"War on Terror" via a "War of Words": Fear, Loathing and Name-calling in Hollywood's Wars in Afghanistan and Iraq

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9-11 AND THE WAR ON TERROR

The causal connection between the September 11, 2001 attacks and the war in Afghanistan and Iraq was strategically and carefully construed on the part of the Bush Administration—providing a perfect political alibi for the subsequent U. S. military invasion and occupation of these two sovereign nations. Former President Bush is famously remembered for declaring: "We wage a war to save civilization itself. We did not seek it. But we will fight it" (Excerpts, 2001, p. 6). Across the Atlantic, Tony Blair's matching war cry was: "To safeguard peace, we have to fight" (Cowell, 2001, p. 6) Also chronicled is the Anglo-American alliance formed to combat the global "war on terror" (Hoge, 2001) with Britain vowing to stand "shoulder to shoulder with the US" (Ford, 2001, p. 7) defending itself against what President Bush called "acts of unimaginable horror" (Excerpts, 2001, p. 6), and his British ally called "the worst terrorist outrage" (Cowell, 2001, p. 6). A decade later, the wars still rage both on the ground and on the silver screens of Hollywood. The overt attacks on the people and places in these two war-zones have had a noticeable ripple affect domestically in terms of 'reported' public sentiments and reactions. Most are aware for example of the firestorm of fear-driving attempts in the recent, highly publicized church-sponsored Koran-burning event. Equally prominent is the inflammatory reaction from some New Yorkers to the building of a mosque near Ground zero. Adams (2010, p.5) reports on these events:

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The Florida Pastor [Terry Jones] who inflamed the debate over con-
struction of an Islamic center near Ground Zero in Manhattan faded
from public view, but anger simmered during a weekend marked
by a memorial for 9/11 victims and dueling protests near the site of
the proposed project.

How has such a fear of the 'other' occurred? Can films produced in
the decade since 9/11 be implicated in such reactions?

OUTLINING THE RESEARCH FOCUS

While in any analysis of film, the context of filmmaking is as per-
tinent to the analysis as the content of the film *per se*, the scope of the
current paper impels a particular focus on filmic content—in partic-
ular, linguistic choices. The analysis aims to spotlight *how* the context
of two real wars finds linguistic encoding, and ultimately, mimetic
(audience) approval or disapproval in and through filmic content.
Downing (1980) compellingly argues that the power of film lies in
its seeming capacity "to shape public feeling while appearing only to
express it." It is this duality of rendition and representation that the
current paper aims to understand. After all, the exploitation of media
content in the service of state-driven agenda is not new (Moritz, 2005).
Strategies of euphemism and mystification in the media marketing of
the Vietnam War for example have been well chronicled particularly
from a linguistic point of view (Bolinger, 1980, p. 132; Hughes, 1988,
p. 220-220). Similar research has looked at World War II language.
Of particular interest has been the manner in which the Nazi pro-
paganda of *Gleichschatung*—"putting everyone in the same gear"—
(Ehlich, 1989) was prominently and successfully accomplished via
meticulous linguistic manipulations—in particular, via strategies of
"lexical hardening" (Ehlich,1989); micro linguistic manipulations
of emotion-inducing language steeped in cultural connotation and
stereotype in a bid to both co-opt and mobilize German working-
classes in the Nazi propaganda-machine's attempt at conflating anti-
Semitism with nationalistic ideology (Ehlich, 1989).

Consequently, while filmic analysis can benefit from a macro-
analysis of the context of filmic production (Miller *et al*., 2005), a
micro-analysis of textual renditions in particular films (Bleichen-
bacher, 2008) provides yet another manner to investigate the ideo-
logical role of film in the 21st century. The current paper is focused on
how consent is manufactured in and through film. Linguistic data col-

lected and coded from a randomly viewed list of over 40 film titles—all produced in the decade after September 11, 2001 (henceforth, 9/11)— underscores a number of key research questions. Firstly, *how* do these post-9/11 filmic productions represent the peoples, places, styles, rituals and names—in short, the culture of Arab and Muslim peoples in Afghanistan and Iraq—two countries experiencing U.S. military presence. Secondly, what are the specific verbal (linguistic) and visual (semiotic) strategies employed by such post 9/11 films to stereotype the 'enemy' and in effect "other" them? Thirdly, what might the ideological affects of these linguistic renditions have on audiences domestically as well as abroad, who are currently part of the so-called 'Global War on Terror'. Finally, what function could the 'othering' of the enemy in and through film serve both rhetorically and politically?

Filmic evidence from over 40 titles coded in the decade after the events of 9/11 reveal the workings of verbal and visual name-calling strategies which resonate with and reproduce Anglo-American phobias about Arab and Muslim people. Furthermore, these linguistic devices occur in the form of two consistent linguistic strategies. Firstly, via seemingly peripheral linguistic comments conflated against powerful visual reminders, numerous films in the data set reveal the workings of the device of *cinematic reminiscing*—defined in this paper as linguistic reminders of 9/11 which subversively as they historically "sign-post" audience-awareness about a nation's trajectory towards and engagement in war. Additionally, via a strategy of *cinematic acquiescing*, another device employed in several films, we see overt encodings of disparagement—systematic dysphemia, and name-calling of the peoples and places encapsulated in the war-zones in a bid to gain public consent for these militaristic invasions. Ultimately, it is argued, the complementary workings of *cinematic reminiscing* and *acquiescing* in 21st century films released in a post-9/11 decade reflect at the very same time as they reinforce a classic "orientalist" (Said, 1980) othering of the constructed enemy. Why this treatment of the enemy? Could it be that this *othering*—evoked in and through "a series of crude, essentialized caricatures of the Islamic world is presented in such a way as to make that world vulnerable to military aggression" (Said, 1980)? Could it also be possible that in instigating a 'fear' of Arab and Muslim peoples domestically, public policy regarding this geopolitical space goes unquestioned?

WAR IN FILMS VS. FILMS IN WAR

The explicit propagandist role of film in the recent 'war on terror' has been chronicled by numerous scholars (Kellner, 2010; Prince, 2009; Boggs and Pollard, 2005; Valantin, 2005; Suid, 2002; Shaheen, 2001). Film scholars such as Moritz (2005) recount how a mere two months after the September 11th attacks "Bush's advisor Karl Rove invited a crew of hand-picked directors and producers to exchange ideas. The topic: possible Hollywood contributions to the war against terrorists" (p. 120) — a move which ushered in a new era in filmmaking—what Moritz (2005) aptly labels, "militainment" (120). Such facts underscore commonly held perceptions—namely, that "movies are undoubtedly a powerful means of direct influence" (p. 124) particularly for "the target groups of 14-29 year old males" (Thomsen, 2005, p. 12)—a target audience who we are apprised are "conditioned to permanent aggressive militarism" in lieu of diplomacy (Thomsen, 2005, p. 12), and coincidentally also the age group which signs up for soldiering.

