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**HISTORIOGRAPHY OF BLOCKBUSTER  
HISTORICAL FILM**

**Master's Thesis**

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## ÖZET

### TARİHİ GİŞE FİMLERİNİN TARİH YAZIMI

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Tezin amacı, tarihsel gişe filmlerinin (blockbuster) tarih yazımı araçlarından biri olarak işlevini araştırmaktır.. Bu amaç doğrultusunda film bir tarih yazma aracı olarak değerlendirilebilmek için öncelikle genel anlamda tarih yazımı olgusuna değinir. Çalışmada tarih yazımı, öyküsel özellikleri kullanarak tarihsel gerçekliklerden inşa edilen bir yapı olarak tanımlanır.

Öyküsel filmle üretilen tarih yazımına ve onun ortaya çıkardığı tarihsel hissiyata bir adım daha yaklaşmak amacıyla, çalışma öyküsel filmin özellikleri ile devam eder. Tezin iddiasına göre, tarih yazımında farklılıklar yöntemsel ve araçsal olarak ortaya çıkmaz, bir hissiyat ve deneyim yaratma ya da yaratmama (diegetic / non-diegetic) anında şekillenir. Hissiyata dayalı bir tarihsel deneyimin ortaya çıkma ihtimali tarih yazımı pratiklerini değerlendirmede kilit bir işleve sahiptir.

Öyküsel sinemanın yaptığı tarih yazımı, öykülediği tarihsel olaya bakış açısını ortaya çıkardığı tarihsel hissiyat nedeniyle izleyiciye geçirmiş olur. Öyküsel tarihi filmin sunduğu ve içine alarak izleyiciye yerleştirdiği bakış açısı filmin yarattığı deneyim hissi nedeniyle, konu olan tarihsel olayın anlamlandırılma sürecinde etkin rol oynar.

Çalışma alanında ilerlemeye devam etmek adına, tez blockbuster sendromu üzerine eğilirken, bu sendromun toplumsal eğilimlerle kurduğu etkileşime odaklanır. “Best Seller” romanlar ve “blockbuster” filmler kar odaklı olarak şekillenen ana akım popüler kültür ürünleri olarak görülebilir. Bu kar odaklı üretim biçimine sahip olan ürünler toplumun genel eğilimleri, yaraları ve beklentileri ile etkileşim içinde olduğu ve hatta kendi anlatıları içinde o noktalara göstermelik çözümler ürettiği sürece izlenilirliğini yükseltecektir. Bu ilişki üzerinden, ana akım

popüler kùltür ürünlerinin anlatıları içinde hakim söylem etrafında şekillenen temel toplumsal eğilimleri barındırdığı kabul edilebilir. Bu ihtimal bir blockbuster tarihi film üzerinden ve o filmin bir tarih yazma aracı olarak işlevi bağlamında tekrar düşünöldüğünde, popüler kùltür ürünü olan tarihsel filmin, tarihi o günün toplumsal eğilimleri dolayısıyla temsil ettiğı öngörülebilir. Bir başka deyişle tarih yazımının bir aracı olarak kabul edilen filmin “blockbuster” olarak üretilen türleri, konu edindiğı tarihsel olayı üretildiğı dönemin temel toplumsal eğilimlerini içinde barındıracak türden bir perspektifle temsil ederler. Tarihsel temsillerin günün temel eğilimleri üzerinden şekillenmesi, öyküsel filmin yaratacağı tarihsel deneyim hissiyatı nedeniyle geçmişin şimdiki zamanın hakim söylemleri üzerinden yeniden üretilmesine neden olur.

Tez çalışmasında detaylandırılarak tespit etme yolunda ilerlenen etkileşimli bu etkileşimli durum, 11 Eylül dönemine dair söylemleriyle G. W. Bush ve seçim kampanyası sürecindeki söylemleriyle Barack Obama dönemlerinde gösterime girmiş Hollywood ürünü blockbuster II. Dünya Savaşı filmlerindeki tarihsel temsilleri karşılaştırır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Tarih Yazımı, blockbuster film, filmsel tarih temsilleri

## ABSTRACT

### HISTORIOGRAPHY OF BLOCKBUSTER HISTORICAL FILM

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This thesis is dedicated to understand the historiographical performance of the historical blockbuster film. In the effort to explore the historiography of historical blockbuster films, the study opens with the notion of historiography in general to reflect on the filmic historiography practice afterwards. Through the study the historiography is defined as a constructed narrative material that houses historical facts far from an inborn entity.

In order to progress on the filmic representation of history, the study focuses on diegetic historiography that generates a sense of historical experience. To differentiate the modes of historiographical practice, the study states that the diversity is not bases on the filmic and written modes, but it lies in the diegetic and non-diegetic practices of historiography. The generation of sensual experience, which diegetic practices perform, is the focal point from which to make this separation.

The historiography of the historical diegetic film transmits its perspective of the historical event it represents to the audience through its sensational experience. The sensational experience generated by the diegetic film engenders the comprehension of the historical event towards the framing of the representation practiced in film.

In order to progress further on the field of the study, the thesis focuses on the historiographical performance of Hollywood blockbuster films to discuss the relationship between the formation of blockbuster historical films and the dominant discourses of the society.

The popular mainstream practices of historiography like bestselling historical novels or blockbuster historical films are profit oriented. This profit-oriented characteristic of popular mass-media products gains significance for this study through the relationship it poses with the

dominant social tendencies. The popular mainstream practices of historiography are produced to be consumed on a massive scale. In the case of blockbuster films, the blockbuster industry is naturally designed to sell a lot of tickets. Through the rules of supply-and-demand management, the popular mainstream practices of historiography need to be pertinent to the sensations of society. In other words, they need to relate to the current tendencies within a society.

The ideology of those in political power in a community effects the value systems and social tendencies of the society to a large extent. The blockbuster films while tracking the current tendencies of the society render the ideologies of those in political power within their plots and narration.

In the case of a blockbuster film performing historical representation, the main current tendencies of society would inevitably be involved in the historiography. Based on this idea, the thesis argues that the historiography of blockbuster historical films reflected the current ideas of the dominant discourse in a society. And moreover, through the sensed experience that was engendered by the transmission of the perspective the film posed for the historical event, the dominant discourses of the society were transmitted back to the audience.

Grounding on these ideas the study intends to understand the reproduction of historiography through the historical representations of blockbuster films according to the shifting tendencies in a society.

With that intention I studied the shifting tendencies of American society that revolved around the discourses of George W. Bush in the period of his presidency and Barack Obama in his presidential campaign through the historical representations of the blockbuster World War II films produced in those two periods.

**Key words:** Historiography, diegetic film, blockbuster film, filmic representation of history

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Historical films have always fascinated me with the invitation they send for a trip to the past. They offer a kind of witnessing of the historical event they narrate through the sensational experience of the past. Being almost able to sense the past through the visual excitement that arises on layers of lace and all the other elements that are not commonly in use in the present are significant part of my fascination. As a constant viewer of historical films, from time-to-time I noticed myself interpreting historical events by the references based on my visual and sensual memory of the historical films.

Focusing on this peculiar observation, I discovered that an important portion of my historical consciousness was housing the sensual cognition of the historical films I had watched. Considering my own experience as an elementary cinephile on historical films, I started to develop the idea that historical films were somehow performing as a tool of historiography. And if so, how was the audio-visual and diegetic film medium practicing historiography? What were the parallel, and also different, aspects of the filmic and written practices of historiography? What was the distinguishing role of the notion filmic experience on the historiographical performance of an historical film? And of course, to start with, what was historiography? That was the seed for my intellectual process on the historiographical performance of historical films.

The diegetic film that had a world design of its own and progresses by its own gravitational rules was conducting a sensual experience. In the case of diegetic historical films, the sensational experience would be about the historical event that is narrated in the film. Within the diegetic historical films, I attribute blockbuster historical films great importance for their extensive reach. Being widespread is one of their natural characteristics as they reached huge populations. To be a blockbuster historical film meant they influenced historical conscious in a broad sense.

Another natural characteristic of the blockbuster film lay in the intimate relationship it presented with the social tendencies of a society through its enacting of the dominant



discourses of the ones in the power to lead in a society. The idea that established the relationship between the dominant discourses in the society and the contexts of a blockbuster film became known to me in Kaya Özkaracalar's MA class on Science Fiction films in 2009. In the discussion session after the screenings of *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951) and the remake of the film in 2008, Özkaracalar emphasized the differences of the two versions. He has reasoned the variances with the differing discourses of Barack Obama during his election campaign from the broad dominant discourses of 1951 in American society. Installing the connection between the dominant discourses and blockbuster films in the field of the historical blockbuster films, the issue of historiography the blockbuster films perform would be relative to the dominant discourses in a society. But how would a blockbuster film be interrelated with the political power in a society? What was the essence of this association between the dominant discourses in a society and blockbuster films? What would be the consequences of this association once the blockbuster films performed historical representations? These issues broadly constitute the framework of my study. To investigate these issues and their interrelations, I will start working primarily on the notion of historiography to reach a broad understanding in order to reflect on the historiographical performance of diegetic film.

The second chapter called "Historiography as a Construct That Houses Historical Facts" defines historiography as a constructed material far from an inborn entity. To understand the conception of historiography I will relate the notions of fact, truth and historical fact within the dynamic social tendencies which history interprets. The main influences of this chapter will fundamentally be derived from the ideas of E. H. Carr and Eric Hobsbawn on the constructed nature of historiography that is reflexive to the current tendencies of the society. To determine and associate the notions of fact, truth and knowledge I will enlist the ideas of Nelson Goodman's interpretation on E. H. Carr's conception of historical fact.

E. H. Carr defines narration as an essential tool for historiographical practice, hence I will endeavor to understand the characteristics of narration based on the ideas of Nick Lacey. To understand the involvement and function of narrative in the practice of historiography Fatmagül Berktaş's and Ernst Breisach's assertions will guide me along with those of E. H. Carr.

Towards the assertions of the Gulbenkian Commission's report that the historiographer is a vibrant and reflexive individual who exists in society becomes another significant point to work on historiography. The historiographer practices historiography among the current social, economic and political tendencies in a society. The historiography of the same historical incident performed at the same time may differ due to the position or the point of view of the historiographer. The perception and hence, the expression of the historiographer comprises the positioning by means of an assenting or dissenting standpoint s/he establishes with the dominant current tendencies in a society. To understand and designate the significance of the positioning of the historiographer as a part of society, Fatmagül Berktaş's, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's, Ranajit Guha's and Zeynep Tül Akbal Süalp's interpretations will guide me.

Historiography as an expression of an historical event that is performed in the present inevitably houses present conditions in its constitution. In Carr's and Hobsbawm's consideration, historiography of the same historical event may shift due to the dynamism historiography acquires in its texture which is susceptible to current social tendencies. As I mentioned above, the social positioning of the historiographer that is bound to the social tendencies of her/his time would be an effective method in determining the historiographical product. Another notion that effects historiographical practice would be the kind of historiography performed. In my study on the historiographical performance of blockbuster historical films, I intend to work on the representative diegetic historiography that generates a sense of historical experience. In the effort to separate and reflect on the historiographical performance of diegetic historical film, I will gather the practices of historiography under the titles of official (dominant) historiography, independent historiography and popular historiography. Placing the historiographical performance of diegetic film in the popular practices of historiography, I will try to interpret the relation of these three kinds of practices with the dynamic tendencies of a society. By doing so, I will endeavor to bring the concept of historiography as close to the field of fiction as possible by emphasizing its constructed nature to draw the distinction between the space of historiography and of diegetic historical representation that brings along the sense of historical experience.

In the third chapter I will concentrate the discussion on representative diegetic film as a tool of historiography. In the effort to study the historiographical performance of diegetic film that operates on the historical consciousness of the spectator, I will primarily work on the generation of the sense of experience diegetic films perform by following the perspective of “Apparatus Theory”. Through the arguments of Apparatus Theory and the Neo-Formalist approach of Thompson and Bordwell, I will endeavor to express the sense of experience diegetic film presents over its narration.

To understand the effects of the sensed experience that diegetic films perform historical representation, I will ground on the perspective of Vivian Sobchack as she defines the situation by designating that history happens. Towards my positioning that highlights the transmission of sensual experience by diegetic historical films, I will discuss the arguments of Robert Rosenstone where he determines the film medium a significantly convenient tool to perform historical representation.

In order to progress on the field of my study, I will focus on the historiographical performance of the Hollywood blockbuster film to discuss the relationship between the formation of blockbuster historical films and the dominant discourses of the society. To determine the nature of this dynamic relationship I will enlist Douglas Kellner’s interpretation of the Frankfurt School’s notion of culture industries.

The fourth chapter is dedicated to analyzing the nature of the synchronous shift in the social tendencies of a society and historical representations in blockbuster films. In other words, the study focuses on the reproduction of historiography through the historical representations the blockbuster films perform according to the shifting tendencies in a society.

I argue that the historiography of blockbuster historical films reflect the ideas of the dominant discourse in a society. Once the dominant discourse becomes different in a society, the historical representation of the same incident shifts in blockbuster historical films accordingly. In an effort to present the bond between the shift in the dominant discourse and the synchronized altering of historical representation in historical blockbuster

films, I will analyze blockbuster World War II films, which were produced in two different dominancy periods.

The shifting tendencies of American society that evolved around the discourses of George W. Bush in the period of his presidency and Barack Obama in his presidential campaign will be studied through the historical representations of the blockbuster World War II films produced in those periods. I will focus the study on the representation of evil in human nature in blockbuster World War II films of these periods based on the observation I have made on the shift within the discourse in American society for that concept. The discourses of George W. Bush after 9/11 and the discourses of the presidential campaign of Obama (the so-called 'Obama Project') and the concept of evil in human nature will constitute the sources that will be tracked for this study on the blockbuster World War II films of these periods.

I placed the study on the representation of evil in human nature in blockbuster World War II films instead of the films that include representations of Afghanistan and Iraq during the United States' attack after 9/11. The reason for this choice is based on the necessary escapist character the blockbuster demands. The blockbuster film establishes the diegesis by means of designing a different environment in terms of space and time to maintain the escapist element for the audience. I choose to work on blockbuster World War II films to detect the shift in the discourse of evil in human nature because World War II is by far one of the important time periods that generated the conception. It can be said of this period; that humanity experienced the definition of evil through the Nazi party, its leader Adolf Hitler, the progress of the Holocaust and the operations of World War II. It was the time said to approach the limits of humanity.

To understand and reflect on the bond between the concept of evil in Hollywood films and the period of World War II, I will call upon Robert Sklar's assertions on the subject. For Sklar, filmmaking practices were also effected by the devastating incident of genocide along with the huge impact it had on Europe and North America, both during the process and afterwards. In Sklar's interpretation, throughout the period of World War II including the time where the United States was discussing whether to join the war, Hollywood

constructed the stereotypical representations of the rightful use of war to defend freedom as well as the creation of the hero, and the concept of evil. Those stereotypical representations were continually reproduced and afterwards. More specifically, representations of the hero and evil, which were produced by Hollywood in the war films during World War II are utilized over again in every period that American society needed a definition for the enemy. Thereafter, the films that establish their narration in the period of World War II constitute the direct definition of evil through the representation of Hitler and German society during the war. Hence, the focus I attribute to World War II films is based on the acknowledgement of the sub- genre for the direct representation of the evil in human nature.

The selection of the blockbuster World War II films of those two periods of dominancy to be analyzed in the framework of this study will be based on the number of screening copies. As one of the solid characteristics of the blockbuster syndrome, I attribute attention to the quantity of screening copies to distinguish the film as a blockbuster. The films to be analyzed in this thesis will be the World War II films produced during the specified periods, which were released with more than 2000 copies on the opening weekend. Towards these specifications, the blockbuster World War II films of the period of G. W. Bush will be *Pearl Harbor* (2001) and *Hart's War* (2002) and the blockbuster World War II film of period of Barack Obama will be *Valkyrie* (2008).

## **2. HISTORIOGRAPHY AS A CONSTRUCT THAT HOUSES HISTORICAL FACTS**

The aim of the first chapter is to comprehend the characteristics of historiography as a term that constitutes its existence from the intersecting fields of narration and historical factuality. This explanation of historiography as a practice that establishes historical facts with the intention to form fluent expressions of historical events, locates the narrative constitution to a spot close to the field of fiction. In the parts of the first chapter, I will endeavor to define the texture of historiography as a constructed material far from an inborn solid entity. Historiography as a structural narrative form is produced from the current social, economical and political tendencies in a society. Historiography as an expression of an historical event that takes place in the present inevitably houses present conditions within its constitution. Historiography of the same historical event may shift due to the dynamism historiography accesses through its composition that is susceptible to current social tendencies. A shift in current social tendencies would not be the only agent to transform historiography. The historiography of the same historical incident enacted at the same time may differ due to the positioning and point of view of the historiographer. The perception and hence, the expression the historiographer gives an event changes by the positioning in means of either a coherent or dissident point of view s/he establishes with the dominant current tendencies within the society. By highlighting the versatile, dynamic notions of historiography that is formed within the conditions of narration, I intend to locate historiography close to the field of fiction. The designation of historiography to the field of fiction may engender utilization of an identical assessment towards any kind of historical representation. However, historiography that is performed in a representative and diegetic form is not qualified to be appraised in the same field with the non-representative non-diegetic forms of historiography. Even though its constructed nature conveys the practice of historiography to the realms of fiction, the diegetic and representative practices of historiography diversifies itself through the sensation of historical experience they conduct. The historical narrations that are diegetic and representative expose the sense of historical experience through various techniques like the use of closural narrative structures or the maintenance of identification.

The practice of historiography bases the selection and establishment of historical facts in narration, hence the debates on solid historical accuracy or credibility would be incoherent considering the nature of historiography. From this perspective, when focused on the issue of historical accuracy and credibility, the historical representation of diegetic narration stays on an equal level with the non-diegetic practices of historiography. The difference of the diegetic and non-diegetic practices would not surface on the issue of credibility, but does so on the sense of historical experience when diegetic representations are bound to memory. The practices of representative and diegetic mainstream historical films and novels may set examples for historiography that conduct a sense of historical experience. In my study regarding the transformative effects of social tendencies on diegetic historical representation performed by Hollywood blockbuster films, I intend to work on representative diegetic historiography that generates a sense of historical experience. Therefore, I will endeavor to bring the concept of historiography closer to the field of fiction as much as possible by emphasizing its constructed nature so as to draw a distinction between the space of historiography and diegetic historical representation that brings along with it the sensation of historical experience.

## **2.1 A BRIEF HISTORICAL SURVEY OF HISTORIOGRAPHY**

The search for a methodology of maintaining a readily accessible and comprehensible historical knowledge has a respectable history itself. According to Fatmagül Berktaş (2010, p.15) in *The Gender of History* (Tarihin Cinsiyeti) because of the clashes between literature and document-based driven approaches the historiography of the Sixteenth Century was the significant era for close source analyses. This study defined itself through the accurate work on the records of the past and aimed to find and preserve any possible historical data. In Berktaş's consideration of this approach, the document-based effort stimulated the rise of many other critical studies like diplomacy, numismatics and archeology (2010, p.15). The orientation of historiography predictably shifted from document-based studies once again in the Eighteenth Century towards one that put forward literary properties. As Berktaş states, this tendency rose under the influence of the Enlightenment was trying hard to part from the previous political emphasis on historiography and intended to embrace all layers of society. Specialists such as Montesquieu, David Hume, Condorcet, and Voltaire were

leading this tendency in historical writing and as Berktaý points out, they were determined not to concentrate on historical recordings, but in giving primacy to literary properties. The Nineteenth Century was another landmark for historiography as it was for all studies of various disciplines. As Berktaý agrees, the Nineteenth Century was accepted as the era that historiography became an independent academic discipline that acquired its own critical methodology and approach under the influence of leading specialist Leopold von Ranke (2010, p.15). According to Berktaý, Ranke emphasized the impartial and objective properties of the historiographer in determining the close study of historical sources as the rule of historiography. The difference of Ranke's approach from the understanding of historiography in the Sixteenth Century was to consider the historiographer's existence and the generation of her/his point of view through the time and place s/he belonged. The understanding of the historiographer as a product of her/his time and place and more specifically, as a part of her/his society, acknowledges the subjective interpretations that occur within a historiographer's work. The methodological direction that arose through the acceptance of the historiographer's subjective approach placed historiography near the border of modernist scientific disciplines departing from the intuitive, artistic narrative of classic historicism (2010, p.16). The challenging of the understanding of historiography through the subjectivity of the historiographer continued with the interrogation of the historiographer's subjects and the layers of society that the analysis was included. According to Volkan Aytar (2001 p.5), the *Annales* tradition, the *History from Below* approach, the *History of Everyday Life* theories and the *Women's History* movement all challenged the event-centered, individualist and generic approach of the Rankeian model. As Aytar emphasizes, despite their different methodologies and the intentions of their historiographical approaches, they made great contributions to the shift of comprehension of society as a dynamic formation rather than a stable entity (2001 p.5). As Berktaý points out, the historiography of the Twentieth Century practiced in European and American universities was a dependable and substantial profession that was vivid and rich with constant challenges. However, the Twentieth Century was also the era that the hopes of the Enlightenment collapsed under the strong influence of World War II. It was the mood for disappointment – time for reassessment, and even the most durable pillars of truth were under interrogation. Predictably, the optimistic belief in historiography's medium-specific



property of exposing the truth under the correct methodology was also being challenged. The dependability of historical data and the validity of historic texts from ancestral annalists stood on one side of the question and the possibility of objectivity and impartiality of the historiographer on the other. The historiographer was considered an interpreter and historiography was a narration. The belief in the scientific knowledge that the historiography produced was collapsing, therefore it could not have dominance over other types of narration. According to Berktaf (2010, p.17), the postmodernist approach to historiography was in defining it as a branch of literature that is based on historical data. Historiographers defended their position against postmodernist criticism by standing by their methodological interpretations while highlighting their responsibility for giving voice to the past.

## **2.2 THE FACT**

Is fact possible? Is there or has there ever been a phenomenon that remained stable under every condition and in the exact same position? Has there ever been a thought or a solid object that kept its stability when approached from various angles through different views? Certainly, it is not possible. The truth about an incident depends upon the approach by which it is examined. Therefore, the truth about an incident is bound to the common value system of the day. The influential position of the common value system of the day in the determination of the truth of that same day is inevitable. Once the approach of the common value system transforms, the “truth” about that incident would then certainly change accordingly. I will approach the notions of fact and truth as relevant but separate meanings. I take fact as the end product, the overt result of the incident. Let us suppose a collapsed empire. The collapsed position of that empire is a fact it no longer exists. The truth is the zeitgeist effect that goes above and beyond fact. The truth arises from the combination of the fact and the construct built around the fact according to the perceived forms of the society. The truth is the conveyor of the fact so it can be understood. In this sense the fact is stable, but the truth that encloses it is changeable. Once the understanding of the society evolve, the tendencies that affect understanding evolve and the formation of the items that compose the truth evolves accordingly in order to maintain meaning.

Then what is the criteria that characterizes the variable position of the truth as “solid truth”? In other words, which angle of truth is selected and then exists as history and why? Maybe it has something to do with the power hypocenters of the time, the point of view of the ones who rules. In *Ways of World Making*, Nelson Goodman (2001) defines the truth as a docile and obedient servant rather than a solemn master. In his effort to place the works of art on the same level as science as a mode of discovery, he values artwork's ability to create alternative grounds of truth. Critiquing the position of the scientist who would search for the truth but the only truth, Goodman explains the search as an exercise of tailoring up to the perspective. According to him, the scientist who believes in the “only truth”, searches after his foresight and discovers the so-called “only truth” accordingly. To explain the multiple characteristics of truth, Goodman bases his thoughts on the idea that the differing practices of everyday life constitute various points of views. Conceptualizing habit as a conclusion of inveteracy of values that vary from perspective to perspective, Goodman draws a straight line from the habit and foresight in the act of searching for the truth. The predestined progress of the search would conclude on the very point as was intended. Interrogating the concept of the real in the phrase of 'the real world' he parses the reality of “world” and the realism depicted in a picture as a matter of perceptual habit (2001, pp. 18-21).

