

THE CONSTRUCTION OF COLLECTIVE MEMORY AND
WAR

PROPAGANDA IN HOLLYWOOD MOVIES:

PEARL HARBOR, THE ALAMO AND 300 SPARTANS

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BY

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JUNE 2008

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AUTHOR DECLARATION

1. The material included in this thesis has not been submitted wholly or in part for any academic award or qualification other than that for which it is now submitted.

2. The program of advanced study of which this thesis is part has been comprised of: courses in English Literature, including literary theory, English, American, and World Literature in genres that include literary criticism, drama, narrative literature, and thematic courses such as the history of Utopia and Dystopia.

i) Research Methods. The thesis incorporates research methods taught on both the undergraduate and, on the graduate level (by thesis advisor) during the course of the study. See ii below.

ii) Sources examined in this thesis include articles from scholarly journals, other articles such as film reviews, essays, and interviews with the movie directors and co-producers in question; books and secondary sources on collective memory, nationalism, and national identity, and sources from other disciplines (i.e., sociological, historical and film studies sources), the thesis style guides of Turkish universities and international universities as well as many relevant books published by university presses on this subject.

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ABSTRACT

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THE CONSTRUCTION OF COLLECTIVE MEMORY AND WAR PROPAGANDA IN HOLLYWOOD MOVIES: PEARL HARBOR, THE ALAMO AND 300 SPARTANS:

As the title “The Construction of Collective Memory and War Propaganda in Hollywood Movies: Pearl Harbor, The Alamo and 300 Spartans” suggests, this thesis aims to analyze collective memory, national identity and war propaganda along with the role of Hollywood in constructing these concepts in American society. To this end, first I will work out the meanings of collective memory and national identity and how Hollywood informs them. Then, I will analyze three contemporary movies, which are all about the real historical events.

This thesis is composed of three major chapters: in Chapter One, the power of collective memory, the comparison of collective memory with history and the role of Hollywood in constructing collective memory in society will be studied. Chapter Two will focus on the meanings of nation, nationalism and national identity and the role of Hollywood in constructing national identity as well as how it produces war propaganda. Finally, Chapter Three will analyze three contemporary post 9/11 historical Hollywood movies in the light of what will have been analyzed in Chapter One and Chapter Two.

Key words: Collective memory, national identity, war propaganda, Hollywood cinema.

KISA ÖZET

FADİME AKTÜRK YILMAZ

HAZİRAN, 2008

HOLLYWOOD SİNEMASINDA KOLLEKTİF HAFIZA VE SAVAŞ PROPAGANDASININ YAPILMASI: PEARL HARBOR, THE ALAMO AND 300 SPARTANS:

Bu tez kollektif hafıza, milli kimlik ve savaş propagandası kavramlarını incelemek ve Hollywood sinemasının bu kavramların toplum içinde oluşturulmasındaki rolünü ortaya koymak için hazırlanmıştır. Bu amaçla, bu kavramların tanımı yapıldıktan sonra, tarihten gerçek olayları anlatan Pearl Harbor, The Alamo ve 300 Spartalı adlı üç çağdaş Hollywood filmi incelenecektir.

Bu tez üç ana bölümden oluşmaktadır. Birinci bölümde, kollektif hafızanın tarihten farklı olduğu, milli kimliğin oluşturulmasında önemli bir yeri olduğu ve Hollywood sinemasının Amerikan toplumunda kollektif hafıza oluşturulmasında etkin rol oynadığı savunulacaktır. İkinci bölümde millet, milliyetçilik ve milli kimlik kavramlarının tanımı yapıldıktan sonra milli kimlik oluşturulmasında ve savaş propagandası yapılmasında “öteki” ve “düşman” kavramlarının önemi incelenecektir. Sonrasında, bu konuda Hollywood sinemasının ne rol oynadığı üzerinde durulacaktır. Son olarak, üçüncü bölümde üç çağdaş Hollywood filmi, birinci ve ikinci bölümde varılan sonuçlar doğrultusunda incelenecektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kollektif hafıza, milli kimlik, savaş propagandası, Hollywood sineması

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THE CONSTRUCTION OF COLLECTIVE MEMORY AND WAR

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INTRODUCTION

Collective memory has been a great issue of interest and played an important role in politics, society and literature. Maurice Halbwachs coined the term collective memory and defined it as a sense of common history shared by the members of a group that define its identity and promote its unity. (Halbwachs, Collective Memory, 81) He emphasizes the power of social influence on people's personal memories and on a community's collective memories of the past. We remember our past in a group context; therefore, everyone needs other people to remember. Without the framework of collective memory, individual memory can not exist.

Having a collective memory helps define group identity and unity. When a collective memory is created around the shared history of the people in a nation, the feelings of nationalism and the identity of the group strengthens. Anthony Smith defines the nation as a “named human population sharing a historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members” (Smith 14) He emphasizes the importance of having a common history and collective memories to be nation. As Benedict Anderson argues, a nation is imagined as community because a nation can not be imagined without a community which has shared past and collective memories (Anderson 7).

In this thesis, I take a closer look at the importance of collective memory in society, especially in the formation of national identity and the role of Hollywood cinema in constructing a collective memory and national identity, and how it functions as propaganda for war.

Mass media is perhaps the most important means of construction for national identity and collective consciousness. Since we do not actually know the exact realities and details about past events, they are transformed into constructed memory by mass media. Hollywood cinema, as one of the most popular forms of mass media, has a significant role on the American people as well as on other nations.

There are many nationalist movies in Hollywood cinema which depict the American people as very brave and heroic. They convey the message that every American man or a small group of Americans can fight off thousands of people who are challenging them. In this thesis, I will argue that Hollywood cinema functions as propaganda in its depictions of a strong American nationalism, infusing the American people with enthusiasm to defend their country when it is necessary and justifying frequent military attacks on other countries.

Pearl Harbor, The Alamo and 300 Spartans are three important movies which convey these messages. These movies depict historical events in which the protagonists lose the battle at first, but in the end when we look at the larger picture, through their courage and bravery, we see that they win the war. These movies warn the people that if they don't fight for their nation, the same events will reoccur. Americans are trying to construct a collective memory among their people, especially since 9/11, to justify their attacks on Iraq. The feelings of nationalism are

conveyed so convincingly that even the audiences from other nations could feel the pride and honor of the protagonists.

For the sake of clarity, I will first review the research on the theories I will use in my thesis to then have a closer look at the three Hollywood movies mentioned above.

In the first chapter, I study the meaning of the term collective memory and I aim to conceptualize collective memory by comparing it with history. In the second part of the first chapter, I emphasize the importance and power of collective memory in shaping the identity of a group. I argue that shared memories of the past are one of the factors which define group identities, establish group boundaries, and help determine the present and future actions of the groups. And finally, Chapter One will look at the role of Hollywood cinema in the construction of collective memory. Hollywood cinema shapes the collective memory and identity of the American people because they can reach many people and convey many messages. In many of these movies, some very extraordinary and astonishing events are depicted and are being mythologized. And these myths are useful to construct collective memory and identity. These myths are seen as sacred and are used to indoctrinate the people with a ready made identity and memory.

In the second chapter, I review research on the nation, nationalism and national identity, and establish theoretical connections between these concepts. I begin with defining and describing the meanings of these terms. I focus on the idea that national communities are based on belief and they sustain their existence on the condition that their members continue to believe in them. I review the works of Benedict Anderson, Ernest Renan, Yael Tamir, and David Miller. I continue with the

current idea that national identity is more powerful than other identities. I claim that national identity is the most inclusive and strongest identity because nations form the basis of all present political regimes. I compare national identity with some of other forms of identity, such as feminism, liberalism, local or regional identities, economical class identity, and try to demonstrate the power of national identity. I also emphasize the importance of “the other” and “enemy” in the construction of national identity and war propaganda. People define their identities by comparing and contrasting themselves with others. Communication with others and their feelings are important for the definition of identities. Huntington emphasizes the significance of the other for self-definition and notes that “identities are defined by the self but they are the product of the interaction between the self and others. How others perceive an individual or group affects the self-definition of that individual or group” (Huntington 23). Governments always define themselves against and in comparison with the others. They keep their existence as long as they have an enemy against which they can define themselves. If there is no threat to a nation's existence, it is very difficult to sustain a strong and unified nation. Lastly, I draw attention to the role of Hollywood in the propaganda of the American government. The American government has used Hollywood movies during and after their important wars- especially World War II. After the events of 9/11, Hollywood movie producers were ready to use their art to help the American government and army.

Finally, the last chapter closely analyzes the previously mentioned movies in order to bring light to the nationalistic elements in them. In them, there are many aspects and images which glorify the American people and army. We witness the bravery and patriotism of American soldiers literal and figurative and how they

sacrifice their lives for the sake of their nations. There is the message in these three movies that every American is courageous and talented enough to challenge the whole world. Even a very small group of people can resist a huge army. These three movies function as war propaganda for the American government. In all of these movies the protagonists lose the initial battle, but in the end, with courage and patriotism, their nations win the war. These movies contain a warning for the American people that if they do not fight for their nation, they will be doomed. Moreover, the Americans are trying to construct a collective memory among their people, especially since 9/11, and justify their attacks on Iraq. The feelings of nationalism are conveyed so densely in these movies that even the audiences from other nations could feel the pride and honor of the protagonists.

CHAPTER 1

COLLECTIVE MEMORY

1.1 Collective memory vs. History

Remembering and forgetting are basic functions for human beings. Remembrance of physical movements such as breathing, blinking your eyes or swallowing is performed without the conscious and personal will of people. In the same way, people can not often control their ability to remember and forget their individual experiences, such as the distressing and painful events of their past, because personal recollection is generally under the control of social and environmental factors. The larger version of personal recollection and memory is a 'collective memory' which is formed by the construction of collective identities and common histories of social groups, communities, or nations (Taitano 55). In fact, "memory is more properly addressed as social phenomenon rather than a function of individual psychology" (Taitano 55). Collective memory is a term which was developed by the sociologist Maurice Halbwachs in the third decade of the twentieth century. He defined collective memory as a sense of common history shared by the members of a group that define its identity and promote its unity. (Halbwachs Collective Memory 81) Halbwachs' ideas about collective memory have widely been accepted by many anthropologists, sociologists, and historians.

Halbwachs stresses the strength of social influence on people's personal memories and on a community's collective memories of the past. These collective memories are significant for the identity of social groups such as families, members of a religion, or nations. Halbwachs claims that "It is in society that people normally

acquire their memories. It is also in society that they recall, recognize and localize their memories.” (Halbwachs, Collective Memory 38) And he argues that it is impossible for individuals to remember in a consistent way outside their group frameworks. He exemplifies his argument with the impossibility of remembering whether our childhood memories are individual or the result of reminders which our families give us. In his essay “Historical memory and Collective Memory”, Halbwachs writes:

Every collective memory requires the support of a group delimited in space and time. The totality of past events can be put together in a single record only by separating them from the memory of the groups who preserved them and by severing the bonds that held them close to the psychological life of the social milieu where they occurred, while retaining only the group’s chronological and spatial outline of them (qtd. in Crane 1376).

He argues that individual memory is only meaningful and coherent within the frameworks of a social group. Collective memory requires a specific group to be able to survive and continue. An individual needs these kinds of groups to remember and express personal memories because there is a living relationship between these groups and collective memory. Only within the boundaries of such groups can an individual keep the memory alive. Individual memory and collective memory require each other. Without the existence of collective memory, individual memory doesn’t mean anything. Michael Kenny claims that

Individual and collective experience imply each other. Individuals are nothing without the prior existence of the collectivities that sustain them, the cultural traditions and the communicative practices that position the self in relation to the social and natural worlds (Kenny 421).

However, it is also true that we are included in various groups in different parts of our lives. We have a family life, a school life, a social environment, neighbors, friends, and we belong to a religious group and/or a nation. “The groups to which I belong vary at different periods of my life,” Halbwachs notes, “But it is from their viewpoint that I consider the past.” Thus, we can assume that there are multiple pasts and therefore multiple collective memories which can change with the events of the past and the individual memories of them (Crane 1377). Halbwachs supports this idea by excluding the academic study of history from its social influences and sustains a strong division between history and memory.

Collective memory is a current of continuous thought whose continuity is not all artificial, for it retains from the past only what still lives or is capable of living in the consciousness of the groups keeping the memory alive. By definition, it does not exceed the boundaries of this group... Situated external to and above groups, history readily introduces into the stream of facts simple demarcations fixed once and for all... There are several collective memories ... but history is unitary, and it can be said that there is only one history (Halbwachs, Collective Memory 80-81).

Collective memory is continuous, there is no break between the past and present and nothing can be lost in this continuity. On the other hand, historical memory starts when the living contact between the past and present fades (Crane 1377). Moreover, although there are several collective memories which change according to the groups you belong to, there is only one history.

Pierre Nora, who invented the term 'memory sites' in "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Memoire", also distinguishes history from memory. He supports Halbwachs in his argument of having multiple pasts and collective memories:

Memory is blind to all but the group it binds-which is to say, as Maurice Halbwachs has said, that there are as many memories as there are groups, that memory is by nature multiple and yet specific; collective, plural, and yet individual. History, on the other hand, belongs to everyone and to no one, whence its claim to universal authority. Memory takes root in the concrete, in spaces, gestures, images, and objects; history binds itself strictly to temporal continuities, to progressions and to relations between things. Memory is absolute, while history can only conceive the relative (Nora 9).

Halbwachs' concept of collective memory is a dynamic and ever changing social structure which is dependent on a social group and a collective conscience, and which also differs from historical memory.

History is a collection of the most notable facts in the memory of man. But past events read in books and taught and learned in schools are

selected, combined, and evaluated in accord with the necessities and rules not imposed on the groups that had through time guarded them as living trust. General history starts only when tradition ends and social memory is fading or breaking up. So long as remembrance continues to exist, it is useless to set it down in writing or otherwise fix it into memory (Halbwachs Collective Memory 78).

Another important distinction between memory and history, according to Pierre Nora, is that while memory is open to remembering and forgetting, history is the representation and reconstruction of the past. Since there are multiple pasts and multiple collective memories, people can forget a memory when they change their groups or interests and then remember it again after some time. On the other hand, there is only one history and it can not be changed. It is not open to forgetting and remembering. Nora acknowledges:

Memory and history, far from being synonymous, appear now to be in fundamental opposition. Memory is life, borne by living societies founded in its name. It remains in permanent evolution, open to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting, unconscious of its successive deformations, vulnerable to manipulation and appropriation, susceptible to being long dormant and periodically revived. History, on the other hand, is the reconstruction, always problematic and incomplete, of what is no longer. Memory is a perpetually actual phenomenon, a bond tying us to the eternal present; history is a representation of the past (Nora 8).

What is more, Halbwachs argues that historical memory is required when the events and the people are too distant in the past and when they lose their bonds with the society. When history appears, memory moves away from the social environment and becomes confined in the boundaries of chronology and facts; “severing the bonds” from its “social milieu” (Crane 1377).

“General history starts only when tradition ends and the social memory is fading or breaking up . . . The need to write the history of a period, a society, or even a person is only aroused when the subject is already too distant in the past to allow for the testimony of those who preserve some remembrance of it” (qtd. in Crane 1377).

This is the most important distinction between memory and history for Halbwachs. Historical memory is the recollection of a “lost past.” It is formed by chronological and detailed facts. The past is not a collective memory anymore, and it doesn’t make sense in our lives. Jeffrey K. Olick agrees with Halbwachs and states:

History is the remembered past to which we no longer have an organic relation- the past that is no longer an important part of our lives- while collective memory is that forms our identities (Olick 336).

Therefore, history and memory can not exist at the same time and place. When history appears, memory fades away and becomes confined in the boundaries of chronology and facts. According to Nora the main aim of history is to destruct and eradicate collective memory, and argues that a society which exists under the influence of history can not construct a collective memory. He avers:

At the heart of history is a critical discourse that is antithetical to spontaneous memory. History is perpetually suspicious of memory,

and its true mission is to suppress and destroy it. At the horizon of historical societies, at the limits of the completely historicized world, there would occur a permanent secularization. History's goal and ambition is not to exalt but to annihilate what has in reality taken place. A generalized critical history would no doubt preserve some museums, some medallions and monuments-that is to say, the materials necessary for its work-but it would empty them of what, to us, would make them lieux de memoire. In the end, a society living wholly under the sign of history could not, any more than could a traditional society; conceive such sites for anchoring its memory (Nora 9).

According to Nora, collective memory is under the threat of history, and it is already being mistaken by the history. He thinks that "we speak so much of memory because there is so little of it left." History becomes necessary when people realize the distance of the past events and need the chronological facts and details to remember them. Nora believes that lieux de memoire, sites of memory, are formed at this point when milieux de memoire, real environments of memory, disappear. (Nora 12). He warns people that we must create some sites of memory, otherwise history will destroy them:

Lieux de memoire originate with the sense that there is no spontaneous memory, that we must deliberately create archives, maintain anniversaries, organize celebrations, pronounce eulogies, and notarize bills because such activities no longer occur naturally. The defense, by certain minorities, of a privileged memory that has

retreated to jealously protected enclaves in this sense intensely illuminates the truth of lieux de memoire – that without commemorative vigilance, history would soon sweep them away (Nora 12).