For most theorists, this marriage of media, ideology and profit-making trends both prior to and post 9/11 continues—particularly in a culture industry premised on "business as usual" (Thomsen 2005, p. 27). Valantin (2005) chronicles at length the seeming synergy between filmmaking and governmental directive, or rather, imagery in the service of acceptability in and through what he describes as "national security cinema" (p. ix)—an explicit manufacturing of mimetic consent for the American War machine. This 'reading' of film's recent role has also been reiterated by Boggs and Pollard (2007) who examine at length the manner in which the culture industry legitimizes war in and through filmic content which skillfully as it subversively skews audience orientations towards a predominantly nativistic, hyperpatriotic "spectacularization" or "chauvinistic patriotism" (Thomsen, 2005, p.160) of war imagery in a post-9/11 America. The continued use of film imagery for the glorification and legitimation of US corporate interests lends credence to the claim that "In Hollywood, profit and patriotism seem to be marching forward harmoniously in step." (Moritz, 2005, p. 125). Reiterating this analysis, Suid (2002) examines the glamorization of war in film as serving more of a psychoanalytic function—what he labels to be "an escapist entertainment that appeals to viewers' most basic, most primal instincts." (p. 3-4). While for most, it is the analysis of images or the political orientation of filmic content which is the subject of analysis, this paper examines the linguistic manner in which either consent or dissent for war is

construed. The constructivist function of film—using "language and images… and other media creating fragments of reality consciousness in our mind" (Thomsen, 2005, p. 9) has been reiterated by a number of scholars (McDonald and Wasko, 2008). After all, "in the age of moving images" writes Thomsen (2005) "the film industry is deeply involved in the creation of a set of collective mind patterns from the very beginning" (9)—a concern to which we now turn.

THE FILM CORPUS IN THE CURRENT STUDY

Analysis of linguistic data in the current film corpus reveals two strategies of microlinguistic action at work. Firstly, we see numerous examples of the manner in which seemingly innocuous 'dialoging' in films function in an intertextual capacity—an appropriation and incorporation of post-9/11 sentiment. In such instances, "war-on-terror" parlance forms part of the linguistic *mis-en-scene* of dialog exchanges in films—even in films thematically removed or unrelated to these wars. Such commonsensical contextualizations of film as post-9/11 creations abound in and through a strategy of *cinematic reminiscences*, a clever filmic strategy which works in a contextual capacity—setting the film in a historical period—as a post 9/11 film, while also serving as a subliminal reminder of America under attack, with a concomitant need for 'self-preservation'. Several films in the data corpus fall in this category.

The second strategy of *cinematic acquiescence* examines films whose thematic focus is primarily the 'war on terror' and its aftermath. In such cases, linguistic evidence goes beyond reminiscing about 9/11, to functioning in an overt ideological role—one of manipulating audience opinion towards mostly consent towards these wars—rarely do we see dissent against these wars in films. In such cases, we see an overt 'othering' of reel enemies in filmic wars in a bid to effectuate and legitimize mimetic (audience) approval for 'real' enemies in actual ground wars. In the interests of space, narrative details surrounding films are kept to a minimum. An exhaustive filmography is provided at the end of the paper for readers interested in the titles covered.

The current study spans linguistic data culled from films spanning approximately a decade (2001-2010). This period encompasses the historically relevant decade after the events of 9/11— a type of "terrorism which changed the nature of war" (Thomsen, 2005, p. 19). Why such a corpus? To borrow the astute wording of one of the reviewers of the

current paper,[2] the filmic corpus spanning this decade while united in terms of temporal space and thematic focus, differs in filmic genre and semiotic treatment of the wars. So, while all the films from which data is utilized are in fact, post 9/11 filmic productions featuring references to 9/11 and its aftermath—the so-called "war on terror"— they are also artistic creations which attempt to render geopolitical representations of Muslim/Arab peoples and places via different filmic genres. As the excerpts below demonstrate, films in this period range in a continua of different genre-types ranging from fictionalized film genres at the one end of the continuum such as: *Superbad* (Teenage Comedy); *Eagle Eye* (Science Fiction); *A Mighty Heart* (Thriller Drama); *Stoploss* (Realist War Drama); *This Is England* (Historical Drama) to on the other end of the continuum— realist docu-dramas such as *Where in the World is Osama Bin Laden?* –even including a blended genre of realist fiction such as *The Hurtlocker*. These are a few titles from the litany of examples under scrutiny in the current paper.

Furthermore, while seemingly randomized, examples in the current study exemplify two broad filmic strategies at work: films which utilize the events of 9/11 to situate and explicate upon the unfolding action in the form of implied backgrounding or context-building strategies; and secondly, films which engage in an overt foregrounding of the 'war on terror' as spotlighted thematic content. In the former instance, seemingly tangential linguistic allusions are evoked and invoked in the unfolding action in the form of *cinematic reminiscences* —reminders of September 11 and its aftermath. In such examples, manifold linguistic comments abound in the filmic scripts in reference to 9/11 and the 'war on terror'. A complementary strategy used in a plethora of films involves using the events and aftermath of 9/11 as spotlighted content in a bid to induce *cinematic acquiescence*—name-calling strategies meant to 'other' the enemy. Such filmic detailing of cinematic wars is rendered across a number of filmic genres via dialogic strategies which implicitly as they explicitly manufacture consent and acquiescence for the current ground wars raging outside the theater experience. Film scholar Lacy (2003) argues that "Cinema is a space involved in the process of actively forgetting and actively producing history" (p. 1). Data analyses in this paper point to post-9/11 filmic productions as doing much more. This decade of filmic produc-

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tion simultaneously engages in a re-remembering and a re-producing of history—the outcomes of which are explored in the conclusion.

Film as both a reflector and shaper of public opinion emerges not from viewing a few samples of representations from a number of isolated films per se, but rather is most potent when we examine the corpus as a whole—in tandem—as a sample of production over a decade. After all, most moviephiles see not one, not two, but several films (Epstein, 2009). In line with such a context, filmic evidence is worthy of examination for "every linguistic interaction however personal and insignificant it may appear, bears the social structure that it both expresses and helps to reproduce." (Mesthrie et al., 2009, p. 335). Since the focus in the current paper is on the *how* of consent manufacturing, filmic clips are organized around the taxonomy of linguistic strategy adopted rather than chronologically presented—thus traversing a multiplicity of genre types. To rephrase, the discussion of films in this analysis is presented not chronologically but in terms of taxonomy—in particular, via the type of dysphemistic strategy being employed.

