besides, the identification recalls people's communal consciousness, and everyday vigilance.



Figure I 1: Train as a witness of death



Figure I 2: Sinister train at extermination camp

⁶³ Micheal, Rothberg. *Traumatic Realism: The Demands of Holocaust Representation*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000, P.11



Figure I3: Amon's barbarity



Figure I4: ordinary Jewish execution

Everything in the movie evokes the Jewish intimate relationship with death, a death which is imposed upon their destiny. The arbitrariness of death epitomizes Spielberg's representation of the Jews as victims of the Nazi barbarity. The representation explores the American attempt to solve the Jewish issue through military engagement in WWII as liberators; and through cultural and political involvement as bearers of the memory of the Holocaust.

The movie's stress on the arbitrariness of death, as represented by Amon Goeth's summary execution of Jewish prisoners, considers the Jewishness as ultimate cause of death (anti-Semitism). The film's representation of the Jews is a matter of generalization (the Jews are portrayed through inaction, indifference, silence and acceptance of their imminent death). The latter is generative of stereotypes. Spielberg manages, throughout the film, to reproduce the Nazi Jewish stereotypes. The juxtaposition of the Nazi stereotypes with those of Spielberg is illustrative. Where the Nazi stereotypes generate atrocities, death and extermination, those of Spielberg engender hope, life, survival, and an American sense of Jewish victimization. Thus, through *Schindler's List*, Americanization of the Holocaust stands for the assimilation of the Jews as eternal victims.

Moreover, Spielberg's emphasis on the barbarity of the Nazi regime is important. It is a will to credit America and its values with a sense of having won a victorious war over barbarity; liberating the Jews; bearing witness of their memory; and finally, guarantying their survival, and existence in the midst of an enduring hostile environment.

Therefore, Spielberg's version of the Holocaust bears an Americanized understanding of the Jewish plight. The comprehension is cultural and political, if not ideological. It recalls the American general sense of responsibility to expiate the Western responsibility for the Jewish murder. The redemption, through appropriation and democratization of the Holocaust, finds its exact expression.

II/-2-Survival:

Survival is another crucial issue in the history of the Holocaust. It is also the critical focus of Spielberg's *Schindler's List*. Throughout the movie, the Holocaust is articulated according to the Jewish ability to escape death, and remain alive in the midst of a macabre environment. The Nazi barbarity is such that it makes death the rule and survival an exception (hypothetical). *Schindler's List* considers the survival of Schindler's Jews. The survival revolves around a list that Oskar Schindler establishes with a help of his accountant, Yitzhak Stern.

Spielberg's portrayal of Jewish survival and death follows a same pattern. Throughout the film, survival is connected with the figure of the typewriter. The latter is assigned to play a double function. In the same way the typewriter serves the Nazi regime to establish a '*Liste*' (List) of all registered Jews to be executed in the extermination death camps, Oskar Schindler manages to use the machine to establish his own 'List' of over 1000 Jews to be saved. Schindler's List is a noteworthy example of Spielberg's formulation of the Nazi '*Liste*' (List)

as absolute evil. The formulation contrasts with the movie's 'List' which, as Stern asserts, is *absolute good, and it is life*. The contrast between the absolute badness of the '*Liste*' and the absolute goodness of the '*List*' is important. It provides great insight into Spielberg's implicit will to assimilate the history and destiny of the Jews. According to Spielberg's version, Jewish history is fatally torn between good and evil, omnipresent threat of death and hypothetical survival which the Holocaust comes to epitomize. Therefore, Spielberg's association of the Jews with death, as illustrated by the sinister death camps, overlaps with the Jewish urgent need to be rescued. It is a moral duty that Spielberg, implicitly and subtly, assigns to America or at least to Hollywood movie industry to point the necessity, but mainly the urgency of bearing witness to the Holocaust.

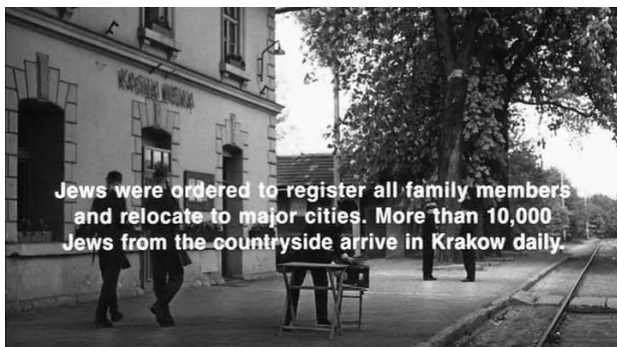


Figure I5: Registration



Figure I6: Symbol of bureaucratic murder



Figure I7: Two beautiful minds



Figure I8: Goodness of the list

Zygmunt Bauman provides an interesting view concerning the survival of Schindler's Jews.

He writes:

*According to the Schindler's List version of the Holocaust experience, the sole stake of that most inhuman among human tragedies was to remain alive –while the humanity of life, and particularly its dignity and ethical value, was at best of secondary importance and above all of no consequences and was never allowed to interfere with the principal goal. The goal of staying alive took care of moral concerns. What counted in the last resort was to outlive the others–even if the escape from death required being put on a separate, unique and exclusive list of the privileged.*⁶⁴

In *Schindler's List*, survival is not simply a matter of moral concerns as Bauman suggests. It considers rather a historical accomplishment. The collaboration between Oskar Schindler and Yitzhak Stern represents more than a fusion of two brilliant minds, but a symbiotic relationship between Jews and Gentiles (Christians). Survival, thus, considers the collaboration between the American values, as highlighted symbolically by Oskar Schindler, and those of the Jews (Stern) to accomplish the victory of life over death, goodness over barbarity, and love over hatred.

Stern not simply serves Schindler's accomplishment of his historical task in saving the Jews, but bears witness to his earthly redemption and absolute humanism. His infliction on Schindler greatly overlaps with the general stereotypes concerning the Jews. Amon Goeth in a conversation with Schindler asserts that the Jews have no future except casting a spell on the Gentiles. Therefore, Spielberg's overall stress on survival is a way to put emphasis on the future at the expense of the past. Through survival, Spielberg tries to reconstruct the Jewish past in order to build a Jewish future with which America is morally, politically and ideologically committed.

⁶⁴ Zygmunt, Bauman. *The Holocaust's Life as a Ghost*. In *Social Theory after the Holocaust*. Robert Fine & Charles Turner. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000, P.8



Figure19: establishing a list

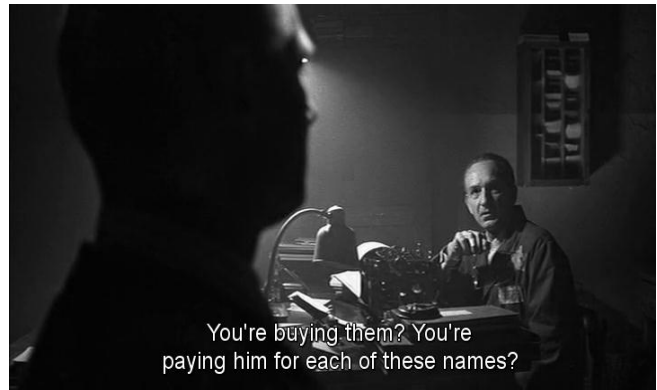


Figure20: Nazi corruption



Figure21: association with witchcraft



Figure22: Jewish stereotypes

The duo's collaboration symbolizes the reconciliation between the Jews and Christians. The reconciliation explores the American attempt to appropriate the History of the Holocaust to achieve a historical reconciliation between the Western civilization and Jewish history. Furthermore, it examines America's moral responsibility to reconcile Western civilization with the Judeo-Christian fundamental values which Americanization embodies.

Throughout the movie, Spielberg's portrayals of *Schindler* and *Amon Goeth*, though different in characterization, are similar. Both are represented as masters of the Jewish destiny, i.e. the arbitrariness of death and survival is ultimately dependant on the two character's will and

humor. Put this way, he seems depriving the Jews of their natural ability to defend, save and extract themselves from the grip of the Nazi barbarity and imminent death.