Thus, besides being very different, history and memory are like two rivals. When one of them appears, the other disappears. History is only a representation of past events and its main goal is to sweep memory away. On the other hand, collective memory is crucial for a society or a social group in order to construct their identity. It provides a living relation with the past and present. Therefore, in order to preserve collective memory, we need to create sites of memory. Quoting Nora, Hue-Tam Ho Tai illustrates these lieux de memoire, sites of memory, which aim to construct French collective memory and national identity.

The archives and the tricolor; libraries and festivals; dictionaries and the Pantheon; museums and the Arc de Triomphe; the Dictionnaire Larousse and the Wall of the Federes (where defenders of the Paris Commune were massacred by the French Army in 1871). "The collection also includes real people (Rene Descartes and Joan of Arc), mythic ones / (the Good Soldier, Nicolas Chauvin), battles (Verdun), competitions (the tour de France), and novels (Marcel Proust's Remembrance of Things Past) (Tai 4th passage).

1.2 The Power of Collective Memory

Collective memory is a remembrance of history shared by members of a social group or a nation which defines the identity and promotes the unity of that group. Halbwachs claims that the individual memory exists within the frameworks of family, religion, and nation. Jeffrey K. Olick quotes Halbwachs and writes:

Halbwachs argued memory is in no way a repository of all past experiences. Over time memories become generalized “imagos”, and such imagos require a social context for their preservation. Memories, in this sense, are as much the products of the symbols and narratives available publicly- and of the social means for storing and transmitting them- as they are the possessions of individuals (Olick 335).

Memory is mainly a social phenomenon rather than a function of individual psychology or physiology. We remember our pasts with the help of external influences and recall our memories from the perspectives of the groups which we belong to. Remembering is not related to renewing the hidden images in our subconscious. It is the result of an external promotion that causes the renewal of images from the past. Therefore, Halbwachs argues, we needn't search our memories in somewhere hidden in our brains.

There is no point in seeking where they are preserved in my brain or in some nook of my mind to which I alone have access: for they are recalled to me externally, and the groups of which I am a part at any time give me the means to reconstruct them, upon condition, to be sure, that I turn toward them and adopt, at least for the moment, their

way of thinking. But why should this not be so in all cases?

(Halbwachs Collective Memory 38).

Memory is a socially constructed structure and there is no completely interior remembrance. People can remember and recognize their memories only in society. It is impossible for the mind being isolated from the society. There is only one place where it can be removed from the society: dreams. Halbwachs argues that the mind can only be isolated from its social environment at nights while sleeping. Therefore, if an individual psychology looks for an area where consciousness is remote and isolated from other people, it can only be found in the dreams. The images in the dreams are almost totally remote from the social representations, so Halbwachs compares these images with raw materials in terms of their ability to enter into all types of combinations. The images of dreams have haphazard relationships. Halbwachs believes that there are as many differences between the line of successive images in dreams and a series of recollections as that between “a pile of rough-hewn materials with superimposed parts heaped one upon the other, only accidentally achieving an equilibrium” and “the walls of an edifice maintained by a whole armature, supported and reinforced by neighboring edifices” (Halbwachs, Collective Memory, 42). The dream is based on itself; however, memory is supported by the members of our social environment. Halbwachs argues:

There are no recollections which can be said to be purely interior, that is, which can be preserved only within individual memory. Indeed, from the moment that a recollection reproduces a collective perception, it can itself only be collective; it would be impossible for the individual to represent to himself anew, using only his forces, that

which he could not represent to himself previously –unless he has recourse to the thought of his group. If recollections were preserved in individual form within memory, and if the individual could remember things only by forgetting human society and by proceeding all by himself...., he would become fused with his past. ...there is indeed one case in which people become fused with the images that they represent to themselves, that is, where the person believes he is living what he imagines all by himself. But this is also the only moment in which he is no longer capable of the act of memory: when he dreams (Halbwachs, Collective Memory, 169).

In fact, the idea that memory is interior, personal or isolated from the society contradicts the aim of remembering and recollection. Memory aims to unite the members of a social group although they have different interests and goals. And not every past event can be called collective memory; it must stir emotions, excite people and infuse them with enthusiasm.

Collective memory is an exploration of a shared identity that unites a social group, be it a family or a nation, whose members nonetheless have different interests and motivations. And of the fact that the crucial issue in the story of memory is not how a past is represented but why it was received or rejected. For, every society sets up images of the past. Yet to make a difference in a society, it is not enough for a certain past to be selected. It must steer emotions, motivate people to act, be received; in short, it must become a socio-cultural mode of action (Confino 1390).

Therefore, we need collective memory as a unifying element in any kind of social group, such as a family, religious group or a nation because it motivates people to act together. People keep the existence of their identity through generations by the help of collective memory. It directs the actions, knowledge and understanding of people by exploiting their emotions. Remembering a shared past stirs people's emotions and infuses them with the feeling of integrity and unity with the other members of the group. By means of collective remembering, people believe that they belong somewhere and they are not alone. They feel protected and cared for. Assman and Czaplicka explain the necessity of collective memory by quoting Nietzsche:

According to Nietzsche, while in the world of animals genetic programs guarantee the survival of the species, humans must find a means by which to maintain their nature consistently through generations. The solution to this problem is offered by cultural memory, a collective concept for all knowledge that directs behavior and experience in the interactive framework of a society and one that obtains through generations in the repeated societal practice and initiations (Assmann, Czaplicka 126).

Just like human beings need collective memory to continue their existence, memory needs to be fed by a collective source, in other words human beings, to continue its existence. Coser compares this case with the existence of God and creatures in the introduction of Halbwachs' The Collective Memory. "Memory needs continuous feeding from collective sources and is sustained by social and moral props. Just like God needs us, so memory needs others" (Coser 34). God is perhaps

the most powerful one in the world for the believers; God creates everything in the world; everything in the world owes its existence to the God. However, if there aren't human beings who praise and give thanks to God, there is no meaning in his existence. People need God to exist, but God also needs people. In the same way, people need memory to survive and guarantee their existence, and memory needs people and their social and moral support to sustain its existence because people learn everything from other people. They don't invent any of the basic concepts in their lives such as their religion, language, traditions, laws, morals, etc. All of these are given by other people and these are, in fact, all collective representations. Therefore, our memories need a collective source to continue. Quoting Blondel, Halbwachs notes:

The individual does not invent his religion, his morals, his laws, his aesthetics, his science, his language, the patterns of his everyday behavior with his equals, superiors, or inferiors, with the strong and the weak, with the aged, women, or children, his manner of eating and conducting himself at table, the infinite detail, finally, of his thought or his conduct. All these he receives ready-made, thanks to education, to instruction and to language, from the society of which he is part. These include, to be sure, conscious activities but they are mental states whose most essential characteristics are distinguishable from the purely individual states. If they are common to all, not only are they not peculiar to any person, but, further, they are not entirely realized in any of their individual incarnations. The ideas of the moral men are not morality, those of the savant are not science; our tastes are not

aesthetics, the words which we exchange are not language. A mental reality which constitutes and at the same time transcends the individual consciousness, such is the essential nature of collective representations (qtd. in Halbwachs, "Individual Consciousness", 814-815).

Another important reason why we need memory is the fact that collective memory constructs collective identity in any kind of group. Both the individuals and groups have an identity. And identity is constructed because it is an active phenomenon. People can define their identities themselves. It is related to the ideas of people about themselves. An individual may be a member of many groups and thus is able to shift identities.

Identities are, overwhelmingly, constructed. People make their identity, under varying degrees of pressure, inducements, and freedom. Identities are imagined selves: they are what we think we are and what we want to be. Apart from ancestry, gender, and age, people are relatively free to define their identities as they wish, although they may not be able to implement those identities in practice (Huntington 22-23).

Collective memories of the groups to which people belong help them define their identities. Charlotte Linde claims that memory is not only a physical activity but also a social one because it is an important element which constructs identity. "Memory is not only a neurological process of recording, but also a social process of construction and reconstruction. Memory in this sense is a key to identity, and to the acquisition of identity" (Linde 608). Collective memory tells us about how a

community (a family, religious group, nation, etc.) imagines and defines its identity through the practice of collective remembering and forgetting. Therefore, there is a strong relationship between collective identity and collective memory. A shared past and collective remembering have been used to unify the members of a group and determine their identities throughout the history. Having common memories from the past promotes the unity of even a small group of friends. The more people share with other people, the stronger their relationship will be.

Shared memories of the past are one of the factors which define group identities and determine the present and future actions of the group. Thus, collective identity can also be a part of the study on collective memory. In their essay called “Collective Memory and Cultural Identity”, Assman and Czaplicka identify ‘collective memory’ as ‘cultural memory’. They stress the importance of three poles in this theory and relate them to each other; memory (contemporized memory), culture, and the group (society) (Assman- Czaplicka 30). They emphasize the significance of culture and memory in the concretion of identity and state that cultural memory is defined by the search for identity. They propose:

Cultural memory preserves the store of knowledge from which a group derives an awareness of its unity and peculiarity. The objective manifestations of cultural memory are defined through a kind of identificatory determination in a positive (“We are this”) or in a negative (“That is our opposite”) sense. Access to and transmission of this knowledge (knowledge in the cultural memory) are not controlled by ... ‘theoretical curiosity’ but rather by a ‘need for identity’ (Assman- Czaplicka 130).

Collective memory is important for people to feel themselves belonging to a group. If an individual doesn't have a shared past with a group of people, he/she will feel lonely and isolated from the other members. In order to share the identity of a group, one must share some collective memories with the other members. Coser writes about his own experience in the introduction of Halbwachs' The Collective Memory:

I came to this country as an immigrant shortly before Pearl Harbor. It did not take me long to establish friendships, or at least contacts, with young people of roughly my own age. But I felt for a long time that there was something in my relations with native Americans that blocked full communication, and that there was a kind of impassible barrier between us. It was only after I remembered Halbwachs's work on memory, which I had read at the Sorbonne, that I was able to put a finger on the reason for this mild estrangement between us. I then realized that they and I did not share enough collective memories.

The memory of major sports events shared by my friends was not part of my memory. I had not worshiped particular famous baseball players with them. I was confused when I noticed that American football was something very different from the European variety, so that I had no way of participating in their football lore. They talked about common experiences in high school that made little sense to me. They often gossiped about early girlfriends and their amorous conquests in high-school days. They were not particularly

history-minded, yet I often found it hard to follow when some historical reference cropped up in conversation. In summary, much of what I had experienced until my twenties made but little sense to my new friends, and, reciprocally, I could not make much sense, lacking points of repair, when talking to American age-mates, and later classmates at Columbia. I was excluded from their collective memory and they from mine (Coser 21).

He was able to establish friendships and contacts with the people from his age group, but there were always some barriers which blocked complete communication. The reason for these obstacles is that he and his friends did not share the same past, and they did not share collective memories. This example demonstrates the importance of collective memory in sharing the same identity. No matter how well people get along with each other, they will have some problems at some point because of not sharing the same memories.

Memories are parts of the opinions and feelings which are common to and shared by a group. This group is composed of people with whom we have a relationship with at present or with whom we have had a relationship in the previous days or years. Sharing the same past and having collective memories with the people in this group is important in order to have strong relationships because these common memories help people to construct an identity and promote their feeling of relation and belonging.

1.3 How do Mass Media and Hollywood help to construct Collective Memory?

Mass media and Hollywood movies have an important role in shaping people's ideas. Hollywood movies especially have a profound effect on people because they can reach many people to convey messages. It is easier to reach people by movies because many people enjoy watching movies, and it is easier to watch a movie than read. Therefore, Hollywood is a good way to convey to people a message and channel their ideas and emotions. A film may be more "ambitious" while evaluating past events because, as Nancy Rhoden claims:

[...] it can juxtapose different images in quick succession, tell multiple stories from multiple perspectives, move rapidly from the large narrative to individual stories, and depict the emotions and liveliness of people who lived in the past (Rhoden 207).

Movie producers in Hollywood are aware of their power in building a prospected future and they try to construct a feeling of American collective memory and nationalism. Hollywood cinema functions as a means of propaganda in its depictions of a strong American nationalism infusing the American people with enthusiasm to defend their country when it is necessary and justifying the frequent military attacks on other countries. "Being responsive about their roles to determine the future", Wetta and Novellii argue, "Hollywood producers have made a lot of movies to vivify the wars that they have had":

Hollywood knows that it must play its role in creating the world of tomorrow by combining fact and fiction, Hollywood has produced many dramatically powerful movies to vivify the war for the American people. (Wetta and Novelli 862)

Most of the time, “memory is manipulated and exploited by the nation states or power groups in order to legitimize their existence, or a particular social system” (Olick, Robbins 126). Quoting Foucault, Jeffrey Olick and Joyce Robbins note; “Since memory is actually a very important factor in struggle... if one controls people’s memory, one controls their dynamism” (Olick, Robbins 126). Being aware of this reality, Hollywood tries to bring the wars to life in movie theaters. Movie producers portray the difficulties and sorrows that American soldiers experienced during previous wars and celebrate their victories. When people remember the common sorrows, traumas, and victories that they had in the past, a collective memory of nationalism erupts spontaneously and in this way, the government of the USA legitimizes their existence and justifies their frequent military attacks on other nations which have been going on for years. After all,

America, as Geoffrey Perret puts it, is “a country made by war.” “War” in American history, he argues, “is a factor as important as geography, immigration, the growth of business, the separation of powers, the inventiveness of its people, or anything else that contributes strongly to its unique identity among the nations of the Earth.” If war is this important to the creation of American culture and its perception of American’s uniqueness and its cult of endless victories, then Hollywood’s war stories take on added significance since almost all that Americans knew about war, up to Vietnam, the first “television war”-came from the movies. (qtd. in Wetta and Novelli 862-863)

The American government tries to employ the wars that the Americans attended for their sake. Since national traumas and defeats are more encouraging and inspiring, Hollywood usually demonstrates the losses they suffered after a major defeat. The sorrow and grief infuse the American people with the enthusiasm of defending their country. During a war or after a defeat the American government has used the Hollywood industry to form a unity and collective consciousness among their people. Especially after WWII the American government sought the assistance of Hollywood to depict the American people as unified:

[...] the OWI's Bureau of Motion Pictures repeatedly asked the movie industry to present an image of America united and harmonized by war, with labor and management, blacks and whites, men and women lured out of their divisions by the stirring goal of a common enterprise. The movies were to present a picture of national unity, while the bureaucrats squabbled with each other and with the movie-makers as to how best to present this inspiring picture(Limerick 473).

Another aim of these movies which depict national traumas is to construct a collective response towards the enemies of the US government; they do this by retelling some myths and legends which are extraordinary and unusual. By reminding the people of the difficulties and defeats that they had in the past, these movies try to build a shared identity with the questions “Who are we?” and “What are we to become?” (Neal 21) Arthur Neal states:

While the responses of individuals to national traumas are highly varied, collective responses tend to become standardized through the elaboration of myths and legends for defining the moral boundaries of

society. Stories are told about extraordinary events, noteworthy accomplishments, and unusual tragedies. Such accounts provide ingredients for the creation of a sense of moral unity among any given group of people and permit linking personal lives with historical circumstances. Notions about "who we are" and "what we are to become" are shaped to a large degree from the shared identities that grow out of both extraordinary difficulties and extraordinary accomplishments in the social realm (Neal 21).

It is true that in most of these movies, plays or comics, some very extraordinary and astonishing events like myths are depicted. And these myths are useful to construct collective memory and identity. These myths are granted some sacred meanings and used to present people a ready-made identity and memory. The US government is trying to indoctrinate people with the superiority and accuracy of their nations.

Collective memories may be understood as forms of myth-making. Their significance lies less in their accuracy than in the meanings they have for adherents. ...The creation of myth is pragmatic as accounts of tragic events are drawn upon for self-serving purposes. Myths are useful in sustaining personal identities and commitments as well as in supporting a political policy or in documenting the urgency of avoiding a particular line of action. As forms of myth, however, collective memories also become endowed with sacred meanings as they are drawn upon to embellish perceptions of society as moral community (Neal 215).

In fact, mass media is a means by which the collective response to national traumas is led and a collective consciousness toward these traumas is constructed not only in the USA but also all over the world. Not only traumas are commemorated but victories are also glorified in mass media. Although nations gain a victory after a war, they still suffer a lot of losses. Therefore, the people in these countries can not be joyful after the victory because many of the families lose at least one of their members in the war. They may have a big success, but generally they lack morale. Mass media intervenes here and constructs a collective memory and consciousness about the importance of the unity and existence of the country. People learn to ignore the losses that they have suffered and enjoy their victory because the survival of their nation is more important than their individual losses. Writing about WWII, Rosenheimer notes the mood of American people and the role of Hollywood and he gives some examples to the countries which use mass media in order to praise their accomplishments:

We won through superior numbers, through superior materiel, and lots of it. But we didn't win through superior morale, and that is where Hollywood could have helped. The Germans, indoctrinated by film (along with everything else) in the superiority of their system, had that. Apparently the Japanese had it, too. As did, I suspect, the Russians (Rosenheimer 330).

After the American government decided to enter WWII, Hollywood and other forms of mass media also joined the war. Since then, they have produced many patriotic war movies, plays and comics which infuse people with nationalistic

feelings and ideas. The purpose of these forms of entertainment is to inform people about the wars, to entertain people and to inspire them.