LOCATING HOLLYWOOD

A distinction between "Hollywood" as a place versus Hollywood as a culture industry is made in this paper. The analysis utilizes the word 'Hollywood' in the economic sense in which current parlance employs the term— a metonymic location of a culture industry. This media conglomeration— situated within a 'borderless' and globally expansive world (Miller et al 20005; Macdonald and Wasko 2008; Pandey 2013) lacks a geographical location *per se*. Hollywood in this sense, both serves at the very same time as it culls global talent via the strategy of what Cowen (2002) defines as "cinematic clustering" (p. 87) which at its best entails "the strategic use of cinematic talent from around the world" in a bid to "strengthen the market position" (p. 87) of Hollywood-produced films. With the fluid and seemingly "flat world" (Friedman, 2005) dissolution of national boundaries emerging in the 21st century we are increasingly witnessing what Wasser (2005) calls the "transcendent power of Hollywood". In a sense then, it is becoming much harder to 'locate' where Hollywood really is. In a poignant sentence opening his essay on the "Transnationalization of Hollywood," Wasser (2005) goes as far as claiming that "Hollywood is booming while the American film industry weakens" (p. 63). Recent film scholars (MacDonald and Wasko, 2008; Pandey 2010; Pandey 2013), have increasingly chronicled how globalization forces in the 21st century have created globally-spanning

blockbusters with directorial and aesthetic talent garnered from multiple continents both in a bid to expand the "dream factory's" reach (Tyrell, 1999) while at the same time quell competition from national cinema endeavors (Miller et al. 2005).

So, while some of the data in the current paper is elicited from films which have obvious roots in British filmmaking, the transnational nature of Hollywood in terms of both production and distributions channels (Epstein, 2009) prompts the use of the term, "Hollywood" as a generic, metonymic term for films produced in English for broad mass appeal, and maximum market-output both domestically and abroad (Epstein 2009). Important to emphasize is that the films produced in the decade after 9/11 are not homogenous in their representations of the wars. However, there is no doubt that in the market-oriented nature of the film industry, it is ticket-sales which constitute a common denominator (Epstein, 2009). Thus, most of the films in the corpus are big budget films with mass audience exposure.

LOOKING AT EXAMPLES: CINEMATIC REMINISCING

For many, the consistent allusions to the 2001 attacks in a plethora of movies comes as no surprise. Linguistic comments about the 9/11 attacks, and the subsequent London bombings, form a consistent verbal detail in Hollywood movies of the past decade—even movies with themes unrelated to the war such as *Sugar*—a film whose primary focus is: the transnational capitalist baseball industry. *Sugar* uses a filmic strategy of "staged authenticity" (Thomsen, 2005, p. 18) to underscore its docu-drama filmic style. The film is quick to tell audiences of a son 'in Iraq'—a fact unsurprising considering Moritz's (2005) report that since the attacks, the government has sought ways of deploying the entertainment industry in the war against terrorism. The consequence: a consistent presence of the aftermath of 9/11 in the Visio-verbal syntax of post-9/11 films. As films are a conflation of imagery and language, Visio-syntax refers to the orchestrated manner in which post 9/11 filmic productions index allusions and remembrances to 9/11 in and through both visual imagery (montage) and verbal detail (dialoging).

Often, the verbalizations of the attacks are overt as in the film, *Reign Over Me*, a movie which overtly explores the theme of loss as a consequence of 9/11. In the film, a grieving widow tells audiences: "Then those monsters flew over here from across the world". The use of the term "monster" for the hijackers is both a reminder of what happened as well as a commentary on the need for 'self-preservation'. The use of

the events of 9/11 to introduce both character and plot is another comment strategy seen at work in the science fiction film *Knowing*, which examines a child's supernatural powers in predicting an impending natural disaster. In *Knowing*, the toll of terrorism is stated in numeric terms. Details of lives lost is presented as a cipher which only the child can decode. Consequently, via dialog inclusions sporadically included in the film, audiences are constantly reminded of the "2,996' lives lost".

A myriad of such verbal reminders abound in the post 9/11 decade—often in the form of seemingly incidental details. Consider the film *Vantage Point* which tracks the assassination plot of a world leader in a bid to proffer a commentary about global terrorism. In *Vantage Point* via a powerful strategy of cinematic 'replay,' audiences are voyeuristically and verbally reminded of the death toll as a consequence of terrorism not just domestically, but internationally. On numerous occasions in the viewing of the film, we are told that "Since 9/11, more than 4,500 people have been killed in the rising tide of global terror." Terror we can argue through such a strategy is no longer local, but global.

A similar strategy of *cinematic reminiscing* takes center-stage in the film *Remember Me*—a 2010 drama which explores the psychological trauma of loss on those left behind. The film culminates with the events of 9/11 metaphorically filmed through the windows of the now defunct World Trade Center. In an attempt to foreshadow the impending action, a professor is shown in the opening scenes of the film, *Remember Me*, launching a lecture delivered to a group of attentive students seated in an amphitheater with the following opening: "In the wake of recent terrorist attacks, do you think there's a place for a discussion about ethics when we are talking about the root causes of terrorism?"

Cinematic reminiscing is not always verbal. It is sometimes visually plotted as in the opening and culminating scene bookmarking *The Stone Merchant*, a film which uses the events of 9/11 to examine *how* terrorists plan and execute their destruction. In this 2006 film starring Harvey Keitel, there is a careful spotlighting of a historicity of Islamic domination with its parallel in modern times—what Said (1980) so poignantly describes to be an Islamic threat of a: "resurgent atavism, which suggests not only the menace of a return to the Middle Ages but the destruction of the democratic order in the Western world." This 'fear' is carefully rendered for audiences to see in the form of the following still (see, below). Here, we see the chalk etchings of a university professor, himself an amputee, and victim of an Islamist terrorist bomb attack in Nairobi. The teacher draws a graph on the board for all stu-

dents in his class after he testily responds to a student's objection that "Not all Muslims are terrorists" with the curt response: "But, almost all Terrorists are Muslims." The following still forms the last lingering close-up scene in the film. As an aside, both *The Stone Merchant,* and *Remember Me* use the powerful trope of 'teaching' to evoke their speech acts of *cinematic reminiscing*.
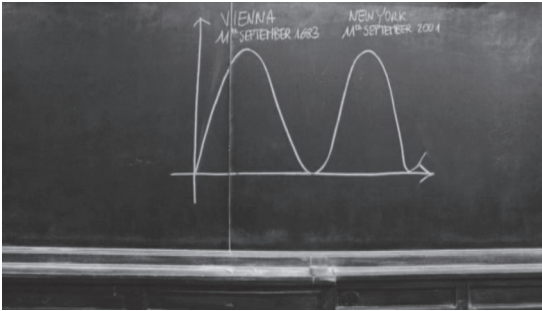
Still excerpted from: Djaoui, A. et al (producers); Martinelli R. (director). March 2006. *The Stone Merchant*. USA: Monarch Home Video.