Spielberg's 'God-like' figure, assigned to both Schindler and Amon Goeth, goes hand in hand with his implicit representation of the Jews as weak, feeble and infantile. In the film, the Jews are depicted as being at the mercy of Amon's cruelty, and Schindler's goodness and humanism. For Judith Doneson *Schindler's List* belongs to a main stream Hollywood representation of the Jews. She argues:

*In U.S. films Jewish people are generally associated with femininity. The Jewish person is depicted as weak and dependant on the Christian/Gentile, and is seen as being incapable of saving himself without the aid of a strong, male Christian.*⁶⁵

In fact, *Schindler's List* is a kind of representation of the Jews which is ultimately, if not fatally, bound to the barbarity of the Nazi perpetrators of the genocide, Amon Goeth, or to the Nazi goodness, Oskar Schindler. This torn figure of the Jew illustrates the Jewish intimate relationship with death because of his Jewishness, and that of life because of his femininity and infantilism. For Anna Reading "survival was in large part dependent on Jewish people enacting traditional gender roles and maintaining particular aspects of femininity and masculinity. What enables women's survival in the film in the face of Nazi atrocity is dependence on their ability to conform to acceptable forms of femininity."⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Judith, Doneson. "The Jew as a Female Figure in Holocaust Film. Shoah: A Review of Holocaust Studies and Commemoration", Vol. 1 no. 1, 1978, P.12

⁶⁶ Anna, Reading. The Social Inheritance of the Holocaust: Gender, Culture and Memory. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002, P.97



Figure23: Jewish Bestiality



Figure24: Forms of femininity

Through Spielberg's exploration of the Jewish intimate relationship with death, and their natural ability to survive, the film reproduces all the Jewish stereotypes. The reproduction explores the existing contrast between the American and German Nazi attitudes towards the Jewish destiny. Through Amon Goeth, the stereotypes are synonymous with death and destruction, a death which belongs to a macabre past. With Schindler, however, they represent a recollection of a traumatic memory which serves establishing a new stereotypical tendency. The weaknesses, femininity and infantilism of the Schindler's Jews are synonymous with an American sense of moral, historical, political and ideological appropriation of the Jewish victimization. The victimization revolves around the issue of salvation; a salvation of the Jews with which America's *Manifest destiny* would come to balance.

III/- Manifest Destiny in Schindler's List:

In addition to death and survival, salvation is the ultimate goal of *Schindler's List*. Spielberg's overall stress on these two issues is intended to enhance public awareness, mainly American, around the issue of salvation of the Jewish people. In Spielberg's film, Jewish salvation revolves around the necessity to understand the Holocaust as an historical event which witnessed a Jewish traumatic experience of genocide.

With *Schindler's List*, the tragedy takes the form of American moral responsibility to recollect the memory of the event, universalize it, and democratize it. The democratization permits a public identification with the victims' experience of extermination. The identification invites people apprehend the Jews as victims of barbarity. The tendency of victimization calls on the importance of the American values, as highlighted in America's Manifest Destiny, in articulating the American universal role to promote freedom, justice, democracy and peace. The Holocaust provides the opportunity to consolidate the American national identity and character around the necessity of the Jewish salvation which is central to America's ideal view of itself as a nation and people with a definite mission and interests in the world.

In one of the most striking sequence near the end of the movie, numerous Jews are lying on the ground near a rail road. A soldier from a Soviet Army comes on a horse to herald the final liberation of the Jews from the Nazi extermination death camps, and the end of the war. In his address, the soviet soldier, in convincing but not authoritative tone, manages to explain to the attentive Jewish audience that they would go neither East nor West: *"Don't go east. That's for sure. They hate you there. I wouldn't go west either, if I were you."* One Jewish prisoner dares to ask the soldier: *"where should we go?"*, and the latter responds almost metaphorically: *"Isn't there a town over there?"*

Figure25: Jewish bewilderment



Figure26: Soviet Anti-Semitism





Figure27: Jewish lot



Figure28: Jewish tragedy

The above figures are highly symbolic. They denote implicitly the contrast between America and the Soviet Union. If the Soviet Army liberated the extermination death camps, it is America's present duty to bear witness to the Holocaust. When Spielberg voices the former Jewish prisoner asking 'Where should we go?' the question becomes synonymous with a Jewish urgent need for security, shelter, and ultimately a country. The soldier's response comes to contend, through his interrogative sentence and metaphoric use of the word 'town', the Jewish general concerns with survival, a survival that is bound to the necessity to establish a safe homeland for the Jewish people. The homeland is neither situated in the West nor in the East, but rather in a geographic area between the two poles, somehow in the middle or more exactly in the Middle East. Michael Rothberg analyses this crucial sequence when he writes:

*At this moment, the literal becomes metaphorical and a way out is proposed, as the scene changes and the Jews are pictured coming over a ridge in what the music suggests must be Israel.*⁶⁷

The Soviet Army's role in liberating Auschwitz as well as the Nazi barbarity belongs to the past. With *Schindler's List*, America asserts its appropriation of the present as its own (Americanization). The appropriation denotes America's ongoing role in constructing the

⁶⁷ Micheal, Rothberg. *Traumatic Realism: The Demands of Holocaust Representation*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000, P.239

future in which Israel is the ultimate expression of its sympathy for the Jewish plight, and the necessity of Jewish salvation.

Spielberg's portrayal of the soviet soldier announcing the final liberation of the Jews is misleading. With regard to the context of the 1990s, the liberation is thought more as a triumph of the American values over the Nazi barbarity, as represented by Oskar Schindler, rather than by a simple military victory of the soviet Army. Allegorically, the 1990s witnessed the collapse of the Soviet Union and end of the Cold War not because of America's military strength, but rather to the goodness of its values, and justness of its cause.

Furthermore, Israel represents the goodness of the American values for it is a direct consequence of Schindler's lifesaving action. Schindler's Jews not simply represent a generation which founded Israel, but gave birth to a generation whose moral responsibility is to bear witness to the triumph of life over death, justice over barbarity, and the prevailing goodness among humans, i.e. Israel is the gratitude of the Jews for Oskar Schindler.

Similar to America's Manifest Destiny, Israel is also bound to the issue of salvation. Throughout the movie, the Jewish experience of extermination and survival explores the necessity of Jewish salvation as a consecration of the American values. Spielberg's emphasis on Jewish salvation denotes the importance of the Jews (Holocaust) in the formulation of the American identity. The American enduring support for Israel derives from America's apprehension of the Holocaust, and its articulation of the Jewish salvation. The Holocaust helps America to give a universal visibility to its identity, and accomplish its universal mission to promote justice, democracy and peace (manifest destiny). Israel is the ultimate illustration of America's good will to establish democracy in the midst of a hostile dictatorship Muslim world.



Figure29: Jewish consciousness



Figure30: Jewish usefulness

The above figures illustrate the importance of the Jews. The woman's words express the Jewish awareness of the importance of their experience; an experience that would shape the Western (mainly American), moral, political and ideological concerns (Israel). Schindler's words, however, denote the usefulness of the Jews in the accomplishment of his historical Jewish rescue. Furthermore, the Jews help Schindler to assert his personal values (goodness, justice...etc), and identity as a Gentile rescuer of the Jews. Similarly, the American appropriation of the Holocaust serves America in projecting its fundamental values (justice, democracy and freedom), and asserting its identity as a liberator, and a promoter of peace and democracy in the world.

The end of the movie is important. Spielberg succeeds in transcending the conflicting relationship existing between the Jews and the Gentiles. Through the portrayal of the Schindler's salvation by the Jews, he proposes a new relationship based on mutual need, respect, and gratitude.

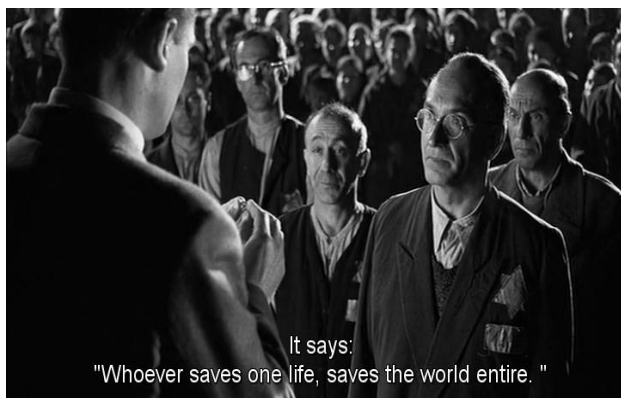


Figure31: Allusion to the Talmud (Shoah)

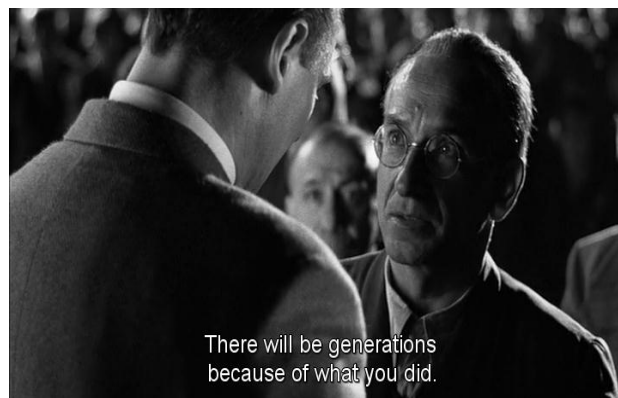


Figure32: Jewish destiny



Figure33: Jewish gratitude



Figure34: Historical ties



Figure35: Free Schindler's Jews



Figure36: Generation of free Jews

Figure34 is highly symbolic. It symbolizes the Jewish gratefulness for Oskar Schindler's preponderant role in saving the Jews. The ring symbolizes the strong ties between the Jews and Gentiles; Jews and the west; and ultimately an enduring alliance between America and Israel.

Conclusion:

Hollywood movie industry plays an important role in the process of Americanization of the Holocaust. Representation of the Jewish experience of genocide is the primary concern of Spielberg's *Schindler's List*. Americanization, as an appropriation of the Holocaust, represents an American will to recover the memory of the Jewish traumatic experience of death and survival.