The movies, the stage plays, the comics, and other forms of popular entertainment also went to war. Hollywood became geared up to turn out a large number of patriotic movies to inform, to entertain, and to inspire. The movies provided dramatic stories that permitted individuals to personalize historical events and to vicariously participate in them (Neal 70).

Countries use their mass media to glorify their accomplishments and justify their performances because mass media is the easiest way to reach many people at the same time. Hollywood is the most powerful weapon for the American government to construct a collective memory among their people by reminding them of their previous victories and traumas.

CHAPTER 2

NATIONAL IDENTITY

2.1 Definitions of nation and nationalism

Yael Tamir starts his article “The Enigma of Nationalism” by telling a biblical story about the tower of Babel (Genesis 11) and he interprets it as a mythical description of the beginning of nations. According to the story, at the early stage in human history, the world was populated by people who spoke the same language until human beings challenged the limits of their ability and gathered together to build a tower which would reach up to heaven. God got very angry and nervous about this bravery and arrogance of human beings, (Tamir, 418) and He said:

Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be withheld from them, which they schemed to do. Come, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech (Genesis 11:6-7) (qtd. Tamir 418).

Therefore, God scattered human beings across the surface of the earth, and they divided into nations. In the light of this story, we can assume that, by dividing people into nations, God created the diversity in the world.

When we consider the meaning of “nation”, it is as various as the diversity of nations. However, a nation can, mainly, be defined as a group of people who share some cultural features, such as customs, values, norms, myths, etc. Having common cultural features is very important to be a nation but many groups other than a nation may also have these common characteristics. The difference between nations and

these groups is that they usually possess a common territory which is their native land and they try to protect this land.

Many groups hold common myths, values, and symbols (e.g., religious groups, ethnic groups, or even professional associations). But nations are not just unified by culture; they are unified by a sense of purpose: controlling the territory that the members of the group believe to be theirs (Barrington 713).

Moreover, Anthony Smith defines nation as a “named human population sharing a historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members” (Smith, 14). In this definition, Smith presents the causes for the existence of a nation together with the effects of it. Nation is often analyzed together with the terms nationalism and national identity. These three terms are related to each other and they are important for our contemporary global and multi-national world.

One of the most important pioneers of this theory is Benedict Anderson. He examines these three terms in his famous book Imagined Communities. He is also aware of the fact that it is difficult to define these terms and the studies on the theory of nationalism are deficient. He concedes in the introduction of his book:

Nation, nationality, nationalism- all have proved notoriously difficult to define, let alone to analyze. In contrast to the immense influence that nationalism has exerted on the modern world, plausible theory about it is conspicuously meager (Anderson 3).

Anderson observes the concepts of “nation-ness and nationalism as cultural artefacts” which were developed around the beginning of the 19th century and “continue to command such profound emotional legitimacy” (Anderson 4). Then he defines nation as “an imagined political community and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign” (Anderson 6).

First of all, Anderson defines nation as imagined because the members of a nation will never be able to all meet and see each other.

It is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion (Anderson 6).

He observes that people “imagine” they share the same beliefs, manners, morals, myths, etc. and construct a collective consciousness of having similar ideas and feelings. However, they do not know each other; therefore, he argues, they can not know the feelings and ideas of each other. There is only the imagination of their communion and they call it “nation.”

Tamir, on the other hand, criticizes this idea of Anderson and he states that this definition of nation seems unimportant and uninformative because according to this definition, all human associations, even families or villages could be regarded as imagined communities. For example, it is improbable that a professor at a university can have a face to face communication with every university faculty, staff, and student. According to this definition, the university will be an imaginary community, too (Tamir 421). Therefore, Tamir argues, a nation can be considered as imagined

not because the members will never meet each other, but because the existence of a nation depends on the condition that members feel and imagine that there is a nation.

...a community is defined as imagined not because of its size or because of the likelihood of face-to-face contact among its members. It is imagined because its existence is contingent on its members' sustaining a certain image of it that is based on their perceptions and feelings. If we adopt this interpretation we would, indeed, define a nation as an imagined community (Tamir 423).

Secondly, Anderson claims that a nation is imagined as limited:

The nation is imagined as *limited* because even the largest of them encompassing perhaps a billion living human beings, has finite, if elastic boundaries, beyond which lie other nations. No nation imagines itself coterminous with mankind. The most messianic nationalists do not dream of a day when all the members of the human race will join their nation in the way that it was possible, in certain epochs, for, say, Christians to dream of a wholly Christian planet (Anderson 7).

The existence of a nation requires the existence of other nations against which self definition can be constructed. Anderson, hence, argues that nations have limits and boundaries beyond which there are other nations. And the most messianic nationalists do not imagine a day when every individual will join their nation although there have been some periods when Christians dream of a completely

Christian planet. Therefore, nations are imagined as limited whereas religions are not.

Further, Anderson argues that the nation is sovereign:

It is imagined as *sovereign* because the concept was born in an age in which Enlightenment and Revolution were destroying the legitimacy of the divinely-ordained, hierarchical dynastic realm. Coming to maturity at a stage of human history when even the most devout adherents of any universal religion were inescapably confronted with the living pluralism of such religions, and the allomorphism between each faith's ontological claims and territorial stretch, nations dream of being free, and, if under God, directly so. The gage and emblem of this freedom is the sovereign state (Anderson 7).

Anderson claims that the idea of the nation was developed as a social structure to alternate previous monarchical or religious orders during the Enlightenment when the power of religion started to decrease.

Finally, the nation, Anderson acknowledges, is imagined as community. In fact, the ideas of nation and community depend on each other. A nation can not be imagined without a community which has feelings of fraternity and national identity.

Finally, it is imagined as a *community*, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. Ultimately it is this fraternity that makes it possible, over the past two centuries, for so

many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings (Anderson 7).

Nations have such a powerful effect on people's imaginations, advocates Anderson, that nationalistic calls for armies to fight for a nation are understood as the responsibility of every individual of a nation. Although, in fact people are unequal and some of them are exploited by the others, national citizens are equal and social classes are ignored in the collective struggle for national survival.

Tamir has the same opinion with Anderson and he also emphasizes the importance of the common feelings of fraternity and belief in common ancestry. He claims that they do not only share these same feelings and beliefs but they also have a desire to protect the welfare of their nation. Therefore, they try to create a safe area where they can keep their identity and carry out their culture. This idea of Tamir is parallel to Anderson's concept of nation as a community. Tamir proposes:

A nation, then, may be defined as a community whose members share feelings of fraternity, substantial distinctiveness, and exclusivity, as well as beliefs in a common ancestry and a continuous genealogy. Members of such a community are aware not only that they share these feelings and beliefs but they have an active interest in the preservation and well-being of their community. They thus seek to secure for themselves a public sphere where they can express their identity, practice their culture, and educate their young. (Tamir 424)

One of the references to this issue is found in David Miller's Citizenship and National Identity. Miller does agree with Anderson and Tamir that national

communities are composed of belief and they sustain their existence on the condition that their members believe in their existence. In fact, he underestimates the importance of the fact that members of a group share common characteristics such as the same language, race, culture, etc. and states that these features are not important, because they are not enough. He attributes the importance of these characteristics to the survival of the nation. They are important as long as the members of the group imagine the existence of their nation.

National communities are constituted by belief: a nationality exists when its members believe that it does. It is not a question of a group of people sharing some common attribute such as race or language. These features do not to themselves make nations, and only become important insofar as a particular nationality takes as one of its defining features that its members speak French or have black skins. (Miller Citizenship 28)

Ernest Renan is another scholar who stresses that a nation is something relating to feelings but he broadens the topic by mentioning the importance of both the present and the past for this feeling to be constituted. Common memories of the same ancestry and territory are very important but not enough. Present day approval and desire to live together are also very important for the existence of a nation. And out of all these requirements, he puts the most emphasis on the common ancestry, brave men from a heroic past and glory.

A nation is a soul, a spiritual principle. Two things, which in truth are but one, constitute this soul or spiritual principle. One lies in the past,

one in the present. One is the possession in common of a rich legacy of memories; the other is present-day consent, the desire to live together, the will to perpetuate the value of the heritage that one has received in an undivided form.... The nation, like the individual, is the culmination of a long past of endeavors, sacrifice, and devotion. Of all cults, that of the ancestors is the most legitimate, for the ancestors have made us what we are. A heroic past, great men, glory (by which I understand genuine glory), this is the social capital upon which one bases a national idea. (Renan 19)

To have a shared past and to have carried out great successes and glories in the past are important as long as the will and desire to do the same things are still influential in the present. The more sacrifices people have made and the more difficulties they have had, the more they love and care for their nation and country.

To have common glories in the past and to have a common will in the present; to have performed great deeds together, to wish to perform still more – these are the essential conditions for being a people. One loves in proportion to the sacrifices to which one has consented, and in proportion to the ills that one has suffered. One loves the house that one has built and that one has handed down. The Spartan song — 'We are what you were; we will be what you are' – is in its simplicity, the abridged hymn of every patrie. (Renan 19)

Telling stories about these glorious events and great deeds, which were accomplished in the past motivates people and promotes their national sentiments. However, these stories are not supposed to be historically correct. They should be generally believed and should infuse people with the feelings of nationalism.

The existence of a nation depends on whether its members have the right beliefs; it is not part of the definition that the beliefs should in fact be true. For individuals to be able to cultivate national feelings, it is important that the story the nation tells itself about its past should be generally believed, but it needn't be historically accurate. (Tamir 439)

In fact, when we look at the origin of nationalism and national identity, Anderson believes, we see that it is related to the reporting of some stories and events about a nation which cultivate national feelings and are generally believed. Anderson argues that these feelings started to be formed after the emergence of print capitalism in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The printing of newspapers and books made it possible for millions of people to imagine themselves as a part of a community. The stories about the glorious past of nations were depicted and the present day events were reported in the newspapers. Books and newspapers were very important to construct a collective memory. Books reminded people about their national victories and traumas in the past, and, thus, promoted the construction of collective memory. Newspapers “made it possible for rapidly growing numbers of people to think about themselves, and relate themselves to others, in profoundly new ways.” (Anderson 36) And he emphasizes the role and importance of print technology and language in the formation of modern nations:

...the convergence of capitalism and print technology on the fatal diversity of human language created the possibility of a new form of imagined community, which in its basic morphology set the stage for the modern nation. (Anderson 46)

Lloyd Kramer also emphasizes the importance of print capitalism – newspapers and books- and acknowledges that they made it possible for millions of people to imagine themselves as part of the same community because they get information from each other and get in touch with the other members.

This imaginative act of identification depended from the beginning on new cultural institutions, because the dispersed people in these societies would never meet, never see most of the places in which their "imagined" compatriots lived, and never know anything about the millions of individuals whom they envisioned as their community (Kramer 529).

The emergence of print capitalism promoted the feelings of fraternity and comradeship and these feelings were combined with the concepts of nation, national identity and nationalism. The existence of an imagined nation causes people to construct a national identity. This national identity promotes the feelings of love and attachment to the imagined nation and thus forms nationalism. And due to this love, people have a desire to protect their nations.

2.2 The Power of National Identity vs. Other Identities

It can be argued that nationalism plays a central role in shaping individual consciousness and beliefs. Therefore, can we suggest that national identity is more important and powerful than other types of social identities? Smith suggests that national identity is the most inclusive and powerful identity because nations form the basis of all present political regimes and nationalism has been a very popular trend recently.

Of all the collective identities in which human beings share today, national identity is perhaps the most fundamental and inclusive. Not only has nationalism, the ideological movement, penetrated every corner of the globe; the world is divided, first and foremost, into 'nation-states'-states claiming to be nations- and national identity everywhere underpins the recurrent drive for popular sovereignty and democracy, as well as the exclusive tyranny that it sometimes breeds (Smith 143).

Moreover, national identity is important because people feel that they are part of something larger, and they can define and locate themselves somewhere in the world in the light of their nationality. Smith claims:

A sense of national identity provides a powerful means of defining and locating individual selves in the world through the prism of the collective personality and its distinctive culture. It is through a shared, unique culture that we are enabled to know 'who we are' in the contemporary world. (Smith 17)

Tamir compares national identity with others such as liberalism, socialism, Marxism, or feminism and from his comparison we can assume that national identity is more important and broader because nationalism gives people the feeling of belonging to a permanent group.

Liberalism and socialism invite individuals to see themselves as part of humanity at large; Marxism tells them that class membership should overshadow all others; feminism urge them to give priority to gender based identity; while nationalism encourages them to see themselves as contextualized, as members of a particular continuous community. (Tamir 430)

For example, Smith compares nationalism with feminism, and he suggests that national identity is stronger than gender because members of a gender are geographically separated from each other; therefore, they should unite themselves with other organized identities. National identity is more powerful than gender because:

...members of the same gender are geographically separated, divided by class, and ethnically fragmented, gender cleaves must ally themselves to other, more cohesive identities, if they are to inspire collective consciousness and action (Smith 4).

Furthermore, local or regional identities, argues Smith, cannot compete with national identity because “they are not stable. Regions can easily fragment into localities, and localities may easily disintegrate into separate segments” (Smith 4). However, Yeal Tamir opposes Smith’s idea because he claims many other theorists

argue in their works that national identity is not always stable and many people change their identities at least twice while living in the same geography. He illustrates his theory with some examples:

In fact, in the last century, many individuals changed their national identity at least twice while living in the same geographical region—from Lombardians to Italians, from Walloons to Belgians, from Latvians to Ukrainians, and Uzbeks to Soviet citizens, from Serbs and Croats to Yugoslavians, and then back to their original identity (Tamir 431).

Smith also avers that class identity is unstable and thus inferior to national identity because economic factors rise and fall quickly in time.

Classes, like gender divisions, are often territorially dispersed. They are also largely categories of economic interest, and are hence likely to subdivide according to differences in income and skill levels. Besides, economic factors are subject to rapid fluctuations over time; hence the chances of retaining different economic groups within a class based community are likely to be slim. Economic self-interest is not usually the stuff of stable collective identities (Smith 5).

On the other hand, Tamir emphasizes the power of national identity by noting that it is stronger than other identities because people feel the concept of nation as a community of common destiny. He suggests:

Dying for one's nation, he argues, assumes a moral grandeur that dying for the Labour Party, the American Medical Association, or

even amnesty International cannot rival. Unlike the nation these are all bodies one can join or leave easy will (Tamir 144).

Tamir also attributes the strength of nationalism to the promotion of the feelings of fraternity and comradeship both among the members in the present day and across generations. He observes that national identity, different from other identities, helps people to find a place both in the world and in an “uninterrupted chain of being.”

Membership in a nation, unlike membership in a gender, class or region, thus enables an individual to find a place not only in the world in which he or she lives, but also in an uninterrupted chain of being. Nationhood promotes fraternity both among fellow members and across generations. It endows human action with a meaning that endures over time, thus carrying a promise of immortality (Tamir 432).

David Miller is another scholar who looks closely at national identities and investigates the difference between national and other identities that people may have, and he asks, “What does it mean to think of oneself as belonging to national identity?” (Miller Citizenship 28).

The first point is, as I have already mentioned before, national groups are held together by belief. Sharing the same race, language, territory, etc., is important but is not enough. These common attributes are important only with the belief of its members. A nation will keep on existing as long as the members of the group believe that it exists. Just like Ernest Renan said; “a nation’s existence ... is a daily plebiscite just as an individual’s existence is a perpetual affirmation of life” (Renan 19). People

decide to belong to their nations as they decide to continue their lives and they should have the freedom to choose a nationality and to believe in the existence of a nationality or not.

The second characteristic of national identity is that it includes historical continuity. Nations have a long shared past and people remember some deeds, victories or defeats which were accomplished in the past. These collective memories help them have a unity and a collective consciousness:

The second feature of nationality is that it is an identity that embodies historical continuity. Nations stretch backwards into the past, and indeed in most cases their origins are conveniently lost in the mists of time. In the course of this history various significant events have occurred, and we can identify with the actual people who acted at those moments, reappropriating their deeds as our own. Often these events involve military victories and defeats: we imagine ourselves filling the breach at Harfleur or reading the signal hoisted at Trafalgar (Miller Citizenship 29).

The third distinctive characteristic of national identity is that it is an active identity. Nations are collective communities which do things together and share the results of some successes and defeats together. Of course, it is impossible to gather every member of a nation at the same time in one place and ask their opinions. However, people have the right to choose a representative and let them make decisions on their behalf.

The third distinguishing aspect of national identity is that it is an active identity. Nations are communities that do things together take

decisions, achieve results and so forth. Of course this cannot be literally so: we rely on proxies who are seen as embodying the national will: statesmen, soldiers, sportsmen, etc... The nation becomes what it does by the decisions that it takes - some of which may now regard as thoroughly bad, a cause of national shame (Miller Citizenship 29).

This feature certainly distinguishes national communities from other groups such as churches or religious groups. Unlike in a nation, these groups are not supposed to decide or do anything, instead they are expected to interpret some religious orders and messages as best they can (Miller Citizenship 29). In terms of being active, Miller compares nations with the English cricket team in his other book On Nationality, and he attributes that “We call them (the English cricket team) a team because they act together in certain ways—they go out on the field together, they throw the ball to one another, and so on” (Miller Nationality 18), and he adds that nations are like teams in this respect.