The designation of fact depends on the approach. The height of the viewing stand, the angle of approach, even the capacity of sight that Goodman (2001) conceptualizes under the notion of habit determines the registration of the truth. In order to exemplify the dependent characteristics of the truth to the perspective from which it is taken, he applies wordplay such as “Did the sun set a while ago or did the earth rise?” (Goodman 2001, p. 93) or “Does the sun go around the earth or the earth go around the sun.” (Goodman 2001, p. 93). Just like the playful case of the phrase questioning which comes first the chicken or the egg, the answer is simple. It depends. But the challenge in handling the dependent characteristics of the truth arises in the phase of expression. Even though both expressions in the case of the sun and earth refer to same meaning and are completely transitive of each other, Goodman delves into the question of expressive manipulations asserting, “As meanings vanish in favor of certain relationship among terms, so facts vanish in favor of certain relationship among versions” (Goodman 2001, p. 93).

Now I would like to start exploring Edward Hallett Carr's famous question (which is also the title of his groundbreaking) *What is History?* Is there any holly board that all the events and happenings take place on simultaneously? Or is it something written? What is history? Is it a creature (being/entity) or a creation (a narration)?

The 'bound variable' characteristic of fact reveals its dubious nature, but still I do not handle the whole sense of fact through the conception of relativity. The only solid existence of fact may lie at the result. A dead king is a dead king. But the relative making of meaning differs in the narration of how he died, why and if need be, by whose hand.

In his pioneer work *What is History?* Edward Hallett Carr (1990) makes a separation between the facts about the past and historical facts. He stresses the disappearance of the difference between the historical facts and the facts of the past, just because they both happened in the past (Carr 1990, p 13). Historical fact is a piece of solid information. It is evidence, like a sealed letter with ambassador's handwriting, or the signed document of a pact. But a piece of historical fact could only be dependable in the utopia of the single existence of its own. In order to make sense of that piece of information, it should be wrapped in a narration. Therefore, that piece of historical fact needs to be padded here and there with the facts of the past. The fact of the past distinguishes itself from historical facts in the concept of validity.

In the article *Truth and Fact Reconsidered* (1977), which furthers the endeavors of his previous book *Introduction to Philosophy of History*, W. H. Walsh takes a position similar to E. H. Carr. For him the past is inconvenient for observation because of the conductive manner historical evidence exhibits through the act of interpretation. Taking one step further than Carr, Walsh claims that historical evidence, the historical fact Carr designates, can't be valued as an "unvarnished transcript of past reality" for it is significant only with the contribution of the narration. Walsh (1997, p. 55) defines 'the remains' as flexible, unfinished and controversial. In other words, "the remains" of historical evidence are a convenient way of understanding through interpretation.

The facts about the past belong to the certain period of time in which they have been produced. They make sense and they are valid only for that period. They have a life span

that depends on the circumstances that created them. Once those circumstances disappear, the facts of the past are no longer viable. Then, historical facts are redressed through the acquisition of myths that arise from current tendencies of society in order to maintain the meaning that was there before. The role of the facts about the past shift places with the myths in the act of historiography once the patterns of understanding of society changes. The characteristics of the narration are formed according to the valid circumstances of the time in order to be in accord with the understanding of the society of that time.

In historiography, the conclusion is the actuator for the narration of history. The intention therefore determines the conclusion. The first step is the designation of the conclusion and then the flow of events is navigated accordingly. In *What is History*, E. H. Carr (1990, p. 11) determines the selection and organization of the facts as the most important operational methods of influencing view. Historical facts are investigated and selected according to the intention and padded with the facts of the past in order to form a comprehensible narration. Carr (1990, p.123) emphasizes the different levels of importance that are applied through commentary. “The facts of history cannot be purely objective, since they become facts of history only in the virtue of the significance attached to them by the historian” (1990, p. 120). “The facts speak only when the historian calls on them: it is he who decides to which facts to give the floor, and in what order or content” (Carr 1990, p. 11). Carr (1990, p. 103) argues that in the process of constructing a historical narration, the installation of historical facts and the other facts of history (facts he denominates as un-historical) are due to intention. A fact of history that is only valid for the time of the event, as Carr explains, can be advanced to the position of an historical fact by the importance devoted to it by the historian (1990, p. 103). Comparing history to “an enormous jigsaw puzzle with a lot of missing parts,” Carr (1990, pp. 12-13) counters the belief of the existence of an objective and autonomous historical fact free from the interpretation of the historian. “The facts are available to the historian in documents, inscriptions and so on, like fish on the fishmonger’s slab. The historian collects them, takes them home, and cooks and serves them in whatever style appeals to him” (Carr 1990, p .9).

The studies that follow the tradition of the Annales School towards the methodology of historiography, direct their focus on the social positioning of the historiographer to explain

the selection based characteristic of historiography. The sensation and perception of an historical event forms through the viewpoint of the historiographer. The viewpoint of the historiographer is constituted on the social positioning of the historiographer. The field that the historiographer directs her/his focus determines the selection of historical facts to be established in the historical narration. The effect of the social positioning of the historiographer on the process of historiography is widely debated in the works of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Ranajit Guha. The act of selecting historical facts and establishing them in narration would therefore differ through the social positioning of the historiographer.

### **2.3 NARRATION IN HISTORIOGRAPHY**

Why do the historiographers narrate when they are writing historiographical texts? Why can they not just transport the whole of historical information as it was found, collected etc? Because it is simply not possible to do so. Not only can historiographers not do so, but no one can, either in verbal or in written form, express information, an idea, or anything for that matter without narrating it. Human beings narrate while they think, talk and write. Information or an idea as an abstract form cannot exist as pure substance and cannot be transferred to the minds of others by telepathy in the way it is. We communicate by expressing the sentiment of an idea with others. The expression of the sentiment depends on the selection and placement of the words and of course, on the utterance. The process of selecting, ordering and accentuating the words in an order to transfer the meaning is narration.

Nick Lacey in his book *Narrative and Genre: Key Concepts in Media Studies* (2000) states that the word narration comes from the root in Latin *narre* that means to make known, emphasizes the transportation of information the word narration holds. He separates narration from other informational tools like a train timetable when he defines it as the carrier of information of continuous series of events, highlighting its sentimental properties. In the process of transporting the meaning, Lacey (2000, p. 14) attributes great importance to the cause and effect relationship in the construction of narration. The single existence of an event he claims cannot constitute a sequence, the narration is formed in the causality of

events that is placed one after another. Therefore, it needs at least two events. Lacey gives an example in the statement, “The king is dead” for the purpose of defining a non-narration, and he extends the statement into a narration by establishing the cause-effect relationship in the phrase, “The king is dead and the queen has died of grief.”

Historiography, in my opinion, involves narration that is based on the argument mentioned above because it is impossible to express ideas without narrating them. Moreover, the historiography of an historical event is also built through the cause-and-effect relationship. The historiographer finds and constructs a series of reasons that s/he attaches to the initiation of the event s/he is documenting. The act of forming a consistent document about the past that proves itself through the given historical data is bound to its becoming meaningful. What constitutes being meaningful is the narration, the art of expressing the sentiment of the idea, the information. In *Metahistory*, author Hayden White (1975) collates literature and historiography by testing the practice of historiography through the narrative form. His analysis on the style of the historian and the form of text aims to prove that the historiography is an art of construction. According to White, the only distinction between the novelist and the historiographer is that the novelist invents the event while the historiographer finds it.

For the comprehension of an historical document and therefore, for the construction of the narration, it has to involve a cause-and-effect relationship. The resulting event has to be explained with the reasons that caused it. Or in other words, historical fact has to be explained with the facts of past. In *What is History* E. H. Carr (1990, p. 88) mentions that historians constantly endeavor to arrange the past experiences of human by attaching the cause-and-effect relationship to them. Based on this idea, Carr defines history as a constitution composed of organizing the incidents of the past in an order that involves cause-and-effect relationship. Carr underlines the rejection of irrelevant data about past in the act of composing a logical and rational document (1990, p. 147). According to Carr, the historian’s point of view and intention effect the causes s/he attaches to the historical event as well as the decision made about which events to document as historical fact. “The relation of the historian to his causes has the same and dual reciprocal character as the relation of the historian to his facts. The causes determine his interpretation of the historical

process, and his interpretation determines the selection and marshaling of the causes” (Carr 1990, p. 103). In order to demystify his argument on the selective system of historiography that is accordant with the historiographer’s intention, Carr (1990, p. 105) continues:

*“Just as from the infinite ocean of facts the historian selects those which are significant for his purpose, so from the multiplicity of sequences of cause and effect he extracts those, and only those, which are historically significant; and the standard of historical significance is his ability to fit them into his pattern of rational explanation and interpretation.”*

Based on the association Carr (1990) theorizes about narration and historiography, testing some of the methodologies of the narrative arts on historiography would be a useful effort in order to elaborate the concept of historiography as a branch of narration. According to Lacey (2000 p. 10), the beginning of a narrative text works as a hook that catches the audience. Without the hook, the text would not be tempting and the audience would not focus their attention to comprehend the whole text. The historian also has to choose where to start writing. The composition of the introduction phase of an historical text should also be chosen carefully in order to work as a narrative hook. Returning to Lacey’s analysis on narrative theory (2000, p. 10), the narrative hook consists of a process of prediction where the text directs the audience according to the clues given. The clues that are given at the beginning should be clear in order to introduce and co-opt the audience into the diegesis of the narration. The engaging clues for the construction of the process of prediction that Lacey (2000, p. 10) specifies are firstly the identification of the hero and villain. The positioning of the good and bad guys is important to build the perspective of the audience. The point that needs to be taken seriously by the narrator or the historiographer is to form the characteristics of the hero and the villain in accordance with the audiences’ prejudices in order to furnish consistency within the narration. In other words, the construction of the hero and villain should address the target audiences’ field of experience in order to set the recognition of the positioning of hero and villain. The second specification Lacey (2000, p.10) makes on the items of engaging clues is to construct a recognizable setting. The construction of the recognizable setting is mandatory for a narrative hook and has more or less the same function with the positioning of the hero and villain in the introduction. The act of inviting and placing the audience into the gravitational universe of the narration

comes into play one more time in the third specification of Lacey's (2000 p. 10), which is the usage of an understandable narration style. The fourth and last item in Lacey's (2000, p. 10) analysis is the construction of a conventional narrative structure, which includes cause-and-effect motivation in order to excite, invite and place the audience in the diegesis. The introduction phase of a text is responsible for transporting the sensibility of the audience into the conditions of the narrative. Once the content of the narrative is bound with the sentiment of the audience, the authenticity of the narration would last no matter where or when the story is happening such as in outer space or in World War II.

The construction of a narration with the intention to express information, an idea or a tale is the act of structuring a comprehensible and appetizing whole. The comprehensibility of a narration is formed in the bond of compatibility with what the narration presents and the audience's field of experience. Valuing the term narration as a tool for producing sense, the harmony maintained with the conditions of a place and time which the narration targets, instills its comprehensibility.

Historiography puts forward reliability as its trademark, which is built over the transparent characteristics of its evidential texture. However, historiography is composed of placing the historical facts in an order supplied by the historiographer's intention. As a part of the process, the historiographer fills in the gaps of historical facts with the facts of past in order to maintain a cause-and-effect relationship. Therefore, narration in historiography may have its roots in the management of historical facts while in the mission of creating its constitution of comprehensibility. As Ernst Breisach (1994 p. 55) in *Historiography: Ancient, Medieval & Modern* points out that while a narration in historiography justifies itself on the basis of the maintenance of comprehension, history in documented mode can no longer be accepted as the accurate representation of life in the past.

As I have mentioned above, the historiographer makes choices in the process of constructing historiography. These choices include such pivotal decisions as which historical event to document, which historical facts to include and which historical facts to exclude in the process of documentation and more even more crucially, from which perspective these choices will be expressed/narrated.



The choices of the historian are made accordingly to the target audience of the historical document. The perspective of the historiographer would inevitably contain the current tendencies of the society of which the historiographer is documenting. The issue of maintaining comprehension is closely associated with the representation of past events through the conception of society's current tendencies. Therefore, narration in historiography contains the current tendencies of society as the determining element on the perspective that is developed. In *The Gender of History* (Tarihin Cinsiyeti), Fatmagül Berktaş (2010) claims that it is necessary for a historiographer to know herself/himself and her/his society in order to explain another. According to Berktaş, the understanding of the other society is done through the understanding of the society the historiographer belongs to. The acknowledgement of the other society is done through the determination of the analogous qualities and differences the two societies have. In order to compare the societies, the historiographer or the narrator, has to understand the field of shared experience of the society s/he belongs to. The shared field of experience in a society builds the shared juncture of cognition. Therefore, the historiographer or the narrator has to form her/his perspective, the style of narration and the choices s/he make during the act of historiography according to his/her society's cognition in order to maintain comprehension. The representations of the past events, or in other words the act of historiography, portrays events that have taken place in a time that is different from the time the historiographer is writing about. The society of the past is a different society from the current one, even if they share the same national flag. Therefore, the act of historiography represents the events of a past society through the circumstances of the current society in order to make sense to the current society, in other words, to be understood. The comprehensibility of a historical text is based on the perspective directed from the field of experience of the current society. The perspective composed through the tendencies of a society, constitutes one of the key characteristics of narration in historiography.

In the effort to understand and explain the interrelation in the narration composed to represent the past events with the current conditions of the society, the historiographer's position as a part of the current society is also worth attention. Arising from the current tendencies of the day, the historiographer is inevitably a part of society. Her/his perspective would consist of, be effected or directed by her/his field of experience. The narration the

historiographer forms consequently houses her/his perspective as a part of the society that defines its existence on the choices made, and the narrative form used. Carr (1990, p. 16) argues that no such thing as a naked fact exists before the historian handles and processes it. The utilization and therefore, realization of a historical fact is based on the process the historian performs on it. According to Carr (1990, p. 169) the historical document is only capable of bearing how the historiographer handles the subject. In other words, the historical document reflects the historiographer's point of view. The perspective of the historiographer cannot be considered as sublime entity that is sealed and free from the dynamics of the society s/he lives in. Carr continues, "When we attempt to answer the question 'what is history' our answer, consciously or unconsciously reflects our own position in time and forms part of our answer to the broader question what view we take of the society in which we live" (Carr 1990, p. 8).

#### **2.4 THE HISTORIOGRAPHER IS A PART OF THE SOCIETY**

*"Early biologists were content to classify species of birds, beasts, and fishes in cages, aquariums and showcases, and did not seek to study the living creature in relation to its environment. Perhaps the social sciences today have not yet fully emerged from that primitive stage" (Carr 1990, p. 47).*

In the assertion above, Carr highlights the erroneous approach of the historiographer as one of a solitary existence - an isolated entity -. Carr (1990, p. 44) suggests that we analyze the historian's historical and social environment before studying the historiography the historian performs. Carr (1990, p. 40) claims that in order to understand the work of the historian, the place s/he stands and the root of that standpoint within the social environmental circumstances should be analyzed. Referring to the entity of the human being as a social animal, Carr (1990, p. 31) emphasizes that humankind mutates from a biological entity to a social one synchronous with birth through the effect of becoming a member of society. Stressing on the transformative character of the society, Carr (1990, p. 31) suggests that no matter the cultural state of history or pre-history, the human being is born into society and is shaped by its tendencies. The effective chemistry of the society transports its collective memory to each and every human being through the permeable regions of human intellect. The collective memory that is being shaped by the present tendencies of the society over and over again is implanted not only to the newborn, but to

all human beings that form the society. Carr (1990 p. 31) puts forward language as an example of the embodying activities of the society. Valuating language as a tool to transport the characteristics of the society, Carr (1990 p. 31) asserts that language is not just an individualist communicative instrument but also a social inheritance. Language forms the constitution of thought as much as the methodology for the expression of the thought. Therefore, the dynamic nature of language the society forms, uses and reforms according to the mutating tendencies of the society refreshes itself constantly through each and every part of the society. Qualifying the conception of individuality in a modern national community as one of the most endemic modern myths, Carr (1990, p. 31) points out that the individual and the society are integral to each other operating harmoniously to prove each other's existence. He remarks, "...no man is an island, entire of itself" (Carr 1990, p. 31).

The report by the Gulbenkian Commission *Open the Social Sciences* (1996) also suggests the assessment of the social scientist as a part of society. Intending to highlight the necessity for the restructuring of the social sciences, the report directs its focus on the historical construction of scientific knowledge. The report confronts the diversification of social sciences into standardized exclusive disciplines acknowledging the social sciences as a monolithic constitution. The report argues that the separation of the social sciences into disciplines isolates the social scientist from the dynamics of the society prohibiting them from the essential interactivity. In order to constitute a vivid formation of social sciences the report suggests the social scientist integrate the various social sciences among social disciplines within the context of their interaction with society's social tendencies.

Fatmagül Berktaş (2010, p. 8) stresses the historiographer's relation to society's tendencies as well. Appraising the historiographer as a natural part of the society (like any other part that forms it), Berktaş (2010, p. 8) pays close attention to the effects of the society's tendencies over the historiographer in the process of the documentation of history. Berktaş (2010 p. 8) claims that the perception directed to a phenomenon is not just formulated from the characteristics of that phenomenon but evolves through the beholder's point of view. The historiographer's perceptual field is inevitably shaped by the society and the tendencies the historiographer belongs to. The frame that composes the historiographer's point of

view, she continues, determines what the historiographer perceives, associates with it and interprets. The choice made in what to document by the historiographer also houses the existence of the undocumented actualities.

The perspective of the critique made by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1999) and Ranajit Guha (2006) focuses on the obscure actualities that are undocumented due to the historiographical subsidization of the dominant ideologies. These studies imprint the perspective of their historiographical methodology immanent to the histories of social layers that made to remain silent. The practices of historiography that directs the focus on the areas that are intentionally omitted from mainstream historiography highlights the significance of the perspective the historiographer acquires. The historiographer is interactive with the dynamic tendencies of the society s/he belongs, which constitutes the environment for the formation of the perspectives. Accordingly, the choice of subjects the historiographer performs in the act of historical documentation is an output of her/his perspective.

In the book chapter called *A History of Experience, Historical Experience and Experience History (Bir Deneyimin Tarihi, Tarih Deneyimleri ve Deneyim Tarihi)* (2006), Zeynep Tül Akbal Süalp exposes the multi-layered metabolism of history by highlighting the reflection of different societies in history by means of time and space. Süalp (2006, p. 41) states that history is the perspective of the one who ever studies history as much as the historiographer in the process of documentation. In Süalp's interpretation the analyzer's perspective, which is directed towards history is as subjective and permeable to the society's tendencies as that of the historiographer. She stratifies the constitution of history through the periods of time the historical event is written, analyzed, rewritten and reanalyzed due to the tendencies that evolve within a society. In the relation occurred on the perspectives of the societies of the past and present due to the historical apprehension, Carr (1990, p. 55) designates the dual function of the history as understanding both the past and the state of the period from whence the past is documented. According Carr, the past is understood through present conceptions and therefore, historiography should be evaluated within the tendencies of the society the documentation is performed. Carr clarifies the notions of the correlation between the historiographer and the current characteristics of the society s/he belongs to as:

“The reciprocal process of interaction between the historian and his facts, what I have called the dialogue between the past and present, is a dialogue not between abstract and isolated individuals, but between the society of today and the society of yesterday.” (Carr 1990, p. 55).

## **2.5 THE INTERACTION OF HISTORIGRAPHY WITH DYNAMIC SOCIAL TENDENCIES**

As I endeavor to define the characteristics of the practice in earlier sections, I consider the act of historiography as a constructed representation of past. Historiography is composed of a historiographer's choices among the data pool of historical facts according to her/his intention of historical narration. As Hayden White suggested (1975) historiography is a narration that performs the representation of the past and if so, it may not be appropriate to limit the historiographical performance to written practices. The act of narration is not limited to written practices and so does the ability of performing representation. In this respect, the term historiography comes to include other mediums on which it can be said to perform historical representation. Around this climate of comprehensiveness towards other mediums to perform historical representation, I distinguish the forms of the practice as diegetic and non-diegetic historical representations. In the framework of this study, I locate the distinctive point between the diegetic and non-diegetic representations of historiography, rather than within the medium of practice referring to written or filmic practices. All historiographical practices are composed of narration and they include historical facts in their historical representations. In accordance with the purpose of this chapter, all (non-diegetic and diegetic) forms of historical representation interact with the dynamic tendencies of the society. However, the diegetic representation of history generates a sense similar to experience over the historical event the narration represents. Therefore I will endeavor to explain the relationship between the dynamic tendencies of society on diegetic and non-diegetic forms separately.

This separation grounds on my intention to study on the historiographical function of the diegetic film. Through the focus I perform to the historiography of diegetic films, the framework of the study on the entire field of historiography is limited accordingly. I will further separate the sources of historiography as I will differentiate between the practices of

‘Official (Dominant) Historiography’, ‘Independent Historiography’ and ‘Popular Historiography’. Popular historiography will constitute the field on which I will discuss diegetic forms of historical representation, which is based on the diegetic characteristic of popular historiography.

### **2. 5. 1 Official (Dominant) Historiography**

The feeling of sustaining and developing the heritage by taking each step in front of the posterior on the same path has great importance in a society for the sake of progressivity. In his illuminating book on the study of historiography *On History*, Eric Hobsbawn (2009, p. 27) argues that even the most revolutionary societies hunger for cutting-edge innovations and that ‘novelty’ is synonymous with ‘improvement’. Designating history as a permanent dimension of the human consciousness, Hobsbawn associates the composition of social institutions with historiography. The collective continuity of experience as he designates it, enables the proud sense of expansion to flourish. In order to continue the sense of the regular experience of growth, the historiography of the past should be coherent with the present. Therefore, the myth of the progressive existence of a society needs the reproduction of its history according to the present dominant discourses. Societies change, they evolve in many ways; ideologically, economically, sociologically both in singular existences and/or in multiple combinations.

The shifts that occur in the discourse of the constitution that acquires the power to lead in a community necessitate the appropriate reproduction of historiography accordingly. In other words, when the dominant discourse in a society changes the path it have been on, then history needs to be reorganized in order to ensure the myth of progressive existence. Hobsbawn (2009, p. 14) directly explains the relationship between history and the present by referring to history as a pattern for the present. When social transformation occurs, to keep coherence between the past and for the sake of improvement, history has to be reconstructed accordingly. The transformation would feel like improvement as long as the present looks like progress over the past.

Althusser's (1977) notion of the "Ideological State Apparatuses" gains significance at this point for us to understand the function of official historiography. Toby Miller (2000, p. 404) explains Althusser's ISA's as:

*"He sees the economic base as compromised of the productive forces and relations of production. Its superstructure is the law, the state and ideology. The state has two main characteristics. The first involves the use of force and its threat as a means of eliciting obedience. The characteristic is composed of the army, the police, the courts, the bureaucracy, and the prisons. Its work is done by sanction and interdiction – the (repressive) State apparatus ((R)SA). The second characteristic is the "Ideological State Apparatuses" (ISA's), which include religious and educational institutions, the family, the polity, the trade union, and the communications and cultural ISA's".*

Acknowledging the reproduction of history through historiography in accordance with the shift in dominant discourses of the ones in power to lead a society, official historiography positions itself as an ideological state apparatus.

The reconstruction of history by means of historiography to maintain consonance with the shift in the dominant discourse may be accomplished in various ways. For example the historical facts that form the landmarks of a whole historical narration would be chosen differently according to the new discourses. Or the plot shaped around the historical facts surrounded with the facts about the past can be placed according to the fresh dominant discourses in the society. Hobsbawn (2009, p. 23) argues that there may be some shifts in the dominant discourse, which would not need any legitimization to achieve the acceptance of the society like technological ones. But some other transformations, Hobsbawn continues may need the legitimization in order to gain the recognition of society. If that new discourse has something that is similar to that of the ancestors of that society, the comfort of performing the tradition would do the magic. But if the characteristics of that transformation were not supported by past traditions or is simply the current historiography of that society, history in Hobsbawn's view simply needs to be corrected or reproduced to be appropriate for the present situation. Designating the history as one of the most useful instruments of establishing the dominant discourse in a society, Hobsbawn puts forward the contemporary generation of history.