Through visual representation, *Schindler's List* implies America's moral, political, and ideological commitment towards global major events such as genocide. America's responsibility towards the Jewish plight is manifest. Through vulgarization, democratization, and universalization, Spielberg's film contributes in rendering the event accessible for large public audiences. The movie overall stress on death and survival helps public identification with the Jews as victims of stereotypes, atrocities and barbarity. The victimization helps forge a public collective consciousness and awareness around the necessity of the Jewish salvation with which America is morally, historically, politically, and ideologically committed.

Moreover, the movie provides significant information concerning the American global policy in the light of 1990s. The Holocaust provides America the opportunity to project its fundamental values (democracy, freedom, and democracy), and assert its universal mission as highlighted in its manifest destiny. With *Schindler's List*, America succeeds in appropriating the memory of the Holocaust to reaffirm the righteousness of its actions (involvement with world major issues). The collapse of the Soviet Union is the ultimate result of America's goodness, and justness of its cause. Recollecting the memory of the Holocaust is a continuation of its 'war against evil'. The recollection considers the American appropriation of the present, and its ability to create a good future. Throughout the movie, Spielberg

manages to associate the Nazi barbarity, and implicitly the Soviet Union with defeat and past history.

Spielberg's formulation of the Jewish salvation is crucial. It intends to elucidate the American ultimate interpretation of the usefulness of the Holocaust in shaping the American popular and official representation of the Jews as the most familiar and close 'others'. Spielberg's representation of the Jews considers Israel as the expression of the American apprehension of Jewish salvation. Therefore, Israel stands as the consecration of the American manifest destiny. Israel is a projection of America's identity and values in the midst of a cultural, historical and ideological hostile Arab-Muslim world.

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Chapter III

The Representation of Muslims in Edward Zwick's *The Siege* (1998)



The representation of Muslims in Edward Zwick's *The Siege* (1998)

Introduction:

The following chapter is primarily concerned with the way Americans, through Hollywood media movie industry, do formulate, articulate and represent the Muslims. It considers Zwick's portrayal of the Muslims, through his visualization of terror, in *The Siege* (1993). Furthermore, it aims at shedding light on the politics of Americanization of terror as formulated through Hollywood artistic devices used by Zwick (symbolism & metaphors).

It explores Spielberg's Americanization (visualization) of terror to sustain the position of Hollywood as an institution within America's hegemonic, political and ideological culture. I will put emphasis on the role of the movie's representation of the Muslims in awakening the American public interest in the issues of terror, and the necessity of America's Manifest Destiny (involvement with international terrorism). In this examination, the meaning of the Americanization of terror will be defined in the light of Zwick's representation (interpretation) of the major themes surrounding the Muslims such as death, loyalty, and demonization (political utility). I want to consider the ways these three issues are represented.

Moreover, the chapter considers Edward Zwick's representation of terror in the construction of public awareness useful for forging the American mythological identity. Therefore, I will expand on the American need to invest the Muslims with a sense of barbarity, cruelty, and danger central to America's ideal view of itself as a nation and people with a definite world mission, and strategic interests in the world.

Upon the premises of the above paragraphs, I have decided to divide the chapter into three major sections. First, it starts questioning the controversies raised by the release of *The Siege* on the screen in 1998. I will examine the impact of the movie on the American general perception and apprehension of Islam, and Muslims as a religious group. I will put emphasis on the issue of Americanization of terror as an anchor for American (Hollywood)

representation of the Muslims. I will expand on the stylistic features surrounding Zwick's exhaustive use of metaphors and symbolism to represent the Muslim close relationship with death, and loyalty. I will define Zwick's apprehension of the utility of the Muslims, that is say their 'barbarity', 'cruelty' and 'danger', in the light of America's Manifest Destiny. I will then, explore the American need for a formulation of 'evil others', through the visualization of the 'Muslim terror', to project America's values, identity, and justify its foreign policy.

In my examination, I will make appeal to New Historicist approach to investigate, through *The Siege*, the American growing interest in the Muslims, and terrorism in the light of 1990s geopolitical and geostrategic context. It will help apprehend Zwick's formulation of the Muslims to convey meanings, and consolidate the American national cohesion around the necessity of America's involvement with world major conflicts to fight terrorism, and promote democracy and peace.

I/- Americanization of terror in *The Siege*:

Zwick's *The Siege* is not the only film to deal with the threat of terrorism on America. Movies such as James Cameron's *True Lies* (1994) and Stuart Baird's *Executive Decision* (1996), have already tackled the issue of terror. What makes the particularity of the movie is its emphasis on the threat of terrorism on the American soil, and its consequences on America's way of life.

Similar to *Schindler's List*, the movie was released during the 1990s. Several Arab-Americans protested the film while it was in production⁶⁸. Its release in 1998 provoked international indignation, especially in the Arab-Muslim world. It succeeded, however, in raising the American public awareness of the threat of terrorism, the appropriate response to acts of

⁶⁸ Eric, Lichtenfeld. *Action speaks Louder : Violence, Spectacle, and the American Action Movie*. Middletown, Conncticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2007, P.208

terror, and the necessity of the American fundamental values (civil and individual liberties, the constitution).

The decade of the 1990s is of the greatest importance for it witnessed growing Hollywood interests in political religiously motivated terrorism. Helena Vanhala writes:

*[Hollywood's] focusing on religion as motivation reflects the development of concepts about international terrorism in U.S. foreign policy. Analyzing terrorism as motivated by fundamentalist foreign views emerges in 1990s state department reports, seeing fundamentalism as a primary threat to U.S. interests and citizens. Similar to the state department's reports, Hollywood films of the 1990s portray terrorists threatening the U.S. mainland.*⁶⁹

Helena Vanhala's words illustrate Hollywood enduring engagement with the political sphere, and its shift of concern from Communism (red threat) to Islamic terrorism (green threat). The shift of concern marks the Americanization of terror as the core of Muslim-American relationship. The collapse of the Soviet Union witnessed America's need to substitute the Muslims as 'evil others', for the Soviets. Furthermore, the decade translates the American general association of the Jews with trauma, whereas the Muslims with terror; the Jews with the need to be protected (saved), whereas the Muslims with the need to be combated.

Perhaps, one of the major examples of the Americanization in *The Siege* is Zwick's portrayal of terror as a consequence of the American involvement with the Arab-Muslim world. In fact, the majority of the terrorists is closely concerned with the Arab-Israeli enduring conflict, and the second Gulf War in Iraq, or closely concerned with the Arab-Israeli enduring conflict. The characterization of Samir Nazhde and Sheik Ahmed Bin Talal, both leading terrorists, provides significant information concerning the real motivation of the terrorist attacks in New York. Throughout the movie, it is clear that revenge is the primary concern of the terrorists.

⁶⁹ Helena, Vanhala. "Civil society under Siege: Terrorism and Government response to Terrorism in the Siege". Jump Cut, A Review of Contemporary Media, 2008. www.ejumpcut.org

The formulation of revenge, as Muslim response to America's direct involvement with the Middle East, intends to transform terror into a subject of Americanization. In other words, it provides the opportunity to project America's historical, moral and political responsibility towards the protection of the American people, and its fundamental values (peace, security, and liberty). Throughout the film, the responsibility is represented by a sort of military, political, and police involvement with terror.⁷⁰

Figure37: Political responsibility



Figure38: Protecting the Jews

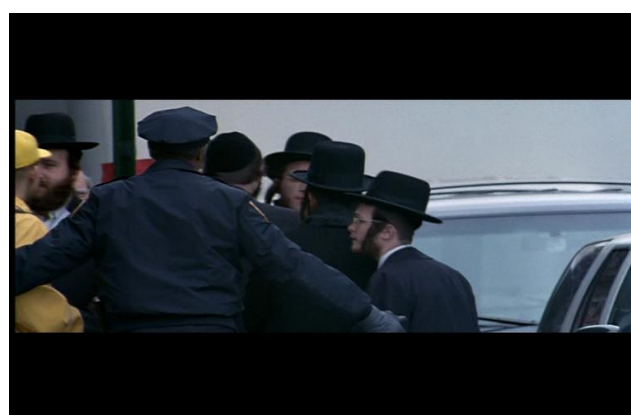


Figure39: Policing Islam



Figure40: police response to terror

⁷⁰ Sherrow, O. Pindler. *The Politics of Race in the United States: Americanization, De-Americanization, and Racialized Ethnic Groups*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010: "policing Muslim communities has now become quite marked."P.101

The movie's emphasis on the Muslim acts of terror on the American soil, aims at crediting the American involvement in the Middle East with the aura of 'freedom fighters'. In other words, what America is fighting for at home is the same abroad. Therefore, similar to the Americanization of the Holocaust, the appropriation of terror aims at putting to the fore America's responsibility to project its values onto the world. Both appropriations consider the American role and involvement with major world issues such as genocide and terrorism. They are also concerned with America's moral, historical and ideological responsibility to fight terrorism for the sake of promoting peace and democracy.