While one may quibble with the politics underpinning filmic representations, and posit the convincing argument that not all of Hollywood's 9/11 portrayals are homogenous, what is crucial is that this strategy of *cinematic reminiscing* is used with consistency. Consequently, even in left-leaning films such as *Rendition*—a film which explored the 'hyper-control' exerted by the CIA in the Bush administration particularly in its treatment of foreign captured insurgents jailed in the infamous Guantanamo Bay prison, we see overt inclusions to 9/11. In *Rendition*, the allusions are semiotically rendered in the form of cinematic re-simulation as in the chilling reminder which opens the film.


Still excerpted from: Golin, S. *et al*. (producers); Hood G. (director). October 2007. *Rendition*. USA: New Line Cinema.

There is no doubt that the attacks have left "people resentful, hurting and looking for someone to blame" (Allan and Burridge, 2006, p. 10) with no easier target than the people and places encapsulated in the two war zones seen as the source of the attack by the Bush Administra-

tion. This mimetic angst (audience fear) is voyeuristically captured and commented upon in several movies. In the film, *Reign over Me*, a movie focused on the trauma of loss suffered as a consequence of 9/11, audience members watch as the actors themselves watch a television screen posting new threats:
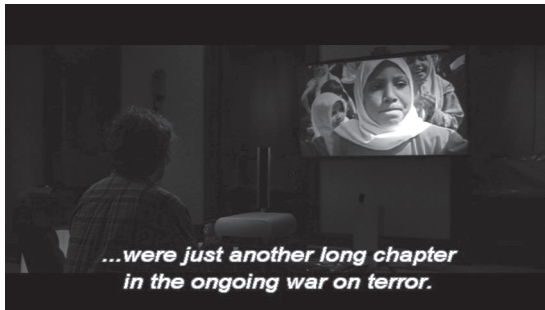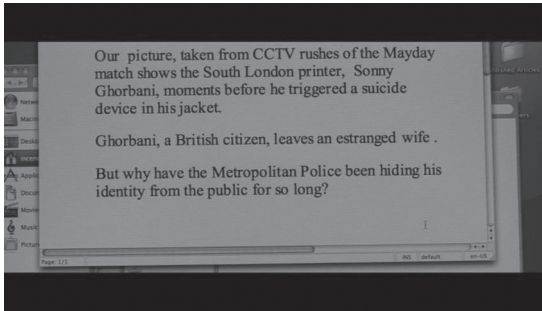

Still excerpted from: Binder, J and M. Rotenger (producers); Bender, M. (director). March 2007. *Reign Over Me*. USA: Columbia Pictures.
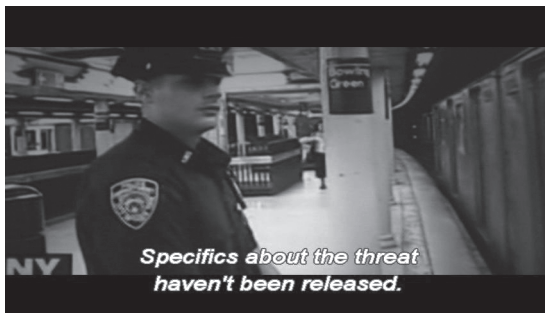
Still excerpted from: Binder, J and M. Rotenger (producers); Bender, M. (director). March 2007. Reign Over Me. USA: Columbia Pictures.

The above visuals show the dual workings of *cinematic reminiscing* both as a contextual and filmic strategy. So, while the film does draw audience attention to "the United States heading towards a *Big-Brother-is-Watching-You* society of continuous and networked surveillance" (Thomsen, 2005, p. 16), this cinematic spotlighting also manages to reflect fear at the very same time as it sustains it.

This device is used with generous abundance in the film *Incendiary*— a film exploring a similar theme of grief and guilt which the London mass-transit bombings have had on the families of both victim and assailant.   Thus, across the Atlantic, the London bombings see visual and verbal memorialization in the film, *Incendiary*—accomplished via a lingering shot on the following filmic still which both condones the utility of mass surveillance at the very same time as it insidiously assures audiences of a 'free press' doing its job.

Our picture, taken from CCTV rushes of the Mayday match shows the South London printer, Sonny Ghorbani, moments before he triggered a suicide device in his jacket.

Ghorbani, a British citizen, leaves an estranged wife .

But why have the Metropolitan Police been hiding his identity from the public for so long?

Still excerpted from: Paterson, A et al. (producers); Maguire, M. (director). October 2009. *Incendiary*. UK: Image Entertainment.

LOCATING REASONS AND LOCATING THE WARS

For audiences subjected to films in the decade after 9/11, it is filmic causation for the ground wars which see overt verbalization. Consider the film *The Kingdom*, a cinematic foray into the FBI's role in investigating a bombing attack in a Riyadh-based foreign workers compound. In, *The Kingdom*, Jennifer Garner's character is quick to warn a child (of all people) about "all the bad people out there who plan, organize, train, brainwash, and preach extreme violence," concluding: "These are the men we are fighting"—a message which locates the reason for war in overt terms for both child and viewing audience alike. Again, even in pacifist-focused films, the causation of war sees center-stage. In the film, *Lions for Lambs*, we see an intellectual analysis of the politics of war-mongering. This cinematic feat is accomplished via a juxtapositioning of the consequences of elite orders meted out by politicians, and their effects on ground soldiers—another polemic analysis of the cause of war in Afghanistan. In *Lions for Lambs*, a commanding officer tells soldiers: "Al Qaeda and the Taliban have been whittled down to small wolf-packs," adding, "we've successfully pounded the enemy into something much smaller." Several films choose to utilize filmic close-up shots of the war-zones made especially visually prominent in *Lions for Lambs*. Here, both wars are fore fronted via a camera pan of the map location of the wars. Consequently, war-parlance works in an intertextual capacity—there seems to be both an appropriation and incorporation of war parlance stated in "commonsensical" terms (Fairclough, 1989)—in the role of *mise-en-scene* construction.

Still excerpted from: Redford, R. et al. (producers); Redford R. (director). November 2007. *Lions for Lambs.* USA: MGM.