*"In brief, what legitimates the present and explains it is not now the past as a set of reference points (for example Magna Carta), or even as duration (for example the age of*

*parliamentary institutions) but the past as a process of becoming the present.”*  
(Hobsbawn 2009, p.24).

In order to give an example of the reproduction of history according to the current dominant discourses, Hobsbawn (2009, p. 228) recalls the historiography produced in the Age of Enlightenment where the historiography prior to the 1800s was no longer useful to cope with the demand for change. The term historiography generally refers to the documentation of history through written practices. Fatmagül Berktaş (2010, p. 19) points out the potentials of historiography as an ideological apparatus. Arising from the characteristics of historiography as the selection and the interpretation of facts, Berktaş argues that any kind of historiography consists of the reproduction of the past and therefore may very well become an ideological apparatus. The formation of historical consciousness according to the demands of those in political power in a community Berktaş asserts is inherent to the nature of historiography. Moving on from Hobsbawn’s and Berktaş’s arguments, I deduce that in order to legitimize a transformation in society through the shift in dominant discourses, the historiography that is shaped accordingly is utile.

In the essay, *A History of Experience, Historical Experience and Experience History (Bir Deneyimin Tarihi, Tarih Deneyimleri ve Deneyim Tarihi* (2006) Zeynep Tül Akbal Süalp (2006, p. 41) asserts that the turbulent periods of a society are settled by the appropriation of the historical consciousness according to the dominant discourses. Pointing to the reproductions of historiography according to social changes, Süalp remarks that the black holes of the past are covered by different interpretations. Ranajit Guha in his book *History at the Limit of World – History* (Dünya – Tarihinin Sınında Tarih) (2006) explains the exploitative characteristic of global diplomacy and the use of historiography in the process of legitimization and normalization of injustice. Arising from the intervention that occurred in Indian historiography by the English government as the colonizer of India, Guha (2006, p. 66) argues that the Modern Western Governmental System produces the history of each land it rules according to the legitimization of its existence and leadership. About the flexible character of historiography for the legitimization of the social innovations in a society, Hobsbawn (2009, p. 6) asserts that history can always be invented when the situation warrants.



The appropriation of history by the means of historiography according to the transforming dominant discourses in a society generates a link between ideology and memory. Each time a political power's intentions shift, the official historiography of that community shifts accordingly in order to serve the instillation of the intentions. Examples of official historiography are evident in the curriculums of the mandatory history courses from elementary through high school as they are the fields of historiography that are constructed through the direction of the leading institutions of a society. The historical books that are published under the management of the government may also set an example for official historiography. As I will discuss in the following chapters on the historiographical function of the film medium, historiography is not only accomplished through written practices. A museum, which presents an exhibition on the history of civilization may very well accomplish a historiographical practice. The constructed nature of historiography through the selection and marshaling of historical facts also operates on the same premise of the museum that presents historical artifacts. The museums or art galleries presenting historical artifacts that are managed by the government can operate to establish the rhyme among link between historical consciousness and the dominant discourse.

The historiography that is reproduced in consonance with the discourses of the ones in the position to lead facilitates the acquisition of those discourses by the society. The dominant discourse of society may not always be the discourse of the one in the position to lead. The discourses of the constituents, who struggle to rise to the leading position, may also endeavor to seize dominancy over the tendencies of society through the accomplishment of the influence on the main tendencies of society. The rise to a position of leadership would be proof of the dominance on the current tendencies within the society.

### **2. 5. 2 Independent Historiography**

The ideological statements of the dominant discourse shape the common tendencies in society. The common tendencies in a society are formed through the instillation of the dominant discourse establishes the patterns for the common value systems. The common value system of a society arises from the perspective of those in political power. The shift in the social tendencies of the society evolves broadly around the shift in the dominant

discourses of the society. The guiding ideologies of the current political power, in other words, the ones in power to lead in a community, incorporates and highlights some values of that community according to their perspectives. These values may either be constructed or adapted from earlier periods. The installation instilling of the value system according to the political power's perspective in a community is smoothly transmitted through the historiography constructed to serve the idea of progress. In Carr's words, "When we seek to know the facts the questions which we ask and therefore the answers which we obtain are prompted by our system of values." (Carr 1990, p. 128).

History may be defined as a document about the past, which is written by the historiographer in the present moment. In the process of the formation of a historical document, the event belongs to the period of time it occurred (regardless if it is a month or a century ago) but the action of documenting is done at present. Therefore, the cognition and interpretation of that previous event is inevitably done through the eyes of the present. Carr (1990, p. 25) underlines the fact that the historian belongs to the present. The consequences of the historiographers' natural (present-day) condition forms the core of Carr's argument as the permeable texture of history is exposed to the time it is written. Carr (1990, p. 24) explains the notion of the contemporary formation of history asserting that the past can only be viewed and comprehended through the eyes of the present. The existential bond of humankind to the period of time of their existence with its every tendency and value judgment naturally wraps around the historiographer. In his explanation of the historiographer's mental bond to the present, Carr stresses the wording of the historiographer that transports present cognition of the words like democracy, love or revolution into the events of the past. The understanding of the words evolve according to the tendencies of the present and when the past is inevitably written with the wording (the cognition of the present), the meaning slides along to the present simultaneously. The mental bond of the historiographer to the present surely not only effects the wording of the historical document but also spreads its effect to every stage of historiography from cognition, to the selection and placement of historical data. An historian is a part of society and a part of the common psyche the society builds, which conceives and interprets the past through current tendencies that forms the value system of the present. The historian inevitably appraises the past with the understanding of the present. According to Carr,

(1990, p. 24) the understanding of the present, or in other words, the current value system of a society determines the attribution of factuality.

In line with Carr's interpretation on the historiographer and the value system of the society s/he belongs to, I assert that history written in the present about past is in close relation with present tendencies. Historiography that is performed free from the control or guidance of a political or economic power is still relevant within the dominant discourses of society. Independent historiography may be performed with or against official historiography depending on the social positioning of the historiographer. Even the historiography is performed radically against the official historiography or in other words the discourses of the constitution in the position to lead, the practice involves the current tendencies of the society if only to perform confronting arguments. Through the acknowledgement of historiographer as a part of the society I assert that the historiography involves the current tendencies of the society. The present tendencies of the day that formed within the common value system determines if a historical event was glorious or not and more over if a historical event is worth documenting or not. As I have argued before, the influence of current tendencies over the assessment of historiographer is inevitable, but the reaction towards the main tendencies of the society depends on the social positioning of the historiographer.

### **2. 5. 3 Popular Historiography**

I use the term popular historiography for the practices that express the historical representation through a diegetic narration. By designating the practices of historiography that shelters diegetic narration I refer to the variety of bestseller novels, mainstream fiction feature films and TV series that performs historical representation. The diegetic narrations may perform historical representation towards a historical event or just establish its plot on a historical period utilizing the sense of past as an atmospheric element. The historical representation of these popular mediums may not gain much serious consideration in the name of historiography. Nevertheless it would be carelessness to underestimate the function of diegetic historical narrations for the practice of historiography grounding on their popularity. The diegetic narrations are composed of narrative patterns that include

structured sections such as the three-act structure. The formation of narrative structures grounds on the facilitation of comprehensibility. These structures primarily present the hero and villain of the story on the introduction phase, which installs the bonds of identification with the protagonist. The establishment of the bond with the protagonist explicitly determines the point of view the historical event is going to be narrated from. Once the identification is bond, the experience of the character towards that historical experience transmits to the one who is tracing it on the other side of the identification. In the following acts, the protagonist struggles to overcome the conflicts s/he faces in order to achieve her/his mission. The consolidation of the bond is maintained with the protagonist through bumpy roads of the plot in means of adventurous achievements. The representation of the historical event or the event that the narration presents as a part of a historical period is performed through the perspective of the protagonist in the continuity of the events s/he experiences. The dramatic structure for the representation of the historical event reaches to an end by the achievement of the catharsis. In diegetic narrations the conflicts of the story, in other words the barriers between the protagonist and her/his destination are solved within a closural form. The historical event that is narrated through a diegetic form is always reaches to a closural end in the final act. The narration responds to hooks it attached in earlier phases, the mysteries are solved, the protagonist reaches to his/her destination and eventually the catharsis rises through this closural feeling of completion. The diegetic representative narration of an historical event focuses the comprehension to the field of sensation. The sensational perception that is composed through the identification generates the sense of experience towards that historical event. Therefore I assume that the representative diegetic practices of historiography that the bestseller historical novels or mainstream feature films perform establishes the historical narrations into the field of experience.

The diegesis in a narration is the sphere where all the events occur, it is the genuine world design generated for that narration. The diegesis possesses its own rational consistency within itself in means of building a sphere of actuality that the events occur according to the causality within the rules of diegetic gravity. The rational consistency of the events in the narration is bond to the diegetic gravity hence the plot is legitimized in its own space of actuality independent from the restrictions of reality. When a historical event is represented

through a diegetic structure, that event transports to an area that is free from the laws of historical accuracy. In spite of the fictitious diegesis that projects the historical event, the plot establishes on the historical conscious via the comprehension of the historical event through the sense of experience.

The historiography practices that are done from the fields of official and independent historiography may as well be shaped in diegetic forms like historical films and novels. But the distinctive circumstance is the popularity for the formation of the historical conscious through the common tendencies of the society by the sense of experience the diegetic practices produce towards the historical event. The popular mainstream practices of historiography like bestseller historical novels or blockbuster historical films are profit oriented. These practices of historiography are produced to be consumed by large extends. The current tendencies of the society of the period gains significance in the practice of historical representation due to the profit oriented characteristics of popular historiography. In the rules of supply and demand management, the popular mainstream practices of historiography need to reflect the current tendencies in a society. As I will elaborate the conception of ‘Cultural Industries’ through the approach Frankfurt School in second chapter, the target for the massive consumption requires the embracement of main social tendencies of the society at the period. The narratives of these products need to be formed through the current conflicts of the society and shelter the zeitgeist of period. Like any other popular culture product the products of popular mainstream historiography need to touch blistered areas of society in order to address to broad sensations to be consumed massively. This correlative condition between the mainstream popular historiography and the current tendencies of the society eventuates with the involvement of current tendencies in the representation of the historical event.

#### **2. 5. 4 The Segregation of Diegetic Practices of Historiography from Non-Diegetic Practices of Historiography**

As I have mentioned in the effort to characterize the nature of historiography, the practice grounds on the selection and marshaling of historical facts towards the intended narration. From this perspective, the solidity of historiography in means of historical accuracy, and credibility dissolves in the field of relativity. In my opinion, through the comparison of

diegetic practices of historiography with the non-diegetic practices, the level of credibility stays much or less the same. Considering both practices whether diegetic or not as historical narrations that includes historical facts, it wouldn't be appropriate to place one superior to the other in the issue of credibility. I perceive historiography in broad sense as a constructive practice of historical representation. Therefore I acknowledge the diegetic practices of historical representation inherent to the field of historiographical performances. The point where the diegetic historical representations differ from the non-diegetic is the sense of historical experience the diegetic practices generate. The effect of the diegetic representative practices of popular historiography separate from the non-diegetic, non-representative practices of independent or official historiography in the sense of experience the diegetic ones transmit towards the historical event.

Regarding the interaction of historiography with the social tendencies of the period it is practiced, the diegetic popular historical narrations also exhibit close relations. As I have mentioned earlier the profit-oriented mode of production acquires corresponding approaches to the current tendencies of the society. But the difference of the reflection towards the interaction with the social tendencies on diegetic popular historical representation again grounds on the sense of experience the diegetic forms conduct. Through the transmission of the sense of experience towards the historical event, the diegetic popular historical representation establishes their existence on the field of memory. In popular diegetic forms, the current tendencies of the society shape the historical conscious towards that historical event by the experience effect of the diegetic historical representation. Therefore, the dominant discourses of the ones in power to lead that shapes the current tendencies of the society at large extends, infiltrates to the historical conscious once the historical representation is performed through popular diegetic practices.

In following chapter, I will effort to elaborate the characteristic of popular diegetic fiction films that perform historical representation to progress on my study about the Hollywood blockbuster historical films.

### **3. THE HISTORIOGRAPICAL FUNCTION OF BLOCKBUSTER HISTORICAL FILMS**

I have endeavored to discuss historiography as a construct that houses historical facts in the first chapter. Based on their constructed nature, all practices that perform historiography may be equally evaluated for historical accuracy. The historiography performed by popular diegetic practices like bestselling historical novels or mainstream films may be equally credible based on their common constructed nature that house historical facts. However, the sense of experience that diegetic practices engender locates their process of comprehension differentiates the effect of diegetic practices of historiography from the rest. The representative diegetic practices of historiography, which I will discuss in the form of blockbuster historical films, operate on the field of experience through the identification they form between the spectator and the perspective of narration. Consequently, the sense of experience that diegetic historiographical practices generate on the spectator engenders the formation of the historical consciousness through the perspective of the narration. From this perspective (that takes the concept of experience into account), the function of the diegetic practices of historiography separates itself from other practices of historiography even though they have equal credibility in regards to historical accuracy.

In the second chapter of my study on the historiographical practice of blockbuster Hollywood historical films, I will concentrate on the representative diegetic narrative film as a tool of historiography. In my effort to study the historiographical performance of the diegetic film that operates on the historical consciousness of the spectator, I will primarily work on the generation of the sense of experience that diegetic films perform by following the perspective of “Apparatus Theory” in film theory. Through the arguments of Apparatus Theory and Neo-Formalist approaches of Thompson and Bordwell, I will endeavor to express the sense of experience that diegetic film presents through its narration. To understand the effects of the sense of experience the diegetic films consist once those films perform historical representation, I will also use Vivian Sobchack’s perspective wherein she defines the situation by designating that history happens. Towards my positioning that highlights the transmission of sense experience by the diegetic historical film, I will discuss the arguments of Robert Rosenstone where he determines the film medium as a

significantly appropriate tool to perform historical representation. In order to progress on the field of my study, I will focus on the historiographical performance of blockbuster Hollywood films narrowing the concept of diegetic film in an effort to discuss the relationship between the formation of blockbuster historical films and the dominant tendencies in a society. To determine the nature of this dynamic relationship I will focus on Douglas Kellner's interpretation on the Frankfurt School's notion of culture industries.

### **3.1 THE EXPERIENCE OF DIEGETIC FILM**

The process of making sense out of a diegetic film is in the experiencing of it rather than in the watching. I will work using the Apparatus Theory to understand the nature of filmic experience and the consequences of this sense of experience on the historiographical performance of historical films. Apparatus Theory acknowledges the film medium as a conductive device that transmits its discourse to the spectator through the sensation it generates on the field of experience. The closural continuous narration, the identification (both with the characters and the film itself) and the inner coherence of the narration are the main elements of diegetic narration in film. Through these structures, the spectator attaches to the narration. The film makes sense through the attachment established with the inner structures of diegesis. In other words, the diegesis operates via its own gravitational rules and the comprehension depends on the acceptance of these rules. Therefore, the act of comprehending a film demands the shift in the base of plausibility according to the inner coherence of the diegesis. Once the attachment is bonded with the diegesis, the camera (or the projection) becomes the eyes of the spectator and the perspective of the narration takes over reasoning and then the discourse of the film is transmitted to the spectator. The diegetic film transmits its discourse through the sense of experience, which is generated from an effort to make sense of the narration. Apparatus Theory takes the technical characteristics of the film medium from the phase of production to projection to account for the transmission of messages through the constitution of the experience. Toby Miller (2000, p. 403) asserts that Apparatus Theory defines the film medium as a technological device that is composed of the interactive relationship between the text and spectators. In his words "... Apparatus Theory inquires into the impact of the technical physical specificity of watching films on the processing methods used by their watchers" (Miller 2000, p. 403).



And also "...the experience of watching film would best be understood as a set of objects (the technology of the cinema and the techniques of narrative), plus relations to those objects (credulity, identification and fantasy)" (Miller 2000, p. 405). Apparatus Theory is based on Althusser's theorization of Ideological State Apparatuses, which is rooted in Marxist theory. According to Toby Miller (2000, p. 403), most of the studies on the development of Apparatus Theory were done after the mid-1970s and these studies were derived from branches of semiotics psychoanalysis, and ideology critique. Miller designates the founding theorists of Apparatus Theory as Christian Metz, Jacques Lacan and Luis Althusser (MLA). From the studies through Apparatus Theory, Miller attaches significance to Metz's work "Imaginary Signifier" for its view of the film medium and emphasizes on his association of the medium with the theories of Lacan and Althusser.

According to Robert Stam (2000, p. 110), Metz acknowledged the film medium as a multi-dimensional socio-cultural fact in his work. For Metz, the impact of the film medium was generated in three phases: pre-filmic events, post-filmic events and a-filmic events. The pre-filmic events were the economic conditions, which the film industry operates under such as the use of technology and the cinema's vend-motivated nature. The post-filmic events were the processes of exhibition, distribution and the expectations of the reaction towards the film. And the a-filmic events were the physical experiences of film like the ritualistic notions of movie-going such as the decoration of the theatre or the ambiance of the foyer and the mental experience of the diegesis.

In "Imaginary Signifier" (1974), Metz deepens his study on a-filmic events especially on the mental experience of the diegesis explaining the formation of the suture and the state of the transcendent. The concept of suture was developed in the work of Jean-Pierre Oudart 'Cinema and Suture' published with the name 'La Suture' in the Cahiers du Cinéma in 1969. The notion of suture explains the attachment of the spectator into the diegesis, in the moment the base of plausibility locates on diegetic ground. In "Imaginary Signifier", Metz endeavors to describe the unconscious part of the spectator that works toward constituting meaning.

In his study, Metz investigates specific features of the film medium that generate filmic experience. He defines the filmic signifier that produces meaning as an imaginary signifier. The multi-perspective nature of film involves both hearing and sight is important for Metz (1974, p. 246) not because it is a means of rich perception, but because of its significance as an imaginary perception. The real voice and real sight is absent in film. What is heard is the recorded sound of the actual voice and what is seen is the recorded image of the actual object. Metz interprets this lack as an element in the process of constituting the attachment to the imaginary filmic field or in other words, the diegesis. For Metz (1974, p. 250) the film both covers the fictional and nonfictional as it covers a certain absence of the one who was once present. "...The activity of perception which it involves is real (cinema is not a fantasy), but the perceived is not really the object, it is its shade, its phantom, its double, its replica in a new kind of mirror" (Metz 1974, p. 250). For Metz, the lack is based on the perception of recorded material instead of the actual, and this condition creates a fictional space that has great familiarity with the real, which gives film the freedom to create its own laws of reality. According to Metz (1974, p. 250), another layer of lack, which supports the generation of suture is the segregation of space. This term refers to the absence of an audience in the act of the shooting a film and the physical absence of actors and where they are located from the screen in the projection phase. The act of the shooting the filmic reality (for example; the process of filming, the set decoration, lighting, the shooting, the presence of the actors, etc.) never occurs in the presence of the spectator, thus the spaces of these two acts are split. For Stam (2000, p. 122), "the missed rendezvous" as he refers to Metz's notion of the segregation of space, generates a belief in the filmic image in a paradoxical way.

For the sense of experience that is generated through the perception of diegetic film, another significant condition for Metz (1974, p. 250) is identification. Metz states that the identification with film occurs in two phases synchronously. One of the phases of identification is the one attached to the character in film, experiencing the whole process towards the eyes and sensation of the filmic character. The other one is composed of the bond with the camera or the projection, in other words it is the act of receiving the film's perspective or point of view. To argue and further his ideas on the identification process,

Metz borrows from the psychoanalytic theories of Lacan working on the concept of 'mirror stage'.

According to Metz's interpretation (1974, p. 250) of Lacan, self-awareness is not a default application that a human being arrives with at birth. Self-awareness (the separation of the self and the other and the formation of the ego) develops in childhood with the realization of the self. Once a child in her/his mother's arms recognizes the reflection of the objects that surrounds her/him in a mirror and recognizes their mother, the child for the first time meets with her/his image as a divergent organism from the mother. In the mirror stage, the child identifies with her/his reflection and the reflection in the mirror is the image of the child. This moment of the mirror stage for Metz as he interprets Lacan is the reason for the identification with the image of the character in film. The film screen can be considered a mirror during projection. The filmic mirror may project everything, but the one thing that could never be projected in this mirror is the spectator's self in the act of perceiving. The self of the spectator remains in the cinema house, but the reflection of his or her own body disappears. The spectator, which has long since passed the mirror stage, proceeds in comprehending the filmic narration despite the absence of self-reflection in this rather uncanny mirror. The natural demand to perceive the reflection triggers the creating of identification with the filmic character. This identification enables a process of comprehending the sensations of the filmic character and operates as a significant element in generating the sense of experience in the spectator.

Metz (1974, p. 251) defines the identification with the camera or in a sense, with the film as a whole as the acceptance of the diegesis as an alternative dimension of reality coherent in itself. The perceptual performance of the spectator is physical and therefore actual, but the object of perception stays on the level of the imaginary. Through the acceptance of filmic diegesis as a constructed design of reality for the filmic world, the action would not disturb the spectator even if it were extreme in nature. In this phase, the spectator identifies with her/himself in the act of perceiving. This identification enables the establishment of filmic continuity (the progress of the storyline) inside the spectator's own tracking. Through the identification with the film and the presentation of filmic events, the hooks of cause and effect simulate the reasoning of the spectator. The camera angles become the vision and the

soundtrack becomes the hearing of the spectator. Handling natural reflexes like the turning of the head to the source of a sound or the squinting of the eyes to see more details through the control of the filmic presentation generates the state of transcendence. In Metz words, "... the spectator *identifies with himself*, with himself as a pure act of perception (as wakefulness, alertness): as the condition of possibility of the perceived and hence as a kind of transcendental subject, which comes before every there is" (Metz 1974, p. 253).

In terms of Apparatus Theory, the state of transcendence is the condition that the discourses of film transmit to the spectator during the act of perceiving the film through the sense of experience. Toby Miller (2000, p. 405) interprets the state of transcendence as the substitution of spectator's ability to comprehend with that of the filmic orientation.

*"The subject was presented with what looked like unveiled, transparent truth, whereby the camera substitutes for the eyes. Spectatorship was like "being there", but with intriguingly radical transformations of time and perspective: the distant grew near, the past became present, and points of view shifted. The spectator's loss of mobility was compensated by this promiscuous look, which traveled everywhere, to the most dangerous or painful as well as exhilarating places, and with impunity, as classical narrative ensured the ultimate restoration of equilibrium through perfect knowledge. The eye transcended the limitations of the body to roam across the multiple viewpoints the scenes of fiction feature film. (Miller 2000, p. 405)"*

Miller (2000, p. 406) explains the function of the transcendental state to serve the consolidation of spectator's perspectives to the side of the film. Miller defines the cinematic apparatus as the device that conducts the actual sensation of events to the constructed representational formation of film. He claims that this cinematic apparatus directs the spectator to gain the perspective of the film through the development of sensual experience despite filmic artificiality. In opposition to the sensually possessive nature of the diegetic film, Miller (2000, p. 406) places the non-diegetic, practices of filmmaking that endeavors to prevent the spectator from attaching. He presents the conventions of Hollywood feature films to exemplify the diegetic practices of filmmaking. The continuous progress of film, both in means of editing and mise-en-scene, the closural narrative style and the ultimate omniscient positioning of the spectator are significant characteristics of diegetic films. Non-diegetic practices of filmmaking strive to exhibit the artificial formation of the filmic narrative. The non-closural narrative styles, methods of non-continuity editing, highlighting

the existence and moreover, the intervention of the filmmaker are the nudging techniques of the non-diegetic films that disturb the constitution of attachment.