Yusef J. Progler makes the issue clearer:

More important, the West, with the American media setting the pace, stubbornly clings to an image database of Muslims for its utility in defining policy. In this context 'terrorists' are needed in a number of ways: to provide an 'evil other' against which to oppose one's own good self; to wait in the wings and intimidate citizen-consumers into all sorts of security schemes to 'protect freedom'; to hit the city streets and storm rural villages in the service of state power, at which time they may become 'police' or even 'freedom fighters'; and, to provide an exhaustible stream of villains and 'bad guys' as foils for the impoverished entertainment industries.⁷¹

Yusef's words explore the preponderant role of Hollywood movie industry in the ongoing Americanization of terror. It seems clear that Hollywood engagement with the political sphere aims at codifying terror. The codification creates a single sense of American traumatic experience of terror in the public consciousness. Everything in the movie contributes to enhancing the Muslim terrorists' determination to hit, harm ordinary innocent U.S. citizens, and destroy government facilities.

⁷¹ Yusef, J. Progler. *Islamic Imagery and American Policy*. In *Covering Islam: Challenges & Opportunities for Media in the Global Village*. Singapore: Ed. Syed Farid Alatas, RIMA & KAF, 2005, P.93



Figure41: Targeting ordinary citizens



Figure42 :Targeting innocent children

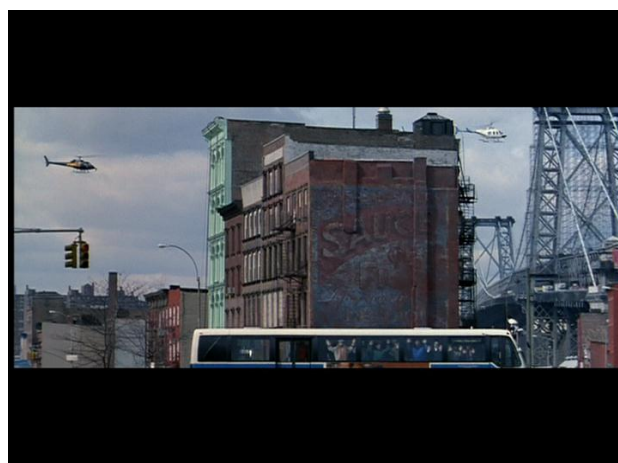


Figure43: Media coverage



Figure44: Advertising terror



Figure45:Bus explosion



Figure46:Targeting FBI HQ

Zwick's portrayal of the devastating effects of the terrorists' acts calls on both individual and communal responsibility, and action. The movie's overall stress on the death of innocents

and destruction of public facilities such as the FBI headquarter, is intended to enhance the public awareness of the real motivations of the terrorists: the destruction of America. In *The Siege*, the Americanization takes the form of a transformation of public awareness of the danger of terrorism into a public support of government policies. Furthermore, it is a process of integrating terror into the American consciousness as a driving vehicle to create ‘freedom fighters’, as Yusef Progler suggests⁷². In other words, it invites the American people to take part, and full responsibility in America’s global war on terror (public support for America’s involvement in the Middle East).

In the film, Anthony Hubbard epitomizes the image of a ‘freedom fighter’. As a protagonist he is certainly the one who represents well the American values. Similar to Oskar Schindler, his relentless efforts to save the American citizens from terrorist attacks, is highly symbolic. He symbolizes justice and security. Throughout the movie, he is portrayed as a guardian of civil liberties, the law, and order. His triumph over the terrorists, and General Devereaux’s brutal methods (internment, torture, and violation of the constitution), provides significant elements concerning the goodness, and righteousness of the American values. The triumph of Anthony Hubbard in restoring public order and freeing the Muslim community from internment, symbolizes the triumph of the American values on the American soil. Zwick succeeds in transposing that victory to the future triumph of the American values worldwide, i.e. the success of the American values abroad depends on their implementation at the domestic level (Americanization as a process of integrating the world into the American values by dint of domestic example)⁷³.

In *The siege*, Americanization takes the form of reconciliation between the American people with their enduring history (tradition) of freedom, liberty, justice, law, democracy and peace.

⁷² Ibid, P.93

⁷³ W. T. Stead. *The Americanization of the World, or The Trend of the Twentieth Century*. New York: Horace Markley, 1901, P.437

Through Anthony Hubbard's long struggle for civil liberties, the American strong ties with their ideals are sealed. This attachment is highlighted through public awareness that America is a target of Muslim fundamentalist whose threat recalls the necessity to defend America's ideals both domestically and abroad.



Figure47: Terror vs. law



Figure48: Caring for innocents

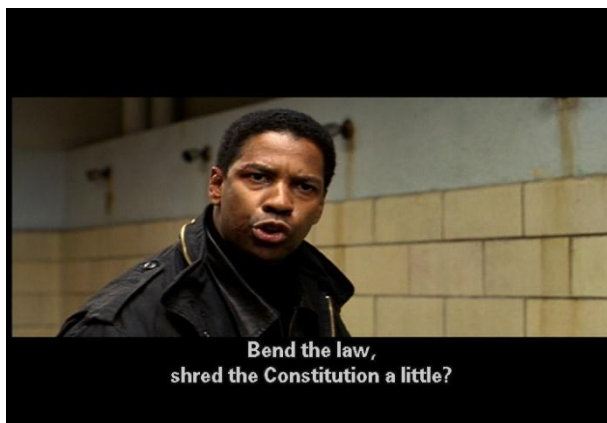


Figure49: Terrorist's will



Figure50: Constitution vs. terror

Zwick's emphasis on Hubbard's righteousness is nothing less than a reminder of the importance of the American values as the founding pillars of America. For him, the film "is not about terrorism; it's about us. It's about who we are and who we choose to be. It asks

some important questions: how will we respond to an attack from within-and who will we be when tested?”⁷⁴

Like Oskar Schindler, Hubbard represents the American dream. Being a black American, he is credited with the aura of protector of the American Constitution whose fundamental values helped the blacks to shift from slavery to freedom (Civil Rights Movement); and from slaves to freedom fighters. For a large American public audience, his protective attitude helps the identification with the character's moral values. It also contributes to enhancing the American sense of patriotism around the necessity of fighting terrorism.

Everything in the movie appeals to public consciousness. For example, targeting a bus transporting innocent children, respectively in figures 11 and 12, suggests the barbarity of the terrorists as well as public concern. Like in *Schindler's List*, 'children' are foregrounded to exacerbate public fear, whereas the 'bus' calls on everyday vigilance and concern (social mode of action)⁷⁵. Thus, the American public consciousness can be read as an American belief in the justness of America's ideals, and its involvement in global major issues such as terrorism.

Therefore, the Americanization of terror and trauma (Holocaust) considers America's role in standardizing the American values, and the necessity of its actions. America needs both trauma and terror to sustain its hegemonic position in the global political environment. According to the protagonist, General Devereaux's violation of the American Constitution can be read as a victory of terrorism (figure13&14). In other words, the victory over terrorism

⁷⁴ Twentieth Century Fox Film Corp., The Siege Production notes, 1998, P.4. In Eric, Lichtenfeld. *Action speaks Louder : Violence, Spectacle, and the American Action Movie*. Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2007, P.208

⁷⁵ Allon, Confino. Collective Memory and Cultural History. *American Historical Review*, 1997. In Dan, Stone. *The Historiography of the Holocaust*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.

depends on America's ability to defend, sustain, and assert its fundamental values embodied in its constitution.

Overall, *The Siege* provides significant information concerning the ongoing Americanization of terror. The Americanization of terror takes the form of a transformation of public awareness of the danger of terrorism into a public support of America's global war on terror, i.e. a process of integrating terror into the American consciousness as a driving vehicle to create 'freedom fighters'. Through terror, America finds an outlet to project its values both domestically, and worldwide. As a Hollywood product, the movie considers the representation of the Muslims through its formulation of terror. Compared to the Americanization of the Holocaust, the appropriation of terror intends to democratize, vulgarize, and finally universalize the American values as a protection against 'Muslim terrorism' (evil).

II/- Representation of the Muslims in *The Siege*:

The Siege is primarily concerned with the visual representation of the Muslim terrorists waging a terror campaign on New York City. The film provoked controversial responses worldwide, because of its portrayal of the Muslims as terrorists⁷⁶. The visual representation of terror represents the core of Muslim representation. According to Arshad Khan:

*American media have played a significant role in stereotyping the Muslims and Arabs. They are, to a large extent, responsible for creating the image that Muslims and terrorists are synonymous.*⁷⁷

This section considers the stereotypes revolving around Zwick's representation of the Muslims. The representation is for the most visual and verbal formulation of the Muslim

⁷⁶ Eric, Lichtenfeld. *Action speaks Louder : Violence, Spectacle, and the American Action Movie*. Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2007, P.208

⁷⁷ Arshad, Khan. *Islam, Muslims and America*. New York: Algora Publishing, 2003, P.67

relationship with death and loyalty. The formulation denotes the American attempt to Americanize terror as part of America's apprehension of the Muslims as 'evil others'.

II/-1- Death:

Both *The Siege* and *Schindler's List* revolve around the issue of death. If the Holocaust is a Jewish experience of death, terror is certainly America's apprehension of the Muslim intimate relation with death, i.e. the American experience of Muslim formulation of death.