What then follows is clever strategy to connect the two wars in the mind of audiences evoked via a deictic declarative: "They're allowing Wahhabi insurgents to hike from Iraq to Afghanistan"—said with a careful pontification of location for viewing audiences. For many viewers, the two wars seem indelibly connected. While it is matter of debate as to whether the film sought to spotlight this connection in a bid to garner dissent, it seems clear that for many—a decade after the invasions—that the lack of any real weapons of mass destruction—not terrorism, the 'supposed' cause of war in Iraq, has been relegated to the dustbin of historical amnesia.
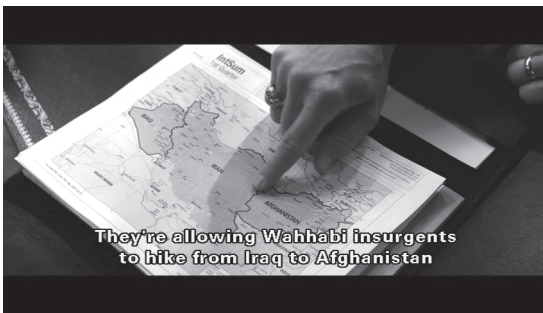
Still excerpted from: Redford, R. et al. (producers); Redford R. (director). November 2007. *Lions for Lambs.* USA: MGM.

A "dramaturgical and aesthetic shift" (Thomsen, 2005, p. 18) identified in post 9/11 film-making has been the use of "the cross-referentiality and intertwinement of different media" (Thomsen, 2005, p. 18) in film-making in a bid to instigate a sense of authenticity in films replicating our media-obsessed world. We witness the use of this strategy for example, in the science fiction thriller, *The Invasion*, a suspense film which uses the context of terrorism to locate an epidemic of somnambulance triggered by extraterrestrial fungi. In a bid to highlight the tactics used by what are labeled 'the insurgents' the film uses interruptive voice-overs. Consequently, in *The Invasion*, a radio reports the following

grim details as Nicole Kidman's character eats breakfast: "Hundreds were killed in the bloodiest attack in Iraq since the start of the occupation." The voice-over proffers minute details in the form of: "A mixture of toxic chemicals was strapped to suicide bombers." We see a similar verbal focus on suicide bombers in *Lions for Lambs* where Tom Cruise's character argues for a need for the wars saying: "They butcher the people who helped us, who voted."

Cinematic reminiscing also occurs in visual terms. Consider a powerful scene taken from the widely successful film *Charlie Wilson's War*, a grand, Hollywood production of selective history, and "post-cold war triumphalism" (Chalmers, 2010, p. 1) which subversively as it overtly condones the 'arming' of nations—in this case—Afghanistan—in the cold-war period. Entertaining as *Charlie Wilson's War* was to watch, the film failed to make any overt links to the mujahedeen of yore and their causal links to the Taliban to today. It is also rumored that "The film's happy ending came about because Tom Hanks, "just can't deal with this 9/11 thing," according to Melissa Roddy, a Los Angeles filmmaker with inside information on the production of the film" (Chalmers, 2010, p. 90). Sometimes, the prod is visual as in the still from *Charlie Wilson's War* where the semiotically significant crescent moon is juxtaposed against a silhouette of the mujjahadeen.

Still excerpted from: Hanks, T. et al. (producers); Nichols, M. (director). December 2007. *Charlie Wilson's War*. USA: Universal Pictures.

THEORETICAL MODEL: DYSPHEMIA AND CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

The current paper presents a taxonomy of name-calling strategies directed at the people and places, in both wars. Evidence demonstrates the consistent use of dysphemic language—name-calling—uttered on the silver screens of Hollywood at the people, places and practices—linguistic and cultural—construed as Iraq and Afghanistan. The paper lends credence to the claim that "language is used as a weapon against enemies, and as a release valve when we are angry, frustrated

or hurt" (Allan and Burridge, 2006, p. 2)—both strategies currently at work in the silver-screen wars raging also for a decade. The theoretical framework utilizes taxonomies of dysphemia as outlined by Allan and Burridge (2006) who define dysphemia as "speaking offensively"; a verbal practice which entails use of "taboo language" (p. 31) such as "curses, name-calling, and any sort of derogatory comments directed towards others in order to insult or wound them." Nuessel (2008) has used the term "ethnophaulism" (p. 29) to describe words used to "deprecate and disparage a group of people."

In the extensive taxonomy proffered by Allan and Burridge (2006), the following seven classifications of epithets are identified all of which are heard in the verbal and visual syntax of films pertaining to the wars in the post 9/11 decade examined in this paper. The insults and maledictions (Allan and Burridge, 2006, p. 79-85) include: comparisons of people with animals; slurs derived from tabooed bodily organs/ effluvia; dysphemistic epithets picking on physical characteristics treated as abnormalities (i.e., clothing practices); imprecations involving mental subnormality/derangement, and stereotyping (Karim, 1997); and finally, insults which Allan and Burridge (2006) label   "-IST-dysphemisms (racist, sexist and ethnic slurs) on the target's character" (p. 85).

These linguistic strategies encode word-manufacturing strategies—labeled as morpho-semantic strategies since they involve unique morphological and semantic processes (O'Grady *et al.*, 2010). Evident in the analysis of such name-calling is the use of innovative morpho-semantic strategies including but not limited to: blended morphemes; the use of innovative compounding strategies as well as the use of borrowed pro-clitic forms (O' Grady *et al.*, 2010). The analysis is framed within current approaches to critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1992) in which "the intricate relationships between text, talk, social cognition, power, society and culture" (van Dijk, 1993, p. 253) are examined, and some recent societal effects examined. While critics of critical discourse analysis are quick to point out its potentially reductionist methodology—in particular, its "too strong a focus on the grammatical effects of texts" (Blommaert, 2005, p. 35), and a concomitant lack of historicity, the current paper argues that the microanalysis of text in and thorough a focus on the now—a synchronous analysis of textuality in current media such as film— permits for an alternate means to comprehend *how* the diachronicity of context—history— sees interpellation and intertextualization in and through popular media such as film. After all, language is "a reality-creating

social practice" (Fowler, 1985, p. 62). In film, as we shall see, linguistic inclusions strategically as they systematically "constrain content in a bid to favor certain interpretations" (Fairclough, 1989, p.52).