Stepping away from the separation Miller details, I believe that Apparatus Theory refers to the diegetic practices of filmmaking that define the film medium as a device that transmits its discourses to the spectator through the constitution of sensed experience. Therefore, the non-diegetic practices of filmmaking cannot be evaluated under the same conditions as diegetic practices on the transmission of discourses and moreover, the non-diegetic processes consciously struggle to create the opposite effect. In respect to the historiographical performance of historical film, diegetic and non-diegetic films also necessitate separation because of the constitution of sensual experience in diegetic narratives. The historiographical performance of non-diegetic films could be included and discussed in the field of independent historiography. And as I have mentioned in the first chapter, the historiographical performance of diegetic films take part in the field of popular historiography. In my study on the historiographical performance of the Hollywood blockbuster historical films, I will continue to work with the sensual experience the diegetic film creates through the Neo-Formalist approach of Kristin Thompson and David Bordwell.

Thompson and Bordwell explain the conception of involvement in diegetic film through the formal elements of the medium. The determination of filmic patterns that serve preconceived effects (in means of both audio-visual and sensual terms) compose the necessary fields to study film through formal approaches. Thompson and Bordwell (2008, p. 54) emphasize the engaging characteristic of diegetic films to attach their subjects through sensual involvement they perform through filmic narrative. They explain this bonding characteristic of diegetic film by their Neo-Formalist approach that uses narrative patterns the filmmaker creates (or reuses) to present the spectator a structured experience.

The definition of filmic diegesis translates into its own terms when understood from the Formalist approach even though the meaning and function would not change. As I have discussed above, Apparatus Theory explains diegesis as the composition of a design of world that is coherent in itself as a whole working through its own logic with cause-and-effect relationships. Apparatus Theory's conception of filmic diegesis is based on the

acknowledgement of a world that is constituted by design and that operates under its own gravitational rules. Thompson and Bordwell (2008, p. 56) worked on the causal and balanced establishment of formal elements into a film to understand the generation of diegesis. By the balanced establishment of formal elements, they refer to the resolution of the hooks like the reappearance of a character who was introduced briefly at the start or the balanced frame compositions generated through carefully placed shapes. According to them, this balanced establishment of filmic elements suggests that the film has its own system of operation. These organizational rules are peculiar to diegesis, hence free from the rules of actual life and therefore, adjust a spectator's mode of comprehension and reaction. In Thompson and Bordwell's example, Charlie Chaplin falls down in the street, in the film the spectator bursts into laughter, but in life the reaction towards someone in pain would probably be different. "We watch a pattern that is no longer just 'out there' in the everyday world; it has become a calculated part within a self contained whole" (Thompson and Bordwell 2008, p. 56). In accepting the diegesis as a coherent and independent whole, free from the limitations of real life, the reactions toward the events depicted would be shaped according to the diegesis. The coherence between the elements of film and the reaction of the audience are both appropriate to the gravitational rules of the diegesis, which constitutes the formation of the sensual experience.

In the effort to sustain the attachment to the diegesis, the production of expectation becomes a significant notion in Thompson and Bordwell's (2008, p. 60) approach. The notion of production of expectation is similar to the terminology of Apparatus Theory and as it is designated as filmic continuity. According to Thompson and Bordwell, the existence of expectation also sharpens the appetite for tracing filmic narrative in the forefront, therefore the conception gains another function when assessed from the Neo-Formalist perspective. In Thompson and Bordwell's interpretation, the gratification of the expectations through the means of closural formations produces sensual satisfaction and relief. The coherent cause-and-effect relationship that is consistent with the gravity of the diegesis retains the involvement of the spectator and hence, strengthens the sensual experience.

Through their Neo-Formalist approach Thompson and Bordwell (2008, p. 70) assert that the form is the element that shapes the filmic experience. The form that arises from the utilization of patterns establishes the balanced and coherent design of diegesis. The diegesis keeps the spectator attached through the placement of patterns that constitute the dynamic interplays. Thompson and Bordwell (2008, p. 69) portray the sensual experience diegetic film creates through the attachment that develops to the plausibility of the diegesis. They explain the function of elements that constitute the form in film with their metaphoric interpretation of the nature of experience.

*“As you walked into a building, your experience develops over time. In many cathedrals, for example, the entryway is fairly narrow. But as you emerge into the open area inside (the nave), space expands outward and upward, your sense of your body seems to shrink, and your attention is directed toward the altar, centrally located in the distance. The somewhat cramped entryway makes you feel a contrast to the broad and soaring space. Your experience has been as carefully planned as any theme park ride. Only by thinking back on it can you realize that the planned progression of the building’s different parts shaped your experience. If you could study the builder’s blueprints, you’d see the whole layout at a glance. It would be very far from your moment-by-moment experience of it, but it would shed light on how your experience was shaped” (Thompson and Bordwell 2008, p. 70).*

Both approaches from the perspectives of Apparatus Theory and Thompson and Bordwell’s Neo-Formalism exhibit the sense of experience diegetic film presents to the spectator. As the stance of Apparatus Theory strongly indicates, the sense of experience generated through the sensual involvement of diegesis engenders the transmission of film’s discourses to the spectator.

### **3.2 HISTORIOGRAPHICAL PERFORMANCE OF DIEGETIC FILM**

Based on the previous discussion, I would now like to focus on the historiographical performance of diegetic film in my study on the historiography of blockbuster historical films. If diegetic film constitutes a sense of experience through its narration then diegetic historical films would constitute a sense of historical experience by means of their perspective for an historical event. The historical consciousness of a spectator to experience an historical film would most probably be influenced by the historical representation of that specific event which is narrated in film. The diegetic historical films reproduce the history or more specifically, the experience of the past from the present and in the present of the spectator. Through the presentation of the sensual experiences of an historical event that is

narrated by a diegetic historical film, history becomes a phenomenon that happens at present as Sobchack (1996, p. 7) puts forward. In *The Persistence of History*, editor Vivian Sobchack expresses this phenomenon by quoting the tagline of The History Channel, “If you couldn’t be there the first time, here is your second chance” along with the slogan “All of History, All in One Place” (Sobchack 1996, p. 4). According to Sobchack (1996, p. 4), the historical representation performed by audio-visual practices (in terms of film and television which she address as an extension of the film medium in the conception of sensual experience) collapses the perception of history of an historical event to the present tense. In other words, for Sobchack the historiographical performance of the representative and diegetic practices abolishes the temporal space between the present and past by the sensual experience they transmit. This occasion creates a blur in the cognition of history by dragging the meaning to the field of simultaneity. Sobchack (1996, p. 5) describes the mode of historical representation in the beginning of Twentieth Century as a phenomenon that happened some time ago before the filmic representation of history, while she points out the shift of perception this conception performs. “Today history seems to happen right now – is transmitted, reflected upon, shown play-by-play, taken up as the stuff of multiple stories and significance, given all sorts of ‘coverage’ in the temporal dimension of the present as we live it” (Sobchack 1996, p. 5). The sense of experience generated for an historical event through the historiographical performance of the diegetic film transforms the perception of history to a sensation of the present. The conception of history mutates into a conception that is produced and described from the present, therefore the whole temporal sensation dims in a broad sense.

Through the assembling and relating the theoretical perspectives that I have mentioned in this chapter, the consequence of historiographical performance of diegetic film arises. That is the transmission of discourses by means of historical perspectives. In other words, historical diegetic films constitute a sense of historical experience towards their perspective of the historical event. The sensate experience generated by diegetic film engenders the comprehension of an historical event towards the framing of the representation in the film. The relationship between the dominant social tendencies of the present and the formation of the historical perspectives of blockbuster historical films (as the branch of diegetic film that is most interrelated with the dominant tendencies of society because of its profit-based



nature) would be the eventual focus of this chapter. But before I elaborate the characteristics of the relationship between the present social tendencies and historical representation of the blockbuster film, I will discuss the arguments of Hayden White and Robert Rosenstone on the appropriateness of the medium of film for the purposes of historiography.

### **3. 2. 1 THE APPROACH OF HAYDEN WHITE AND ROBERT ROSENSTONE ON THE HISTORIOGRAPHICAL PERFORMANCE OF FILM**

Robert A. Rosenstone (1995, pp. 5-23), in his article *The Historical Film as Real History* in the journal *Film – Historia* confronts historians who find historical films inappropriate to serve as a tool of historiography. He claims that the fictive characteristic of the film medium disturbs the professionals of historiography. In the article, Rosenstone opposes the historiographer's arguments on the constructed character of filmic representations of history by pointing them the same methods utilized by the written practices of historiography. Rosenstone builds his framework of arguments around Hayden White's (1988) theory that works on the filmic representation of history. Hayden White contributed to the terminology of the filmic representation of history by introducing the term "historiophoty". White defines historiography as "the representation of history in verbal images and written discourse" (White 1988, p. 1193). In his article, he places the definition of the term historiophoty above the term historiography stressing the differing tools the two mediums use in their means of historical representation. White defines historiophoty as "the representation of history and our thought about it in visual images and filmic discourse" (White 1988, p. 1193). The performance of representation of history through the use of pen and paper (metaphorically) is abbreviated as historiography. In the first chapter of the thesis I have tried to explain the methods of historiography in an effort to define this creation as a construct. The selection of historical facts according to the plot and the wrapping of the historical facts with the facts of past in order to build a seamless historical narration would point to the constructed character of historiography.

The aim of Rosenstone's article (1995, p. 5-23) is to attract attention to the historiographical performance of historical film. To exemplify his argument, he humorously directs the question to historians asking if they have ever gained some

historical knowledge that is outside their area of expertise through a film. By this association, Rosenstone progresses, reasoning that even if a film's informational attribution is not that respectable nor reliable, the historical representation in the historical film inevitably carries historical knowledge. In his study, Rosenstone evaluates the historiography of written and filmic practices as equal in the case of historical accuracy based on the narrative selected, in other words, the constructed nature of the practice. He asserts that the work of historiography should not be considered more reliable than the historical film in the representation of history.

Robert A. Rosenstone compiles his work on the historiographical performance of the film medium in the book *History on Film Film on History*. In an effort to express his ideas about the possibility of the representation of history through film it would be best to open this analyses with the incident he mentions that in his words enlightened his mind. In the year 2000, he attended a conference in Japan. There he joined some former friends and colleagues whom he had met when he was working at Kyushu University as a Fulbright professor. One of his friends, a mathematician and a student of Buddhism, reflects on Rosenstone's ideas about historical representation in historical films. He says that Rosenstone's idea that a two-hours film could do as much representation of history as a four-volume book reminds him of the association between Sanskrit texts of Buddhism and Buddhist paintings. In the Sixth or Seventh Century Japan, Buddhist priests created visual works of Sanskrit texts as paintings in order to make them much more comprehensible to the illiterate population in an effort to spread the ideas of Buddhism. Buddhist priests knew that the paintings would not carry all the meaning and the information about Buddhism, but they wisely thought that the paintings would express the sense of Buddhism in a more accessible way. The idea of this story strongly influenced Rosenstone's way of thinking about the representation of history through historical films. Defining the historical film as just another medium for the representation of history like the medium of historiography, Rosenstone (2006, p. 155) simply distinguishes them as history on the page and history on the screen. He suggests that if there is more than one way to express the ideas of Buddhist doctrine, then he supposes that there are alternative ways to express historical knowledge. In order to express the similarity of the constitutions of historiography and historiophoty, Rosenstone (2006, p. 155) highlights the methodology of historiography by means of

narration and selectivity. He asserts that the use of narration is an inevitable way to express and understand the traces of data about past. History is understood through stories. Historical narrations house historical fact along with other elements that are not data or evidence (facts about past), but are fundamental for the constitution of the narration. Rosenstone (2006, p. 155) continues with the selective characteristic of the historiography. He points out that for the fabrication of a seamless historical narration, historiography selects the appropriate facts from a pool of historical data by intention, leaving the unselected historical data without interpretation. By the use of selection and narration Rosenstone asserts that the historiography constructs historical data into historical knowledge, in other words, the expression of historical meaning. Comparing this narrative and selective methodology with the historical film's structure, Rosenstone argues that the historical film may not be history in the traditional understanding but it is indisputably a tool to express historical knowledge. He puts forward that the historiography through film (historiophoty) enables the representation of the past in an audio-visual way. In his analyses Rosenstone (2006 p. 2) considers the historical world created by written material and by filmic material similar to each other by the way each house both the actual events and the fictional contributions made to align the pieces of data into the narration. Challenging the commonly held idea that the written representation of history, in other words historiography, is the one factual and solid way of shedding light on the past, Rosenstone (2006, p. 3) follows the path Hayden White opened through the post-structuralist critique of historical practice. In his groundbreaking book *Metahistory* (as I have already mentioned in the first chapter in the effort to analyze the narrative in historiography) Hayden White (1975, p. 89) works on the structure of the most prestigious historical texts. As a consequence of his effort to position historiography as a genre of literature that contain factual elements, White suggests that glorified historical texts were written in the structure and the style of Nineteenth Century British novels. Through the perspective of the work of White, the solidity and stability of the historical text dissolved along with the unconditional credibility that historicism suggested. The emergence of the constructed nature of historiography with the contribution of Hayden White opened the way for Rosenstone to assume the possible existence of other mediums whose functions is the representation of history. From the analysis he makes in his book *History on Film Film on History*,

Rosenstone aims to attract attention to the filmic representation of history which he thinks is a convenient tool for expressing the meaning of past. To articulate his analysis Rosenstone starts by diminishing the borders of filmic representation of history as a means of a material designed for entertainment. Designating the audio-visual media as a contemporary tool for cultural expressions, Rosenstone (2006, p. 4) considers the film medium in the same field. Without the creation of the influence the historic film instills, Rosenstone asserts that most of the historical consciousness of a population would be nil. Opposing the traditional monopoly of historical representation by the tool of historiography, he puts forward the availability, moreover the success of film as a tool for the expression of past meaning. By doing so, Rosenstone does not suggest overriding the written representation of history (historiography), but in proposing historiophoty as a more accessible tool for that purpose. What Rosenstone states is that the filmic representation of history deserves more attention and respect as it is another important kind of tool for the representation of the meaning of past.

### **3. 2. 2 A CRITIQUE OF HAYDEN WHITE AND ROBERT ROSENSTONE'S APPROACH**

Hayden White and Robert Rosenstone's approach is important based on their arguments that appraise the performance of historical films in the field of historiography. Applying White's idea of historiophoty and Rosenstone's argument on the constructed nature of all practices of historiography, I'd like to emphasize the equal value of historical accuracy that this approach gives to the filmic and written practices of historiography. I find this approach useful on the issue of historical accuracy in written or filmic practices of historiography based on its constructed nature. However, using this assessment of filmic and written practices of historiography without considering the difference that diegetic, narrative and representative elements of this practice make up the weak side of this argument.

To directly define the medium of film as an audio-visual device to conduct information would be gently reductionist. Using this assessment (I will use the exaggerated example of) the sensational value of a smart refrigerator with an audible dash panel would have an equal effect to that of film. As I have mentioned previously, the occurrence and the effects of the

filmic experience of diegetic films, the filmic representation of history demands specificity on the issues of diegetic and non-diegetic practices. I ended the first chapter by designating the diegetic and non-diegetic practices of historiography as an aspect that includes all practices of historiography. As I have mentioned, I accept and espouse the equality of historical accuracy of the different practices of historiography, whether diegetic or non-diegetic, based on their constructed nature. But the historical representation of non-diegetic film that endeavors to avoid the attachment of spectator and the transmission of the sensual experience of the historical event may be appraised with same value as the work posed by independent historiography. On the other hand, the historiographical performance the diegetic historical film poses shall be understood in the field of popular historiography along with other diegetic practices (written or spoken) that transmits sensual experience of the historical event. The transmission of sensual experience gains a high measure of importance when considering the approach of Apparatus Theory. Through the sensational recreation of the historical event that collapses the meaning of historicity to the present moment as Sobchack suggests, the diegetic practices of historiography specifically the film can be understood as a tool to reproduce history. The reproduction of history may be understood as a definition of historiography, but the difference lies just where this definition is. The reproduction of history is the performance of the diegetic practices of historiography because they transmit a sensual experience of the historical event. The work of the non-diegetic practices of historiography may be conceptualized as the narration or expression of history. Diegetic and non-diegetic works of historiography may be on the same level when evaluated from the aspect of historical accuracy. After all, they are both narratives that contain historical facts and the selection and establishment of those historical facts depend on the intention of the historiographer or in some cases filmmaker. But as I argue based on the approaches of Apparatus Theory and Sobchack, the difference lies in the transmission of the sensual experience of the historical event that is narrated. The perspective of an historical film towards the historical event it depicts becomes established in spectator's historical consciousness through the transmission of sensual experience of that historical event.

### **3.3 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE BLOCKBUSTER FILM AND THE DOMINANT TENDENCIES OF SOCIETY**

The historical representation of a diegetic film constructs a sphere of experience about the historical event narrated in the film. A significant portion of historical consciousness is constituted through and within the products of mainstream popular historiography. The dominance of popular historiography may be explained by the ideas of easy accessibility and more significantly, by the continuous excitement created by popular media. The popular mainstream practices of historiography such as bestselling historical novels or blockbuster historical films are profit oriented. The profit-oriented characteristics of popular products gains significance in this study because of the relationship it poses with the dominant social tendencies of society. The popular mainstream practices of historiography are produced to be consumed on a massive scale. In the case of blockbuster films, the blockbuster industry is naturally designed to sell a lot of tickets. Through the rules of supply-and-demand management, the popular mainstream practices of historiography need to be pertinent to the sentiments of society. In other words, they need to relate with the current tendencies in a society. The narratives within these products comprise the current conflicts of a society and contain the zeitgeist of the period. Like any other popular culture product, the products of popular mainstream historiography need to touch the wounded areas of society in order to create broad sensations to be consumed on a large scale. This correlative condition between mainstream popular historiography and the current tendencies of a society is given form by the involvement of current tendencies in the representation of the historical event. Hence, the historical sphere of experience the diegetic blockbuster films perform historical representation include the current social tendencies in their practice of historiography. As I have argued in the first chapter, the ideology of the political power in a community effects the value systems and social tendencies of the society to a large extent. Blockbuster films, while tracking the current tendencies of the society, render the ideologies of those in political power in their plots and narration.

### **3. 3. 1 HOLLYWOOD FILM AS A PRODUCT OF CULTURE INDUSTRY**

In my effort to study the integration of dominant discourses on popular narrative representative works of historiography especially blockbuster historical films, I will work on Douglass Kellner's interpretation of the Frankfurt School's notion of culture industries.

Taking the approach of the Frankfurt School, Douglas Kellner's analysis determines that the Hollywood film is a product of the culture industry. Kellner (2004, p. 202) starts with a brief explanation of the development of the notion culture industries in the Frankfurt School. According to Kellner, the perspective developed by the Frankfurt School in the 1930s initiated a critique directed towards mass communication. The interdisciplinary approach of the Frankfurt School on mass communication contained the critique of the political economy of media, the social and ideological effects of mass culture, and audience reception studies. In order to emphasize the industrialization procedure of mass-produced culture, the theoreticians of the Frankfurt School Adorno and Horkheimer developed the term 'culture industries'. In their analyses, they highlighted the commercial restrictions that shape the system of mass-production. In Kellner's explanation (2004, p. 202), the mass-mediated cultural pieces were analyzed through the context of industrial production. Therefore, the commodities of mass-mediated cultural pieces were assessed as any other material of mass production. The assessment was done through the notions of commodification, standardization, and massification of cultural production. In Kellner's explanation, along with the transformation rendered on the formation of a cultural artifact, the productions of the culture industries' spreads the value system that is suggested by the dominant discourse in a society. The mass-produced artifact therefore creates a standardized cultural product that acts as a broom to gather and place the mindset of the society into the borders of a dustpan. In Kellner's expression, "The culture industries had the specific function of providing ideological legitimation of the existing capitalist societies and of integrating individuals into the frameworks of its social formation." (Kellner 2004, p. 203). For Kellner (2004, p. 203) the Frankfurt School's perspective was the first to approach culture industries as the reproducers of the contemporary societies.

The products of culture industries were to establish the notions of the dominant discourse in a society through the media, as it was the most significant element of socialization during leisure time. The value systems formed by the dominant discourse of a period in a community is reproduced and established by culture industries almost like the blood vessels within the body. Through socialization, the products of culture industries suggest that the ideology of the dominant discourse spread disguised as leisure-time activity. The repetitive nature of the products of culture industries is based on the standardized form, as it was a convenient entity to market widely. The products of the culture industry render themselves on the already-existing mindset, stay in the realm of already-compromised thoughts and beliefs therefore, reproduce the existing conditions of society. By doing so, these products achieve excessive amounts of consumption through the comfort of perceptibility and in the safety of coherence.

Kellner (2004, p. 203) asserts that the outputs of culture industries are efficient tools of social control and domination through the habituation of the individual to the amenity of partaking in the dominant patterns. In Kellner's words "...mass culture and communications stand in the center of leisure activity, are important agents of socialization and mediators of political reality, and should thus be seen as major institutions of contemporary societies with a variety of economic, political, cultural and social effects." (Kellner 2004, p. 203).

According to Kellner (2004, p. 203), the theorists of the Frankfurt School (through their exile in the United States) detected the product of culture industry in the United States or American 'popular culture' was serving to improve the profits of capitalism. The culture industry in the U.S. was controlled by huge corporations; therefore the formation of cultural artifacts was managed by the principles of mass production. The mode of production was standardized to be able to fulfill the needs of a commercialized cultural consumption. The function of the cultural industry in the U.S. was the legitimization of American capitalism through the reproduction of the values espoused by the institutions of the system. According to Kellner (2004, p. 204), the term designated as 'Hollywood film' was the industrial mode of production of film in the United States. The Hollywood film is a cinematic production that attributes vital importance to commercial values. When defining



Hollywood film as a product of the culture industry of the United States, the commodification of the filmic material occurs due to its mode of production. Kellner (2004, p. 205) considers film as the first mass-produced material of the Twentieth century. The mass-production of film is the commercial attempt ruled as a branch of the entertainment industry in United States. The aim of industrialized production was to provide huge consumption. In other words, to maintain a substantial amount of consumption, film in United States is produced in the mode of mass-production. The texture of a Hollywood film is formed according to the entertainment industry. The benefits of the film medium (compared to the other practices of the entertainment industry) were both the technological and sensual (conceptual) capacity of the medium to be reproduced.

The technological reproduction is the physical multiplication of the projection copies of the film in order to present the film countless times in different theatres. On the other hand, the sensual reproduction of the Hollywood film can be understood through the concept of film genres. A film genre is the formation of emotional patterns due to the plot of the filmic narratives. The similar placement of the events and the almost identical formation of the characters like the hero and the villain determine the characteristics of film genres. The Western, melodrama or horror genres are examples of popular Hollywood film genres. The creation of film genres was the consequence of the effort to fulfill the demands of the film industry. According to Kellner (2004, p. 205) film genres were formed in United States by their continuous reproduction in popular films. In order to keep up the constant consumption of films in United States, popular types of films were mass-produced in genre form. The genre films of Hollywood cinema in Kellner's (2004, p. 210) interpretation constitute the perfect formula for commercial success by fulfilling the audience's expectation through the narrative structure. Kellner explains the profit-based constitution on the mode of Hollywood film production as "...following the economic imperatives of the capitalist system to produce products as quickly and cheaply as possible to maximize production and profits, the Hollywood cinema became a genre cinema." (Kellner 2004, p. 210).