The opening scenes are important for they set the stage for the film's upcoming major issues. In one of the major sequences that open the movie, live shots are given from an American army barracks' bombings that occurred in Dhahrane, Saudi Arabia. What is interesting with these scenes is rather the media coverage of the tragic event. The rapidity with which the media manages to make a link between the bombings and an Iraqi Muslim religious leader, Sheik Ahmed Bin Talal, denotes both the media's engagement with the political sphere, and a tendency to associate the Muslims with terrorism, i.e. with acts of terror that generate death.



Figure51: Act of terror

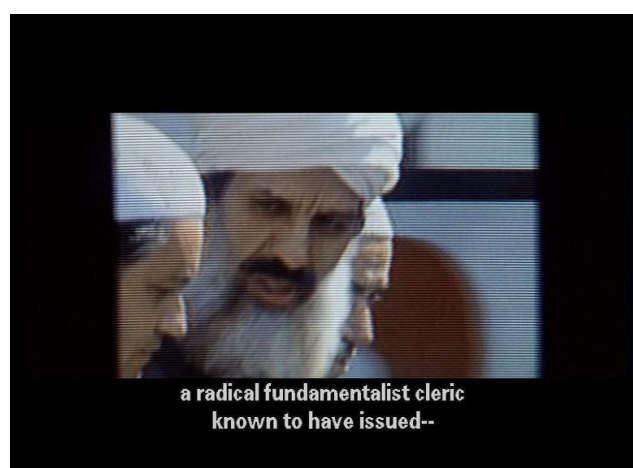


Figure52: Religious radicalism as a threat

Picturing the massive destruction of the army barracks is intended to enhance the American public apprehension of terrorism. The stress on the Sheik, as the instigator of the attack, is nothing less than a portrayal of the Muslim as generative of death, destruction and terror. In both movies, death serves in foregrounding the American sense of moral and political responsibility. Where the Holocaust creates a sense of American public compassion and sympathy for the Jews, the portrayal of the Muslim as instigator of death and terror, creates a sense of collective paranoia, and a comprehension of the Muslim as a potential threat to America. It is clear then, the portrayal of the Muslim in connection to death and terror responds to a cultural, political, military and even economic (Hollywood movie industry) considerations, as Yusef J. Progler asserts: "Muslim are portrayed as 'terrorists' according to economic, military, and political necessities."⁷⁸

As in *Schindler's List*, everything in *The Siege* suggests death. Muslim eagerness to die or perpetrate death is of high importance. It denotes the contrast between Jews and Muslims. While Jews are portrayed through their long battle for survival from imminent death in the concentration camps, the Muslims are rather concerned with a certain predisposition to face death and generate it at a large scale. The most striking example of this contrast is the metaphoric sense of the movies' 'Lists'. While *Schindler's List* is concerned with the survival of the Jews, *The Siege's* 'Watch list' is rather concerned with Muslim terrorism.

What is striking about the Muslim intimate connection to death is the fact that it is a subject of security concern. In the film, Elise Kraft, a CIA operating officer, embodies a general American knowledge of Islam and Muslims. Her experience and long tradition of involvement with the political Muslim activists in the Middle East are important. The

⁷⁸ Yusef, J. Progler. *Islamic Imagery and American Policy. In Covering Islam: Challenges & Opportunities for Media in the Global Village.* Singapore: Ed. Syed Farid Alatas, RIMA & KAF, 2005, P.68

knowledge provides significant information concerning the American apprehension of Muslim predisposition to death as a direct threat to America.



Figure53: Origin of terror



Figure54: Eagerness to die

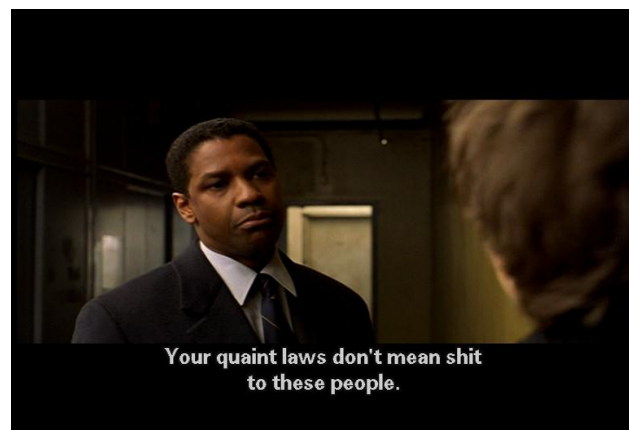


figure55: Muslim barbarity (primitiveness)



Figure56: Muslim cruelty

With respect to the American knowledge of Islam, Edward Said writes:

*Knowledge of Islam and Islamic peoples has generally proceeded not only from dominance and confrontation but also from cultural antipathy. Today Islam is defined negatively as that with which the West is radically at odds, and this tension establishes a framework radically limiting knowledge of Islam. So long as this framework stands, Islam, as a vitally lived experience for Muslims, cannot be known.*⁷⁹

Said's words are important. They illustrate the American political and ideological biased knowledge of the Muslims. If the American knowledge of the Jews revolves around the public

⁷⁹ Edward, W. Said. *Orientalism*. London: Penguin Books. 2003, P.155

acquaintance and awareness of the Holocaust as a Jewish tragic experience of death, Knowledge about the Muslims is limited to their acquaintance with death, and a fear of their ability to engender it.

Both Muslim and Jewish relationships with death are stereotypical. While *Schindler's List* portrays the Jewish general stereotypes to enhance the American public sense of responsibility towards the Jewish plight, *The siege* foregrounds rather Muslim stereotypes to alert the American consciousness to the Muslim threat, and calls on their commitment towards their ideals (promotion of liberty, democracy, and peace...etc.). The stereotypes such as cruelty, barbarity, martyrdom, and fanaticism are intended to put forward the goodness of the American values. Zwick succeeds in juxtaposing Anthony Hubbard's enduring effort to restore peace, law and order with Samir Nazhde's will to destroy and kill. The juxtaposition helps sustain the American commitment towards their country by calling on their sense of discernment between good and evil, death and life, and ultimately between America and Islam.

With regard to the issue of death, the differences in articulation between the two movies are highly important. In *Schindler's List*, the Jews are represented as victims of the Nazi barbarity. The victimization serves the Jews to gain the American public sympathy, and government's enduring support for Israel as a Jewish homeland. In *The Siege*, however, the Muslims are represented as barbarians and perpetrators of blind acts of terror whose victims are innocent American citizens. The representation thus, enhances the American apprehension of the Muslims as a potential threat to America's fundamental values. As such, they provide America a justification for its involvement in the Middle East.

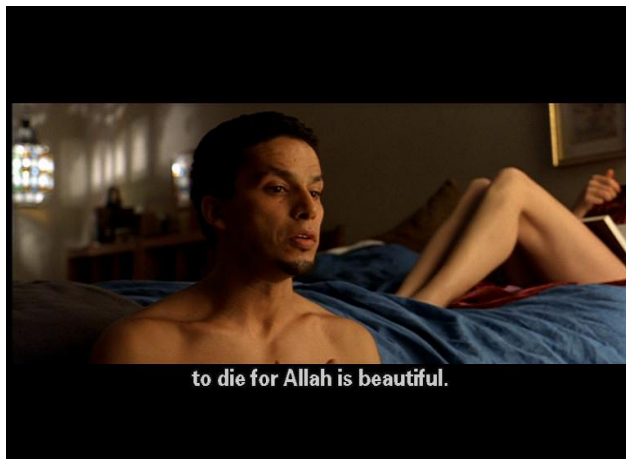


Figure57: A sense of martyrdom



Figure58: Reference to Israel



Figure59: Ritual of death



Figure60: Death as power

It is interesting to underline the importance of death in shaping the ongoing Americanization of the Holocaust and terror. The Arab-Israeli enduring conflict epitomizes the process of Americanization of world history. Yusef J. Progler writes:

Negative images of arabs and Muslims in the 20th century are closely linked to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Prominent American scholars like Edmund Ghareeb (1983), Jack Shaheen (1984), and Michael Suleiman (1988) have consistently found connections between stereotypical images of Arabs in American media culture since the establishment of Israel on the land of Palestine in 1948.⁸⁰

⁸⁰ Yusef, J. Progler. *Islamic Imagery and American Policy*. In *Covering Islam: Challenges & Opportunities for Media in the Global Village*. Singapore: Ed. Syed Farid Alatas, RIMA & KAF, 2005, P.65

If the Americanization of the Holocaust succeeds in forging a stereotypical image of the Jews as eternal victims, the Americanization of terror tends to forge a stereotypical image of the Muslims as criminals. Thus, criminalizing the Muslims goes hand in hand with the tendency to victimize the Jews. The first works as a justification for the ongoing American involvement in the Arab-Muslim world. The second, however, serves sustaining the American enduring support of Israel not only as a Jewish homeland, but as a projection of America's fundamental values, i.e. Israel as a democratic state which mirrors the American values.

Overall, Zwick's version of terrorism (mass death) bears an Americanized comprehension of the Muslim nature, and character. The comprehension is cultural and political, if not ideological. It recalls the American moral, political and ideological responsibility to safeguard the American values as a rampart against the undermining Muslim threat.