The fourth aspect of a national identity is that it connects a group of people to a certain territory. This is another important feature which differentiates national identity from others such as religious or ethnic groups. If you are a good Muslim, for example, you should make a pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in your life, but you do not have to settle down there. However, a nation must have a native land with which every member must have a connection.

The fourth aspect of a national identity is that it connects a group of people to a particular geographical place, and here again there is a clear contrast with most other group identities that people affirm, such

as ethnic or religious identities. These often have sacred sites or places of origin, but it is not an essential part of having the identity that you should permanently occupy that place..... A nation, in contrast, must have a homeland. This may of course be a source of great difficulties, ..., but it also helps to explain why a national community must be (in aspiration if not yet in fact) a political community (Miller Citizenship 29-30).

From this characteristic we can conclude that nations are supposed to serve as the basis of states because states must perform their power over a particular territory (Miller Citizenship 30).

The final characteristic of national identity, which Miller emphasizes, is that the members of a nation must believe they have some common traits, and there is something distinctive about themselves that distinguishes them from other nations. The members of a nation are not people who have been thrown together in one place by chance and urged to share some traits.

Finally it is essential to national identity that the people who compose the nation are believed to share certain traits that mark them off from other peoples. It is incompatible with nationality to think of the members of the nation as people who merely happen to have been thrown together in one place and forced to share a common fate, in the way that the occupants of a lifeboat, say, have been accidentally thrown together. National divisions must be natural ones; they must correspond to real differences between peoples (Miller Citizenship 30).

Miller is careful while writing about this aspect of national identity and warns his readers that he is not implying racism or the idea that the nations are composed of biological descent. The common qualities that he mentioned can be cultural, such as morals, tastes, feelings, customs, etc. Therefore, immigration will not be a problem if the immigrants adopt the most important qualities of the host national identity (Miller Citizenship 30).

Miller stresses these traits of a national identity in order to differentiate it from other types of identities. He notes, “These five elements together - a community constituted by mutual belief, extended in history, active in character, connected to a particular territory, and thought to be marked off from other communities by its members’ distinct traits – serve to distinguish nationality from other collective sources of personal identity” (Miller Citizenship 30).

2.3 Importance of the “Other” and “Enemy” in the Construction of National Identity and War Propaganda

As I have already mentioned, people define and construct their identities themselves. However, this construction does not occur in an isolated environment. People define their identities by comparing and contrasting themselves with others. The communication with others and the ideas and feelings of them are important for the definition of identities. Samuel Huntington emphasizes the significance of the others for self-definition and notes that “identities are defined by the self but they are the product of the interaction between the self and others. How others perceive an individual or group affects the self-definition of that individual or group” (Huntington 23).

To define their identities people need others. To argue that you are a woman, you need other women just like you and men who are different from you. To define your race, you need others from your own race and some other races that are different from yours. However, for the definition of national identity, people also need allies and “enemies” because people need the feelings of hatred and they need to defend themselves. The more they struggle and fight for something, the more they love and care for it. Besides having enemies, people need some allies from the same nation. The shared feeling of hatred towards another nation and having a common enemy promotes the unity of people and increase their love for their nations. An individual can not construct a national identity alone; he needs other people who feel the same way. Huntington quotes some of the twentieth century's greatest minds and writes:

Oh, how wonderful it is to hate," said Josef Goebbels. "Oh, what a relief to fight, to fight enemies who defend themselves, enemies who are awake," said Andre Malraux. These are extreme articulations of a generally more subdued but widespread human need, as acknowledged by two of the twentieth century's greatest minds... “There is a need”, Vamik Volkan has said, "to have enemies and allies." This tendency appears in early-mid-adolescence when "the other group comes to be definitely viewed as the enemy. (Huntington, 24-25)

People usually try to find some allies who will be on their side when they have enemies because they want to be supported and defended against their enemies. Therefore, having allies is important as having enemies in the formation of national

identity. This is also important for governments. In order to maintain their existence as a government and construct a national identity among their people, they also need both enemies and allies. Therefore, while fighting against their enemies, governments propagate and overestimate their performances both from within and outside of their countries to find some allies for their politics.

Governments always define themselves against and in comparison with others. Their existence depends on having an enemy against which they can define themselves. If there is not a threat to a nation's existence, it is very difficult to maintain a nation's strength and unity. Many statesmen and politicians have been aware of this situation, and they have been worried about the future of their governments when they eliminate all of their enemies. Huntington gives some examples of old governors who thought that their existence would be in danger if they had no more enemies.

The collapse of the Soviet Union and of communism left America not only with no enemy, but also for the first time in its history without any clear "other" against which to define itself. (257) ...In 1987, Georgiy Arbatov, a top adviser to Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, warned Americans: "We are doing something really terrible to you—we are depriving you of an enemy." (258) ... In 84 b.c., when Rome defeated its last serious enemy, Mithradates, Sulla asked: "Now that the universe offers us no more enemies, what may be the fate of the Republic?" In 1997, the historian David Kennedy asked: "What happens to a nation's sense of identity when its enemies

are utterly vanquished, and no longer provide the energizing force of a threat to that nation's very existence?" (Huntington 259).

Having an enemy helps people and governments improve themselves because most of them are ready to sacrifice absolute gains in order to be more successful than their rivals or enemies. This feeling encourages them to be better off and gain more successes.

In many situations people choose to sacrifice absolute gains in order to achieve relative gains. They prefer to be worse off absolutely but better off compared to someone they see as a rival rather than better off absolutely but not as well off as that rival: "beating the outgroup is more important than sheer profit" (Huntington 25-26).

He goes on by giving an example about Americans against Japanese.

To the bafflement of economists, Americans say that they would prefer to be worse off economically but ahead of the Japanese rather than better off and behind the Japanese (Huntington 26).

Moreover, creating a collective memory is very important for the construction of national identity. Since memory is an active phenomenon, it is essential for the governments to control people's memories. If they control people's memories, they can control their dynamism too. Therefore, when people remember some common memories and a shared past, they unify and defend their nation and country. When people from the same nation keep their memories about their common victories and defeats alive, a national identity erupts spontaneously. One of the best examples of this idea is the Armenians. Armenians have preserved and enforced their national identity by means of their collective memory about the so-called Armenian genocide

in 1915. They have united as a nation by the continuous recollection of the so-called genocide. Constructing a shared response and hatred against a common enemy is a strong way to create national identity.

Besides having enemies, governments also need some allies who will be on their side and support them. Therefore, they try to propagate themselves and advocate their deeds. Propaganda is the expression of ideas and behaviors of a person or a group in order to influence other people's or group's ideas and behaviors. Murphy and White identify in their article "Propaganda: Can a Word Decide a War?":

Propaganda is any form of communication in support of national objectives designed to influence the opinions, emotions, attitudes, or behavior of any group in order to benefit the sponsor, either directly or indirectly. Certainly propaganda has been used from time immemorial as a tool in warfare (Murphy and White 15).

There has been a change in the meaning of propaganda from a religious to a military and then to a political context during a period of less than two hundred years. The religious use of the term was effectual through the eighteenth and most of the nineteenth century. During the twentieth century the term experienced a change to a political or military context (Fellows 182). Fellows illustrates this change in the meaning of the term propaganda within encyclopedias:

The shift in meaning of propaganda is revealed in rather striking form in encyclopedia treatments of the topic. In the ninth edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1875-89), the article propaganda is devoted entirely to the propagation of the Catholic faith, by the organizations

mentioned previously. The article is written by an archbishop. The eleventh edition (1910-11) contains no article on propaganda, although the word is referred to in a brief article on propagation. In the fourteenth edition (1929), the article is by an editor historian and is almost entirely concerned with war propaganda. In the current edition, the emphasis is on political propaganda, in an essay contributed by a political scientist and communication expert, Harold D. Lasswell (Fellows 186).

Propaganda is very important for governments especially against their enemies. Even if there are some people who do not like propaganda, their enemies may use it very effectively. For this reason, Perry argues, it is very important for the welfare of a government to use propaganda. If it had not been some patriots who used propaganda, their country would have never won its freedom. Therefore:

To refuse to use it against him (enemy) makes about as much sense as refusing to shoot at the enemy for fear you might hurt him. . . . This country would never have won its freedom if Sam Adams and Patrick Henry and Benjamin Franklin had not used propaganda; we wouldn't have the Constitution if Alexander Hamilton and James Madison had not written in the Federalist some of the best propaganda I ever turned out in this or any other country (qtd. in Perry 437-438).

2.4 The Role of Hollywood in the Propaganda of the American Government

The way to propagate and transmit the portrait of a government is as important as the propaganda itself. H. M. Spitzer suggests that some people can be

represented in an academic form, but such people are a small minority, and it is not the minority that is important for this purpose. Even though the people in this minor group may be the people who determine the nations' destinies, they are limited by the views of the common man in their countries. It is this common man who should be influenced. Therefore, attention should be turned to common everyday activities. A way of doing this is to show situations which may probably happen to everybody and to show how they happen in different countries. We all may have an accident, we all may appear in a court of law, we all must go to school, and we may find ourselves without a job (Spitzer 221). As Spitzer explains:

Presentation in this form would be possible in most of the current media. It could be made in the spoken words of a radio talk or play, in the written words of a magazine article, or possibly in the picture form of the comic strip or film. In any of these shapes it could be made graphic enough to be absorbed and understood even by the most simple and unsophisticated people (Spitzer 221).

The most influential way to propagate a national vision is perhaps film. The American government has used Hollywood movies during and after their important wars, especially World War II. The OWI's (Office of War Information) Bureau of Motion Pictures asked the Hollywood industry to depict a united and harmonized image of America, with laborers and managers, blacks and whites, men and women in a harmonized way, overshadowing distinction. The movies were expected to represent national unity (Limerick 473).

The mega-plot of the government's wartime effort to put the movies to use is, however, compelling enough.... During the war the

government, convinced that movies had extraordinary power to mobilize public opinion for war, carried out an intensive, unprecedented effort to mold the content of Hollywood feature films (Limerick 473).

Film is better because it is an international means of communication. “It is well within the power of the film to reduce psychological distance between people in various parts of the world, just as the airplane has reduced physical distance”(Jones “Hollywood War” 1). It is easy to understand a film, even if it is in a different language. The topic and message of a film is usually obvious; therefore, there are less barriers for the film industry and it can be understood everywhere. It is also a way of representing places, cultures, morals and conditions in other countries.

From its inception, the motion picture has, by its very nature, been an important medium in international communication. By making meaning explicit in pictures, the film transcends barriers of language, and can be understood by people everywhere. The film has also, since its earliest days, provided a means for familiarizing people with the sights as well as the customs and living conditions that exist in parts of the world war distant from their own (Jones “Hollywood’s International” 362).

The Hollywood film industry is the most popular one in the world. Many people from all over the world watch the movies produced by Hollywood. If the United States did not do any diplomatic and consular services, did not send its ships and tourists anywhere, and remained away from the world's markets, its people, its language, its states and towns, its problems, customs, and morals would still be

familiar in every part of the world. Especially since WWII, most American film producers know that the United States is known to the world mostly through its movies and that this fact gives an important responsibility in the selection and depiction of subjects in American movies. The film works for America in the same way as the flag once did for Britain (Jones “Hollywood’s International” 364). Great Britain thought that American movies posed a profound threat to their empire because they were aware of the fact that the American government advertised themselves, their country and their policies in them. They were trying to convey the message that America was the only country which had real importance for the world.

There is evidence that by the middle 1920's Great Britain looked upon the American film as a serious threat to the empire. Lord Newton, speaking in the House of Lords stated: The Americans realized almost instantaneously that the cinema was a heaven-sent method of advertising themselves, their country, their methods, their wares, their ideas and even their language, and they had seized on it as a method of persuading the whole world that America was really the only country that counted (Jones, Hollywood’s International, 364).

Hollywood served as an important weapon for the American government during and after the World War II. The first role of film producers has been to unite the American people and promote their feelings of fraternity and comradeship. They also tried to increase the morale of the people especially after the attack on Pearl Harbor. The second role of the Hollywood industry has been to promote their deeds and to justify their policies all around the world.

After Pearl Harbor, the war between the United States and Japan became as much a race war as a geopolitical conflict. This was evident in statements made during the war by U.S. civilians and in the propaganda created in both nations. (Sheppard 306)

Anti-Japanese propaganda consistently and negatively focused on the physical characteristics, social customs, and religious beliefs of the Japanese people....Throughout all forms of American media, the Japanese were referred to derogatively as "Japs" and were routinely depicted as back-stabbing monkeys lurking in the jungle or as vermin in need of extermination (Sheppard 306).

After 9/11, the American government and people regarded the attacks as a second Pearl Harbor. They were familiar with the situation, so Hollywood movie producers were very quick to play their roles. They were not soldiers, but they were ready to use their art to help the American government and army. They were planning to fight against their enemies and find some allies around the world. Shortly after the event, some movie executives went to the White House and asked for their 'orders'.

Having waved the flag for so many years before September 11, Hollywood's first reaction was to put the industry at the government's disposal. Less than a month later, forty Hollywood executives made the pilgrimage to the White House for a two-hour discussion with Chris Henick, deputy assistant to the president, and Adam Goldman, associate director of the Office of Public Liaison. Leslie Moonves, president of CBS, explained their mission: "I think you have a bunch

of people here who were just saying, "Tell us what to do. We don't fly jet planes, but there are skill sets that can be put to use here." With its usual relaxed attitude toward historical accuracy, the New York Times stated that while "not new to Hollywood," such patriotic sentiments had been "rarely in evidence since World War II." ...There was a clear need, both "domestically and internationally to tell the story that is our story" (Young 256-257).

The Hollywood industry was ready to perform its role. All means of media, on the other hand, started to convey messages to the whole world just after the attacks. They tried to show the world how brutal the attacks were and how much they were mistreated. They immediately created images of "enemy" as "the others." They depicted themselves as the "innocent" and "freedom fighters" while others are "terrorists" and "barbarians". In this way, they tried to bring the world to their side and find some allies to fight together against their enemies.

In the days immediately following the devastating events of 9/11, the Bush administration and the corporate media seemed as if they were conspiring in an infectious spread of convenient binaries: cowards and heroes, terrorists and freedom fighters, evil and godliness, us and them. This pervasive 'Jihad vs. McWorld' view had the same effects as a horror movie, which, in Stephen King's explanation, 'takes away shades of gray' and 'urges us to put away our penchant for analysis and to see things in pure blacks and whites' (Brady 96).

CHAPTER 3

THE CONSTRUCTION OF COLLECTIVE MEMORY, NATIONAL IDENTITY AND WAR PROPAGANDA IN THREE HOLLYWOOD MOVIES

3.1 Pearl Harbor

The attack on Pearl Harbor is a very important event in the American history. For the U.S., the attack was one of the most significant events of World War II. U.S. Navy battle ships were attacked so unexpectedly that the navy suffered a lot of losses. More than 2000 people died and more than 1000 were wounded. It is a national trauma which has later turned into a collective memory to unify the American people. As Arthur Neal suggests, national traumas promote the construction of collective memories and their remembrance is guaranteed by the creation of national temples, monuments, and holidays.

National traumas also provide the raw material for shaping national identities and revitalizing values for promoting the collective good. To provide some assurance that the past will be remembered properly, acts of commemoration are directed toward the creation of national shrines, monuments, memorials, and holidays. These creations build upon echoes from the past and facilitate the memory process for current and future generations. To give them a proper place in the fabric of social life, traumatic events need to be selectively remembered. Those aspects of the past that were embarrassing to the nation or lacked relevancy for the moral foundations of society tend to be ignored (Neal 203).

The Pearl Harbor attack is a striking example of such national traumas and it should be remembered by the American people. Therefore, the American government tries to remind people of this important event by using popular culture. Using every means of American popular culture such as songs, films, plays, TV shows, etc., Americans are being made to remember this event.

After all, when the name Pearl Harbor first entered the lexicon of American popular culture, it was an event not to be forgotten, with wartime songs, films, and news media urging the national public to self consciously “Remember Pearl Harbor” for the war effort (White, 510).

The movie Pearl Harbor, which was directed by Michael Bay, is an important effort to remind people of this attack. Pearl Harbor (Bay, 2001) tells the story of the Japanese bombings on Pearl Harbor in 1941 and of two brave American pilots, Rafe and Danny, who have been friends since their childhood. The movie released in the sixtieth anniversary of the attack in order to honor the people who died and also those who survived. It is an epic, romantic and tragic movie which appeals to the feelings of the audience. It attracts the attention of many people not only with the romantic relationship between the characters but also with the feelings of disappointment and desperation during and after its forty-five-minute attack sequence.

The film opens with the scene of two children on a farm pretending to be American pilots fighting against the Germans. Then we see them grown up into two of the best pilots in the US Air Force. They are both very talented and courageous

and still good friends in spite of their opposite characters. Rafe is an outgoing and confident young man while Danny is mild-mannered, humble and introvert.

Rafe meets Evelyn who is a beautiful and attractive nurse in the US Army during an examination to determine appropriateness to be a pilot in the army. He is attracted by her and tries to charm her, and they fall in love with each other. However, Rafe joins the British Royal Air Force as a volunteer and leaves Evelyn behind. After a short while, Danny is informed that Rafe has been shot down and died. Danny and Evelyn get closer and seek consolation and comfort in each other's arms. They try to find happiness together but when Rafe returns unexpectedly from the war alive, they are both stunned. Evelyn is surprised twice because she learns that she is pregnant with Danny's baby on the same day that Rafe comes back. Rafe and Danny face a dilemma of choosing between their friendship and a girl.