### 3.3.2 BLOCKBUSTER SYNDROME

Through the 1950s the film industry in United States achieved a higher state of commercial success in the formation of the notion blockbuster. Although the concept of the blockbuster film has no strict definition, the indicative characteristic of the phenomenon is ‘size’. As depicted by Julian Stringer in the book *Movie Blockbusters* (2003, p. 5), the generic identity of the blockbuster films is the size and that is big. The massive size of a blockbuster film is created in each phase of its cinematic constitution. Big budget, big production, big stars, big marketing are all combined and targeted for big consumption. In his study portraying the factors of the formation of blockbuster in Hollywood film, Thomas Schatz (2003, p. 17) embarks on a survey beginning in the early 1950s. Schatz assesses the growth of independent motion picture production, the increasing prominence of studios, the emergence of commercial television, and the reconfiguration of the American lifestyle through the patterns of media consumption as the main factors of blockbuster syndrome in the Hollywood film industry. Schatz portrays the constitution of blockbuster films by means of their orientation toward profit as ‘calculated production’ by giving such examples as the films, *The Ten Commandments* (1956), *The Sound of Music* (1965) and *Jaws* (1975). Thomas Elsaesser in his article *The Blockbuster: Everything connects, but not everything goes* defines the blockbuster film as a sensational event. In his portrayal of the characteristics of the blockbuster film, Elsaesser (2001, p. 16) begins with big subjects and big budgets as they form around the notions of disasters, world wars, monsters, aliens, etc. According to him, the subjects shape around traditional stories, the mystical background of historical events and usually in the form of fantasy or science fiction. Next, he mentions the young male protagonist who accomplishes impossible quests (the archetypical hero from Western mythology) as an inevitable component of the blockbuster film. Defining the blockbuster film as the technological extension of fairy tales, Elsaesser (2001, p. 17) underlies the industrial organization that manufactures the spectacular experience. The conception of marketing is introduced to the realm of the cinema through the blockbuster films. The rush activity of marketing as a tool of attracting attention of the society (or more frankly, the target consumer group) to the upcoming spectacular event is a significant definitive component of the blockbuster film. Various marketing strategies are applied such as the large organized events regarding the film to gain media coverage or the

merchandising of the action-heroes figures in fast-food-chain restaurants. Elsaesser (2001, p. 16) indicates that the blockbuster film announces out loud (in the form of marketing) that it is going to be a “spectacular”, weeks before the first screening through the excitement it creates in the media. The blockbuster film is a film that establishes and presents itself as an event. According to Elsaesser, a film doesn’t turn out to be a blockbuster as a result of the sales success at the box office, the blockbuster film is a creation that is produced and promoted and presented as a blockbuster. The power to produce mind-blowing visual effects that suggest a new mode of reality or the power to open the film in thousands of theatres at the same time, which captures the custom of going to a movie is provided through the extravagant budget of the blockbuster movie. Julian Stringer (2003, p. 5) emphasizes the positioning that is implied by the blockbuster film through marketing strategies and defines the concept of blockbuster as the most public kind of popular cinema. According to Stringer, one of the most charming characteristics of the blockbuster film is the parade it presents to show off wealth during the process of promotion for the film. Thomas Schatz (2003, p. 18) also marks the marketing phase of the blockbuster film as an inevitable component of its constitution defining the blockbuster film as a pre-sold spectacular. From the 1950s to the present, the notion of the Hollywood film is substantially understood around the concept of the blockbuster.

### **3. 3. 3 THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL TENDENCIES ON BLOCKBUSTER FILMS**

From early film to the present, the film in United States (like the rest of the world) covers an important part of leisure activity. Moving from the understanding of the film medium’s possession over the leisure time, it can be stated that the film medium influences social life constantly. According to Kellner (2004, p. 205), in the first half of the Twentieth Century, Hollywood films were a significant source of influence in the United States and act as a tool of enculturation. Exceeding the borders of influence in the following decades as Kellner states, the Hollywood film became an important agent of socialization, which generated patterns for morals, marriage, happiness, and so on. But the influence of Hollywood film (in other words, mainstream film) is unfortunately not independent from the socio-economic tendencies in the society. Hollywood film reproduces the dominant discourse in a society through the narrative it creates. The proper ways of thought and

action that are suggested by the current dominant discourse is presented and therefore legitimized in Hollywood films. The reason for this reflexive relationship between the dominant discourse and Hollywood film would be explained in the profit-based characteristic of culture industry. According to Kellner (2004, p. 207), Hollywood films were produced by big studios from the very beginning of the film medium. The monopoly the big studios had on the production and the projection practices reduced the act of filmmaking to a limited group of commercial establishments. The profit-oriented mode of manufacturing is instilled in the practices of film production through the direction of commercial mentality. In order to market a film to an audience on a huge scale, in other words to be consumed smoothly, the films needs to be in accordance with the current tendencies in a society. Thompson and Bordwell (2008, p. 326) explain the industrial mode of production and the role of broad social tendencies in their metaphoric designation of the contract between the filmmaker and audience. “Because of the contract between the filmmaker and audience, the promise of something new based on something familiar genres may also respond quickly to broad social trends” (Thompson and Bordwell 2008, p. 326). In Kellner’s expression, “Since films must attract large audiences, they need to resonate the audiences’ dreams, fears, and social concerns and thus inevitably reflected social mores, conflicts and ideologies.” (Kellner 2004, p. 207). Through this understanding, Kellner considers Hollywood film as a convenient material for analyzing the society for which the film is produced. According to Kellner (2004, p. 207), the mainstream film reflects the dominant tendencies of the social conflicts of a society along with the solutions the dominant discourse poses for the conflicts. The Hollywood film determines its menu according to the demands of the audience in order to be consumed by a large population. The dominant tendencies of a society constitute the demands of the society. Consequently, the dominant tendencies of a society designate the experience the audience desires to have through the film medium. The filmic experience that fulfills the demand of the audience is the filmic experience that houses the tense social conflicts in its narration and suggests smooth solutions to the problem. Through the filmic experience, the audience confronts current conflicts and relieves itself through the catharsis of the film. Therefore, the Hollywood film positions itself as a tool for relaxation to the audience and arguably stands at the core of the entertainment industry. The Hollywood film not only exhibits itself as a

fun place to escape from daily worries, but a sphere that cures daily worries. For the solutions of the conflicts within a society, the Hollywood film once again influences from the dominant discourse in the society. The Hollywood film suggests that all social conflicts would be gracefully solved through the common values of the society. The common values, the common sense that is being shaped by the dominant discourse. Kellner sheds light on the bond between the dominant discourse in U.S. society and the Hollywood film by stating that, “In order to resonate the audience fears, fantasies and experiences, the Hollywood genres had to deal with the central conflicts and problems in U.S. society and offer soothing resolutions, assuring its all problems could be solved within existing institutions.” (Kellner 2004, p. 211). This quote points to a bond between the dominant tendencies of a society and mainstream cinema through the understanding of the socio-economic framing of the Frankfurt school by the conception of culture industries. The recent blockbuster *Avatar* (2009) directed by James Cameron would be a suitable example to explain this concept. One of the main global concerns of our time is the threat of losing the natural resources of our world through global warming. According to specialists on the subject, under our present conditions of consumption, the earth would be able to provide the necessary resources for humanity for approximately fifty more years. The social tendency that has evolved around this threat to humanity enabled the establishment of many new businesses. Intrinsic to the nature of capitalism, the threat of global warming turns into a business opportunity by means of ‘green-wash’. Many of the auto industry’s hybrid electric cars, the natural distillation to be done by famous oil brands or the household appliances that use less energy would be examples of this ‘green-wash’. The blockbuster film *Avatar* as a product of culture industry establishes its thematic narration around this social tendency. The film contains one of the main conflicts of society (the threat of ruining the natural balance of the earth) and finds soothing solutions for the problem through its catharsis. The creators of blockbuster films usually establish the diegesis by offering a different environment in terms of space and time to maintain the escapist element for the audience. A direct realistic representation of the conflict may disturb the voyeuristic pleasure. As we trace the diegesis of *Avatar*, the film transports the conflict of our earth to a fictitious planet.

This relationship could be simplified to say mainstream film or more directly, the blockbuster film is produced to be consumed on a mass scale. The aim of the production of a blockbuster film is to be sold to a large audience. In order to be sold to a mass audience, the blockbuster film has to be as the audience wants it to be. In other words, the blockbuster film has to fulfill the audience's demands and to discover the demands of the audience (the target consumer group) the blockbuster producers ascertain and analyze the main tendencies within a society. The main tendencies of the society are shaped around the values the dominant discourse establishes. By the detecting the main tendencies in the society, the blockbuster film creatively engraves the fears and fantasies of the audience in the narration. The stylish lacework of the blockbuster aims to attract the attention of the audience. The blockbuster film portrays and then, heals socially conflicting fields by mentioning and synthetically healing where the 'shoe pinches' in the society. The social conflicts portrayed in the blockbuster that are designated as the problematic areas by the dominant discourse in the society are fixed again within the norms of the dominant discourse. By the soothing resolutions the blockbuster films suggest through catharsis, the blockbuster film heals the problematic issues within the existing social institutions. Through the understanding of the bond above, I assert that the blockbuster film reflects the ideas of the dominant discourse in a society.

### **3. 4 THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF BLOCKBUSTER HISTORICAL FILMS**

The constitution of the blockbuster film is bound to the main tendencies of the society through economic interests. But what happens when a blockbuster film performs historical representation? The main current tendencies of the society would inevitably be involved in the historical representation. In regard to this aspect Vivian Sobchack (1996, p. 6) acknowledges the historiography performed by popular practices like blockbuster films as a commodity, something that is adjusted for the highest consumer satisfaction. As I have discussed previously, the dominant discourse of those in political power influences the tendencies of the society to a great extent. Based on this idea, I argue that the historiography of blockbuster historical films reflect the current ideas of the dominant discourse in a society. Therefore, the historical representation of an incident in blockbuster films would shift simultaneously with the transformation of the dominant discourse in a

society. To further my study on the bond between the dominant discourse and historical representation in historical blockbuster films, I will focus on blockbuster World War II films produced in two different periods. The transformation of the tendencies in American society that evolved around the discourses of George W. Bush and Barack Obama will be studied through the historical representations of blockbuster World War II films produced during these two periods.

#### **4. THE SHIFT IN THE DISCOURSES OF BUSH AND OBAMA AND THEIR REFLECTIONS IN BLOCKBUSTER WORLD WAR II FILMS OF THESE PERIODS**

In an effort to work on the effects of social dynamics and societal tendencies on the reproduction of history through the historical representations in blockbuster films, I will focus my analysis on the transformation of the representation of evil within human nature. I choose to work on the representation of evil in human nature based on the observations I have made on the shift in the discourse abroad of American society for the conception of this notion. The shift I will elaborate on is the transforming social tendency for the concept of evil in human nature according to the transforming discourses of the presidential administration of George W. Bush and the presidential campaign of Barack Obama. For my study on the transforming representation of evil in human nature, Hollywood blockbuster World War II films that were produced in these two periods will constitute the framework of the analysis. My focus on World War II films is based on the acknowledgement of the World War II sub genre for the direct representation of evil in human nature. The direct representative codes that were generated during World War II for the narration of the evil in human nature are continually utilized in Hollywood films.

##### **4.1 WORLD WAR II AND THE CONCEPTION OF EVIL IN HUMAN NATURE**

For the creation of the concept of evil in human nature, World War II far outshines all other periods. What is portrayed in this period was that humanity experienced the definition of evil through the presence and operation of the Nazi party through its leader Adolf Hitler along with the military operations of World War II and the progress of the Holocaust. It was the time determined as the approach to the limits of humanity. The seeds of the World War II were planted with the election of the Nazi party in Germany in 1937 with Adolf Hitler elected as leader. The German government was founded on the both physical and psychological wrecks of World War I gained power with the promise of reproducing a true unified force of Aryan Germans. The adherents of the Jewish religion were annihilated in the process and the justification for these acts was posited on the discourse of the creation of a pure nation.



According to Robert Sklar (1994, p. 367), World War II holds a unique place in the broad historical consciousness. The Holocaust was defined by the murder of six million adherents of the Jewish religion performed by the Nazi Government of Germany. As Sklar stresses about this issue, the distinctive feature of the actions of Holocaust was the deliberate practice of annihilation of the Jewish people. This devastating incidence of genocide had irreversible effects mainly in Europe and North America both during the process and also afterwards. The incidence of the Holocaust had a broad global effect included the practice of filmmaking in various ways. The effort to document World War II generated the demand for the hand-held camera shooting techniques, which contributed to the growth of cinematography to a major extent. The possibility to shoot on location rather than under the designed conditions in the studio enabled the creation of realism both in diegetic or non-diegetic filmmaking practices. The realistic traditions of documentary filmmaking practices could without exception be attributed to the technical and stylistic contributions of World War II. Alongside the technical contributions of the period to cinematographic practices, the effects of the period on the concepts of narration in filmmaking practices should also be taken into consideration. Based on the framework of this study that consists of the blockbuster Hollywood films, I will limit my attention to the effects of World War II in filmmaking practices within the borders of diegetic and mainstream Hollywood films.

Robert Sklar (2002, p. 236) states that World War II was fought synchronously on the movie screen, indicating the mediation of the war through the motion picture camera. The intertwining character of the filmic texture included both narrative, genre entertainment films and actual documentaries of the war. The matter of filmic representation was the identical visual transmission of both actual war footage and the representation of the war in genre entertainment. Based on the inclusive specificity of the medium, Sklar denotes that the film medium has shaped the vision of World War II in a broad sense. Due to the framework of the study, I will direct my attention to the filmmaking practices in Hollywood. Sklar indicates that World War II did not substantially affect the quantity of production in Hollywood. However, the themes of genre entertainment were under the valuation of the 'Office of War Information' (OWI) department of the government. In Sklar's view Hollywood consented to the direction given by the government for the determination of the plots and themes. Therefore, the climate between Hollywood and the

government was mild during that period. The superintendence of the government contained the establishment of the propagandist elements in Hollywood war films such as the bravery of the common soldier in combat. But the most important function of the Hollywood film industry was the ability of the medium to transmit the statements of the government on the war. The government would utilize the Hollywood film industry to exhibit the position of the United States in World War II to American society. According to Sklar, the main concepts of the war to be explained through film to American society were the characterization of the enemy and the rationalization of U.S.'s involvement in the war. One of the most important assignments for film production during the war period was handed to director Frank Capra (1897-1991). He was assigned to direct a series of films under the supervision of the government. The films were produced for all of American society including the soldiers of the United States' army. The film series called "Why We Fight" was composed of seven films aimed to explain the United State's involvement in the war. In Sklar's (2002, p. 240) perspective, the involvement of the United States in the war was broadly explained through the films by the evil ambitions of the enemy. The characterizations in Hollywood films for the war period determined the conceptions of hero, villain and justice in the battle with evil. These codes for the righteous attitude of war, which emerged in that period, became the timeless key sources of representation for any kind of battle in Hollywood films. The stereotypical representations of the hero and bravery in the battlefield were seamlessly adapted to any subject that needed the affirmation of the evil existence of the enemy.

In the post-war period the effects of World War II were continuing. According to Sklar (1994, p. 368) the harsh sense of genocide was so difficult to face that in the post-war period the memory itself soon became phenomenological. Through the trauma of the remembrance of the unbearable horror there arose a hysteria for preserving that memory. The recounting of the experience and the memory of Holocaust came to life through representative mediums. Museums and memorials were constructed to retain the memory of disaster. According to Sklar (1994, p. 368), the representation of genocide spread to the media of popular entertainment and helped disseminate the adherence of the memory. The effort to constitute the widespread representations of the genocide eventuated with the dominance of the representations of popular entertainment mediums on the historical

memory. Therefore, the memory and sensuality of World War II became restricted to the stereotypical representations of popular entertainment mediums.

The popular representations of genocide predictably were established in the medium of film too as it is one of the most developed of the popular entertainment mediums. The stereotypical representations of the rightful war to defend freedom, the hero, and evil, which were constructed in Hollywood during the war period, continued to be reproduced and presented afterwards as well. More specifically, representations of the hero and his fight against evil produced by Hollywood in the war films during World War II were utilized over and over again in every period American society needed a definition for the enemy. Sklar underlines the recycling of the stereotypical representations in popular culture as “World War II- era popular culture represented instead, in its most simple, hence most pure, form, the values of the ‘good war’: unity, self sacrifice for a higher calling, clarity of purpose against an evil enemy, implacable will toward ultimate victory.” (Sklar 1994, p. 342). The constructed values of heroic self-sacrifice working against the evil enemy are constantly employed during the periods of the Cold War and the Vietnam War. In Sklar’s (1994, p. 342) view, the mainstream Hollywood films of these periods utilizes the stereotypical representations of World War II in the effort to justify the reasons to fight as well as to define the enemy.

Mainstream World War II films as a popular sub-genre deserves prominence over other mainstream genre films of Hollywood to represent the evil enemy. The narration of war in films provides a useful atmosphere to generate thrilling action scenes while it reproduces the definition of enemy through the representations of hero and evil. The films that establish their narration in the period of World War II create a direct definition of evil in the form of Hitler and German society during the war. Along with the thematic representations of evil in other mainstream genre films of Hollywood, mainstream blockbuster World War II films are in the forefront due to the historical representation that these films enact.

The film medium can be acknowledged as tool to perform historical representation with its own medium-specific characteristics. The recognition of the historical representation the

film medium performs is based on the acceptance of the fictional nature of historical representation. The historical films that shape their narration around historical incidents perform historical representation. With all the acceptance of the historical representation the film medium performs, I want to focus my study on historical films that are blockbusters. I have already defined the blockbuster films as profit-based entities that are the products of the culture industry. The socio-economic relationship of the blockbuster film with society shows us that the blockbuster film reflects the ideas of the dominant discourse in a society. The study on the problematic area crystalizes in the case of historical blockbuster films. When a blockbuster film performs historical representation, the current tendencies of the society would inevitably be involved in the establishment of the representation.

According to this argument, I believe that the historiography of blockbuster historical films reflect the ideas of the dominant discourse in a society. Therefore, once the dominant discourse becomes different in a society, the historical representation of the same incident shifts in the blockbuster historical films. In an effort to understand the relationship between the shift in the dominant discourse and the synchronized altering of historical representation in historical blockbuster films, I will analyze blockbuster World War II films, which were produced under two different dominancy periods. The shifting tendencies of the American society that evolved around the discourses of George W. Bush in the period of his presidency and Barack Obama in his presidential campaign will be studied through the historical representations of the blockbuster World War II films produced in these periods. The discourses of George W. Bush after 9/11 and the discourses of the presidential campaign of Barack Obama (the so-called 'Obama Project') in the conception of evil in human nature will constitute the framework of this study to be tracked through blockbuster World War II films.

## 4.2 THE SHIFT IN THE SOCIAL TENDENCIES OF AMERICAN SOCIETY THROUGH THE DISCOURSES OF GEORGE W. BUSH AND BARACK OBAMA ON THE CONCEPTION OF EVIL IN HUMAN NATURE

George W. Bush became the 43rd President of the United States in 20<sup>th</sup> of January in 2001. Shortly after beginning his presidential duties, the 9/11 disaster took place in 11<sup>th</sup> of September in 2001. The trauma of this harrowing incident profoundly affected the social tendencies of the U.S. The vigilant foreign policy of George W. Bush during his presidency was more or less certain from his presidential candidacy, however the constitution of his approach became distinct with the 9/11 attacks. The position of George W. Bush towards the incident as the president of the U.S. intrinsically reflected the general discourse of the society. The president's manner of aggressive, bloodthirsty avenger after the terrorist attacks determined the characteristics of the dominant discourse of the society at the time. The presidential speech of George W. Bush on the 9/11 terrorist attacks exhibits his combative attitude.

In his speech right after the incident of 9/11, Bush presented the wounded and insecure mindset that would only heal through revenge and that affected the discourse abroad for that period in great sense. The opening part of the speech introduces the terrorist attacks as the exhibition of evil within human nature.

*“Today, our fellow citizens, our way of life, our very freedom came under attack in a series of deliberate and deadly terrorist acts. The victims were in airplanes, or in their offices; secretaries, businessmen and women, military and federal workers; moms and dads, friends and neighbors. Thousands of lives were suddenly ended by evil, despicable acts of terror. The pictures of airplanes flying into buildings, fires burning, huge structures collapsing, have filled us with disbelief, terrible sadness, and a quiet, unyielding anger. These acts of mass murder were intended to frighten our nation into chaos and retreat. But they have failed; our country is strong. A great people have been moved to defend a great nation. Terrorist attacks can shake the foundations of our biggest buildings, but they cannot touch the foundation of America. These acts shattered steel, but they cannot dent the steel of American resolve. America was targeted for attack because we're the brightest beacon for freedom and opportunity in the world. And no one will keep that light from shining. Today our nation saw evil, the very worst of human nature.” (Bush, (Peters, 2001) 2001)*

The presidential speech of George W. Bush as the leader of the American society affected the social tendencies in great sense, especially in the period of desperate fragility. The ‘absolute evil’ definition he attributed to those who were non-Americans exhibited the “othering” attitude towards the rest of the world. As it is clear from the quote above, the

non-Americans that are devoid of the shining amalgam of opportunities and freedom attacked the U.S. out of their sense of deficiency. The othering attitude towards the rest of the world is supported by the sense of disbelief. In his speech, Bush indicates a sense of disbelief that the 9/11 attacks occurred on the American society directed by non-Americans. The evil that is portrayed as immanent in the human characteristics of the non-American population generated the loss of belief towards the others. As Bush defines and highlights the unyielding anger in American society in his speech, he justifies and provokes counter-violence as the solution to deal with America's wounds. Positioning the 'others' (the non-American population) as bloodthirsty enemies, Bush legitimizes the counter-attacks based on the feelings of insecurity of the society. The next part of his speech portrays the aggressive contesting organizations towards the ones who are defined as evil forces.

*"The search is underway for those who are behind these evil acts. I've directed the full resources of our intelligence and law enforcement communities to find those responsible and to bring them to justice. We will make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those harbor them. I appreciate so very much the members of Congress who have joined me strongly condemning these attacks. And on behalf of the American people, I thank the many world leaders who have called to offer their condolences and assistance. America and our friends and allies join with all those who want peace and security in the world, and we stand together to win the war against terrorism. ... This is a day when all Americans from every walk of life unite in our resolve for justice and peace. America has stood down enemies before, and will do so this time. None of us will ever forget this day. Yet, we go forward to defend freedom and all that is good and just in our world." (Bush, (Peters, 2001) 2001).*

In the second part of the speech, Bush further establishes American society's putative lust for vengeance. He justifies hatred against the others when he states, "none of us will ever forget this day". By doing so, he plants the seeds of the sense of insecurity that necessitate acts of violence towards the ones that will not ally themselves with the U.S. in order to protect themselves. Under this insecure mindset, Bush literally announced the call for a global war against the terrorist action. He denominates the terrorist threat towards the United States as a global case against freedom and justice. By doing so, he legitimatizes his determination to create two sides of the prescribed war. The sides of the war as it is portrayed in the speech are the ones that are allies of the United States and the ones that will not ally themselves with the U.S. who would be considered to support the terrorist action.

George W. Bush designates the situation as a state of global war between good and evil rather than a protest against terrorist action. By doing so, he legitimizes the violent actions against evil forces all around the world. Through his discourse, the evil force is described as the force that is not acting in accordance to United State's favor. Consequently, the force against the constituency of the United States is defined as the evil force. By transporting the politics of war to one that is against the evil side of human nature, the tools of political struggle turn into heroic actions of violence. The clear call for a global war between the America and its allies and the ones that do not support the war in America's favor, translates into the struggle to defend freedom and justice in the world according to George W. Bush's statement. The discourse generated on the disbelief toward the others (the non-Americans) through the pointing on the emergence of the evil side of human nature legitimizes the operations of bold violence. Within the establishment of the avenging discourses against the ones that threaten the United States, the government of George W. Bush starts their action plan.