II/-2- Loyalty:

Loyalty is another important issue related to terror. It is the fundamental concern in Edward Zwick's *The Siege*. Throughout the film, the Muslims are portrayed as loyal to the American values, or faithful to their 'demonized' and 'dangerous' Islamic values. *The Siege* considers the loyalty of the Muslims as a proof of their Americanization, i.e. their ability to assimilate the American values. Loyalty is articulated through the characterization of Samir Nazhde (terrorists), and Franck Haddad (FBI agent).

The movie's opening scenes are important. They recall the Oklahoma City bombings of 1995. The rapidity with which the media manages to make a link between the bombings and an Iraqi Muslim religious leader, Sheik Ahmed Bin Talal, is similar to the media coverage of the Oklahoma bombings. The similarity lies in the fact that both coverage are concerned with what Jack Shaheen describes as media's attempt to create social scapegoats. He writes:

To give examples of how some journalists create 'social scapegoats' and some newspapers perpetuate distortions, consider the reports following the April 19, 1995, bombing of Oklahoma City's Alfred P. Murrah Federal building, resulting in the deaths of 169 men, women and children and the injury of 500 more. Though no Arab or Muslim was involved, they were instantly suspects. Only hours after the terrorists destroyed the Murrah Building, journalists, law enforcement and government officials, and terrorism experts reported that 'Arab-looking men in jogging suits [were] running from the scene. Without hard documentation and credible witnesses, journalists accepted the supposition that the suspects were 'Middle –Eastern –looking men'. Some reporters began questioning the loyalty and integrity of America's Arabs and Muslims.⁸¹

In *The Siege*, all terrorists are Muslims. The bombing of the army barracks in Saudi Arabia contributes not only to create social scapegoats, as Shaheen suggests, but leads to the internment of all the Arab-Muslim community in Brooklyn. The internment is intended to stop all the remaining terrorist cells from perpetrating further attacks.

In both movies, Jews and Muslims are subjects of internment. In *Schindler's List*, the Jewish experience of the extermination camps is due to the barbarity of the Nazi regime. In *The Siege*, the Muslim community's internment is rather due to the barbarity, cruelty, and terrorism of some Muslims. While the internment of the Jews enhances the American sense of sympathy and solidarity towards the Jews, the majority of the Americans have manifested their solidarity with the government's repressive measures against Muslims. According to Sherrow O. Pindler *"for mainstream Americans, Muslim Americans are seen as the 'problem', and singling Muslims for 'extra security' is not a bad thing after all even though it openly infringes on people's hard won civil rights and liberties"*.⁸²

Pindler's words recall the media's intimate relationship with the political sphere, and its important role in shaping the American public opinion. The media succeeds not simply in gaining public support for government's policy, but also to transform public fear and need for

⁸¹Jack, G. Shaheen. *Our Cultural Demon: The 'Ugly' Arab*. Washington, D.C: Washington Post, August 19, 1990, PP. 1-2

⁸² Sherrow, O. Pindler. *The Politics of Race in the United States: Americanization, De-Americanization, and Racialized Ethnic Groups*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, P.27

security into an acceptance of government's infringement of the American fundamental liberties (constitution). The infringement of the American constitution would set the stage for the global war on terror with its controversial violations of human fundamental rights.

Throughout the movie, Zwick manages to put to the foreground Muslims as being fatally torn between violence (terrorism), and collaboration (cooperation). The most striking example of this torn figure is that of Anthony Hubbard's federal agent partner, Franck Haddad (starring Tony Shalhoub). In the film, he comes across as a character divided between his ethnic/religious belongings and his commitment towards his adopted country (America), and his job as a federal agent.

Haddad's commitment, support, cooperation, and years of loyal service in the FBI are portrayed not as individual acts but as that of the whole Arab-Muslim community. However, this collaboration, both individual and communal, seems useless in the light of America's obsession with security, and its global strategic interests. The most striking example of this attitude is General Devereaux's (starring Bruce Willis) decision to intern the whole Arab-Muslim community in Brooklyn including Frank Haddad's own son, to ward off new terrorist attacks by confining the remaining terrorist cells.



Figure60: Muslims as America's knowledge



Figure61: Translating America's Will

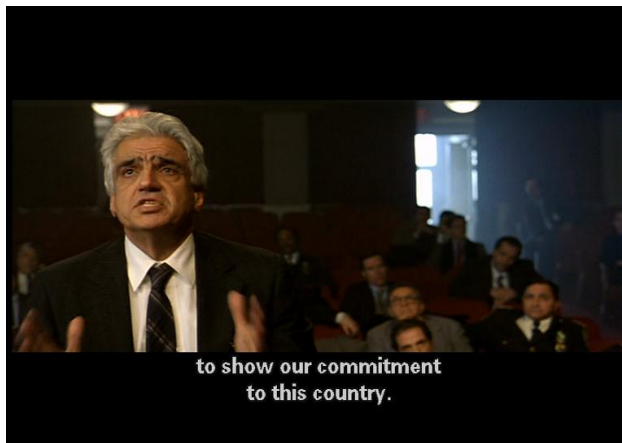


Figure62: Muslim loyalty

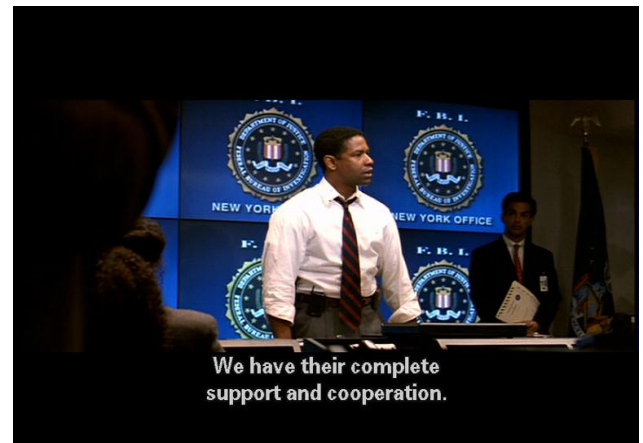


Figure63: Policing Muslim commitment



Figure64: Muslim belonging



Figure65: Muslim consciousness

Following the arrest of his son, Frank Haddad's consciousness and self-awareness recalls the historical, religious, cultural and ideological gap existing between the Muslims and America. The gap is made of mutual misunderstanding, but also of violence, a violence that leads some Muslims, whether out of anger or for revenge to choose and opt for a direct confrontation with American authorities. *The Siege* is rather concerned with a military confrontation (terrorism), but this time on the American soil rather than abroad (in Arab-Muslim countries).

Haddad's wordings, as illustrated in figure 31 and 32, are important. It sheds light on the process that leads Muslims from a mere status of 'sand nigger' (see figure 32) to terrorism.

The same process has led Sheikh Ahmed Bin Talal, Ali Waziri, Samir Nazhde and others to wage a holy war against America on the US soil following its 'policy shift', to overthrow Saddam Hussein's dictatorial regime that massacred their friends, relatives and beloved ones.

The notion of violence invites us to consider another important divided Muslim figure, Samir Nazhde. The latter, as an antagonist, is interesting on several counts. He fits the figure of a collaborative Muslim serving America's foreign agenda and its strategic interests in the Muslim world. He also succeeds in shifting from being a mere 'sand nigger' (slave), as Frank Haddad puts it, and to a soldier of Allah. He then, becomes an American 'terrorist other'. Samir contrasts strongly with Haddad. While the former chooses to stay loyal to America despite his nasty and bitter experience with the cruelty of General Devereaux's coercive measures, the former opts for 'terrorism'. Samir's words are radical: 'to fight for Allah is beautiful.' (figure23).

Haddad and Nazhde, though different in articulation fit the American representation of the Muslims and America's need to build a constructive image of the Muslim man. This constructive image of the Arab Muslim as friend and enemy is fabricated to serve America's interests.

All in all, *Schindler's List* contrasts with *The siege*. In the former, the loyalty of the Jews is an expression of gratitude. Through survival, the Jews manifest their gratitude by bearing witness to the American role in saving the Jews, and America's enduring support for Israel. The Muslim loyalty, however, is formulated as Muslims' betrayal of their origins, religion (Islam), and values. The Americanization of terror represents Muslims' betrayal of their own, i.e. cultural alienation.

III/- Manifest Destiny in *The Siege*:

The representation of the Muslims through the visual formulation of their relationship to death and loyalty is important. The formulation paves the way for the demonization and criminalization of the Muslims. While Spielberg's movie succeeds in transforming the Jewish experience of death (Holocaust) into an American public awareness around the necessity of the Jewish salvation (victimization), Zwick's film is rather concerned with the integration of terror into the American consciousness as a driving vehicle for the demonization of the Muslims.