It is in the midst of this dilemma that the Japanese start to attack Pearl Harbor. They forget their own problems and try to protect their country. The movie spares a long time for the attack scene. After the Japanese attack, the American government declares war on Japan and enters WWII. Danny is killed by Japanese soldiers while trying to protect Rafe. Evelyn gives birth to the baby and little Danny is brought up by his mother and Rafe.

In the opening scene of the movie, Rafe and Danny are imagining that they are fighting against some enemies in an old plane. Despite their age, they have the consciousness of national identity. Their very first sentence is an example of nationalism created by using the image of enemy. They feel that they are fighting against the German because their enemy in the previous war was Germany. Rafe says; "German bandits at two o'clock!" and "We gotta get those dirty German

bandits” and they try to shoot imaginary German planes. We see that the image of the enemy in the society is so clear and powerful that even the children use it in their games. During their fight against the Germans, the kids call their own country as “Land of the free and home of the brave.” These phrases aim to dictate to people that all of the American people are very brave and America is an independent country. There is an obvious goal to create a collective consciousness in this way; every American individual who hears these words will feel the pride and honor of being an American. Moreover, the importance of “the enemy” is also emphasized here. For the definition of national identity, people need “enemies” because people need the feelings of hatred and they need to defend themselves. Therefore, the movie is constructing the American identity by comparing the American people with “the others.” By describing the Germans as “dirty bandits” and the Americans as “free and brave people”, the movie glorifies the American nation.

Another important theme in the movie is the idea that every American is a hero. The three main characters are in a way each other’s heroes. The hero image is established early in the movie with the character Rafe McCawley. Ten-year-old Rafe rescues his best friend Danny Walker from his father’s beatings by hitting Mr. Walker with a board. Rafe is Danny’s hero not only because he saves him from his father but also he teaches him how to fly and fight. Throughout the movie, Danny repeats that if he is a good pilot, it is because Rafe has taught him to fly. On the other hand, this image of friendship goes on later in the movie when Danny tries to help Rafe read the letters of the alphabet during the eye examination in order to keep Rafe’s pilot wings. Moreover, the hero motif is emphasized when Rafe declares that

Evelyn is his hero when she passes him the eye examination although he can not see well.

In addition to the heroic theme, the movie emphasizes that both children are conditioned to war and fighting. Danny's father, for example, fought against the German in France during World War I and saw the dreadful sides of the war. Therefore, he does not want his son to play such kind of games or imagine being a soldier. Instead, he expects him to study and to have a more settled job. That is why he is against his son's friendship with Rafe. He says: "I done told you, you spend time playing with this stupid boy can't read you ain't never goin'to amount to nothin'!" And he proceeds to beat Danny. Since he is depicted as a bad a character here, Rafe directly relates him with the enemy. He thinks "the enemy is bad and he is bad, too." Therefore, he calls Mr. Walker a "dirty German." Another reason Rafe calls him a German is that Mr. Walker does not want his son to be a soldier. Rafe thinks that as Mr. Walker does not want his son to serve for his country, he must be the enemy.

On the other hand, Danny's father's influence on him is seen to some extent. Even though he spends his life preparing to be an efficient soldier and turns out to be a brave pilot just like Rafe, he is more aware of the possible consequences of war than Rafe. He warns Rafe before he leaves for England.

It is war where the losers die and there aren't any winners, Just guys that turn into broken down wrecks like my father.... Don't preach to me about the duty, I wear the same uniform you do. If trouble wants me, I am ready for it, but why go looking for it?

Rafe learns for himself the cold face of the war when he goes to England. It is very difficult to live with the constant risk of death. He writes to Evelyn in one of his letters: "It's different than I thought it would be here. It's cold, so cold it goes deep into your bones... It's not easy making friends. Two days ago, I had a beer with a couple of the RAF pilots. Yesterday, both of them got killed." He is now fully aware of the seriousness of war and sometimes he wishes to be back home. He writes to Evelyn, "I just wish I could be back there with you." However, he does not return and goes on fighting courageously because there is the emphasis that every American is very brave.

Whether they fight against an enemy or not, being a soldier in the army forms their identity. Besides being an important element for a nation to construct its national identity; the army plays a significant role in defining the identities of its members. They gain self confidence and self assurance. While defining the characteristic of Danny, Rafe says; "He's just a little unsure of himself, you know. Get him in a plane, he's sure of himself." Although Danny is a mild-mannered, humble and introverted boy who does not have self confidence, he becomes very confident with the uniform and trusts himself only in a plane. In one of the scenes he acknowledges: "I look at myself in the mirror in this uniform and I still don't know who I am. I look like a hero." He accepts that he behaves in a different manner in the uniform. The uniform makes people feel superior and privileged. Wearing a uniform means being a soldier and working for the army and for your nation.

The heroic American image continues when Rafe goes to England to fight with the British Eagle Squadron against the Nazis as a volunteer. Although his country is not yet in the war and he does not have to go there, Rafe is very willing to

fight for England especially after he talks with Colonel Dolittle, whom Rafe trusts deeply. When Rafe asks his opinion about joining the British Army, he says: “if it was me, I’d go.” Just like Rafe, Colonel Dolittle is one of the heroes in the American army. They are the most powerful, charismatic and attractive characters in the movie. By portraying them in this way, the producers of the movie are endeavoring to set an example for the American people and influence them.

The commander of the British Army also acknowledges the courage and altruism of Rafe. He is well aware of the risk that Rafe has taken. Since they lose their own pilots everyday, it is also probable for Rafe to face the same destiny with the English pilots. When he considers this reality, it is interesting for him to see an American who volunteers to fight for another nation although he does not have to. As a result, he projects Rafe’s courage and altruism to all of the American people. He asks: “Are all Yanks as anxious as you to get themselves killed, Pilot Officer?” There is not only astonishment in this statement and in the eyes of the British commander, but there is also an appreciation for Rafe’s behavior. Rafe’s reply is more important and striking for the establishment of the collective memory and national identity in the movie. He says, “not anxious to die sir, just anxious to matter.” It affects the commander so profoundly that he does not say anything. It is clear from his eyes that he felt embarrassed about his question. Rafe represents not only the heroic American soldiers but also the American people.

The English commander’s respect for Rafe is riveted when he gets the chance to know him more. After he sees how a talented and successful pilot and soldier Rafe is, he feels additional appreciation and admiration for him. And he thinks that if every American soldier is like Rafe, no nation can fight against them: “A lot of

people frown on the Yanks for not being in this war yet. I'd just like to say if there are many more back home like you God help anyone who goes to war with America.” We see the American hero image here again. Rafe, who is only one American soldier in the British Army, is so talented and noticeable that he stands out among all other soldiers.

On the other hand, within the American Army, there are some soldiers who play the second fiddle. For example, a black officer, Officer Miller, is one of them. He joined the army to be a man but he hasn't been allowed to fire a gun for two years. He is a soldier in the army too, yet he is supposed to clean after the other soldiers eat. In one of the scenes, while he is fighting with a strong white mechanic in the army, Miller is depicted weaker and less skilled a fighter. At first sight, everyone thinks that mechanic will beat him; however, Miller does his best in order to gain respect. And he succeeds. By presenting Miller as weaker and inferior at first, the spectator is even more impressed by his actions during the attacks at Pearl Harbor. As we see the unjust behavior done to Miller and feel pity for him, we appreciate him more when we see his brave struggle against the Japanese. There is the message of unity here. Although there have been some conflicts between black and white Americans, at a time of an external threat all Americans, black or white, should join hands and be unified. The attacks on Pearl Harbor are a threat to the American people, and as an American, Dorie Miller does his best for his nation. He becomes “the first black American to be awarded the Navy Cross but he would not be the last. He joins a brotherhood of heroes.” Miller is honored and it is thus emphasized that in case of need every one could be a Dorie Miller and defend his or her country like a hero.

Having a common aim to defend their country unifies people in spite of differences and conflicts. This is seen in the friendship of Danny and Rafe. After Rafe comes back and learns the truth about Evelyn and Danny, he gets very angry with them and fights with Danny. Danny is very upset, yet he does not want to leave Evelyn. He thinks that “there must be some way Rafe and Danny can work things out so that they can be the same again”. At first, Rafe refuses it and says that nothing can be the same again. But once the war between America and Japan starts, they come together again and struggle for the same aim. When they get caught after bombing Japan, first Rafe saves Danny’s life and then Danny dies in order to protect Rafe. They become like brothers again once they start to work for the same goal: to save their country. There is the message that when they fight for their country with a collective aim, their other problems can be ignored. Therefore, if the existence of a nation and a country is in danger, people should set their personal affairs and problems aside and unify for the sake of the survival of their nation and country. Just like Dorie Miller, Rafe and Danny forget about their individual memories and identities, and they behave according to the collective memory and national identity that have been constructed since their childhood.

Fighting for a nation and a country is depicted as divine and glorious. After the attack, while absolving a soldier who is about to die in the hospital, a priest blesses him because he has sacrificed his life to protect his country. He says that the soldier will be in the paradise with angels and saints. He is suffering in agony now, but when he dies, all his pains will end. Pains are temporary; on the other hand, glory lasts forever. He will be celebrated in the paradise and he will be commemorated as a hero. He acknowledges: “Remember, son, hold on to your faith. Today you will be

with me in paradise, so fear not. Fear not, my son. You are a man truly blessed. You will die in a state of grace. Remember, pain is temporary, but glory is forever. Hold on to your faith, my son. You will be with God, the saints, and the angels soon.” Here is a message that if people fight and die for their countries, they will be remembered as heroes in this world. The difficulties and sufferings they have in the war will stay in the world and last only for some time. But the glory and grandeur they gain will last forever. Eternal happiness and welfare are guaranteed for the ones who sacrifice their lives for their nations.

This idea is same for almost every nation, and in the movie we see that the Japanese also struggle and fight against America with the same motivation and feeling. They see their nation as their family, and they say that they will easily give their lives for the sake of their nations. They think that fighting for their nation is their divine mission. One of the Japanese pilots prays to God to be successful while getting prepared before setting off for Pearl Harbor. He prays: “Revered father, I go now to fulfill my mission and my destiny. I hope it is a destiny that will bring honor to our family and if it requires my life I will sacrifice it gladly to be a good servant of our nation.” The point here is that unless the Americans become as brave and self-sacrificing as their enemies, they will not be successful as a nation.

The most impressive and dramatic scene in the movie is the attack sequences. They are technically good, but they also appeal to the feelings of the audience. We see the trauma and desperation of the American soldiers. Many soldiers die with great pain and they do not even have the time to defend themselves. An especially devastating scene is the one in which many American soldiers drown with the Battleship Arizona and die in agony. People from every nation will feel pity for the

Americans when they see the desperate looks of the other soldiers who can do nothing but watch their trapped friends drown in the ship.

In the hospital we see everyone working hard to help the injured. However, there are so many injured people that they can not deal with everyone, so they have to choose only the ones who can be saved. Evelyn is very upset and desperate while deciding who will be treated and who will not. She does not have time to mourn for one of her best friends, Betty, when she sees her lying in someone's arms lifeless. She has to be quick to help other people who still have some hope. It is impossible not to be influenced by the painful screams and agonizing injuries of the wounded people and piles of the dead. Nicholas Cull summarizes the most moving scene in the movie:

The film is at its strongest when these down-home images clash with the savagery of the attack: Boy Scouts watching the first wave of planes swoop down; blood donations lapping into Coke bottles. In a similar vein, the moment when Evelyn uses her lipstick to place triage marks on the foreheads of the wounded, marking them for life or death, is far more moving than the contrivances of the wider plot.

(Cull, 1916)

The idea that the Japanese attacked them suddenly while the two countries were trying to negotiate is emphasized many times in the movie so that everyone will feel for America. They suffered a lot because it was an unexpected attack.

After the attack, we see the American people completely united. President Roosevelt makes a speech in public and people listen to him on their radios and cry. Although he can not walk, Roosevelt stands up with difficulty and speaks with

determination and anger. His sharp reaction unifies the American people and makes them feel the same determination.

Yesterday... December 7, 1941 a date which will live in infamy. The United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the empire of Japan. It is obvious that planning the attack began many weeks ago. During the intervening time the Japanese government has deliberately sought to deceive the United States by false statements and expressions of hope for continued peace. The attack yesterday on the Hawaiian Islands has caused severe damage to American military forces. I regret to tell you that over 3000 American lives have been lost. No matter how long it may take us to overcome this premeditated invasion, the American people in their righteous might will win through to absolute victory. Because of this unprovoked, dastardly attack by Japan I ask that the Congress declare a state of war.

This speech of Roosevelt makes the American people gather together in order to work for their country and try to take revenge on Japan. The narrator in the movie suggests that “Japan continues its military conquest throughout the Pacific. But, back home millions of American workers band together bringing factories to life to avenge Pearl Harbor.” The American people are depicted as patriots and when it is necessary, they gather together and do their best for their country. The movie is trying to remind people of this impressive unity of the American people during and after the Pearl Harbor attacks and construct a collective memory among their people. They try to use collective memory as a unifying element because memory motivates

people to act together and helps people keep the existence of their identity through generations. It leads the actions and knowledge of people by exploiting their emotions. Remembering a shared past stirs people's emotions and infuses them with the feelings of integrity and unity with the other members of the group. By presenting the unity of people during and after a national trauma, the movie aims to construct a unity among the American people today.

For further emphasis on the heroic American image, the movie combines a powerful dialogue between Roosevelt and his cabinet members with visual images. The members of the cabinet refuses to attack at the "heart of Japan" because they think it is impossible and they do not want to suffer more losses. They find various excuses, but Roosevelt makes a speech with relentless determination:

Gentlemen... most of you did not know me when I had the use of my legs. I was strong and proud, and arrogant. Now I wonder, every hour of my life why God put me into this chair. But when I see defeat in the eyes of my country men-- in your eyes, right now-- I start to think that maybe he brought me down for times like these when we all need to be reminded who we truly are—that we will not give up or give in.

The camera shows the ignorant expressions of the members and one of them replies; "Mr. President, with all respect sir, what you are asking can not be done." Roosevelt responds by pushing away from the table. He struggles to stand up by himself refusing to get help from his assistant. When he gets up, he says with determination: "Do not tell me it can not be done."

After his determined reaction, a special team is trained to attack Japan. Colonel Dolittle is the one who trains them. In the beginning, the soldiers who are

chosen for this special mission do not know what they are supposed to do. Dolittle makes them a speech about the danger of this mission. He warns them that it is probable for some of them to die in this mission, so he asks them to decide whether they want to do it or not. He says; “The mission I'm asking you to volunteer for is exceptionally dangerous. Take a look at the man beside you. It's a good bet that in the next six weeks you or he will be dead. Everyone brave enough to accept this step forward.” And everyone in the team steps forward together at the same time while the camera zooms on their feet. Then we see Colonel Dolittle in the front and the other soldiers following him. This impressive scene emphasizes the powerful sense of duty displayed by the eighty brave pilots who took on the dangerous mission. With this scene the movie is trying to arouse the patriotic feelings in the American audience. Every American feels the pride of being an American and most of them will argue that they would do the same if they had to.

The trust and belief that Dolittle has for his soldiers persuade and encourage the audience not to hesitate to make sacrifices and take risks for their country. He looks at his soldiers with appreciation while they are training and says to his friend: “You know Jack, we may lose this battle, but we are going to win this war. You know how I know? Them. Because they are rare. And at times like these you see them stepping forward. There is nothing stronger than the heart of a volunteer.” These sentences are the key point of the movie because the movie aims to tell the American people that even if they lost the battle in Pearl Harbor and they suffered many losses, with the courage and willingness of some American soldiers, they would eventually win the war. If it had not been those brave volunteers, they would not have been successful and victorious. Therefore, if there is need to defend

America again, no American individual should hesitate to risk his or her life and volunteer for the sake of their country. Marilyn Young quotes Ian Buruma's criticism about Pear Harbor that people who fought in the war are supposed to be superior to us:

“It is as though,” Ian Buruma wrote after seeing Pearl Harbor, “we should feel nostalgic for times when dying for the nation was called for. We are supposed to believe that people at war were better human beings, and we should be more like them”(Young, 256).

Colonel Dolittle is the best example of this idea. Although the people in the War Department do not want him to join the raid and stay on the deck, he risks his life and insists on flying with his men. He says:

My friends in the war department don't want me to lead this raid because they say I'm too valuable. They don't want me up in the air flying with the men that I've chosen that I've chewed out, cussed out, pushed to the limit and that I've come to respect. They want me to stand on the flight deck and wave you off. Well, I don't see it that way. So I'm going with you.

This speech is very encouraging for both the soldiers there and the audience because it is very impressive to see him risk his life although he does not have to. This scene also arouses the patriotic feelings of the American audience because there is a stress that no American is born to be a prisoner. Colonel Dolittle is depicted as an ideal American who is brave, patriotic and fearless. When Rafe asks him what he would do if he had to bail out over Japan, he replies: “I was not built to be a prisoner, so I would have my crew bail out. I would find the sweetest military target I could and

drive my plane right smack into the middle of it.” Every soldier there and probably every American audience understands what they should do.