The putative rightful struggle with evil begins with the landing of the troops in Afghanistan in order to capture and prosecute Usama Bin Ladin and to overthrow the Taliban administration. The next move was to invade Iraq under the suspicion that there was production of nuclear weapons and that they were harboring members of Bin Laden's organization. The legitimization of attacking other nations because of suspicion was made possible through the acceptance of the deterrent war doctrine that was part of the national security strategy developed after the 9/11 attacks. The scope of the deterrent war doctrine contained the approval for aggression in the case of suspicion. The discourse of the insecure position, the fragility against the clear definition of evil in human nature established the main characteristics of the social tendency in the period. The loss of belief in American society in humankind that is supported with the discourses of rightful vengeance legitimized aggression toward the suspected threats on the freedom and the just 'in the world'.

Through the two terms of George W. Bush's presidency, the main social tendencies formed in United States foreign policy can be portrayed in the conception of the rightful sense of vengeance that is satisfied through the punishment of the evil ones. The appropriation of

hatred for evil in humankind that is part of non-Americans justified having the blood of the others on American society's hands.

At the end of two terms the Bush administration, the mood of American society was complex. The actions of vengeance that were supposed to heal their traumatic wounds caused by the 9/11 attacks were not that successful. American society was neither relaxed nor victorious, some uncanny uneasiness was running through the zeitgeist. The discourse of rightful and heroic action to maintain freedom and justice in the world was not providing enough legitimization to explain the slaying of thousands of people. The insecure sense of the society was not disappearing, but growing through their involvement in the counter-violence. American society was in a state of war, a blind war that was defined to be against the evil forces. The emergence of that war may have been manufactured, but the consequences of the war were pretty solid. The young members of the American military forces were losing their lives next to the enemies they were to overcome. The loss of belief in human kind, the loss of hope and the continuing sense of insecurity were leading American society toward great despair. The uneasy souls whose hands were covered with blood were seeking a ray of hope. It was in these conditions that Barack Hussein Obama appeared, a courageous newcomer with a Harvard Law degree proposing to give back hope to American society.

Barack Obama declared his candidacy for president on February 10, 2007. The redemptive discourse he established on the concepts of hope, belief and change persisted from his speech announcing his candidacy all through his successful presidential campaign. In his candidacy speech he declared that he was against the war in Iraq from the beginning. Opposing the production of hatred and the devastating sense of lust for vengeance, he proposed the production of belief in humankind. His promise was to contest the terrorist threat with diplomacy without the use of military actions. The discourse of Obama that was proposing the return to the belief in humankind and hope for the future effected the tendencies of the society that was in major despair. His campaign's success was rooted in the enabling of the change. He proposed that humankind learns from their mistakes and American society had the power to correct their failures. Through his campaign Obama proposed the concept of belief against the disbelief discourse of the administration of



George W. Bush. He rejected the discourse of evil in human nature and related the evil actions of humankind with the conditions one gets trapped in. The discourse of belief in humankind was a great relief and it came right when it was needed by American society that was in the position of evil with the blood of many on their hands. Obama's discourse of belief and hope healed the guilt of American society for the violent actions of vengeance. There was no absolute evil in human nature, but there were mistakes. He proposed that the mistakes could be corrected through the lesson humankind learns from them. American society had to learn from their mistakes and change their violent attitude towards the designated enemies of the Bush administration. The harsh consequences of the war were the mistake of the Bush government and that should be corrected. Obama defined the urgent need for change, the change in the society's tendencies and the change in the strategy of the government for the struggle against terrorist activities. In his administration speech he proposed his belief in American society to challenge the broken parts of the Bush administration and rebuild the United States through his election as president.

*“The genius of our founders is that they designed a system of government that can be changed. And we should take heart, because we’ve changed this country before. In the face of tyranny, a band of patriots brought an Empire to its knees. In the face of secession, we unified a nation and set the captives free. In the face of Depression, we put people back to work and lifted millions out of poverty. We welcomed immigrants to our shores, we opened railroads to the west, we landed a man on moon, and we heard a King’s call to let justice roll down like water, and righteousness like a mighty stream. Each and every time, a new generation has risen up and done what’s needed to be done. Today we are called once more – and it is time for our generation to answer that call. For that is our unyielding faith – that in the face of impossible odds, people who love their country can change it. That’s what Abraham Lincoln understood. He had his doubts. He had his defeats. He had his setbacks. But through his will and his words, he moved a nation and helped free a people. It is because of the millions who rallied to his cause that we are no longer divided, North and South, slave and free. It is because men and women of every race, from every walk of life, continued to march for freedom long after Lincoln was laid to rest, that today we have the chance to face the challenges of this millennium together, as one people as Americans. All of us know that those challenges are today – a war with no end, a dependence on oil that threatens our future, schools where too many people children aren’t learning, and families struggling paycheck to paycheck despite working as hard as they can. We know the challenges. We’ve heard them. We’ve talked about them for years. What’s stopped us from meeting these challenges is not the absence of sound policies and sensible plans. What’s stopped us in the failure of leadership, the smallness of our politics – the ease with which we are distracted by the petty and the trivial, our chronic avoidance of tough decisions, our preference for scoring cheap political points instead of rolling up our sleeves and building a working consensus to tackle big problems. For the last six years we’ve been told that our mounting debts. Don’t matter, we’ve been told that the anxiety Americans feel about rising health care costs and stagnant wages are an illusion, we’ve been told that climate change is a hoax, and tough talk and ill-conceived war can replace diplomacy, and strategy, and foresight. And when all else fails, when Katrina happens,*

*or death toll in Iraq mounts, we've been told that our crises are somebody else's fault. We're distracted from our real failures, and told to blame the other party, or gay people, or immigrants. And as people have looked away in disillusionment and frustration, we know what's filled the void. The cynics, and the lobbyists, and the special interests who've turned our government into a game only they can afford to play. They write the checks and you get stuck with the bills, they get the access while you get to write a letter, they think they own this government, but we're here today to take it back. The time for that politics is over. It's time to turn the page...*

*...let's be the generation that never forgets what happened on that September day and confront the terrorists with everything we've got. Politics doesn't have to divide us on this anymore – we can work together to keep our country safe. I've worked with Republican Senator Dick Lugar to pass a law that will secure and destroy world's deadliest, unguarded weapons. We can work together to track terrorists down with a stronger military, we can tighten the net around their finances, and we can improve our intelligence capabilities. But all of this cannot come to pass until we bring an end to this war in Iraq. Most of you know I opposed this war from the start. I thought it was a tragic mistake. Today we grieve for the families who have lost loved ones, the hearts that have been broken, and the young lives that could have been. America, its time to start bringing our troops home.” (Obama, 2007)*

Barack Obama's campaign strategy constituted a major shift in the social tendencies through his discourse of belief, hope and change. The social change the campaign aimed to instill in American society was accomplished. The discourse abroad of the society was shifted from disbelief to belief, from insecurity to courage and from restlessness to hope. One of the main discourses that shifted in the American society through the transforming discourses of George W. Bush and Barack Obama was the conception of evil in human nature. Bush, in the aggressive combative position he took after the 9/11 incidents indicated the existence of evil in human nature. The proposition of Bush was to process destructive military activities in order to deal with the threat of evil in human nature. In other words, Bush justified his militaristic violent attitude through the necessity of dominance in regards to the challenge with the evil in human nature. The military occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq was admittedly a self-protective act of the United States in the battle with the evil in human nature. The consequence of this military action was naturally the death of thousands including the soldiers in the United States army. Through its encounter with the violent face of war, it was time for American society to face the evil in its nature. The evil in its nature surfaced in its sense of hatred and lust for vengeance. The protective military actions that were proposed to be just and necessary were far from being humanistic, but were quite literally bloody. Through the consequences of war significantly the loss of thousands of people, American society discovered the evil in its own nature. Wisely, Barack Obama

established the key concepts of his presidential campaign using this social tendency of that period. He built up the notion of change to overcome the sense of guilt. Obama proposed that there was no such thing as evil in human nature. Evil actions were the consequences of the positions we were trapped into. Evil actions were the mistakes of human nature. He defined human nature as a constitution that needed to be directed. Through the misdirection (referring to the Bush government) human nature could have fallen into mistakes that may have seemed like evil. But mistakes were to be corrected. Simply put the violent consequences of the war in Afghanistan and Iraq were not directly American society's fault, they were government's, and the mistake could be corrected by a change in the government. The change Obama proposed to American society was to take hold on their faith and correct their faults through the lessons they learned from their mistakes relieved a deep sense of underlying guilt. With the success of the election campaign Barack Obama and his team, Barack Obama was elected the 44<sup>th</sup> President of the United States. His victory in the presidential election proves the establishment of the shift in the social tendencies in American society.

#### **4.3 THE REPRESENTATION OF GERMAN SOCIETY IN HOLLYWOOD BLOCKBUSTER WORLD WAR II FILMS OF THE BUSH AND OBAMA PERIODS**

In the following part, I will analyze blockbuster World War II films that were produced in these two periods in the effort to detect the reflections of these discourses on historical representation of evil in human nature. In order to inquire about the representation of evil in human nature in blockbuster World War II films, I will focus on the representation of the German people during World War II. Broadly, through the social tendency in American society that evolved around the evil nature of the enemy discourse of G. W. Bush, the enemy is defined as a whole. Far from seeing the conflict as a political and economic matter between the ruling classes, Bush controversially reasoned it as the evil in the nature of the enemy. In Bush's positioning, every single individual that made up the nation had his or her share of evil nature. The Holocaust was the work of the whole of German society; each soldier, housewife or retired person was a part of the crime. This approach enabled the justification of violence enacted on the communities of Iraq and Afghanistan. Each and every individual was a part of this evil constitution, therefore they all deserved to be

punished. Through this comprehensive approach of evil within human nature tendency in American society, I will trace the representation of the German people during the war in blockbuster World War II films of the Bush period. In this study, the Bush period is designated from the presidential election in January 2001 to the presidential campaign announcement of Obama in February 2007 taking into consideration the social change Obama evoked in American society. The Obama period is designated in this study from his presidential campaign announcement in February 2007 to his presidential election in November 2008. The most powerful of Obama's messages during his election campaign was the idea of 'change'. The various utilizations of the word, including 'change your perspective' was driving toward the core imperative 'change the president'. The main offering of Obama to American society during the election campaign was to change to discourses and actions of George W. Bush to one that espoused opposite ideals. Consequently, Bush's concept of evil in human nature towards the enemy was changed in Obama's arguments. In an effort to detect the shift in social tendencies of American society towards the conception of evil in human nature, I will trace the simultaneous shift in the representation of German people during the war in blockbuster World War II film of the Obama period. The emergence of evil in American society through the actions of vengeance after the 9/11 incident necessitated the conversion of the conception of evil in human nature. The discourse of Barack Obama that denies the existence of evil in human nature was soothing to American society's troubled senses. He related how evil actions occur because of the conditions humankind is trapped by due to the mistakes of the ruling class. In his declaration, there was no evil in human nature, evil actions were mistakes and humankind was capable of learning from their mistakes and also, to correct them.

The reason I placed the study on the representation of German society during World War II instead of on Afghan and Iraqi societies during the United States' attack on them after 9/11 can be explained by my two motives. One of my motives is based on the escapist nature of blockbuster films. As I have mentioned before, the creators of blockbuster films establish the diegesis by designing a different environment by means of space and time to maintain the escapist element for the audience while they include the current conflicts within society. The audience relaxes by overcoming the current conflicts in the catharsis phase without being involved in the actual current problems. My other motivation in placing the study on

the representation of German society is the generation of the conception of evil in Hollywood films during World War II by pointing to the Nazis and even more significantly to Adolf Hitler. As I have discussed based on the interpretations of Robert Sklar earlier in this chapter, the representation of the Nazi in Hollywood films, which were produced during World War II, created the main codes for the exhibition of evil in Hollywood films.

The selection of the blockbuster World War II films to be analyzed in the framework of this thesis is based on the number of screening copies of the films I will discuss. As I have mentioned earlier, blockbuster syndrome can be described with many different conceptualizations, but the inevitable common ground for these explanations would be in terms of their hugeness. Huge production budgets, huge marketing activities and huge releases would define their extravagant nature. As I have mentioned, films do not become blockbusters as a result of their box office success, blockbuster films are produced, advertised and released as a “blockbuster.” Blockbuster films announce that they will be sold in enormous quantities. Because of this announcement, many copies of a film blanket movie theatres. A blockbuster film reaches almost every single movie theatre nationwide, and in many cases, in multiplex movie theatres it is screened in six or seven theatres simultaneously. A blockbuster film introduces itself to the audience through the wild distribution in movie theatres. Through this concept, I give attention to the quantity of screening copies of a film to distinguish the film as a blockbuster. In this study, I will draw the line at the number of 2000 screening copies. The films to be analyzed in this thesis will be World War II films produced in specified periods, which are released with more than 2000 copies in the opening weekend.

### **4. 3. 1 BLOCKBUSTER WORLD WAR II FILMS OF THE BUSH PERIOD**

#### **4. 3. 1. 1 *Pearl Harbor* (2001)**

The Hollywood blockbuster World War II film *Pearl Harbor* was released in 2001. It was directed by Michael Bay and its subject is the attack of Pearl Harbor. The Empire of Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, was an island of Oahu in Hawaii in the United States during World War II on December 1941. In the polarizing period of World War II, the Empire of Japan was part of the Tripartite Pact with Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, which comprised the Axis Powers. The military expedition of the Empire of Japan on Pearl Harbor became one of the significant factors that lead to the United States' involvement in World War II. The United States participated in World War II along with the Allied Forces of England and France.

The blockbuster film *Pearl Harbor* narrates the touching story of a love triangle between a navy nurse and two combat pilots during World War II. The dramatic conflicts consist of the challenge through the love triangle with the heroic attributions of military occupations. The period of World War II and Pearl Harbor are utilized in the film to generate the necessary conditions to narrate the love story. The circumstances of war bring with it the necessary obstacles for love to flourish. The desire for the lover is triggered by the war, which then sets obstacles on their path before the happy reunion of lovers can take place. The concept of war becomes a useful theme to express the sense of love thinking in terms of narration. The paradox that enthrall lovers rises upon the desire to be along with lover and the proud patriotic responsibility to fight. The sensed feelings of fear of losing a lover in battle, longing expressed in love letters, the yearning involved in waiting for a lover, and being caught in the middle of serving your country and tenderly caressing your lover appear through the defined space of love under conditions of war. The film *Pearl Harbor* utilizes these narrational sources of war in order to express the love story. Pearl Harbor is a romantic film jazzed up with thrilling battle scenes that are established in the era of World War II. Based on fictional features the film may not claim historical accuracy. However, through the narration presents the chain of actual events like World War II and the Pearl Harbor attack, the blockbuster film *Pearl Harbor* inevitably performs historical

representation. The filmic narration of the love story in *Pearl Harbor* demands both the physical and conceptual design of the environment of World War II. The effort to create the sensation of World War II and the Pearl Harbor attack enables the film to perform historical representation. Besides the generation of historical representation through the design of filmic world, the use of archival newsreels creates an uncanny assertion for realism. The information about the progress of World War II in the film is mostly transmitted through the original newsreels the filmic characters watch in movie theatres. After a while, the use of archival footage extends from the newsreels in cinemas and the film starts to use those images much more frequently. Alongside the placement of archival footage in the film, the film also uses and transforms its own fresh-made footages as original images of World War II. For instance, in the attack sequence of Pearl Harbor, the leading character saves a journalist with a movie camera by chance and then the film projects the incident in the style of archival footage. The significance of archival footage lies in its value as an historical document. Certainly, archival footage would not be a solid and arguably reliable historical source due to the various choices of framing, but still that piece of moving image exists as a historical document. The blockbuster fiction film *Pearl Harbor* employs both original archival footage and constructed archival footage in its visual diegesis. Through the involvement of archival footage the consistency of the diegesis within itself (the valid gravitational force of the filmic world) it springs into the space of actuality. The use of archival footage in the diegesis engenders the appearance of authenticity for the fiction film *Pearl Harbor*. The sudden effect provided by the use of archival footage in the diegesis expands to the rest of the film in terms of historical accuracy. The origination of authenticity from the use of archival footage in the film carries the issue of historical representation of fiction film onto slippery ground. The blending of archival footage and representative footage in the shared space of the diegesis blurs the frame of historical representation in *Pearl Harbor*. The putative independency of the film from historical accuracy that is generated in the fictional presence of the diegesis is blocked through the establishment of archival footage. Acknowledging the problematic historical representation of Pearl Harbor due to the blending of archival and constructed footage, I direct the focus to the core issue of this study.

My intention in analyzing *Pearl Harbor* is to determine the historical representations for the conception of the German people in the period of World War II. The analysis is based on the relationship I detect within the discourse of George W. Bush on the evil in humankind and the historical representation of German society in blockbuster World War II films of the period. In my view, *Pearl Harbor* is an important example in studying the historical representation of German society during World War II. The significance is based on the methodology used for the representation of German society. Throughout the film we never encounter a German except in the archival images of Adolf Hitler during a military speech and the archival footage of Nazi troops as they were marching. Even in the battle scenes where the protagonist pilots a battle plane and fights with Nazi air forces, the presentation excludes the imagery of Nazi pilot. Throughout the battle we witness the gestures and facial expressions of the protagonist as he shoots at the Nazi plane or gets shot, but as for the Nazi plane we only see the exterior. The Nazi pilot is not seen in a single shot. The film clearly indicates the evil existence of Nazis as the initiators of World War II and all the harrowing incidents of the period are related to them even though the film never actually represents them. The film appears to be striving to avoid humanizing German society through its lack of filmic representation of a German with flesh and bone. The concept of German society is defined in the reflection of Adolf Hitler, which is portrayed in the film as a bodiless existence of an evil spirit. Before I focus my study on the historical representations of Germans in film; let me briefly portray the dramatic action of *Pearl Harbor*.

*Pearl Harbor* opens with the introduction of Rafe and Danny's friendship as children in the countryside of the United States. During the childhood sequence, two young boys are presented through their passion for flying. Along with the placement of a newsreel, the narration dissolves into the year 1940. The newsreel informs the viewer about the defeat of France in their battle against the Nazis in World War II and the resistance of the United States to be involved in war. The next dissolve transports the narration with a phrase on screen indicating the date and location as 1941 Long Island. The film reintroduces the main characters as grown up Rafe McCarley (played by Ben Affleck) and Danny Walker (played by Josh Hartnett) as lieutenant pilots in the U.S. Air Force. Rafe's girlfriend Evelyn (played by Kate Beckinsale) is a Navy nurse in medical hospital of the Air Force, where the two first meet. The two lovers, Rafe and Evelyn, split due to Rafe's volunteering to fight for



the British in the Royal Air Force against the Nazi's air forces. Rafe promises Evelyn that he will come back for her no matter what. As Rafe joins the British Air Forces, Evelyn and Danny are transferred to Pearl Harbor on the island of Oahu in Hawaii. Through the slides of sequences of parallel editing, we see Rafe in England fighting air battles with the Nazis and Evelyn in her daily duties of Navy hospital in Hawaii. There is a voiceover of each with each of them reading the love letters they exchange. In the last England sequence, Rafe gets shot down in combat with a Nazi plane and crash into the ocean and is considered killed in action. Danny, as Rafe's best friend, is the one to break the terrible news to Evelyn. Danny and Evelyn support each other as they mourn for Rafe and soon it transforms into a romantic relationship. A few months later, Rafe comes to Pearl Harbor. He has been saved from the crash by French fishing boats and has been trying to exit occupied France since then. Rafe's arrival shocks Evelyn, who has just found out that she is carrying Danny's baby. Feeling betrayed from both sides as his best friend and girlfriend have become lovers over his "death", Rafe fights with Danny. On the morning of their fight, the attack on Pearl Harbor incident occurs. Japanese combat aircraft dive into Pearl Harbor, sinking many U.S. battleships and causing the death of thousands of people. As Evelyn runs to the military hospital to help injured soldiers, Rafe and Danny reach their aircrafts and shoot down a few Japanese aircraft during the counterattack.

Blockbuster World War II film *Pearl Harbor* extravagantly narrates the attack sequence that lasts more than forty minutes. Both the spectacular establishing shots of sinking battleships in the naval port and close-ups of soldiers in despair are presented to serve the overflowing of emotions with the added valuable support of the soundtrack. After the Pearl Harbor attack, the government of the United States declares a state of war and gets involved in World War II along with the Allied Forces of France and England. For their efforts in the defense of Pearl Harbor Danny and Rafe receive Congressional Medals and get called for a new mission. Before their departure, Evelyn tells Rafe that her heart will belong to Rafe forever, but she has to stay with Danny due to his baby she carries inside her. She requests that Rafe keep this information to himself so Danny can complete the mission without confusion. For their new mission Rafe and Danny gets assigned to a top-secret military action called the "Doolittle Raid" which aims to bomb Tokyo City of Japan as a retaliating gesture. The Doolittle Raid accomplishes its mission, but causes Danny's death as he

throws his body in front of the bullets in order to save Rafe. When Rafe tells Danny that he is going to be a father, Danny asks Rafe to be the child's father as he perishes in Rafe's arms. Danny's touching funeral sequence is followed by Rafe's medal ceremony in *Pearl Harbor*, which is explained by Evelyn's voiceover narration. In those touching lines, Evelyn speaks about the power of United States against the evil forces of World War II, how they have overcome the injustice, accomplished the impossible and won the war. *Pearl Harbor* closes with a sequence that presents Evelyn with Rafe as a happy couple in a country house raising their child Danny whom they have named after his father.

After briefly explaining the dramatic structure of the film, I direct the focus to the conceptual representation of German society. I used the word conceptual based on the reason that the film lacks the bodily representation of German society. The film doesn't present any German character. As I have emphasized above, *Pearl Harbor* constantly mentions Germans and blames them for the pain they spread to Europe and America due to the conditions of World War II without literally showing them. The lack of physical representation for German society, which all the rest of the characters constantly talk about with hatred, triggers the assumption of German society as a whole unified evil entity. On this matter, I endeavor to indicate the portrayal of evil spirit through the representation of German society by highlighting the lack of physical representation. The film presents German society during World War II as a sinister existence without a bodily physical presence that sheds evil all across the world embodied in the persona of Adolf Hitler.

The conceptual evil representation of German society in *Pearl Harbor* begins synchronously with the introduction part of the film. In the opening sequence, the film portrays Rafe and Danny as small children playing with Danny's father's glider plane. In the plane they role-play as combat pilots in the mission to bust up "bandit Germans". They accidentally start up the plane and fly for a short time. After they perform a dangerous landing, Danny's father starts to beat Danny out of fear and anger. In the effort to save his best friend, Rafe hits Danny's father with a piece of wood as he curses him by shouting "You dirty German!" Danny's father freezes for a second and yells at Rafe to call him whatever he likes but not "German" designating that attribution as the worst offense. A close-up shot of Rafe's face as he watches Danny and his father walk by dissolves into a newsreel in a

movie theatre. The newsreel of 1940 contains the images of Hitler, SS flags, Nazi troops marching as the voiceover states that “Adolf Hitler builds the German military machine and drags all of Europe into war”.

With the transition to the year 1940, the film reintroduces Danny and Rafe as lieutenant pilots in the U.S. Air Force. When Danny finds out that Rafe is leaving for Britain to join the Royal Air Forces in the fight with Nazi forces, he questions Rafe about his intention. Rafe answers Danny’s effort to persuade him not to go by stating that he cannot sit on his back while those dirty Germans are smashing Europe. Rafe denotes that those Germans need someone to kick them in their backsides. Speaking of German backsides, it would be inappropriate to skip mentioning the pincushion in President Roosevelt’s office. In one of the scenes of the declaration of a state of war, President Roosevelt takes out a pin from a file and sticks it into a pincushion portraying Hitler as he bends over. The scene portraying Hitler’s backside as a pincushion is composed of various shots from different angles making a serious effort to clearly express the situation.