In *The siege*, the American experience of terror is to a large extent similar to the Jewish experience of the Nazi barbarity (terror of the camps) in *Schindler's List*. In both movies, the Americans and the Jews are portrayed as victims of terror. In Zwick's film, the visualization of terror foregrounds America's moral, political and ideological responsibility towards its own people, and its fundamental values. The Americanization of terror vulgarizes, democratizes, and universalizes the American values as a protection against the 'Muslim terrorism'. The democratization helps public apprehension of terror as the primary threat to America, and Muslims as America's 'demon others'. The demonization recalls the importance of the American values, as articulated in America's Manifest Destiny, in formulating the American universal mission to promote democracy and peace as part of the global war on terror. Similar to the Holocaust, terror provides the opportunity to consolidate the American national identity and character around the necessity to fight Muslim terrorism (criminalization of the Muslims), which is fundamental to America's ideal view of itself as a nation and people with a definite mission and interests in the world.

The opening scenes of *The Siege* contrast with those of *Schindler's List*. Spielberg's portrayal of ordinary Jewish family considers the American identification with the Jewish plight. In *The*

Siege, the cultural and ideological gap between the Muslims and America is put forward. Edward Zwick excels in making great deal of juxtapositions. The juxtaposition between Sheik Ahmed Bin Talal's bearded image and that of Bill Clinton's beardless one is striking. While the figure of the Sheik is intimately linked to religious intolerance, desert (primitiveness), bombings, destruction, death, and terror, Bill Clinton's image is rather linked to consternation, religious tolerance (New York City's mosque), civilization, and justice.



Figure66: Stereotyped American

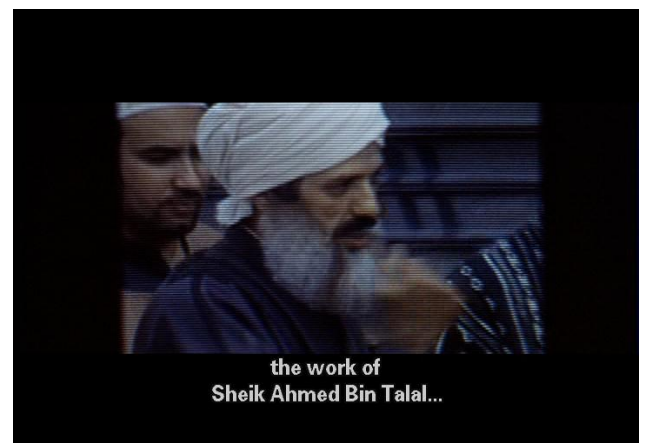


Figure67: Stereotyped Muslim



Figure68: Muslim barbarity

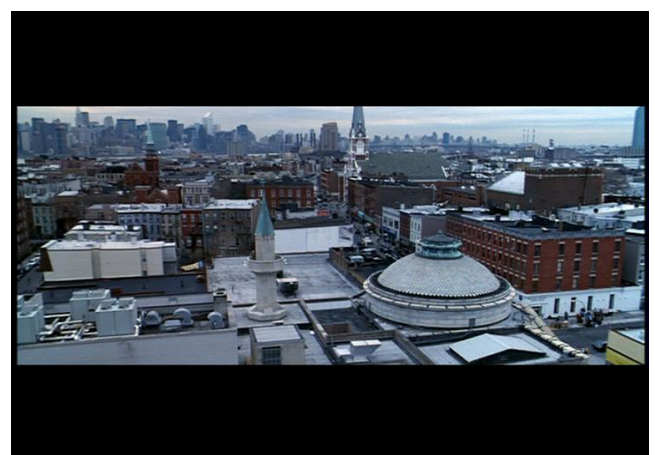


Figure69: Religious tolerance



Figure70: Association to emptiness



Figure71: Muslim primitiveness

The association of the Muslims with the desert symbolizes their primitiveness in contrast with the American civilization (modernism). The association of the Muslims with death, as highlighted through their bombings and terrorist attacks, contrasts with the American FBI officer, Anthony Hubbard's determination to stop the bombings and save the lives of innocent American citizens. Through the demonization of the Sheik and Samir Nazhde, the goodness of the Americans is foregrounded. Yusef J. Progler writes: "*Making 'terrorist' and other nefarious characters necessary for self-identification*⁸³."

Unlike the identification with the Jewish suffering in *Schindler's List*, *The Siege* is rather concerned with the American self-identification as a different cultural entity which contrasts with the Muslim values. Again Yusef J. Progler asserts:

*The Muslim world has been a self-reflecting mirror for Western civilization, in which the West continues to define and re-define itself by contrasting and remaking another that is everything the West is not. The West's myth of the Orient will continue to serve its explanatory functions throughout the 21st century, unless the legacy of oppositional identity construction is face.*⁸⁴

⁸³ Yusef, J. Progler. *Islamic Imagery and American Policy*. In *Covering Islam: Challenges & Opportunities for Media in the Global Village*. Singapore: Ed. Syed Farid Alatas, RIMA & KAF, 2005, P.91

⁸⁴ Ibid, P.91

Zwick's overall stress on the threat of the Muslim terrorists on the American military presence in the Middle East gives insight into the American apprehension of the Muslims as a direct threat to America's strategic allies (Israel), and interests in the Middle East. Furthermore, the Muslim terrorism provides America the opportunity to legitimate its direct involvement in the Arab-Muslim world. As terrorists, the Muslims credit America with the aura of promoter of freedom, justice, democracy and peace in an undemocratic, fundamentalist, and dangerous Arab-Muslim world.

If the victimization of the Jews calls on the American moral and political responsibility towards the Jewish salvation, the demonization of the Muslims calls rather on the American military engagement to fight terrorism. Similar to the Holocaust, the appropriation of terror denotes the ongoing American appropriation of the present, and America's role in constructing the future. The latter considers an Americanized Muslim World in which Israel would play a major role.

At the domestic level, the terrorist attacks on transport and government facilities provoked two contrasted reactions. The first represented by the antagonist, General Devereaux, whose methods and sentiments recall the general Arab-Muslim stereotypes. The antagonist's infringement of the U.S Constitution translates a political will to infringe people's Civil Rights and Liberties using the Muslim terrorist attacks as a justification. His controversial decision to deploy the U.S army, police and intern the Arab-Muslim Americans is intended to exacerbate the American general awareness of the danger of international terrorism into a public support of government policies though it violates the American constitution. General Devereaux's brutal measures are intended to prepare the American public consciousness to the necessity of the upcoming global war on terror.

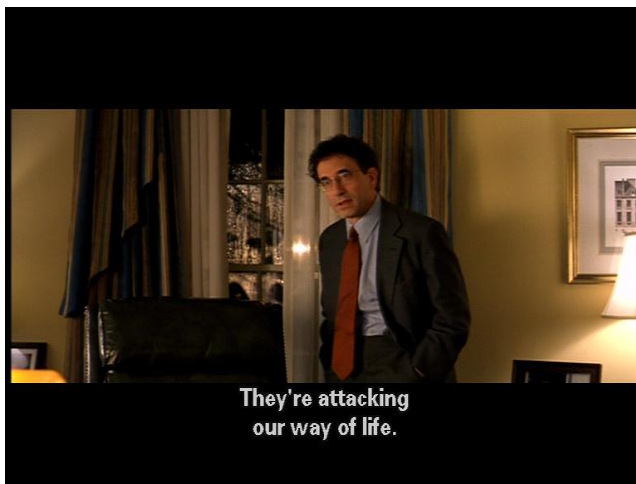


Figure72: Muslims as a threat



Figure73: political appropriation of terror

Furthermore, figure 39 illustrates well the latent American fears of the Muslims. The Muslims not simply target symbols of the American hegemony, but their ultimate goal is the destruction of the American values. Sherrow O. Pindler analyses the American general apprehension of Islam and the Muslims:

*Islam has fueled the idea that Christianity in America is fundamentally undermined; its hegemonic position is somewhat challenged by Muslims. Accordingly, like Black and Mexican communities where social control is evident, policing Muslim communities has become quite marked.*⁸⁵

Put this way, the Muslims, through acts of terror, challenge the American Manifest Destiny. Undermining Christianity, upon which the American values, and mythological identity are based, is synonymous with a challenge to America's universal mission. As such, the success of America's Manifest Destiny depends on the American ability to fight Muslim terrorism and influence.

Figure 40 translates rather the utility of the Muslim terrorism in defining the American general orientation (presidential election). The utility of the Muslim terrorism is quite similar to the usefulness of the Holocaust. Both represent an opportunity to project the American

⁸⁵ Sherrow, O. Pindler. *The Politics of Race in the United States: Americanization, De-Americanization, and Racialized Ethnic Groups*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, P.101

values onto the world. The Jews are useful to mirror what America is fighting for, whereas the Muslims represent what America is fighting against.

The second reaction to terrorism is represented through Anthony Hubbard. He is portrayed through his long struggle against both the terrorists, and General Devereaux's infringement of the constitution. Throughout the movie, he represents the American values. His protective attitude, in the defense of the American Constitution, credits him with the aura of an American patriot. Hubbard represents the American urgent need to reconcile the American people with their fundamental values.