NAME–CALLING THROUGH MORPHEMIC STRATEGIES: SEEKING CINEMATIC ACQUIESCENCE

One highly negative appellation apparent in the film corpus involves the innovative use of compounding of a historically charged racial slur (Essed, 1997) matched with a geographic marker in the form of the endocentric compound "Sand Nigger", whose use in the movie *Crossing Over* occurs as an incorporated form (O'Grady *et. al.*, 2010, p. 142). In the film *Crossing Over*, we are exposed to the bureaucracy surrounding illegal immigration into the United States, and presented with parallel stories of illegal immigrants trying to work in the United States under the real threat of deportation. The threat of terrorist illegals also forms a backdrop of the unfolding action. In the film, a group of teenagers jeer at a fellow Muslim student dropped off at school by her cab-driving father with the imprecation: "It's the sand-nigger express". That this malediction is hurled out by African-Americans successfully deletes the historical accretion of insult encoded in this taboo term (Asim, 2007).

Still excerpted from: Kramer, W and Marshall,W. (producers); Kramer, W. (director). February 2009. *Crossing Over*. USA: The Weinstein Company

"Pronouns, names and address forms are particularly clear and well defined sub-systems of language that reveal asymmetries of power" (Mesthrie *et al.*, 2009, p. 312). This same power which accrues from naming the 'other' sees reoccurrence in several films in the post 9/11 decade. Consider for example, the political drama *The Walker*—a film which examines Capitol politics in the form of a high suspense thriller involving murder. *The Walker* manages to hurl out similar insults. This same appellation—matched with visual violence is witnessed by audiences in a scene in which the epithet is hurled out at knife-point to a

by-standing Arab extra. Here, as in several examples in the data corpus, verbal violence is synchronized with visual violence making the insult doubly-intimidating.

You got it, sand nigger?

Still excerpted from: Nayar, D. (producer); Schrader, P. (director). November 2007. *The Walker*. USA: Kintop Pictures.

The use of the eponym 'Haji' as a form of insult is another fashion-able epithet in current Hollywood—confirming Allan and Burridge's (2006) claim that insults function in an "us vs. them situation" (p. 49). The original semantic meaning of the term "haji" refers to "the holiness of one who has made a pilgrimage to Mecca" (Mesthrie *et al.*, 2009, p. 326). In current Hollywood productions however, the term has gone through a process of relexification (Halliday, 1978, p. 175)—a pejoriza-tion of the term to the point of encoding an entirely irreverent meaning which even audiences unfamiliar with the term soon internalize through repeated exposures to this word. We see multiple tokens in the data corpus of this strategy. Consider for example, the visualization and ver-balization of the term even in a left-leaning film such as *War Inc.*—a movie which attempts a political satirization of the war in Iraq (a box office flop). In the film, John Cusack in the role of a contractor, with the clever eponym, Brand Hauser, attempts to unravel the economic under-belly of the war in Iraq in a fictionalized country called Turaqistan. No other imprecation seems more used than 'Haji' whose variable spelling is consistently conflated with other dysphemistic terms of high semantic import. In *War Inc.*, the imprecation is foregrounded against a tapestry of tolerance. While this powerful image conflates the two conflicting posi-tions on the war, the camera's angle—a foregrounding of the insult, against an imperative for tolerance, lends enough conviction to the argu-ment that the image functions subversively—as an overt attack against an "oppressive" climate of political correctness (Lakoff, 2000). The image further confirms Essed's (1997) claim of "the contradiction between the normative rejection of racial slurs and the lived reality in which toler-ance of racism prevails" (143-144). It is a matter of debate whether the

film merely attempts to spotlight the 'militaristic racism' in a bid to con-done dissent. What is fascinating however is that in the construction of the image –the dysphemia is foregrounded rather than backgrounded. Could this image be one of those dual semiotic creations which shape public opinion while only merely appearing to express it, and already referred to at the outset of the paper?

Still excerpted from: Cusack, J. et al (producers); Seftel, J. (director). May 2008. *War Inc*., USA: First Look Studios.

The theme of the war in Iraq and its after-effects on soldiers suffering the consequences of trauma forms the subject matter of *Stop-Loss*, a film which uses this invective with generous abandon. In this gritty movie, the 'realism' of the war in Iraq is captured on screen via the incessant use of 'Haji' as in: "I got two hajis right across the street"; or when a soldier confesses: "I'm tired of going and killing a haji in his kitchen and his bedroom."

Still excerpted from: Goodman, G. and S. Rudin (producers); Pierce, K. (director). March 2008. *Stop-Loss* USA: MTV Films/ Paramount.

One could argue it is perhaps easier to kill a haji (a thing) than an Afghani or Iraqi (a person) for actor and audience-members alike. While some may argue that the mere use of the term 'Haji' as a decon-textualized term is not sufficient evidence of its use as a dysphemic inventive particularly since in realism-oriented films such as *Stop-Loss*, language is not 'cleaned-up' or sanitized to match audience sen-sibilities, but rather, reflects the reality of 'real war' where soldiers

are not exactly nice to each other (which would be a mystification of war), there is sufficient evidence in *Stop-Loss* to point to the term being used in a dual capacity—to reflect as well as sustain an 'othering'. Consider for example, the manner in which visual evidence is carefully conflated in this film. We see a careful match of a badly disfigured face of an American soldier as a consequence of an IED which we are told is exploded by a 'haji'. This cost of war in *Stop-Loss* is viscerally showcased in the close-up of a badly burned soldier who refers to the cause of his injuries—the infamous IEDs as: "The hajis new bombs" (see still below). The shock of his disfigured face mitigates the semantic import of his own name-calling. No complementary images of burned Iraqi victims of war for example, are spotlighted in the film.


Still excerpted from: Goodman, G. and S. Rudin (producers); Pierce, K. (director). March 2008. *Stop-Loss* USA: MTV Films/ Paramount.

So, in reflecting current war-parlance, the silver-screen also provides viewing audiences with an inventory of invectives for the wars. In the Oscar-nominated movie, In the *Valley of Elah*, a film which confronts the lies, racism, hate and animalistic output of militarism—albeit in the most subtle of terms, we also encounter the use of this invective. We are witness to a returning war veteran, and criminal, coldly remarking to a baffled investigator played by Charlize Theron: "We arrested some hajji who was wounded" continuing with "and the haji screamed. . ." The specific conflation of the term 'haji' with the murdering veteran has to be read differently here than in the film *Stop-Loss*. Here, the invective functions in the capacity of exposure—a cinematic attempt at highlighting troop bigotry towards the 'enemy'. There is an overt depersonalization of the enemy confirming that "flippancy toward what is feared is a means of coming to terms with fear by downgrading it" (Allan and Burridge, 2006, p. 40)—in this case a semantic move on the part of the soldier from animism to animalism.
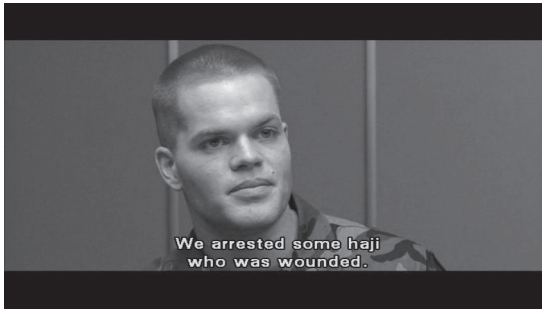
Still excerpted from:
Haggis, P. and Hayward,
B. (producers); Haggis, P.
(director). September 2007.
In *The Valley of Elah*. USA:
Warner Independent Pictures.