Another important reason why the movie is trying to construct collective memory among the American people is the fact that collective memory constructs collective identity in any kind of group. As identity is an active phenomenon, people can define their identities themselves. It is related to the ideas and choices of people. And memory is not only a physical activity but also a social one because it is an important element which constructs identity. Therefore, by constructing a collective memory, the movie is trying to form the national identities of the American people and to infuse them with nationalistic and patriotic sentiments. In order to do this, the movie emphasizes the image of American heroes and patriots. The powerful speech of President Roosevelt is a good example of this theme. During the Doolittle Raid, he conducts an effective radio broadcast;

From Berlin, Rome, and Tokyo we have been described as a nation of weaklings and playboys who hire British, Russian, or Chinese soldiers to do our fighting for us. Let them repeat that now. Let them tell that to General MacArthur and his men. Let them tell that to the soldiers who today are fighting hard in the far waters of the Pacific. Let them tell that to the boys in the flying fortresses. Let them tell that to the Marines.

He emphasizes that in contrast to what has been said about them, the American nation does not need people from other nations to defend their country. America has its own brave patriots and volunteers who will even sacrifice their lives for their country. By showing some shots of American people while listening to Roosevelt’s

message, Bay illustrates the patriotic heroism which is implanted in American culture. In fact, by portraying Roosevelt in such a patriotic and brave manner, Bay exemplifies him as a heroic American individual and a heroic leader of a heroic generation. This collective memory encourages the American audience to form their collective identities as the members of the same nation.

Just before the final scene, Bay compiles some shots accompanied by Evelyn's voice in order to honor the ones who died at Pearl Harbor and the ones who survived. She stresses that America realized they could gain victory after Pearl Harbor. They suffered at Pearl Harbor but later they grew stronger. The feeling of revenge helped them go on.

When the action is over and we look back we understand both more and less. This much is certain. Before the Doolittle raid, America knew nothing but defeat. After it, nothing but victory. Japan realized for the first time that they could lose and began to pull back. America realized that she would win and surged forward. It was a war that changed America. Dorie Miller was the first black American to be awarded the Navy Cross. But he would not be the last. He joined a brotherhood of heroes. World War II for us began at Pearl Harbor and men still lie entombed in the battle ship Arizona. America suffered but America grew stronger. It was not inevitable. The times tried our souls and through the trial, we overcame.

As Evelyn points out, Pearl Harbor was a great defeat for America. Many people died and they suffered great military losses. It was a national trauma remembered for the purpose of creating collective memory and national identity.

Although America lost the battle of Pearl Harbor, they won the war. After Pearl Harbor, they learned to grow stronger. This movie is one of the movies which try to remind people of this national trauma and to create a collective memory about their past. This movie aims to make people more patriotic by reminding them of the sacrifices that their ancestors made. If they risk their lives in time of need and do what their ancestors did, America will grow stronger and be more successful. Jerry Bruckheimer, the co-producer of Pearl Harbor admits that they aimed to create patriotic and nationalistic feelings in the audience and explains what Pearl Harbor meant to him:

You know, what's interesting about Pearl Harbor, what we did is we had a little ceremony before the movie started. It was all the actors. We went inside the Arizona Memorial and saw those names on the wall and one of the survivors plays "Taps." I don't think there was a dry eye in the house. We threw roses in the water and said a little prayer. It's a very emotional, patriotic sense that you get. And hopefully we captured that in movie--that same kind of emotion, the patriotism, the heroism, the courage and the bravery that these men rose to as well as the sacrifices that they made. It's a fascinating, fascinating experience to sit through this movie. (Beyond the Movie)

Moreover, this movie is reminding people of the difficulties and sorrows they had in the past as a nation; thus, it tries to construct a collective memory among the American people. As Foucault says, memory is a very important weapon in struggle; therefore, if one controls people's memory, one can control their dynamism. (Olick,

Robbins 126). The American government is trying to control the memory of their people in order to take them to their side and justify their policies.

3.2 The Alamo

The Alamo (Hancock, 2004) tells the story of the battle of Texas to gain independence from Mexico in 1835-1836. Its main event is the battle which takes place in the fort called the Alamo, which is now known as San Antonio.

The cruel and despotic Mexican dictator Santa Anna has sent an army to destroy Texan autonomy and it has just been defeated by the Texans in San Antonio. However, Santa Anna prepares to attack Texas with a larger army. When Santa Anna approaches to the Alamo with his giant army, a group of Texan leaders, including James Bowie, William Travis and David Crockett, and a group of volunteers are ready to protect the Alamo because Alamo is the only place between Santa Anna's army and Texas. Houston has become the commanding General of the Army against Mexicans. Travis sends one of his men to Houston to ask for help. However, Houston believes that they need to wait for finding more soldiers and volunteers to reinforce his army before going to the Alamo for help. Santa Anna's army attacks the fort of the Alamo for thirteen days and kills everybody inside the fort. Afterwards, Houston withdraws towards Texas with his army. When they capture a Mexican courier and learn that Santa Anna has separated from his army, they plan to attack him. They fight with Santa Anna's army in an open area and Houston captures Santa Anna. We learn at the end of the movie that Santa Anna signs over all Mexican rights to Texas in exchange for his life. Texas is independent thanks to the brave volunteers

who fought against the Mexican Army in the Alamo although they knew that they would die.

The Alamo tells the story of a real event and real characters. The battle of the Alamo is regarded as a mythic event in the region. Even the small children know the story of the Alamo. As Frank Thompson puts it; “to tell the story was to sing a hymn to gleaming, unassailable patriotism and, as Alamo Commander William Barret Travis wrote in his most famous letter, ‘everything dear to the American character’”(20). However, there are some changes in the movie. The movie is far more patriotic than the real event. Thompson argues;

Of course, as in all “true” stories, the actual event was far more chaotic and complicated than that pristine myth of patriotic sacrifice. Scholars and historians have spent decades uncovering new details, and, every time they do, it seems that the legend of the Alamo is chipped away just a little more (20).

The movie was produced to arouse the patriotic feelings of the American people and to unify them after the events of 9/11 even though the first draft of the screenplay was ready in 1998. Thompson tells the story how The Alamo was made:

In April 2002, I was called by producer Todd Hallowell and asked to attend a summit meeting with Ron Howard and several Alamo historians at the Omni Hotel in Austin. There had been rumblings for some time that a new Alamo film was in pre-production, and now I knew the rumors were true. Screenwriter Les Bohem had pitched the idea to Howard several years earlier and in 1998 had produced the first draft of a screenplay. But the project remained on the back burner

until the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Soon afterward, Disney head Michael Eisner put the dormant project on the fast track, apparently eager to get a good, patriotic, All-American story onto the screen. It was clear that Eisner's view of the Alamo came from other movies and not from history. But Howard did not see the subject as a flag-waver. Instead he wanted to tell the story of the Alamo with all the grimness and violence of *Saving Private Ryan* or *The Wild Bunch*. And overriding everything was his desire to take history seriously. Several other screenwriters contributed drafts, including one fascinating if rambling effort by John Sayles.... Howard left the project soon after and was replaced by John Lee Hancock. Happily, Hancock (a Texan) was even more determined to make the film as authentic as possible. He wrote a meticulously researched final draft of the script and kept two noted Alamo historians, Stephen Hardin, Ph.D. and Alan Huffines, on the set with him nearly every day. Even so, he admitted to himself that "each of us who attempts to tell the story of the Alamo, whether in words or images, is doomed to some degree of failure. Seemingly, every source one finds defends itself against a counter source; every bit of data carries an asterisk that puts its relevance or veracity in question" (23).

In fact, it is inevitable to make some changes in the real history while making the movie because the movie has an aim. The characters, for example, Sam Houston, James Bowie, William Travis and Davy Crocket, are mostly admirable and charismatic in the movie. They are very brave and patriotic, and they risk their lives

in order to save Texas. Although they have some personal problems in their private lives, they put them aside to fight for their country. However, the reality of these characters is different. Thompson acknowledges:

James Bowie was certainly an adventurer—but he was also a slave trader, land swindler, and a sometime partner of the pirate Jean Lafitte. And it appears that the famed Bowie knife was created by James' brother Rezin Bowie. William Barret Travis abandoned his pregnant wife to take up with a mistress and arrived in Texas under suspicion of having murdered a man back in Alabama. And David Crockett, while admittedly a fine hunter, did not have much of a career as a fighter of Indians or anybody else. His most striking achievement in life had been serving two terms in Congress (20).

Moreover, when we watch the movie we feel that the Texans are right to want their independence, and Santa Anna is portrayed as a cruel dictator. However, Thompson argues that in the war there is no good side or bad side. There is a reason for both sides to make war. Thompson suggests:

Nor was the Texas Revolution quite the pure-hearted enterprise of which the storybooks sing. Settlers had been drawn to the Mexican territory of Texas by offers of no taxes and free land. But, when Mexican dictator Santa Anna closed the borders, the settlers saw the action as downright “un-American” and started protesting and then fighting the new rulings. In short, the battle of the Alamo was not a case of good guys overwhelmed by bad guys but a conflict in which

each side had valid arguments that could only be settled by violence (21).

The director could not have been as fair-minded as Thompson, because he should arouse some patriotic feelings in the audience so that they should admire these characters and take them as examples. As quoted from Frank Thompson, this movie was produced after the events of 9/11; therefore, we can say that the movie has a goal. Vincent Perez also argues that there is a connection between 9/11 and the Alamo:

In an era when a horrific terrorist attack against Americans on their own soil has been exploited to justify the U.S. invasion of Iraq, the myth of the Alamo, which propelled nineteenth-century American conquest and expansionism in the Southwest, takes on a particularly topical significance (772).

The American government has always tried to employ the wars that the Americans attended for their sake. Since national traumas and defeats are more encouraging and inspiring, Hollywood usually demonstrates the losses they suffered after a major defeat. The sorrow and grief construct a more influential collective memory and infuse the American people with the enthusiasm of defending their country. The Alamo is one of the movies which presents a national trauma that the Americans suffered and tries to construct an American national identity and collective memory among their people along with the nationalistic and patriotic feelings especially after 9/11.

The movie is full of patriotic and nationalistic images. In the beginning of the movie, we are introduced to the Alamo. The Alamo was established as a Spanish

mission in 1718. From the beginning of its foundation The Alamo has a holy mission. However, it has always been a place where some conflicts and wars have taken place. As we learn in the beginning of the movie; “location, proximity to settlements and perhaps even fate made the Alamo crossroads for siege and battle.” And we understand that the Alamo is an important place for the people there. Houston says; “every time a sour wind blows through, everybody runs there and hides inside.” In other words, there is a collective memory about the Alamo suggesting that it is a divine and safe place where people can hide and protect themselves.

The film opens with a bloody scene of war. There are many dead bodies next to each other and some people are crying next to these corpses. We see a bloody hand and next to it, a frame in which there is the photograph of a young woman. And then we see thirteen scores on the wall of the Alamo. Later, we understand that every score represents a day those people defended the Alamo. We see the people who have sacrificed their lives for the sake of their nation.

Then we start to see our main characters who are depicted as heroes. First, we meet Sam Houston while struggling for the independence of Texas. He asks David Crocket to “take the oath for the militia duty and receive 640 acres of his own choosing.” He dreams that Texas will gain its independence from Mexico and in order to realize his dream, he tries to find some support and assistance. He asks other people to invest in Texas by helping him because he believes that if they do not, they will lament later when Texas becomes a good place to live in.

Our second character is Davy Crocket who is famous for being a bear hunter and an Indian fighter. From the play which is inspired by his life and from the respect

and admiration that other people show him, we understand that the name “Davy Crocket” has already got ahead of him and he has been universally embraced as a hero. Later in the movie when he goes to Texas, he introduces himself as David Crocket. Although no one knows him personally, everyone recognizes him as “Davy Crocket of Tennessee.” He is famous for what he has already achieved as a hero. The legendary hero Davy is beyond the real David Crocket.

Next character is Jim Bowie who appears when Houston and Grant are having a conflict and he finishes the argument between them. He has the charisma to influence the people there, and we see that when he takes out his knife, everyone steps back. Later Houston asks him to go to the Alamo and bring the guns back. Although he is fatally ill, he accepts to go.

And finally, William Travis has been given the authority to command the Texan army. He has just got divorced from his wife and got the custody of his son. However, his duty for his nation is his priority so he leaves his son with a family and he goes to the Alamo to command the army. While leaving his son, he says to him; “One crowded hour of glorious life is worth an age without a name.” Therefore, he goes to the Alamo in order to have a glorious name and life. The way to have a glorious name is to defend your country and set this mission as your priority as Travis does.

When James Bowie goes to the town near the Alamo, he remembers his former life with his wife. He feels that it is his home and although he has come to fetch the cannons back to Texas for Sam Houston, he decides to stay there and protect his home. The importance of the society to construct the memories of individuals is emphasized here. Before going to his hometown, Bowie does not

realize that he likes his hometown and he does not remember his memories. However, when he goes to the town, the streets, the people in the town and his old home remind him of his memories. Therefore, we can conclude that memory exists only in the society.

Moreover, the idea of home town or home country encourages people to fight. A piece of land does not mean anything if people do not attribute a meaning to it. However, if they feel that they belong to that piece of land and they have some memories which connect them to that place, it will be easier and more meaningful to make sacrifices and even risk their lives to defend it. Contrary to Houston, who thinks that the Alamo has no importance, Bowie feels that it is a significant fort because there are the cannons that protect his home. Although he accepts to go and bring the cannons back at first, he remembers his happy days with his wife in his home town. It is only this feeling which motivates the fatally ill Bowie to stay and fight for the Alamo. In fact, we also see the importance of nation here. As Anthony Smith defines, nation is a human population who shares a historic territory, common myths and historical memories (Smith, 14). Bowie remembers his memories in his home town; he sees the people who share the same hometown with him and most importantly he realizes the importance of the territory he belongs. Therefore, he decides to protect the Alamo because the Alamo has the cannons which protect his home and his memories.

Although Houston argues that the Alamo has little strategic value, the movie gives an important meaning to the fort. While Colonel Neill is introducing the Alamo to Colonel Travis, he suggests; “this fort is the only thing that stands between Santa Anna’s army and our settlements. As goes the Alamo, so goes Texas.” Therefore,

Travis says “I will defend it with my life, sir” when Neill leaves him in command. Since he believes how important the Alamo is, he risks his own life and persuades people to die there for the sake of Texas.

Santa Anna, on the other hand, is depicted as a cruel dictator in the movie. When his army captures a group of rebels, he orders them all to be executed despite military conventions. He wants every one to fear him and accept his dictatorship. He thinks that if he behaves according to the traditions and execute only some of the rebels, other people will remember that fate took their loved ones. Instead, he wants them remember that it was Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna. He regards his own soldiers as cannon fodder by sending them to breach the Alamo’s walls without proper artillery. By showing these cruel sides, the film tries to create some enmity and anger against Santa Anna and empathy for the Texan army.

Another interesting topic is that we see some Mexican people fighting in the Alamo against the Mexican army for the independence of Texas. They fight for their independence, because they do not want to be slaves under the dictatorship of Santa Anna. One of the Mexicans asks Seguin why he fights for “these low-lives” when Bowie and Travis fight for being in charge. And Seguin replies; “because the enemy of my enemy is my friend.” The Mexican people are also dissatisfied with Santa Anna’s rule and they want to get rid of him. The fact that those Mexican people fight against their own nation for the sake of independence with the American people reminds us Renan’s and Miller’s definitions of nation. Ernest Renan argues: “a nation’s existence ... is a daily plebiscite” (Renan 19) and Miller claims : “National communities are constituted by belief: a nationality exists when its members believe that it does” (Miller, Citizenship 28). The Mexican people in the Alamo believe that

they will be more independent if Texas becomes independent; therefore, they fight against their own nation. They believe that they belong to Texas and they make their choice about their side.

On the other hand, although Santa Anna is depicted as a cruel dictator, he has a mission too. He also fights for the integrity of his country and nation and he is also aware that without blood and without difficulties, there will be no glory. If they do not suffer today, their descendants will suffer in the future. They also have nationalistic and patriotic motivations. He says to his men;

My mission is to preserve the integrity of the national territory. Did we gain our independence only to have our land stolen by bandits? It stops here! It must stop here! If it does not, our grandchildren and their grandchildren will suffer the disgrace of begging for crumbs from the Americans. Without blood, without tears there is no glory.

Therefore, war is difficult for everyone. We see some Mexicans in the Alamo whose brothers, cousins, relatives and friends are fighting in the Mexican army. They are forced to fight against each other and it is of course difficult for them. Everyone is afraid of dying. When the Mexicans start bombing the Alamo, we see a scared Mexican soldier shaking and putting his hands on his ears not to hear the sound of the bombs, and some frightened women and children hiding in a shelter and crying. Most of the Texan volunteers and soldiers are anxious and they know that it is nearly impossible to win against the huge Mexican army. Some of them would prefer to withdraw and some would prefer to surrender. Nevertheless, this is war and although it is difficult, the film shows that they should not give up. There is the message that for the sake of their nations and to leave a peaceful and comfortable future for their

descendants, people should struggle in the present. If they do not risk their lives and even their loved ones' lives, the world will never be a good place to live. If they want to demolish the dictatorship and be independent, they have to make sacrifices.