Figure74: American values

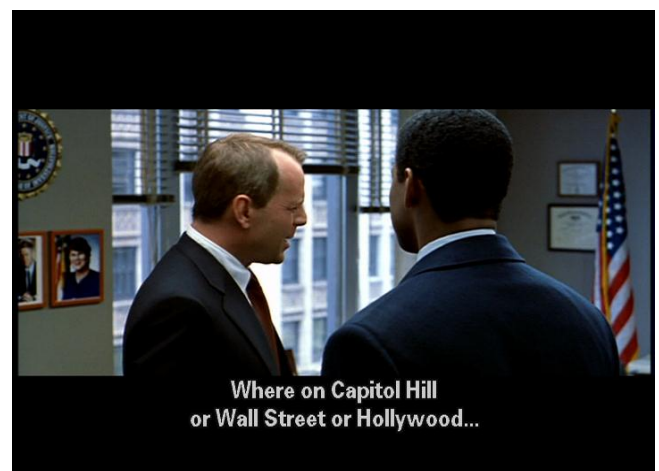


Figure75: American patriotism

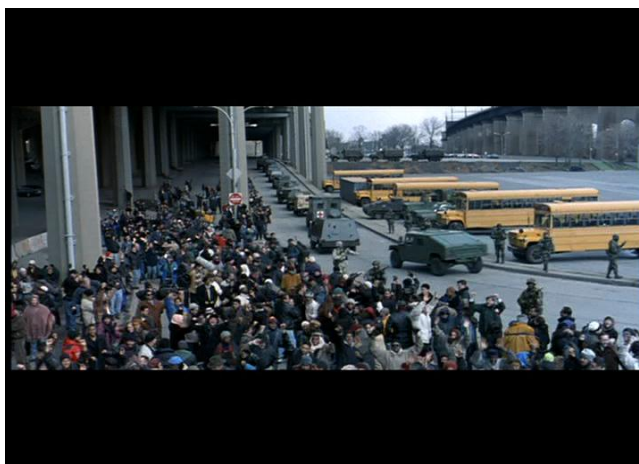


Figure76: The triumph of American values

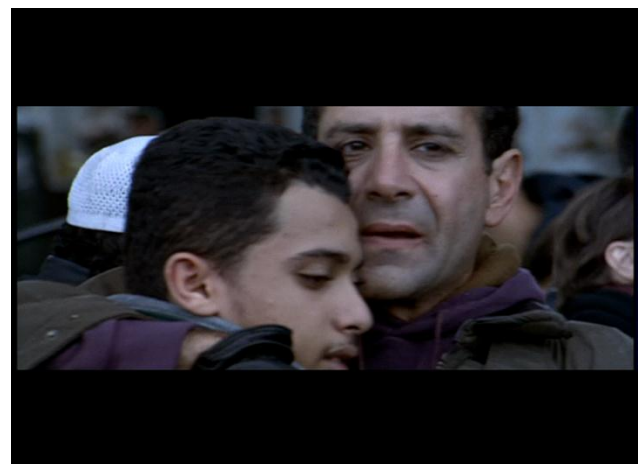


Figure77: Reconciliation

The end of the movie is important. Zwick succeeds in putting to the fore the role of the American values in consolidating America's national cohesion. Figure 43& 44 illustrate the triumph of the American values in freeing the Arab-Muslim Americans. According to Hubbard, victory over terror depends on America's ability to implement, and protect the American way of life (freedom, justice, and democracy).

Conclusion:

Hollywood movie industry plays an important role in the Americanization of terror. Representation of the American experience of Muslim 'terrorism' lies at the heart of Edward Zwick's *The Siege*. The Americanization of terror represents a political and ideological will to elucidate America's experience of terrorism through the demonization of the Muslims. The demonization revolves around America's apprehension of Muslims' connection to death, and explores the possibility of their Americanization (loyalty to America as a betrayal of their values).

In *The Siege*, terror calls on America's moral, political, and ideological responsibility towards the protection of the American people and its fundamental values (constitution). It also puts forward America's commitment against global major issue such as terrorism. Zwick's movie succeeds in enhancing the American public awareness around the danger of Muslim terrorism, and the necessity of America's global war on terror (involvement in the Middle East).

The movie overall stress on death and loyalty helps the American public self-identification both as a different cultural entity and victims of Muslim terrorism. If the victimization of the Jews helps forge the American collective consciousness around the necessity of the Jewish salvation (Israel), the demonization of the Muslims helps rather sustaining America's hegemony over the Arab-Muslim world.

Moreover, *The Siege* provides significant information concerning the American strategic orientations in the light of the 1990s. In a way, the Holocaust, terror provides America the opportunity to project its values onto the world, and a viable justification of its universal mission as highlighted in its Manifest Destiny. Handling terror represents a continuation of America's 'war against evil'. The Americanization of terror translates America's need to substitute the Muslims as 'demon others' for the Soviets. The movie considers the appropriation of Muslim terror as America's present challenge.

Furthermore, *The Siege* considers the American attitude towards Muslim terrorism. According to Zwick, the victory over terrorism depends on the American ability to protect, asserts, defend and implement the American values at home. Put this way, the movie explores the necessity of the American reconciliation with their values. The reconciliation calls on the American consciousness around America's universal mission to promote justice, freedom, democracy and peace.

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General conclusion

Conclusion:

Throughout this dissertation, I have argued that Hollywood representation of the Jews and Muslims, respectively in *Schindler's List* (1993) and *The Siege* (1998), is strongly linked to historical, cultural, economic, political and ideological considerations. My aim has been to show the importance of the visualization of the Holocaust and terror in the representation of the Jews and Muslims as religious groups.

Through the visualization of the Holocaust, Spielberg's *Schindler's List* succeeds in awakening the American public and political interest in the issue of memory, and the necessity to recollect the Jewish experience of Nazi barbarity (terror). As for terror, Zwick's *The Siege* considers the American experience and awareness of Muslim 'terrorism' as a direct threat both to America's way of life, and its hegemonic position in the global political environment. I have shown the ideological utility of both the Holocaust and terror in the ongoing process of Americanization of world history.

In many ways both movies explore the American and Jewish experience of terror. The two experiences provide America the opportunity to project its fundamental values onto the world. In *Schindler's List*, the Jewish stereotypical figures lie at the heart of the representation of the Jewish experience of death and survival. The film helps to enhance the American apprehension of the Jews as America's 'victimized others'. The Americanization of the Holocaust implies the American moral, political and ideological responsibility towards the Jewish salvation. Through Hollywood democratization of the event, the victimization of the Jews finds its perfect expression in the American enduring support of Israel as a Jewish homeland. Israel stands as the consecration of the American Manifest Destiny for it is a projection of America's fundamental values in the midst of a cultural, historical and ideological "hostile" Arab-Muslim world.

The Siege epitomizes Hollywood representation of the Muslims as terrorists. The film stresses Muslim presumable eagerness to die, hit, destroy and kill innocent American citizens. Hollywood employs its hegemonic position to 'demonize' the Muslims. The demonization has ideological implications. Its purpose to get the support of public opinion for government in its fight against terrorism. Terrorist threat helps consolidate the American national cohesion around the necessity of U.S involvement in the Middle East. The involvement mirrors America's ideal view of itself as defender, promoter of freedom, democracy and peace. The criminalization of the Muslims, thus, helps sustain America's hegemony over the Arab-Muslim world.

My research has shown that where the Americanization of the Holocaust aims at integrating the Jews as America's 'victimized others', it also assimilate the Muslims as its 'demon others' that is victimizers. The role of Hollywood is preponderant. Its visual representation of the Holocaust and terror sustains America's hegemonic position in the global cultural and media environment. It contributes to standardize the American way of life, and values. It thus, translates the American cultural and mythological view of the world. The view reflects key elements of the American character and identity for Hollywood is concerned with interpreting issues like history, and violence from an American point of view.

Furthermore, the Americanization of the Holocaust and terror paves the way for the ongoing American involvement in the Middle East and elsewhere. Both movies consider the American moral, political and historical responsibility towards America's fundamental principles. Therefore, Americanization is a truthful witness of the American need for a founding and enduring common consciousness (myth). It translates a successful attempt to credit the American values and character with a universal mission which the Holocaust and terror come to epitomize.

I have also argued that the Americanization of the Holocaust and terror represents the core of the American comprehension, and apprehension of historical, cultural, political, and social realities. America's Manifest Destiny lies at the heart of the American collective consciousness and existence as an enduring cultural and political entity with a peculiar responsibility and historical mission. With Americanization, America succeeds its historical transition from a mere traditional, theoretical and even hypothetical powerful nation to a more modern, practical, technological, imperial and hegemonic superpower.

I posit that Americanization considers America's appropriation of the present as its own, and the ability to create a good future. It aims at integrating the world into the American values as part of its universal mission to lead the world to salvation. The 1990s translates America's quest for universal challenges which would provide her the opportunity to assert its supremacy, and fulfill its Manifest Destiny. My research has shown that both movies manage to associate the Nazi barbarity, and Muslim 'terrorism' with evil and defeat. The association is intended to assert the goodness of the American values, and the justness of its cause.

Therefore, Americanization foregrounds America (people, nation, and identity) as an omnipresent possibility. America's existence depends on its ability to defend, promote its fundamental value. Hollywood representation of Jews and Muslims symbolizes America's will to project/expand its identity and character as a paradigm of universality. The American imperialism is largely based on America's appropriation and belief in universality.

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