In, *The Green Zone*, another film which attempts a questioning of the 'weapons of mass destruction' alibi used by the Bush Administration in its invasion of Iraq, we see the use of the invective in a similar vein. In the film, audiences are exposed to the rampant 'othering' given free rein in the military. Thus, in *Green Zone*, a soldier is filmed using this term of disparagement for all Iraqi nationals, as when he informs his commanding officer—played by Matt Damon—with: "This Hajji says he needs to talk to you about something" A similar venting of anger sees reoccurrence in the same film, when a bystanding guard superciliously asks of Matt Damon's translator, "What's up with the Hajji?"—a careful inclusion of the label used on the part of the directors in both these films to encode the attitude of most of the troops towards the 'enemy'. In these two films, the invective is used sparingly and critically—with none of the lead characters using the terms, and instead, watching in astonishment its use. See for example, the facial expression on Charlize Theron's character in the still below excerpted from *The Valley of Elah.*
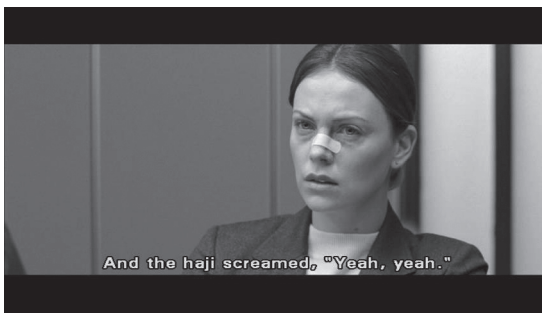
Still excerpted from:
Haggis, P. and Hayward,
B. (producers); Haggis, P.
(director). September 2007.
In *The Valley of Ela*h. USA:
Warner Independent Pictures.

The invective *Haji* is conflated not just with verbal attack, but with visual violence as in the following scene from *Stop-Loss* where a marine who has lost a platoon member hurls out the invective—con-

firming that slurs can be both "directly and indirectly intimidating" (Essed, 1997, p. 142). The camera seems sympathetic to the plight of the soldier—who only seems to be interested in 'rescuing' his platoon-mates—using whatever means necessary to gather intelligence as to their whereabouts in a carefully construed 'an all-is-fair in-love-and-war' type of scene.

You having fun, Haji? You having fun?

Still excerpted from: Goodman, G. and S. Rudin (producers); Pierce, K. (director). March 2008. *Stop-Loss* USA: MTV Films/ Paramount.

The seemingly 'innate' propensity for violence of the constructed 'enemy' is filmic fodder in many an acclaimed film. Consider for example the macabre content contained in the 2010 Academy Winner, *The Hurt-locker*—a film which meticulously chronicles the bravery of bomb dismantlers in the Iraq war. In one scene, we are given the grisly details of dismantling a bomb stuffed in a cadaver packed with explosives—'a body bomb'. The question is does this cinematic concoction successfully utilize fetishization, and the dismemberment of Iraqi society in the service of triumphalism and militarism? One has to watch the DVD commentary to find out that the contraption of the 'body bomb' was a creative concoction devised on the part of Kathryn Bigelow's filmic team. In the DVD commentary Bigelow claims that "this prosthetic is a heavily loaded symbolic moment…the idea of a bomb put inside the body of the Iraqi people." Most audiences will unlikely get this fictional symbolism 'seeing' instead the gruesome 'reality' of a cadaver strapped with real bombs—a macabre indictment against a people who will stop at nothing—who this film seems to insinuate –seem maliciously keen on using their dead to create more dead. After all, *The Hurtlocker* was touted as a film based on true soldier accounts. The lingering still on a "butcher shop" which opens the action of *The Hurtlocker*— a film which swept the stage at the Academy Awards— is proof enough of the point-of view being proffered in the film. We have three occurrences of this dysphemic term used to describe civilian Iraqis. Consider the still below with its verbalization:

EOD just pulled a nine on a *haji* in a car.

Still excerpted from: Bigelow K. et al. (producers); Bigelow, K. (director) June 2009, *The Hurt Locker.* USA: Universal Studios.

In other examples, a soldier remarks: "The nine is now pressing into the haji's forehead" with a much more disparaging comment uttered by another soldier who proclaims in exasperation: "You've got two infantry platoons behind you whose job it is to go haji hunting." The conflation of hunting 'hajis' and militaristic fighting is not lost on viewers. Afterall, for most, it is the hunter's prowess that is spotlighted—and not his/her kill.

Haji with other dysphemic terms occurs in *Harsh Times*—a film which examines the psychosis of a veteran suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. In the film, an unstable war veteran unleashes anger and guilt in a cathartic tirade and metonymic claim: "You know what they were—they were fuckin' hajjis, terrorists, the bad guys."
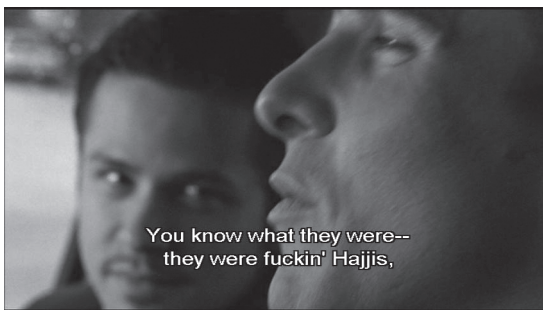
You know what they were--
they were fuckin' Hajjis,

Still excerpted from: Ayer, D. and Sperling A. (producers); Ayer, D. (director). November 2006. *Harsh Times*. USA: MGM.

A similar semantic juxtapositioning occurs in *Stop-loss* where a bereaving father is given license to vent via a compounded invective: "I'd go back tomorrow to get that Haji bastard that killed Preacher."

Still excerpted from: Goodman, G. and S. Rudin (producers); Pierce, K. (director). March 2008. *Stop-Loss* USA: MTV Films/ Paramount.