Rafe and Danny’s fighting sequence after Rafe returns from occupied Paris shelters another evil representation of German society in a conceptual sense. In this sequence, Rafe is filled with anger toward Danny for his betrayal. Because as he was leaving for Britain, Rafe promised Evelyn that he would come back for her and entrusted Danny to look after Evelyn while he was away. When he cheats death and comes back to Evelyn as he promised, he finds out that she and his best friend Danny have become lovers. Rafe enters a hula bar in Pearl Harbor where he meets his former classmates from Long Island military school. Danny enters the bar in a panic not knowing what to do from the shame of his betraying his friend. Ignoring Danny, Rafe continues narrating his battle tales. He tells how sneaky and cruel the Nazi air forces attack during battle referring to Danny. Rafe associates the fighting attitudes of Nazi soldiers who attack when his back is turned with Danny’s betrayal. In this sequence the film represents Nazi soldiers as inglorious and brutal and are equated with Danny’s dishonesty.

In Britain fighting with the Royal Air Forces against the Nazi forces, Rafe encounters the brutal face of war. As the sense of war becomes literal through bloodshed for Rafe, the

statements about Germans grow sharper accordingly. The enthusiasm of British pilots to smash down Nazi aircrafts and sink them into sea is continuously presented in the scenes of the British military camp. The battle sequence of Rafe in Britain with Nazi combat aircrafts is significant as an example for the conceptual representation of Germans in *Pearl Harbor*. The sequence concludes with Rafe's crash deep down into the ocean via the deadly hits his aircraft takes from the assaults of Nazi combat aircraft. The thrilling air combat in *Pearl Harbor* is presented through the sensation of Rafe. The excitement, courage and fear for the moments of battle are portrayed in the facial expressions of Rafe. The touching sequence reaches to climax when Rafe cries out "may day" to aircraft radio as his plane falls. Meanwhile, the Nazi forces' side is only represented with the exterior of the Nazi aircraft. The air combat scenes never portray the German pilot fighting against Rafe. The dynamic editing consists of the alignment of short reverse shots containing shots of Rafe in close up and wide shots of the German aircraft shooting at him. The lack of representation for the pilot triggers the sensation that the aircraft is operated by a bodiless power. Through the harm the aircraft gives Rafe, the representation of the bodiless power becomes evil and so do Germans. Not only in this battle sequence but also in none of the battle scenes with the Nazi forces in Pearl Harbor contains the bodily representation of Germans.

This film about World War II never establishes an encounter with a German except for Adolf Hitler. Adolf Hitler is the only German in the film. In *Pearl Harbor*, Adolf Hitler is not represented by an actor, but he is presented by the placement of archival footage. The bodies, faces, expressions, sensations and attitudes of German society are portrayed as a projection of Adolf Hitler. *Pearl Harbor* represents Germans society during World War II as a whole evil force that is composed of replicas of Adolf Hitler. Through the legitimization the film gains over the attribution of evil constitution, *Pearl Harbor* constantly humiliates, hates and is disgusted by German society during World War II. *Pearl Harbor* is about the confrontation of the United States to the sudden strike from the Japanese coast. However the antagonist of the film is not the Emperor of Japan or Japanese soldiers. The air strike by Japan in the film is naively reasoned through the reduction in their oil supplies. Therefore, the Emperor of Japan is positioned as another victim of the war, in other words the great evil entity that is obliged to attack others in order to sustain themselves. Based on this portrayal, the antagonist of the film that is about the Japanese

attack on Pearl Harbor coast is still Nazi Germany viewed as a symbolic force unified in the face of Adolf Hitler. From this perspective, the representation of German society in *Pearl Harbor* as a blockbuster World War II film of the Bush period exists parallel with the discourses of Bush for the existence of evil in human nature.

#### **4. 3. 1. 2 *Hart's War* (2002)**

Hollywood blockbuster film *Hart's War* was released in 2002. The film was an adaptation from the novel with same title by John Katzenbah and was directed by Gregory Hoblit, The phrase indicating that the film was inspired by or based on a true story doesn't take place in the opening credits, therefore the film does not claim to be historically consistent and would then manifest its fictionality. However, the notes giving information about the date and location and the continuing voiceovers of the war news on the radio that covers the beginning of opening sequence operates successfully to draw the frame of the diegesis to the perception of the era of World War II. The apprehension of the diegesis in the historical conceptualization of World War II enables the film to perform historical representation. The film is an action-mystery that establishes its narration in the period of World War II. Although the story of the film takes place during the World War II period, the war functions as the broad formation of the atmosphere in film. The implications of the racist discourse towards African-Americans in American society constitute the main issue of film. World War II is the period the narration depicts and the story is based on the participation of African-Americans in the U.S. army. In the film, the progress made by American soldiers in diminishing the racism towards African American soldiers is highlighted in the comparison with the extravagant racist attitude the Nazi Party performed. The story progresses in a prison camp where captured American soldiers are kept and are ruled over by Nazi soldiers during World War II. The Nazi soldiers in *Hart's War* are portrayed as a whole integrated evil entity identical to each other. My intention in analyzing *Hart's War* is to determine the historical representations of the Nazi soldiers in the film. This analysis is based on the relationship I detect within the discourse of George W. Bush on the evil in humankind and the historical representation of the German society in blockbuster World War II films of the period. Before I intensify the study on the historical representations of the Nazi soldiers in the film, let me briefly portray the dramatic action of *Hart's War*.

The film begins on the Belgium front in World War II during the Battle of the Bulge in 1944. The Nazi soldiers trap Lieutenant Hart (played by Colin Farrell), who is a navigator in the U.S. army of the Allied Forces. The aim of the capture lies in the intention to learn the locations of oil reserves that belong to the Allied Forces through the interrogation and torture of Hart. As a white-collar soldier accomplishing his duties in headquarters miles away from the battlefield, Hart's resistance to interrogation falls apart in the first stage of torture. He gives away the information for the places of oil storages, which he was being tortured for. In five days, Hart gets on a train that transports American prisoners-of-war to a camp all the while feeling the shame of his betrayal.

The establishment of the POW camp location is composed of three separate premises. The POW camp for the Russian soldiers, the POW camp for the American soldiers (both ruled by Nazi soldiers) and the shoe factory (that will later turn out to be a bomb factory), which belongs to Nazi government. Oberst Werner Vissel (played by Marcel Lureş) is the Nazi commander of the POW camps. In the POW camps, the American soldiers maintain their relationships by rank. The chain of command still exists between the soldiers in the POW camp and they act as if they are still on the battlefield involved in the war. The highest-ranking officer, Colonel William McNamara (played by Bruce Willis) who is the leader of the soldiers in POW, welcomes Hart. When McNamara asks him about the interrogation at the Nazi headquarter, Hart denies the fact that he has been released and has given information to them. McNamara observes Hart's deceit through his own interrogation experience, which had lasted for a month, but he does not reveal it. Instead McNamara places Hart in the barracks where the enlisted soldiers' reside instead of placing him with the soldiers of rank. McNamara aims to exclude Hart from their military fraternizing based on his betrayal.

Later on, two captured African-American pilots Lincoln A. Scott (played by Terence Howard) and Lamar T. Archer (played by Vicellous Reon Shannon) of the United States Army (who are Tuskegee airmen) are brought to the POW camp. They are the only African American soldiers in the camp. McNamara also places those two pilots in the enlisted soldiers' barracks along with Hart to prevent uneasiness because of the racist attitudes of the higher-ranked soldiers. Vic W. Bedford (played by Cole Hauser) is an enlisted soldier

staying in the enlisted soldiers' barracks, who is in charge of the black market for the entire zone including the Nazi soldiers. As a ferocious racist who is also a former police officer, Bedford gets annoyed with the African-American soldiers' settling in his barrack. After days of scuffling between Bedford and the African-American soldiers, Bedford causes Archer to be killed by the Nazi soldiers. Through Bedford's direction, Nazi soldiers perform a sudden search in the enlisted men's barrack in the middle of the night and find a jagged piece of metal under Archer's bed, which Bedford has located. The Nazi soldiers accuse Archer of harboring a deadly weapon and instantly shoot him without further investigation. McNamara's interference with the execution does not succeed and cap it all, Commander Vissel barges into McNamara's barrack where he finds and destroys a disguised radio receiver. We only understand later on that Bedford is the one to place the piece of metal under Archer's bed and who asks the Nazi soldiers for the sudden search. In return, he leaks information about the location of the radio receiver. A few days later, Bedford is found dead and Bedford's friends claim that they have seen Scott at the crime scene. Everyone, including the Nazi soldiers, suspect Scott for the murder of Bedford so he can avenge his friend Archer. McNamara persuades Commander Vissel to solve and punish the crime through court-martial instead of shooting Scott recklessly.

So launches the court-martial for the murder of Bedford. McNamara assigns Hart, who was a former law student, to defend Scott. Meanwhile, McNamara has been trying to sabotage the bomb factory near the POW camps for some time. The organization of the sabotage was the true reason he would not place Hart in his barracks as he had already been stamped with the label traitor. In an effort to distract the Nazi soldiers, McNamara kills Bedford as he is confident they will accuse Scott for the crime because of racism and his lust for vengeance. To gather and isolate the Nazi soldiers for enough time to complete the preparations of the sabotage, McNamara requests a court-martial. When Hart discovers McNamara's plan, he challenges McNamara with his own racism as he has trapped African-American soldier Scott to accomplish his plan. The court-martial would eventually find Scott guilty and execute him, but the time and distraction the court case takes would be just enough to explode the Nazi bomb factory. McNamara comes to terms with his racist attitudes when he surrenders himself to the Nazi commander before he is about to execute all the American

prisoners. Commander Vissel gathers all the American prisoners to shoot when he finds out about McNamara's plan just as the court-martial was reaching an end.

In the final sequence, McNamara surrenders himself in return for Vissel's sparing of the other American soldiers' lives. Right in this moment, the deafening sound and scarlet blaze of an explosion appears. Vissel shoots McNamara himself while McNamara feels fulfilled by the honor of accomplishing his duty as a soldier. During McNamara's death scene, Hart informs the audience through voiceover that the war will be finished in three months time and they have returned home including Lincoln Scott.

In my study to portray the representation of German society during World War II in blockbuster World War II films of the Bush period, I will continue to study *Hart's War*. For the representation of the Nazi soldiers in *Hart's War*, the first important observation to note would be the identical imagery used. The film does not bring out the characteristics of each of the soldiers individually; instead it displays a single representation of the Nazi soldier and applies those features to all. For the purpose of this identical portrayal, the direction of the acting and the selection of the cast are the important features along with the dramatic construction of script. Remarkably, the pale blond faces, cold watery blue eyes and hard thin lips that make up the "Aryan German" representation for *Hart's War* is evidenced by the whole Nazi soldier cast. The most significant representation of the Nazi soldier is done through Colonel Oberst Werner Vissel, the leader of the Nazi soldiers in the POW camp district. *Hart's War* portrays Vissel as a heartless, ruthless, cold-blooded soldier who utilizes his nimble intelligence for his evil ambitions.

The representation of Nazi soldiers in *Hart's War* begins with the entrapment of Hart in the woods. Nazi soldiers disguised as Ally Forces set up Hart and capture him in the wake of a violent chase. Divested of his clothes and under the threat of frostbite, Hart meets with his interrogator, Nazi officer Lutz. With his sharp, steely-cold attitude and horrifying blue eyes, Lutz draws out the information from Hart. Later on, the film relives the moments of torture from Hart's point of view through flashbacks revealing Nazi soldier Lutz's evil manner.

The introduction sequence for the POW camp opens with the execution of Russian prisoners by German soldiers. The sequence narrates Hart's arrival to the POW camp along



with other American soldiers where the first thing they witness is the execution of the Russian prisoners. The leader of the Nazi soldiers, Colonel Vissel hangs the Russian soldiers while he gives a threatening speech on the consequences of attempted escape to all the prisoners in the camp who are forced to watch the execution. The defamatory mocking Vissel performs over the dead bodies of the prisoners as he compares the Russian soldiers to animals intensifies the evil representation of Nazi soldiers.

There is also another sequence right before the murder of Bedford that dramatizes his disappearance. This is the sequence of the flour truck. In this sequence, a truck of flour arrives on the American side of the POW camp. As American soldiers carry the packets of flour in, they notice Russian prisoners staring at the flour packets with starving eyes. Comprehending the shortage of food transportation from the Russian front to prisoners in POW camp, Bedford starts to throw flour packets to the Russian side over the barbed wire. A Nazi soldier commands Bedford to stop sharing food with the starving Russian prisoners and enjoys watching the prisoners begging for food through his wicked eyes. Then the Nazi soldier suddenly shoots Bedford in the hand as he tried to throw one last package. Also, in this sequence a Nazi soldier again refers to the prisoners as starving animals who beg for food. The representation of the Nazi soldier in this sequence stays on the same track with the rest of the film portraying the Nazi soldier as an evil entity.

The evil portrayal of the Nazi soldiers is evident once again in the scene they find a piece of metal under Archer's bed and execute him. In *Hart's War's* the narration of the pleasure the Nazi soldiers take over torture and destruction is much more touching than the actuality of oppression. The representation of Colonel Vissel as the leader of the Nazi soldiers in POW camp constitutes the key code for the projection of evil in the Nazi soldiers in *Hart's War*. The evil nature of Colonel Vissel is emphasized throughout the entire film, but the martial-court incidence is significant for the representation of his malevolent and sneaky intellect. Through traps he creates to deceive Hart and McNamara separately, his ruthless and sharp intelligence is emphasized. The film portrays the one-on-one encounters of McNamara and Vissel during the martial-court period; they talk frankly to each other, sit around and even share a drink. Through these encounters, Colonel Vissel is represented as a sorrowful penitent person at first sight, but as the narration grows his sincere actions are revealed to

be fake. Colonel Vissel is represented in *Hart's War* as an evil entity who is capable of benefitting from the tragedy of his own son's death to soften McNamara.

In conclusion, *Hart's War* represents Nazi soldiers as evil entities. As a part of the German society during World War II, Nazi soldiers are portrayed as ruthless cold-blooded human beings that take pleasure in persecuting others. The film portrays the spirit of World War II and the Holocaust as shared in the consciousness of German society of the period through the identical imagery it creates for the Nazi soldiers. From this point of view, the representation of German society in *Hart's War* as a blockbuster World War II film of the Bush period is parallel to the discourses Bush uses for the existence of evil in human nature.

#### **4. 3. 2 FROM BUSH TO OBAMA**

German society in blockbuster World War II films of the Bush period is defined as a whole through the social tendencies that evolved around the evil nature of the enemy. From Bush's perspective, every individual belonging to a society of a designated enemy is a part of the whole evil entity. The social tendencies of American society were formed through the discourses of G. W. Bush in a broad sense, especially after 9/11. Mirroring the positioning of Bush in blockbuster World War II films of the period, every single individual of German society had his or her share of the evil in their nature. The Holocaust was the work of the whole of German society; each and everyone was a part of this crime. In blockbuster World War II films of the period, the representation of German society was invariably evil. The dynamics of the gripping dramatic structure in those films were constituted through anger, hate and revenge of evil German society during World War II. The approach of G. W. Bush regarding the evil in the enemy's nature enabled the justification of violence that was executed on Iraq and Afghanistan after 9/11. Everyone was a part of this evil terrorist attack, therefore there was nothing wrong with punishing the evil entity because they deserved it. The nature of the enemy was evil and every single individual that is a part of the designated enemy would have her/his share of the evil in their nature. Through this tendency of the discourse of evil in human nature in American society, I have tried to track the historical representation of German society during World

War II in blockbuster World War II films of the Bush period. In my study, I have designated parallels between the apprehension of evil in human nature through the incident of 9/11 and the historical representation of German society during World War II in blockbuster World War II films. The blockbuster World War II films of the period represented German society as a whole evil constitution. Each historical representation of Germans during World War II in blockbuster World War II films of the period was identical, binding the evil to the whole. The violence performed on Afghanistan and Iraq due to their designated responsibility for the 9/11 attacks was legitimated through the acknowledgement of evil in their own human nature. In the aftermath of military attacks toward Afghanistan and Iraq, it was time for American society to notice the evil in their natures. The attacks were processed through the discourses of justice, honor and resistance with shadings of lust for vengeance, but the blood was shed on both sides. It was real pain with a hint of the uncanny sense of guilt. If evil was really intrinsic to human nature, the perception and the acceptance of evil in their own natures was too much to handle once evil arose from their own decisions and actions. The emergence of evil through vengeance in American society after the 9/11 incident necessitated the conversion of the conception of evil in human nature. The discourse of Barack Obama during his election campaign rose over the concept of change and it denied the existence of evil in human nature. He related evil actions with the conditions humankind is trapped into due to the wrong decisions one makes (clearly assigning the blame to the Bush government). In his declaration, there were no evil in human nature, evil actions were mistakes and humankind was capable of learning from their mistakes to correct them. During this time Obama's conceptualizations were soothing the troubled senses of American society. The shift Obama accomplished on the social tendencies of American society is verified through his victory in presidential election. Through this transforming tendency in American society on the conception of evil in human nature, I will trace the shift on the historical representation of the German people during the war in blockbuster World War II film of the Obama period.

### 4. 3. 3 BLOCKBUSTER WORLD WAR II FILM OF THE OBAMA PERIOD

#### 4. 3. 3. 1 *Valkyrie* (2008)

The blockbuster World War II film *Valkyrie* was directed by Bryan Singer and released in 2008. The film begins with the phrase that indicates the plot is based on a true story. The phrase confirms the direct relation of the film to an historical event of World War II. From the beginning the film displays its intention to narrate an historical incident. The confirmation for the relationship of the diegesis to the actuality of World War II enables the film to perform historical representation. The film is about an assassination attempt on Adolf Hitler called “Operation Valkyrie”. According to a closing phrase just before the credits, Operation Valkyrie was one of the many assassination attempts of an organization composed of high-ranking officers of Nazi Germany during World War II. The officers in the organization are portrayed in *Valkyrie* as courageous soldiers who realize the threat Hitler poses towards Germany and the whole of Europe. Acknowledging the evil ambitions of Hitler, the Nazi soldiers show the heart-felt intention to dispose of him in an effort to save Germany and Europe. The blockbuster World War II film *Valkyrie* literally states its mission to change the common opinion of German society during World War II. The film emphasizes that condemning of the whole of German society as taking part in evil actions and then, producing the outcome of World War II would be a mistake. The blockbuster World War II film tells the story of those in the German community that tried hard to prevent Hitler from doing what he did. Through the historical representation *Valkyrie* performs in regards to World War II, the film transmits the information that some courageous members of German society struggled hard to stop Hitler. The positioning of film also surfaces through the official tagline “Many Saw Evil, They Dared To Stop It”. Therefore, German society cannot be described as a whole evil entity. The analogy of the discourses in *Valkyrie* and the discourses of Barack Obama through the period of his election campaign catches the eye boldly considering the zeitgeist of the period. *Valkyrie* is a film about taking hold of and changing destiny, showing the courage needed to realize mistakes and doing whatever it takes to correct them. The discourses of film explicitly resemble the core statements of Barack Obama during his presidential campaign. For the reconceptualization Obama performed on the notion of evil in human nature, *Valkyrie*

follows the same path of the presidential campaign. The film definitively presents German society during World War II as not being an evil constitution as a whole. German society was trapped under the cruel ambitions of a powerful leading figure, Adolf Hitler, and had no choice but to obey his intentions. The evil ambitions were not the society's demands; they belonged to the leaders. There was no evil in human nature; the evil actions were the mistakes of humankind and humankind was capable of learning from their mistakes and also struggled to correct them. According to the historical representation of *Valkyrie*, that was exactly the spirit of the courageous officers who attempted Operation Valkyrie with the intention to assassinate Adolf Hitler during World War II. In my study on *Valkyrie*, I will focus on the representation of German society during World War II as I briefly portray the dramatic structure of the film.

The blockbuster World War II film *Valkyrie* opens with the military oath of Nazi Germany. The oath is: "I swear by God this sacred oath: That I shall render such unconditional obedience to Adolf Hitler, Führer of the German Reich and people, Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces and that I shall at all times be ready, as a brave soldier, to give my life for this oath" (*Valkyrie*, 2008). The foreground, as the oath scrolls the words one by one, turns into a Nazi flag with a swastika. Soon this image dissolves into the travelling shot of a battlefield. According to the phrase written on the screen, it is the military camp of the German 10<sup>th</sup> Panzer Division in Tunisia, North Africa. The camera enters one of the tents where the film introduces Colonel Claus von Stauffenberg (played by Tom Cruise). The inner voice of Stauffenberg starts to pronounce the words in German as he writes in his journal and later the inner voice softly transforms into English saying:

*"The Führer's promises of peace and prosperity have fallen by the wayside leaving in their wake a path of destruction. The outrages committed by Hitler's SS are a stain on the honor of the German army. There is a widespread disgust in the officer corps toward the crimes committed by the Nazis. The murder of civilians, the torture and starvation of prisoners, the mass execution of Jews. My duty as an officer is no longer to save my country, but to save human lives. I cannot find one general in a position to confront Hitler with the courage to do it. (Valkyrie, 2008)"*

The journal scene takes place in the introduction phase of *Valkyrie*, establishes the bond with Stauffenberg as the protagonist while it clearly defines the positioning of him towards Hitler's Germany. In his journal, Stauffenberg expresses how the German army was in great despair from the brutality the cruel ambitions of Hitler engendered. Stauffenberg

blames the SS Army of Adolf Hitler in committing the evil actions and he designates the German army as a separate unit that is disgusted by Hitler's savagery. He feels disappointed by the promises of peace and prosperity that turned out to be false hopes and also inveigled in his belief in Hitler and also of becoming involved in World War II. Acknowledging World War II as a crime processed on humanity, he declares that he would struggle to save human lives even if it means betraying his country.

In the next sequence Stauffenberg is severely wounded in a sudden air raid by the British Royal Air Force just as he was making arrangements to resign from his division in North Africa. Stauffenberg wakes up in a Munich military hospital still recovering from the air attack where he lost his right hand, the fourth and fifth fingers of his left hand and his left eye. He gives his Veteran Honor medal from the Nazi government to a young soldier at the hospital. As Stauffenberg leaves the hospital, his thoughts are expressed by his inner voice "I am a soldier, I serve my country. But this is not my country. I was lying out there bleeding to death, thinking if I die now, I leave nothing to my children but shame. I know now there's only one way to serve Germany. In doing so, I'll be a traitor. I accept that." (*Valkyrie*, 2008). *Valkyrie* presents soldiers like Stauffenberg as despairing souls full of shame for the evil actions of Hitler during World War II which is far from reducing the whole of German society to a whole evil entity. Stauffenberg struggles to find a way to direct his efforts to eliminate the stain on the honor of Germany.

When he arrives home to his family in Berlin, Stauffenberg takes a call from a group of officers and politicians who have tried a few fruitless assassination attempts towards Hitler. The undercover organization leaded by Major General Henning von Tresckow (played by Kenneth Branagh) has lost a member and is considering Stauffenberg as a replacement. Enthusiastic about the assignment, Stauffenberg questions their plans and is disappointed when he understands that they have no further thoughts about what to do after killing Hitler. Stauffenberg confronts them by asserting that eliminating Hitler would not be enough to end the war and he questions what would happen if they succeed in killing him, but not his closest officers. Their response to Stauffenberg is, "It only matters that we act now, before we lose the war. Otherwise, this will always be Hitler's Germany. And we have to show the world that not all of us were like him." (*Valkyrie*, 2008). In this sequence

the broad discourse of *Valkyrie* that confronts the common judgment of evil in German society during World War II surfaces when Tresckow states that not all of them were like Hitler.