Unity is very important for a nation during a war. In the beginning of the movie, there is controversy about who the commander of the Texan army would be; those who support Bowie are opposed to those who support Travis. The conflict is later resolved when Travis proves his courage and worth to Bowie and his men. Once united, the men suddenly become visibly more efficient. It is the turning point for the Alamo and the soul of the war changes for the Texan Army afterwards. If there is the unity and friendship in the army, the desire to fight will be more meaningful because the people in the same army have some common memories and dreams for future. They start forgetting their differences and remembering their commonalities. That is why they risk their lives. They are struggling for the same goal. Moreover, when they see their commanders on the same side, they fight more willingly and enthusiastically.

In fact, Colonel Travis is so brave and determined enough to risk every thing to defend the Alamo. He writes a letter to Sam Houston and says;

I call on you in the name of liberty to come to our aid with all dispatch. If this call is neglected, I am determined to sustain myself as long as possible and die like a soldier, who never forgets what is due to his own honor and that of his country: victory or death.

He is fully aware of the fact that if reinforcements do not come to help them, they will all die there. However, he still declares that he will give his life without hesitation if he needs to. He is an ideal leader and he encourages all others to do the

same. However, Sam Houston does not agree to send his soldiers to the Alamo because he wants to collect a larger army in order to destroy Santa Anna's army completely. He also knows that if he sends his limited number of soldiers to the Alamo now, they will still get defeated. He waits to collect a huge army which will have a chance of success against the Mexican army. He thinks that they should sacrifice the Alamo and the people there in order to be successful in the long run, to declare their independence and to create their own government. Eventually, he believes, the people in the Alamo risk their lives and fight for this aim. He proposes:

Gentlemen, I will raise an army. We will relieve the Alamo. But only after we have declared independence and created a government that can be legally recognized by all the nations of the world. That is what every besieged man in the Alamo is fighting for.

In order to gain a larger victory and be more successful, nations can sacrifice some places and some people. Hancock and other producers try to construct a collective memory and national identity among the American people by reminding them of their history. If it had not been the volunteers who fought in the Alamo and if it had not been Sam Houston who sacrificed some of his people and territory to win the war, they would not have an independent and as powerful a country today.

The importance of collective memory to bring people together in a struggle is also emphasized in the movie. The black slaves of Travis and Bowie do not have a dream of independence, so they leave at the first opportunity. They do not have any common memory and dream with the other people there. On the other hand, Bowie's sister-in-law does not want to leave Bowie, because she thinks that he is from her blood and they are a family. They share a collective memory and a common past.

Her sister was his wife and the fact that he loved her sister makes her commit herself to Bowie. In the same way, other people are there because they all share collective memories about the cruel dictatorship of Santa Anna and common dreams of creating an independent government. Juan Seguin is a good example for this. Travis asks Seguin to take a letter to Houston because he knows the territory well, but Seguin wants to stay there with his friends. He does not want to leave them. When Travis orders him to go, he goes. But Houston does not let him go back, and Seguin can only feel sorry for not keeping his promise to his friends. At the end of the movie, we see Seguin at the Alamo, keeping his promise, and burying the remains of his friends in San Antonio where they still rest today.

In every war movie the most impressive scene is when one of the leaders or commanders makes a moving and encouraging speech about the situation they are in. Colonel Travis' speech is no exception. He does not lie about the situation as Crockett advises to him and explains that no help is coming. They are alone to fight against that huge army and if they do it, they will probably die. He declares that they have two choices; they can either surrender under a white flag and ask for mercy or they can stay in the Alamo with him and fight. Without exception, every one stays in the Alamo preferring death to surrender.

I have here pieces of paper, letters from politicians and generals, but no indication of when, or if, help will arrive. Letters not worth the ink committed to them. I fear that no one is coming. Texas has been a second chance for me. I expect that might be true for many of you as well. It has been a chance not only for land and riches, but also to be a different man. I hope a better one. There have been many ideas

brought forth in the past few months of what Texas is and what it should become. We are not all in agreement. But I'd like to ask each of you what it is you value so highly that you are willing to fight and possibly die for. We will call that Texas. The Mexican army hopes to lure us into attempting escape. Almost anything seems better than remaining in this place, penned up. If, however, we force the enemy to attack, I believe every one of you will prove himself worth ten in return. We will not only show the world what patriots are made of, but we will also deal a crippling blow to the army of Santa Anna. If anyone wishes to depart under the white flag of surrender, you may do so now. You have that right. But if you wish to stay here, with me, in the Alamo, we will sell our lives dearly.

After this scene we see people writing letters to their loved ones. And every one tells their families that they will do everything for an independent Texas. One of them tells his wife how beautiful their home is and it is worth dying for it. "Dearest Mary, I hope someone with a kind voice is reading this to you. If you could see, you'd know how beautiful this land - our home - is. Kiss all six children for me and kiss them again." Another one apologizes for not writing until that time: "The scarcity of paper, together with other difficulties I've had to labour under, has prevented me from writing before this, and, indeed, it is a matter of claim whether this letter will ever reach the United States." Another one asks his father to live in Texas when it becomes independent: "Please remember me to my father and tell him to think of nothing but of coming to this fair country when it is free." And finally Travis writes a letter to the family who takes of his son and says: "My respects to all

friends, confusion to all enemies. God bless you. Take care of my little boy.” They all know that they will die; therefore, they say farewell to their families.

When the Mexican army attacks, they fight bravely. Everyone except Davy Crocket is killed and they lose the Alamo. However, as Travis says to his men in his speech, every Texan soldier has taken numbers of Mexicans into death with him. Even James Bowie kills a few Mexican soldiers from his deathbed. David Crocket is taken prisoner and is asked to beg Santa Anna for his life, but he advises them to surrender and he says that he will try to protect them against Sam Houston. He proves that a hero will never give up fighting for his nation. His scream is a symbol which reaches out to the present. He prefers death to being imprisoned and begging someone for life.

The Alamo is lost; however, the people who have fought there help Sam Houston’s army win the war. When Houston decides to attack the Mexican army, he makes a speech to his army. He tells them “You will remember this battle, remember each minute of it, each second, till the day that you die. But that is for tomorrow, gentlemen! For today, remember the Alamo!” The outcry of “Remember the Alamo” becomes their motivation in the war. Throughout the war, they cry “remember the Alamo” and they defeat Santa Anna’s army in eighteen minutes. Santa Anna is taken prisoner. He signs over all Mexican rights to Texas in return for his life.

Everyone in Texas knew that those people who fought in the Alamo would not succeed and that they would die. However, they sacrificed the lives of those people in order to gain a more important victory. In fact, the people themselves knew that they would die. They stayed there willingly. The fact that this movie was produced after the events of 9/11 has attracted attention of many people. Since the

attacks, the American government has been trying to unify their people by reminding them of their pasts and by constructing a collective memory.

Many critics compare The Alamo to America's invasion of Iraq. Vincent Perez is one of them. He argues that cruel dictator Santa Anna is a metaphor for Saddam Huseyin in Iraq, and Santa Anna's barbarian army is a metaphor for Huseyin's army. He draws attention to the fact that American soldiers are very confident in Iraq because they claim that they are fighting to save the Iraqi people from Saddam Huseyin's dictatorship. As Perez writes:

[...] one cannot but reflect on the uncanny parallel between how the Alamo and 9/11 function in cultural memory. This is especially true as one watches live television images of American soldiers, confident that they are fighting to free the Iraqi people, seeking to topple the government of Saddam Hussein. Replace the Alamo's antagonist, General Santa Anna, with Hussein, and treacherous Mexican soldiers with barbaric Arab terrorists, and the rest of the analogy falls rather frighteningly into place. The Alamo myth, as Flores notes, "produces winners, losers, tyrants, heroes" in a manner such that "[a]ny evidence that would complicate the picture is silenced by the weight of its structure." (778)

Perez continues by arguing that just like the Texans used the myth of the Alamo later in their war against the Mexicans, America is trying to use the myth of 9/11 in their attacks on Iraq. America claims that they represent goodness and freedom while Iraq represents evil and terror. They are trying to justify their invasion of Iraq by reminding the people the losses they suffered on September 11, 2001.

As in the nineteenth century, Americans have embraced a binary model of “good versus evil,” or “freedom versus terror,” in our government’s rationale for war against Iraq. As perhaps the ultimate postmodern “master symbol,” Ground Zero has quickly become a foundational site of American cultural memory. But what took place there has been exploited by our leaders to mask U.S. aggression—much like the defeat at the Alamo, served ten years after the battle as a rallying cry for U.S. soldiers during the 1846–48 U.S. war against Mexico. Although the 9/11 memorial has yet to be constructed, the memory of what occurred in New York on that date has already proven powerful enough to justify the U.S. invasion of two countries.

(778)

The Alamo is full of messages for the audience from all over the world. It is an epic movie which tells the story of the bravery of a group of volunteers and the struggle for the independence of Texas. Sam Houston motivates his army by reminding them the Alamo and constructing a collective memory. He defeats the army of Santa Anna in eighteen minutes and wins the independence of Texas. America suffered the 9/11 attacks and they are trying to unify people by reminding them of their history and by reinforcing a collective memory. The message is that America had some difficult days in the past too, but they have always known how to recover and grow stronger. Moreover, they want to justify their invasion of Iraq by recalling 9/11. They try to warn their people that if they do not attack Iraq and destroy their weapons of mass destruction, they will experience another 9/11.

3.3 300 Spartans

300 Spartans is the story of the ancient Battle of Thermopylae where King Leonidas and his 300 Spartan knights fought to the death against Persian King Xerxes and his huge army. What is interesting about the movie is that although it is about a war between Greeks and Persians, it was produced by Hollywood. 300 Spartans is an adaptation of Frank Miller's comic book and it was directed by Zack Snyder. Its screenplay had been offered to Warner Bros Company several times before and every time it was rejected. But the Hollywood producers produced and released the movie when they needed such a film in an international arena to produce war propaganda and to justify their frequent attacks and invasive policies on Iraq and other countries. (Arghavan) The reason why Hollywood produced such a movie is not to glorify the Greek nation of course. In the movie, the Greek nation represents the Western countries and the Spartans, who are depicted as the most glorious and brave Greeks, represent the American people. The movie presents the American people as the ones who are trying to protect the Western countries and the whole world against barbarian Iraqis, Iranians and Taliban's. Since the most powerful weapon of America in the international arena is Hollywood cinema, the government is trying to make war propaganda against the Middle-Eastern countries and call the other Western countries to fight against them. They also want to justify their frequent attacks on Afghanistan, Iraq and other countries.

In the movie, King Xerxes regards himself as a 'god'. In around 480 BC Xerxes asks Leonidas to hand over the city, and Leonidas refuses him. Although the Greek council, gods, and oracles, decide that surrendering is the best solution in order to avoid death and destruction, Leonidas decides to fight against Xerxes.

Despite the insistence of some council members not to fight against the Persians, Leonidas comes out with the 300 most talented and powerful soldiers of Sparta, to fight against “the source of evil in the world”, and to protect his people's “freedom, justice, honor, and dignity.”

Leonidas and his 300 Spartans along with other Greeks (e.g. Arcadians) confront the Persian army in a narrow pass in the nearby mountains. The Spartans fight very bravely and they kill many Persian soldiers. After witnessing their bravery and success, Xerxes tries to negotiate with Leonidas and promises to make him the richest warlord of Greece if he accepts his authority. Otherwise, he threatens that he will destroy Sparta, steal its riches, and kill all its scholars so as to erase the name of Leonidas and Sparta from history. Nevertheless, Leonidas refuses all his proposals and ignores his threats.

After the inevitable and bloody confrontation, the battle finishes with the death of King Leonidas and his 300 knights. At the end of the movie, the single Spartan warrior who had been sent to Sparta to tell of their bravery persuades the council to gather a huge army of 10000 Spartans and 30000 Greek soldiers who are fully enthused by Leonidas’ heroism to fight the Persians.

The Battle of Thermopylae is in fact a real event which took place in the past. A group of Spartans fought against a much larger army and lost the battle, but they did succeed in uniting the rest of Greece to win the final victory against the Persians. This battle is regarded as “a sort of Alamo for ancient Greece” (Korn). However, there is much poetic license in the movie. For example, the group of Spartans who fought against the Persian army was composed of more than 300 soldiers. Moreover, the Persian soldiers are depicted as evil, immoral, cruel and corrupt while the

Spartans are just the opposite. The Persian king, Xerxes, could not have been as tall as in the movie. (Korn). In fact, it is these alterations that one sees the clearest and most startling messages. Due to these changes, the movie works as propaganda for the US and justifies their frequent attacks on several Eastern countries.

The critics argue that this film is full of metaphors. The most important one is the nations which fight in the movie. Sparta is thought to be a metaphor for America and the western world while Persia is the metaphor for the Middle Eastern countries as well as today's Iran (Brynes). The film is regarded as dangerous because it calls western world to attack Iran and other eastern countries. Iran used to be called Persia, and the 300 Spartans warns Western world to defend itself against the Eastern countries. "By ancient Persia, they refer to modern Iran--whose soldiers are portrayed as bloodthirsty, underdeveloped zombies," acknowledges Greek film critic Dimitris Danikas. "They are stroking racist instincts in Europe and America" (Greek Critics). Another film critic Curt Holman thinks that a film like 300 Spartans is very dangerous in today's political climate because "you can easily imagine 300 Spartans being used as the best military recruitment film ever, lacking only a coda like, 'Did you know that Persia is now called Iran? Let's invade Tehran and kick ass like Spartans.' In the wrong hands, 300 Spartans could be a lethal weapon" (Greek Critics).

The movie starts with the scene in which Snyder emphasizes the importance of physical strength and endurance of the Spartan boys and the skill of Spartan soldiers in fighting. We hear a voice telling the life of Spartan King Leonidas since his birth. When he was born, like all the other boys in Sparta, he was inspected

physically. If he had been 'small, puny, sickly or misshapen', he would have been discarded. The narrator tells us;

From the time he could stand, he was baptized in the fire of combat, taught never to retreat, never to surrender, taught that death on the battlefield in the service to Sparta was the greatest glory he could achieve in his life. At age 7, as is customary in Sparta, the boy was taken from his mother and plunged into a world of violence. Manufactured by 300 years of Spartan warrior society to create the finest soldiers the world has ever known. The agoge, as it is called, forces the boys to fight, starves them, forces them to steal, and if it is necessary, to kill. By rod and lash, the boy was punished, taught to show no pain, no mercy. Constantly tested, tossed into the wild. Left to pit his wits and will against nature's fury. It was his initiation, his time in the wild, for he would return to his people a Spartan or not at all.

From the description of the king's childhood, we understand that the Spartan people regard fighting for their nation as superior to anything else. Since birth, they are treated as prospected warriors and they are taught that there is always an enemy to fight. If his body is not suitable for fighting, he is rejected. If it is suitable, he is exposed and conditioned to very difficult conditions that he will face in war. They are taught that a Spartan should never retreat or surrender and the most glorious thing in life is to die for Sparta. He is trained very professionally and at the end of his education, he is tested in the wild. If he succeeds, he returns home as a Spartan. If he fails, he will die.

Spartans sacrifice their children for their country as well as their own lives. They risk the lives of their children in education, knowing that if they fail, they will die. However, dying is better than not being a good warrior. When Leonidas, as part of his education, kills the wolf, he “returns to his people, to sacred Sparta, a king.” Mel Valentin argues that people with physical perfection and strength are superior to the others in Sparta and he suggests in his review:

In 300 Spartans, physical perfection is equated with positive values and virtues and physical imperfection (e.g., the hunchback Ephialtes, two of Xerxes’ grotesque warrior-slaves) with negative values and personal flaws. Every rule has an exception and in the hyperstylized world of 300 politicians are the exceptions. Politicians may not be physically grotesque or unattractive, but as non-warriors untested on the battlefield, they’re presented as fatally slow to act and, in one case, a traitor to the noble Spartan (and by extension the Greek) cause. Warriors, their beliefs, values, and their willingness to sacrifice themselves for the greater good, get respect, admiration, and, if they pay the ultimate sacrifice, glory.

And then we see Leonidas talking to his soldiers about the wolf and the cold winter. He compares the wild wolf with the enemy he now faces; the Persian army. He says:

It has been more than 30 years since the wolf and the winter cold. And now, as then, a beast approaches. Patient and confident, savoring the meal to come. But this beast is made of men and horses, swords and spears. An army of slaves, vast beyond imagining ready to devour tiny

Greece. Ready to snuff out the world's one hopes for reason and justice.

This passage clearly depicts the Spartans (or Westerners, esp. the Americans) as the defenders of reason and justice against the Eastern chaos and evil.

Leonidas is such a devoted king that, he even refuses to obey certain laws, customs and traditions in order to save his people from being slaves to the Persian king. When the messenger of Xerxes asks him to surrender, Leonidas looks at the hope in the eyes of the children and women. After getting the approval of his queen, he kills the messenger. He asks the gods and the oracle before going to a war for their permission. However, when they tell them not to fight and to surrender, he is conflicted. He has been taught to protect and obey the laws and rules since childhood, but these rules are now telling him to retreat. When he asks his wife what he should do to save his world when “the laws he is sworn to protect say not to do anything”, she answers: “it is not a question of what a Spartan citizen should do, or a husband, or a king. Instead ask yourself, what should a free man do?” In order to be free and to save his people and country, he should ignore the laws and customs. In fact, according to the queen, we assume that not only brave and patriotic Spartans but every free man should do the same for the sake of freedom.