Soon Stauffenberg proposes that the organization take advantage of “Operation Valkyrie” in an effort to assassinate Hitler. The name of the operation comes from the famous opera by Wagner. “*The Ride of the Valkyries*” is the third act of Richard Wagner’s popular opera “*Die Walküre*”. Borrowing its theme from ancient war mythologies, the opera narrates how a mythic force has the power to choose the ones who will survive in wartime. In World War II, parts of “*Die Walküre*” was used as the soundtrack for war reels and it was also known as one of Adolf Hitler’s favorite music scores. “Operation Valkyrie” is the deployment of the “Resume Army” for a state of emergency in order to prevent any threat towards the maintenance of the government. The troops of the “Resume Army” stay on hold in the main cities of Germany, especially in Berlin. They do not move to the battlefronts, they reside in cities to be able to intervene in any kind of insurrection towards the Nazi government. Stauffenberg’s plan intends the utilization of Operation Valkyrie based on placing SS Army and Resume Army against each other and then, seizing the government in the resulting political and military chaos. The assassination plan consists of creating an explosion in the Wolf’s Lair; the confidential headquarters of Adolf Hitler where significant decisions are debated with the participation of top officers in the Nazi government. Once the Wolf’s Lair explodes with the plastic explosives that are placed in the meeting room, the forces of the Nazi government would remain without a leader and therefore, vulnerable to disposal. The inside officer who is a part of the assassination organization, would shut down communication from Wolf’s Lair once the explosion occurs in order to isolate any transfer of information. After the explosion, the organization would spread the news that Hitler was dead which would deploy the Resume Army. Next, the organization would target the SS Army using the Resume Army to control them as if the SS forces were uprising to seize power after Hitler’s death. Once the government was unguarded as the Resume Army was dealing with SS Army, the organization would seize the government and make an agreement with the Allied Forces in order to end World War II.

The organization assigns Stauffenberg to be the leader of Operation Valkyrie due to his brilliant envisioning of the assassination attempt. Meanwhile, the Nazi government also assigns Stauffenberg to a high-ranking strategic position in the Nazi army for his faithful devotion. With the authorization Stauffenberg gains through his promotion, he gets to join the meetings in the Wolf's Lair. Naturally, he would be the one who would place the plastic explosives in the meeting room. Once Stauffenberg arrives there with the explosives, he finds that the location of the meeting has changed to a wider and breezy room due to hot weather conditions. The amount and effect of the explosives were arranged according to the conditions of a small and windowless meeting room; therefore, the amount of explosives may not be enough to accomplish the operation. Another unfortunate event is the absence of Heinrich Himmler (played by Matthias Freihof) the leader of the SS Army and a member of Hitler's close circle in the meeting. The rest of the members of Operation Valkyrie fall into dispute about continuing the operation when Stauffenberg informs them about Himmler's absence and the change in location.

Despite of the inconvenience of the location, Himmler's absence and the hesitancy of the rest of the organization, Stauffenberg places and sets the explosives as close as he can to Adolf Hitler. He then witnesses the huge flames of the explosion as he leaves the Wolf's Lair. Stauffenberg spreads the message around about the death of Adolf Hitler; the information is accepted all over Germany and the occupied countries due to the isolation of communication in Wolf's Lair, but unfortunately Hitler survives the assassination attempt. Assuming Hitler dead, Stauffenberg continues the operation as planned, but the activation of the Reserve Army is delayed via the disagreements inside the organization. On Stauffenberg's arrival, they quickly re-gather and go forward with the plan according to their new situation. But no matter how hard they try to accomplish their mission, the word of Hitler's surviving the assassination attempt soon spreads. Eventually "Operation Valkyrie" fails in spite of the enormous struggles of Stauffenberg and the rest of the organization.

The Nazi government arrests and sentences the members of the organization to death. *Valkyrie* portrays the executions of the members of the "Operation Valkyrie" organization in a long, sensational sequence. *Valkyrie* once again uses Stauffenberg's inner voice as he is



being executed saying, “Well, we have to show the world that not all of us were like him.” (*Valkyrie*, 2008). The Hollywood blockbuster World War II film *Valkyrie* clearly expresses its intention to inform the rest of the world that the German society was not a whole evil entity during World War II. Adolf Hitler and his close circle were the evil ones that drew in the rest of the community. The cruel actions of German society were the extension of Hitler’s evil ambitions; German society was trapped under his command. *Valkyrie* suggests that the common historical evil representations of the participants of German society like the soldiers or the officers were unrealistic. Considering the tagline of the film once again “Many Saw Evil, They Dared To Stop it” *Valkyrie* asserts that German society during World War II was a victim of Hitler’s evil ambitions who suffered the shame of his brutality against humankind and struggled to stop him. The film closes with the written phrase “You did not bear the shame. You resisted. You bestowed an eternally vigilant symbol of change by sacrificing your impassioned lives for freedom, justice and honor”. The phrase belongs to the entrance wall of the memorial that was built in 1980 on the field where the executions of Stauffenberg and his friends took place.

#### **4. 3. 4 THE SHIFT IN THE HISTORICAL REPRESENTATION OF GERMAN SOCIETY IN HOLLYWOOD BLOCKBUSTER WORLD WAR II FILMS THROUGH THE DISCOURSES OF G. W. BUSH AND BARACK OBAMA**

*Valkyrie* narrates the story of courageous men during World War II who take reign of their will and confront evil forces and struggle hard to change the destiny of a country. The film was produced and released during the presidential campaign of Barack Obama. Some of the most famous campaign slogans of Barack Obama during his presidential campaign were: “Yes, we can”, “Change we believe in”, “Vote for change” and “I am asking you to believe. Not just in my ability to bring about real change in Washington. I am asking you to believe in yours”. The resemblance of the discourses of Obama that effect the social tendencies of American society in a broad sense on the concept of evil in human nature and the discourses of *Valkyrie* is striking. According to both, there is no evil in human nature, there are mistakes that humankind is trapped into and humankind is capable of correcting these mistakes through the experience they gain from their faults. Considering the representation of German society during World War II in the blockbuster World War II films produced in two different dominancy periods, of Bush and Obama, I perceive that the

evil conceptualization of German society was multi-functional. In the period of G. W. Bush, especially after the 9/11 incident, German society during World War II was the evidence for showing evil in the enemy's nature. In the climate of vengeance toward the evil enemies, German society during World War II was represented in blockbuster Hollywood World War II films as a whole evil entity that participates in the evil actions while United States was sending troops to Iraq and Afghanistan. Through the uncanny sense of guilt based on the military expeditions of Iraq and Afghanistan, which would cost thousands of human lives on both sides, the concept of evil in human nature grew to be unacceptable for American society. The reason for this unbearable conception is that during the period American society was facing its own evil nature. It was in this climate that the discourses of Barack Obama designated that evil actions are mistakes and blesses humankind with the courage to change their destiny by correcting their mistakes, which then, healed the guilty souls of American society. The social tendencies of American society gone through a transformation on the cognition of evil as a part of human nature with the effect of Obama's discourses. In this way, German society as the victim of the evil ambitions of Hitler struggled hard to change their destiny was thereby, the evidence for the innocence of American society for the bloodshed in Iraq and Afghanistan. The historical representation of German society during World War II in blockbuster World War II films shifted accordingly considering the concept of evil in human nature. Through the profit-oriented relationship of the Hollywood blockbuster film industry with the current main tendencies of American society, the historical representation of German society during World War II also shifted in a correlated way.

## 5. CONCLUSION

This thesis is dedicated to understanding the historiographical performance of the historical blockbuster film. In the effort to explore the historiography of historical blockbuster films, I opened this study with the notion of historiography in order to reflect on the filmic practice afterwards. Through the study I made in the first chapter I defined historiography as a constructed narrative material that houses historical facts far from an inborn entity.

To reach the understanding of history and historiography I related the notions of fact, truth and historical fact within the dynamic social tendencies of history interpreted by the historiographer. The main influence of this chapter was fundamentally derived from the ideas of E. H. Carr and Eric Hobsbawm on the constructed nature of historiography that is reflexive to the current tendencies of the society. To determine and associate the notions of fact, truth and knowledge I enlist the ideas of Nelson Goodman as he interprets E. H. Carr's conception of historical fact.

Moving along on the ideas of E. H. Carr I designated narration as an essential tool for historiographical practice. An information, or an idea as an abstract form would not exist as pure substance and could not be transferred to the minds of others in that way. The act of communication is the expression of the idea in a form in order to be understood by the others. The expression of the sentiment depended on the selection and placement of the words and of course, on the utterance. Narration is the process of selecting and ordering the words, and accentuating them in order to transfer the meaning. Therefore, narration was essential for the practice of historiography. To understand the involvement and function of the narrative in the practice of historiography Fatmagül Berktaş's and Ernst Breisach's assertions guided me along with those of E. H. Carr.

My study of the historiographer as a vibrant individual who exists in and reflects through her/his society align with the assertions of Gulbenkian Commission's report. The historiographer practices historiography within the current social, economic and political tendencies of a society. The historiography of the same historical incident performed at the same time would differ due to the social position, the point of view of the historiographer. The perception and hence, the work of the historiographer is comprised of the social

positioning by means of either assenting or dissenting standpoints s/he established with the current dominant tendencies in society. To understand and designate the significance of the positioning of the historiographer as a part of society, Fatmagül Berktaş's, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's, Ranajit Guha's and Zeynep Tül Akbal Süalp's interpretations have guided me.

Historiography as an expression of an historical event was performed in the present therefore, it inevitably houses present conditions in its constitution. In Carr's and Hobsbawm's considerations, historiography of the same historical event would shift due to the dynamism historiography acquires through its texture that is susceptible to current social tendencies. Along with the social positioning of the historiographer, the kind of historiographical practice was another significant point to study on the constitution of historiography.

In my study on the historiographical performance of blockbuster historical films, I focused on diegetic historiography that generated a sense of historical experience. Hence the differing of historiographical practices was not based on the filmic and written modes, but in the diegetic and non-diegetic practices of historiography. I took the generation of sensual experience, which diegetic practices perform, as the focal point from which to make this separation based on the idea that both written and filmic practices would be either diegetic or non-diegetic. In the effort to separate and reflect on the historiographical performance of the diegetic historical film, I gathered practices of historiography under the titles of official (dominant) historiography, independent historiography and popular historiography. Placing the historiographical performance of the diegetic film in the popular practices of historiography, I tried to interpret the relationship of these three kinds of practices within the dynamic tendencies of society. By doing so, I endeavored to bring the conception of historiography closer to the field of fiction as much as possible by emphasizing its constructed nature so as to draw the distinction between the space of historiography and diegetic historical representation that brings along with it the sensation of historical experience.

Through these studies, I perceive historiography in a broad sense as a constructed practice of historical representation. The historiographical practice is based on the selection and marshaling of historical facts towards the intended narration. From this perspective, the solidity of historiography by means of historical accuracy, and credibility dissolved in the field of relativity. Considering both practices (whether diegetic or not) as historical narrations that include historical facts, it would not be appropriate to place one of them superior to the other on the issue of credibility. Therefore, I acknowledge the diegetic practices of historical representation inherent to the field of historiographical performances. The point where diegetic historical practices differ from the non-diegetic ones is in the sense of historical experience the diegetic practices generate. The effect of the diegetic representative practices of popular historiography are separated from the non-diegetic, non-representative practices of independent or official historiography in the sense of experience the diegetic ones transmit towards the historical event.

In the second chapter I focused the study on the ways diegetic film is a tool of historiography in order to get one step closer to the performance of historical blockbuster film. I entered the study with the generation of the sense of experience that diegetic films perform by following the perspective of “Apparatus Theory”. I continued my study on the subject with the Neo-Formalist approaches of Thompson and Bordwell. Through the arguments of Apparatus Theory and Neo-Formalist approaches of Thompson and Bordwell I intend to present the sense of experience that diegetic film presents over its narration. The process of making sense out of a diegetic film was in the experiencing of it rather than in watching it. Each of these approaches (from the perspectives of Apparatus Theory and Thompson and Bordwell’s Neo-Formalism) exhibit the sense of experience that diegetic film presents to the spectator. The closural continuing narration, the identification (both with the characters and the film itself) and the inner coherence that formed the structured experience were the main elements of diegetic narration in film. The sense of experience generated through the sensual involvement in diegesis engendered the transmission of film’s discourses to the spectator.

To understand the effects of the sense of experience that diegetic films perform historical representation exhibit, I ground my arguments on the perspective of Vivian Sobchack as

she defined the situation by designating that history happens. Through assembling and relating the theoretical perspectives of Apparatus Theory, Thompson and Bordwell's Neo-Formalism and Vivian Sobchack's critique of evergreen history I intended to designate the historiographical performance of the diegetic film. The historiography of the historical diegetic film was transmitting its perspective of the historical event it was representing to the audience through its sensational experience. The sensational experience generated by the diegetic film engendered the comprehension of the historical event towards the framing of the representation practiced in film. Towards my positioning that highlighted the transmission of the sensual experience by the diegetic historical film I discussed the arguments of Robert Rosenstone as he determined the film medium as a significantly convenient tool to perform historical representation.

In order to progress further on the field of my study, I focused on the historiographical performance of Hollywood blockbuster films to discuss the relationship between the formation of blockbuster historical films and the dominant discourses of the society. To determine the nature of this dynamic relationship I studied Douglas Kellner's interpretation of the Frankfurt School's notion of culture industries. In my study, I designated the mainstream Hollywood film as a product of the culture industry using Kellner's arguments and distinguishing the blockbuster syndrome as the highest level of this mode of production. For the interpretation on blockbuster syndrome, I based my ideas on those of Thomas Schatz, Thomas Elsaesser and Julian Stringer.

The popular mainstream practices of historiography like bestselling historical novels or blockbuster historical films are profit oriented. This profit-oriented characteristic of popular mass-media products gains significance for this study through the relationship it poses with the dominant social tendencies. The popular mainstream practices of historiography are produced to be consumed on a massive scale. In the case of blockbuster films, the blockbuster industry was naturally designed to sell a lot of tickets. Through the rules of supply-and-demand management, the popular mainstream practices of historiography needed to be pertinent to the sensations of society. In other words, they need to relate to the current tendencies within a society. The narratives of these products comprise the current conflicts of the society and shelter the zeitgeist of the period. Like any other popular culture

product, the products of popular mainstream historiography need to touch wounded areas of society in order to address in broad sensations what needs to be healed in the effort to be consumed on a massive scale. The correlative condition between mainstream popular historiography and the current tendencies of the society is seen through the involvement of the current tendencies in the representation of that historical event. Hence, the historical sphere of experience the diegetic blockbuster films that perform historical representation also include the current social tendencies in their practice of historiography. As I have argued in the first chapter, the ideology of those in political power in a community effects the value systems and social tendencies of the society to a large extent. The blockbuster films while tracking the current tendencies of the society render the ideologies of those in political power within their plots and narration.

The consistence of the blockbuster film is bound to the main tendencies of a society through economic interests. In the case of a blockbuster film performing historical representation, the main current tendencies of society would inevitably be involved in the historiography. As Vivian Sobchack emphasized, the historiography performed by popular practices such as blockbuster films was, in fact, a commodity, something that is calibrated for the highest consumer satisfaction. The notion of the highest consumer satisfaction was bound to be in accord with the social tendencies of the society. The dominant discourse of those in political power influenced the tendencies of the society to a great extent. Based on this idea, I stated that the historiography of blockbuster historical films reflected the current ideas of the dominant discourse in a society. And moreover, through the sensed experience that was engendered by the transmission of the perspective the film posed for the historical event, the dominant discourses of the society were transmitted back to the audience.

The third chapter is dedicated to analyzing the nature of the synchronous shift within the social tendencies of society and the historical representation in blockbuster films. In other words, the study intended to understand the reproduction of historiography through the historical representations that blockbuster films performed according to the shifting tendencies in a society.

I argued that the historiography of blockbuster historical films reflect the ideas of the dominant discourse in a society. Once the dominant discourse becomes different in a society, the historical representation of the same incident shifts accordingly in blockbuster historical films. In an effort to present the bond between the shift in the dominant discourse and the synchronized altering of historical representation in the historical blockbuster films, I analyzed blockbuster World War II films, which were produced in two different periods under two different dominant discourses.

With that intention I studied the shifting tendencies of American society that revolved around the discourses of George W. Bush in the period of his presidency and Barack Obama in his presidential campaign through the historical representations of the blockbuster World War II films produced in those two periods. I intensified the study on the representation of evil in human nature in blockbuster World War II films of these periods based on my observation on the shift within the discourse throughout American society for that concept. The discourses of George W. Bush after 9/11 and the discourses within the presidential campaign of Obama on the concept of evil in human nature constituted the sources for this study that I tracked in the blockbuster World War II films of these periods.

I placed my study on the representation of evil in human nature in blockbuster World War II films instead of in the films that included representations of Afghanistan and Iraq during the United States' attack after 9/11. The reason for this choice is based on the necessary escapist character blockbuster syndrome demanded. Blockbuster films established the diegesis by means of designing a different environment in terms of space and time to maintain the escapist element for the audience. I chose to work on the blockbuster World War II films to detect the shift in the evil-in-human-nature discourses because World War II far outshines all other periods for the advancement of this conception. It can be said of this period; that humanity experienced the definition of evil through the Nazi party, its leader Adolf Hitler, the progress of the Holocaust and the operations of World War II. It was the time that approach to the limits of humanity.



To understand and reflect on the bond between the conception of evil in Hollywood films and the period of World War II, I called upon Robert Sklar's assertions on the subject. For Sklar, the filmmaking practices were also effected by the devastating incident of genocide along with the huge impact on Europe and North America both during the process and afterwards. In Sklar's interpretation, throughout the period of World War II, including the time the U.S. was discussing joining the war, Hollywood constructed the stereotypical representations of the rightful use of war to defend freedom, the hero, and the concept of evil. Those stereotypical representations were continually reproduced afterwards. More specifically, representations of the hero and the concept of evil produced by Hollywood in the war films made during World War II were utilized over again in every period American society needed a definition for the enemy. Thereafter, the films that establish their narration in the period of World War II constitute the direct definition of evil through the representation of Hitler and German society during the war. Hence the focus I attribute to World War II films based on the acknowledgement of the sub-genre for the direct representation of the evil in human nature.

The selection of the blockbuster World War II films of the dominancy periods I have studied are analyzed in the framework of this study based on the number of screening copies. As one of the solid characteristics of blockbuster syndrome, I attribute attention to the quantity of screening copies to distinguish a film as a blockbuster. The films that are analyzed in this thesis will be World War II films produced in the specified periods, which were released with more than 2000 copies on the opening weekend. Towards these specifications, the blockbuster World War II films of the G. W. Bush period were *Pearl Harbor* (2001) and *Hart's War* (2002) and the blockbuster World War II film of the Barack Obama period was *Valkyrie* (2008).

The approach of G. W. Bush was significantly presented his speech after the 9/11 attacks for the evil in the enemy's nature and enabled the justification of violence applied to Iraq and Afghanistan afterwards. Everyone was a part of this evil terrorist attack, therefore there was nothing wrong with accepting the evil constitution that deserved to be punished. The nature of the enemy was evil and every single individual was a part of the designated enemy would have her/his share of evil in their nature.

Through the tendency consisted on the discourse of evil in human nature in American society, I have tried to track the historical representation of German society during World War II in blockbuster World War II films of the Bush period. In my study, I have designated parallels with the apprehension of evil in human nature in the incident of 9/11 and the historical representation of German society during World War II in blockbuster World War II films. In order to grasp the configuration of German society during World War II, I focused on the development of the German characters in those films. Michael Bay's *Pearl Harbor* (2001) and Gregory Hoblit's *Hart's War* (2002) were blockbuster World War II films of the period which represented German society as a whole evil entity. Each historical representation of the Germans during World War II in blockbuster World War II films of the period was identical, binding them to the evil whole. The historical representations of German society did not define them as individual characters that had individual personalities and decisions on their own. They all implemented collective evil intentions. Therefore, German society during World War II was depicted as the evidence for the idea of the evil in human nature. From my perspective that is based on this interpretation, the violence performed in Afghanistan and Iraq due to their designated responsibility for 9/11 attacks was legitimated through the acknowledgement of the discourse of evil in human nature.

In the aftermath of the military attacks toward Afghanistan and Iraq, it was time for American society to notice the evil in their own natures. The attacks were processed through the discourses of justice, honor and resistance in the shade of the lust for vengeance, but the blood was shed on both sides. It was real pain with a slight touch of an uncanny sense of guilt. If evil really was intrinsic to human nature, it was too much to handle when the time came to perceive and accept evil in their own selves once evil arose from their decisions and actions. The emergence of evil in American society because of the ideas of vengeance that occurred after the 9/11 incident necessitated the conversion of the concept of evil in human nature.

The discourse of Barack Obama during his election campaign arose from the conceptions of change and it denied the existence of evil in human nature. He related evil actions with the conditions that humankind is trapped into due to the wrong decisions one makes

(clearly assigning blame on the Bush government). In his view, there was no evil in human nature, evil actions were mistakes and humankind was capable of learning from their mistakes to correct them. The conceptualizations that Obama formulated were soothing for the troubled sense in the psyche of American society. The shift of discourse Obama accomplished on the social tendencies of American society was verified through his victory in the presidential election. Through this transforming tendency in American society on the concept of evil in human nature I tracked the shift on the historical representation of German society during the war in Brian Singer's *Valkyrie* (2008) as the blockbuster World War II film of the period.

Some of the most famous campaign slogans of Barack Obama during his presidential campaign were: "Yes, we can", "Change we believe in", "Vote for change" and "I am asking you to believe. Not just in my ability to bring about real change in Washington. I am asking you to believe in yours". *Valkyrie* narrates the story of courageous German men who take the reins of their will and confront the evil ambitions of Adolf Hitler and struggle hard to change the destiny of their once-honored country during World War II. This resemblance to the discourses of Obama that effected the social tendencies of American society in a broad sense on the conception of evil in human nature and the discourses of *Valkyrie* is striking.

According to both, there are no evil in human nature, there were mistakes that humankind is trapped into and humankind was capable of correcting the mistakes through the experience it gained from their faults. Considering the representation of German society during World War II in the blockbuster World War II films produced in these two different periods under the two differing dominancy discourses of Bush and Obama, I perceive that the evil conceptualization towards German society was multi-functional.

In the period of G. W. Bush especially after the 9/11 incident, German society during World War II was the evidence for the evil in the enemy's nature. In the climate of vengeance toward the evil enemies, German society during World War II was represented in *Pearl Harbor* (2001) and *Hart's War* (2002) as a whole evil entity that participated in evil actions. Those were the times where the United States was sending troops to Iraq and

Afghanistan. Through an uncanny sense of guilt based on the military expeditions of Iraq and Afghanistan, which cost thousands of human lives on both sides, the concept of evil in human nature grew to be unacceptable for American society. The reason this conception became unbearable was the confrontation of American society with its own evil nature. It was in this climate that the discourses of Barack Obama, which designated evil actions as mistakes and blessed humankind with the courage to change their destiny lightened the guilty souls of American society.

The social tendencies of American society underwent a transformation on the cognition of evil as a part of human nature with the effect of Obama's discourses. In this way, German society was seen as the victim of the evil ambitions of Hitler who struggled hard to change their destiny, which was viewed as the evidence of the innocence of American society for the bloodshed in Iraq and Afghanistan. The historical representation of German society during World War II in blockbuster World War II films shifted accordingly considering the conception of evil in human nature.

Through the profit-oriented relationship of the Hollywood blockbuster film industry with the current main tendencies of American society, the historical representation of German society during World War II shifted in a correlated way. It is this shift that I have endeavored to present in this study. I intended to portray the reproduction of historiography in historical blockbuster films that is practiced in accordance with the transformation within the dominant social tendencies.

In this study, I have endeavored to discuss and interpret the historiographical performance of the historical blockbuster film. Blockbuster films certainly do not cover the entire field of the historiographical practice of all the various types within the film medium. The study may go further through research on the historiographical performances of the other filmic practices. Those other filmic practices may be broadly conceptualized by the non-diegetic, non-representative films that are not produced with orientation toward profit. The characteristics of the relationship of those practices within the main tendencies of the society would naturally be different from those of blockbuster filmmaking practices. The historiographical practice of the documentary also exists as a whole different field in which

to work, especially on practice of documentation the concept houses. The study of the historiographical performance of film medium in a broad sense demands appropriate approaches that are convenient to work with on the differing practices of filmmaking.

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