Therefore, he gathers the most powerful and skilled warriors of Sparta who also believe that they should fight to death for freedom and for Sparta, and they march to the north in order to fight against the Persian army without the approval of the council or the oracle. We see that those 300 men are not only ready to risk their lives for Sparta but they are also eager to sacrifice their loved ones' lives. The captain of the army who is an old friend of Leonidas has brought his son to fight in

the army too. He believes that he is as brave as the others and he is willing to sacrifice his son for the sake of his nation. The existence and survival of their nation should be their priority. Every free person should behave like the captain in order to protect the freedom of their people. No citizen should hesitate to sacrifice everything they own, even their lives and their families' lives.

Throughout the movie, the Spartans who want war are depicted as virtuous and superior. Although they break laws and kill messengers, they're completely glorified. On the other hand, the people who do not want war are depicted as traitors. One of the council members who strongly opposes to fight turns out to be bribed by Xerxes. Even the priests who do not let Leonidas declare war against the Persian army are depicted as traitors and they are also bribed by the Persians. If Sparta is a metaphor for America, we can assume that these traitors who are against the war are the people who are against war and who accuse the American government for attacking Iraq in vain and killing many innocent people. And the people who approve the American government for their attack and the American soldiers who go to Iraq to fight are the glorious and superior people who set the existence of their nation as their priority. Moreover, we see a clear parallel with how the US ignored the UN's appeal for patience when they were planning to invade Iraq. The film puts a pressure on anti-war propagandists in the US and all around the world and blames them to be traitors because the American government is trying to protect their people and the other countries from the brutal and barbaric Middle Eastern countries. Hollywood producers play their roles in the wars by propagating the international policies of the American government.

Not only the men but the women who are also in favor of war are depicted as glorious and virtuous. The best example is Leonidas' wife. We see the queen as a representation of the devoted people. She sends her husband to the war and then she accepts to give her body to persuade one of the council members to send reinforcements to 300 warriors. Said Abo Maala emphasizes her courage and dedication in his film review and he acknowledges:

We also see King Leonidas's wife as a model of dedication, as she urges her husband to go out and face the Persians at the gates of the city. She sacrifices her honor as a Greek woman and as a queen for the freedom of her people and for the civilization. She tries to persuade a member of the Greek council (also a Persian agent) of the necessity of sending the army to support the king, and he claims her body for the request. When he breaks his promise to her and scandalizes her in front of the Greek council, she reveals her capacity to avenge herself and kills him. (Maala)

The physical difference of the Spartans and Persians is also astonishing. The soldiers in the Spartan army are good-looking handsome men while the Persian soldiers are depicted as ugly, barbaric and frightening. However, the differences between the attitudes of the Spartan soldiers to each other and the Persian soldiers to each other are more startling than their physical appearances. The Persian soldiers are mostly slaves who are not professional soldiers and who are forced to fight and die; on the other hand, the Spartan soldiers are professional warriors who act in harmony and who protect each other. Leonidas even says: "I would die for any of my

own men” when Xerxes tells him that he would gladly kill his own men for victory.

Ma’ala suggests:

Hearts will soften at the depiction of a few humane situations among the Spartan warriors, and harden at the inhumanity practiced by the Persians. For the Persians are not human, but monsters, barbarians, and preying dogs, freaks from whom blood and smoke erupt....Values of freedom, justice, honor, and dignity on one side are contrasted with the subjection of slaves and deification of Xerxes, who is covered in gold and even walks on the bodies of his slaves to disembark from his ship. Even in battle, we see the Spartans as professional warriors who protect and are afraid for one another, and who cooperate and fight valorously. Meanwhile, the Persian army consists of humiliated slaves who do not plan for battle, but who are led to it and die, their corpses transformed into mountains at the hands of the Spartans. (Ma’ala)

The narrator in the movie uses the word ‘soulless’ to describe the Persian soldiers. And all the Persian soldiers are horrible deviants hidden behind masks and veils, so that they do not even look human. When the audience sees the inhumane and cruel behavior of King Xerxes and his men, they get angry with them while the humane and patriotic behavior of the Spartans is fully justified.

Moreover, throughout the movie the Spartans are thought to be superior while non-Spartans are inferior. Not only the Persians but also the Arcadians are inferior to Spartans. When the Persian army finds out the secret way and gets behind the Greeks, the commander of Arcadians believes that they will not be successful against the huge Persian army, and he retreats home with his men. On the other hand, the

Spartan king and his 300 warriors do not even hesitate to stay and fight against the huge army because they believe that even if they are defeated and killed, they will be glorious.

With all these qualities and characteristics the Spartan soldiers can be seen as a metaphor for the American soldiers in Iraq. First of all, the number of the soldiers is parallel. Just as the 300 Spartans were confronting far superior numbers, so are the American soldiers. Secondly, like the Spartan warriors, the American soldiers are there to protect their people from a second 9/11-style attack and from the weapons of mass destruction which the Iraqi government could have used against them one day.

Furthermore, American soldiers are also depicted as humane and professional warriors who fight against a barbaric enemy. And the American government and media are dehumanizing their enemy too. In the movie, Persian soldiers are shown as inferior and thousands of Persians die but they're "faceless and soulless masses." Their deaths are not important and Spartan warriors make a pile of their bodies, making them seem worthless. On the other hand, when someone from the Spartan army dies, it is seen as a tragedy. In the same way the American media and the government completely do not care about the deaths of many "faceless and soulless" Iraqi insurgents. But when an American soldier is killed, it is shown as a tragedy. And finally, it is pointed out that the cry that the Spartan and American soldiers use is same. In one of the reviews, the critic suggests; "Among US Army troops the cry "hooah" or HUA (Heard. Understood. Acknowledged.) is an old tradition to signal unified approval. In 300, the Spartans scream "haooh" whenever their king gives a rousing speech about the merit of slaughtering foreigners." (Blatant)

In fact, in an Entertainment Weekly interview, graphic novelist Frank Miller was asked a question about “today's equivalent of Spartan soldiers” and he admitted that the Spartan soldiers are parallel with the American army. He said: “The closest comparison you can draw in terms of our own military today is to think of the red-caped Spartans as being like our special-ops forces. They're these almost superhuman characters with a tremendous warrior ethic, who were unquestionably the best fighters in Greece” (Miller). And these American special-ops forces are “specifically trained to conduct operations in hostile, denied, or politically sensitive environments to achieve military, diplomatic, informational, and economic objectives of the United States.” (Wikipedia) Moreover, SOF units have operated “in Iraq and Afghanistan where they are actively pursuing former regime leadership targets. Some estimates suggest that about 80 percent of deployed SOF units are currently operating in Iraq and Afghanistan” (Schmitt and Schanker).

It is not surprising that everyone is influenced by the unity and war strategy of the Spartan soldiers and every audience supports the ones who cry for freedom and justice. All Spartan soldiers do the same thing at the same time. They can easily challenge the huge numbers of the Persian soldiers and monsters. The narrator says; “we do what we were trained to do, what we were bred to do and what we were born to do. No prisoners, no mercy.” The Spartan soldiers are fighting against the Persians without hesitation and with a good morale. They laugh, joke and enjoy what they do. They are the ones who have passed the exam when they were children. They were born for this and they have been raised for this. Fighting for their nation is the meaning of their lives. As the queen says to her husband, “freedom is not free.” Therefore, they should pay the price of being independent, even if it is with their

lives. They act in harmony, knowing what to do and when. They like each other and care for each other. When the son of the captain dies, the narrator tells; “Days wear on. We lose few, but each felled is a friend, or the dearest blood.” Although they lose only a few of their friends, they mourn for every one of them while the Persians do not care about their dead soldiers.

The courage of the Spartan warriors comes from their king, Leonidas. It is impressive to see his comfortable and confident attitudes during the war. He is a very charismatic and influential character. He does not hesitate to give his life for the sake of his nation. He always emphasizes the importance of freedom and justice. He likes and admires his men. When the captain of his army does not want to send him alone to talk to King Xerxes, he tells him to relax because, he says; “if they assassinate me, all of Sparta goes to war. Pray they are that stupid, pray we are that lucky.” We can assume that he would prefer to be assassinated and die if it meant that the Spartans would send reinforcements to fight the Persians; he regards his army as lucky if he is killed because their victory would be guaranteed. He will not fear or hesitate to die if his death is better for his nation. Besides, freedom is his priority. Leonidas rejects Xerxes’ bribe by stating: “the world will remember that the free men stood against a tyrant, that few stood against many, and before this war is over that even a god king can bleed.” And the narrator glorifies Leonidas when he kills the first immortal and although Xerxes is thought to be a god-king, he feels fear towards the glorified Leonidas. The narrator says: “Immortals. They fail our king’s test. And a man who fancies himself a god feels a very human chill crawl up his spine.” His men admire and praise him even with their last words. At the end of the movie, one of his men

says to him: "It is an honor to die at your side." And he replies to him with the same amount of admiration and praise: "It is an honor to have lived at yours."

Throughout the movie, the Spartans say things which depict that they regard their nation superior to others. In one part of the movie, the narrator argues, "when muscle failed, they turned to their magic. One hundred nations descend upon us, the armies of all Asia. Funneled into this narrow corridor, their numbers count for nothing." They believe that a hundred nations from Asia attack them with the Persian army, but they are brave and strong enough to challenge them all. If Sparta is a metaphor for America, there is an emphasis on the worldwide anti-Americanism. Most countries in the world do not approve of the American attacks on Iraq; therefore, the American government argues that many nations are against them and they are fighting against the terror alone.

When the Persians learn of the secret path allowing them to surround the Spartans, Leonidas sends one of his men back to Sparta in order to tell the story of what they have done and persuade the council to join the fight against the Persians. Once he comes to Sparta, he speaks in front of the council and tells them of their accomplishments, and he conveys the king's message: "Remember us, remember what we have died for." He stresses that Leonidas did not want them to write poems or stories about him or to make monuments or sculptures in his honour; he just wanted to be remembered. His envoy makes the same speech to his soldiers when he collects an army of 30000 Greeks commanded by 10000 Spartans in less than a year. He reminds them of King Leonidas and his 300 brave warriors who saved the Greeks from slavery and cruelty. And he wants them to avenge his king and his brothers. Just like the Texans "remembered the Alamo" in their war with the Mexican army

after the fall of the Alamo, those 40000 Greeks remembered the deaths of 300 Spartans and they aim to “save the world from mysticism and tyranny” giving thanks to Leonidas and the brave 300.

This movie is trying to depict the enemy as brutal and cruel and persuade the people that they should kill the inhumane enemy without hesitation in order to protect their nation. Otherwise, the enemy will not hesitate to destroy them. Therefore, it can be regarded as American war propaganda attempted to convince the American people and others of the validity of their cause. John Power suggests in his review that this movie is pro-war propaganda because: “it tells its audience to hate and destroy its inhuman enemy.” They try to show the brutal histories of the Eastern countries and there is the claim that if they do not attack Iraq or Iran, they will experience a second 9/11 attack because Iraqi people will not hesitate to use their weapons of mass destruction in order to destroy America just like Xerxes uses his immortals and monsters to destroy Greece.

What is more, this movie has some parallel messages with The Alamo. After a similar mutual defeat, both the Texans and Spartans win the final victory. Therefore, it is normal to sacrifice a few people in order to gain a larger victory. If it had not been for such people who risked their lives eagerly, none of the nations today would exist. If the people do not risk their lives today, their nations will not exist in the future. “Freedom is not free.” To be free, every one should sacrifice something.

300 Spartans is a bloody and violent movie, but it makes people believe in the righteousness and glory of the Spartans, who represent Americans, because today they are the ones who die for freedom and justice. It is an effective form of propaganda.

CONCLUSION

Hollywood cinema has worked for the sake of the American government since WWII because it is easier to reach the largest possible audience with movies. Hollywood cinema is an effective way of conveying a message to the people and channel their ideas and emotions. It is efficient and practical for the American government to use Hollywood cinema because it has both a national and international influence.

First of all, they can create a collective memory and national identity among their people. For example, during and after the WWII, the OWI's Bureau of Motion Pictures asked Hollywood industry to depict a united and harmonized image of America, with laborers and managers, blacks and whites, men and women in a harmonized way (Limerick, 473). With the help of these movies, they aimed to unify their people by reminding them of some national traumas like Pearl Harbor and some difficult experiences they had during the war. Since memory is very important for the people, it is often manipulated and exploited by the nation states in order to legitimize their existence, or a particular social system. As Foucault suggests, it is easy to control people's dynamism if you control their memory. (Olick, Robbins, 126). Hollywood producers are very aware of this reality, so they try to motivate people to work for their nation's development and make them believe that their nation is superior to others by portraying the difficulties and sorrows that American soldiers experienced in previous wars and celebrating their past victories. When people remember the common sorrows, traumas, and victories that they had in the past, a collective memory of nationalism develops instinctively and in this way, the

idea and feeling of being an American gain meaning. Consequently, with the feelings of fraternity and patriotism and with the honor and pride of being American, people form a unified society and work to make their nation better and more developed.

Moreover, Hollywood cinema is the most influential way to propagate these discourses because it is an international form of communication. As Jones states, film can easily reduce the psychological distance between people in various parts of the world, just as the airplane reduces physical distance because it is easy to understand the subject of a movie even though it is in a different language (Jones, *Hollywood War*, 1). Since Hollywood cinema is watched all over the world, it can work as a means of propaganda for the US government. Since WWII, the government of the USA has used the Hollywood industry to propagate their ideas and to justify their policies all around the world. However, it has reached its peak since the 9/11 attacks. After 9/11, Hollywood movie producers were very quick to use their influence. They did not fight in a battlefield, but they were ready to use their art to help the American government and army. They were planning to fight against the enemies of their government with their art and to gather some allies around the world. They tried to show the world how cruel the attacks were and how much pain the American people suffered. Images of “us/others, us/enemies, freedom fighters/terrorists, or simply good/evil” were created immediately (Young, 256-257). In this way, the producers served to convert the world to the side of the American government and find some allies to fight together against their enemies. After America started to attack Iraq, Hollywood movies also aimed to justify the American cruelty towards the Iraqi people. By depicting people the sorrows and difficulties the Americans had after September 11, the movies aimed to convince the world that the

American government attacked Iraq because they wanted to avoid a second 9/11. Movie producers conveyed the message that if America did not attack Iraq, Iraqi terrorists would attack them or other western countries with their weapons of mass destruction. Therefore, America tried to protect the whole world as well as their own country from the terrorists of Iraq.

This thesis has attempted to demonstrate that Pearl Harbor, The Alamo and 300 Spartans are three important Hollywood movies which try to serve the American government. Pearl Harbor tries to depict the terrible experiences of the American people during and after the attacks. It has the aim to create a collective memory of their shared sorrows and to unify the American people. As Jerry Bruckheimer, the co-producer of Pearl Harbor admits their goal was to create patriotic and nationalistic sentiments in the audience and to emphasize the heroism, the courage, and the bravery that those men in Pearl Harbor rose to as well as the sacrifices that they made (Beyond the Movie).

The Alamo tells the story of the battle of San Antonio, Texas, to gain independence from Mexico in 1835-1836. Although the first draft of the screenplay was ready in 1998, the movie was produced after the events of 9/11 and it directly aims to arouse the patriotic feelings of the American people and to unify them. It contains the message that America had some difficulties and sorrows in the past too, but they can easily recover and grow stronger if they unify. And they emphasize the fact that Texas gained independence only after a group of volunteers sacrificed themselves and fought to death bravely and willingly. If there are not volunteers who will risk their lives for the sake of their nation, they will never be able to succeed.

Finally, 300 Spartans is the story of the ancient Battle of Thermopylae where King Leonidas and his 300 Spartan soldiers fought to the death against Persian King Xerxes and his huge army. It is interesting that Hollywood has produced a movie which glorifies another nation. However, like The Alamo, 300 Spartans have direct aims for the sake of the American government. The movie is full of metaphors which, in fact, convey messages to promote the USA. In the movie, the Spartans represent the American people and the western world while Persians represent the Middle Eastern world. The Spartan army which is composed of brave and patriotic soldiers who fight and die for freedom and democracy represent the American army. And the Persian army, which consists of ‘soulless’ and ‘faceless’ slaves and monsters that are forced to fight for a barbaric king, represents the Iraqi, Iranian or Taliban army. Therefore, this movie is regarded as dangerous because of “its blatant call for the West to attack Iran. Iran, after all, used to be called Persia, and the 300 film pulls no punches in exhorting the ‘free and rational’ West to defend itself against the Persian hordes” (Korn). By depicting the bravery and determination of 300 Spartans, the movie makes people believe in the righteousness and glory of the Spartans, (i.e. Americans) because they are the ones who die for freedom and democracy. It is a good propaganda film, which completely accomplishes its objective.

All of these movies are good at constructing American nationalism and making war propaganda. Since traumas and sorrows are more influential than victories in creating collective memory and national identity, these movie depict the difficulties that some patriots experienced in the past. There is an emphasis in all of the movies that if it had not been for the courage and dedication of a group of volunteers who sacrificed their lives for the sake of their nations, America would

never be as successful or as developed as it is today. Therefore, they try to encourage people to show the same bravery and devotion, especially after 9/11, if they face another threat as a nation. And they try to make the world believe that they face a very dangerous and barbaric enemy, so they should attack them in order to protect their people from a future Pearl Harbor or 9/11.

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