PLACE NAMES: A CLINE OF NEGATIVITY

The most obvious output of war depictions on the silver screen involve novel morphophonemic blending and clipping strategies involving the suffix "istan" used to insult the geographic space encapsulated in the war zones. In *Harsh Times*, an Afghan war veteran smugly calls the country: "Trashcanistan."


Still excerpted from: Ayer, D. and Sperling A. (producers); Ayer, D. (director). November 2006. *Harsh Times*. USA: MGM.

In an article written soon after the 9-11 attacks titled: "Clan of Stans" Shen (2001) defined "*Istan*" of Persian etymology as 'place of' (p. 12), and then proceeded to examine the semantic roots of seven place names/ countries utilizing this morphemic suffix.

This insult of place also sees occurrence in films attempting a more serious investigation of the wars in the form of docu-dramas such as *Where in the World is Osama Bin Laden?* This film attempts a critique of the state-run machinery set up in the service of 'the hunt for Osama Bin Laden.' Surprisingly we find this multimorphemic blend being used for 'comedic' effect as in the following nonsensical agglutinative form which opens the film.   Narrated in his voice, Morgan Spurlock speculates on his plan of action with: "Was I supposed to go look for him in *Afghanibaluchapakiwaziristan*?" he asks? The inevitable effect is one of 'othering' the entire region—a 'foreignization' that many a mainstream

viewer perceives this geographic space to be. After all, in a close-up shot as seen below, audiences are subjected to the word photographed against a backdrop of the entire map of the region.
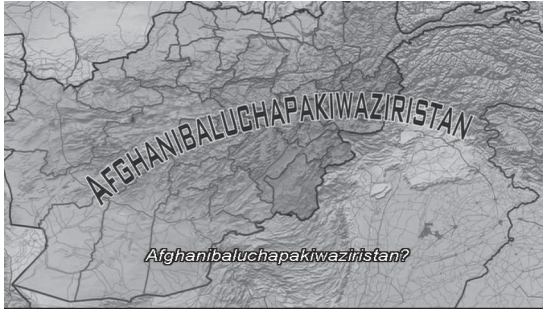
Still excerpted from: Spurlock, M (producer); Spurlock, M (director). April 2008. *Where in the World is Osama bin Laden*? USA: Weinstein Company.

The use of '–istan' as a means to denigrate is consistent—there is even a 2009 release called *Absurdistan*. Sometimes the insult is extreme as in *War Stories*—a film which attempts to explore the global spread of terrorism in this geopolitical space as it tracks the lives of two reporters. In the film, Uzbekistan is conflated with 'whore'. Eager to underscore the chaos of the region, the same blending strategy occurs in, *Lions for Lambs* as "Trash-gani."

Still excerpted from: Redford, R. et al. (producers); Redford R. (director). November 2007. *Lions for Lambs*. USA: MGM.

The cline of insult while more subtle, but perhaps as derogatory, progresses to metonymy—where "the part stands for the whole" (Sebeok, 1994) in the film, *Charlie Wilson's War* where Tom Hanks' character eagerly solicits support for a plan to arm the mujahedeen in a 'faraway' place in the form of: "It's in a pile of rocks called Afghanistan."
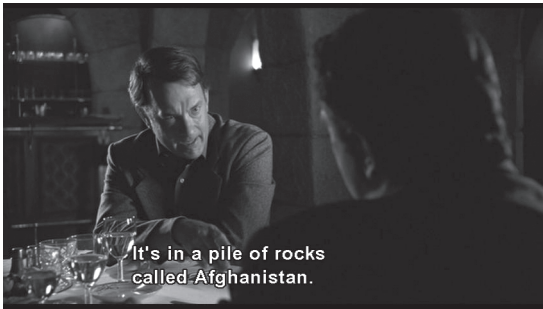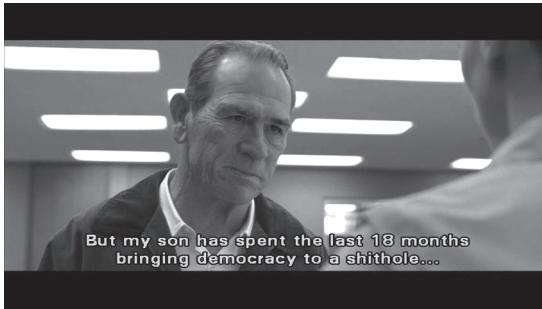
Still excerpted from: Hanks, T. et al. (producers); Nichols, M. (director). December 2007. *Charlie Wilson's War.* USA: Universal Pictures.

The choice of label in *In the Valley of Elah*, slides further down the cline of negativity when an irate father calls Afghanistan "a shithole"—a term used with generous abundance in the film, *Brothers*. This latter film attempts to explore the psychological toll of trauma on returning soldiers and their families.

The effect of place on the psyche of both viewer and soldier alike is most vividly vocalized in the 2010 Academy Award winner, *The Hurtlocker* where audience members hear soldier comments in the form of: "Let's get out of this fucking desert"; "I fucking hate this place"; followed by a sarcastic rejoinder in the form of "You don't like waiting around in this beautiful neighborhood?" –uttered at the very same time as the camera carefully pans across a garbage-strewn street. As an aside, one has to hear the director commentary by Kathyrn Bigelow fourteen minutes into the film [in the DVD] to find out that this scene was cinematically created—*a mis-en-scene* whose workings she explains at length as: "It was a pretty clean street—yeah we brought in quite a lot of garbage. I remember personally picking up the garbage and scattering it around as I remember it…" Why such a detailing of place one wonders especially for a film shot in Jordon instead of the real Iraq? Why such a careful attempt at rendering a sense of place? This cline of labeling confirms Allan and Burridge's (2006) finding that: "terms of pejorization" (p. 54) often range in "scale with fear, abhorrence, loathing, and contempt at the one end, and nothing worse than low social esteem at the other" (p. 54). With such consistent and predictable verbal and visual bombardment in current film, it becomes easy to see just what little effort it takes to rile citizens over Koran-burning or mosque building in the 'homeland'. Could the cognitive effects of such filmic labeling be having their desired social effect on viewing audiences?

Still excerpted from:
Haggis, P. and Hayward,
B. (producers); Haggis, P.
(director). September 2007.
In *The Valley of Elah*. USA:
Warner Independent Pictures.

The use of the suffix "istan" as a 'trendy' form of insult finds reoccurrence in *Lakeview Terrace*—a psychological thriller of a cop-turned-rogue. In the film, a deranged police officer played by Samuel Jackson hurls out the morphemic backformation: "You a Euro-Mexi-Japa-Chine-stani or what?" Again, while such wordage functions to reflect current war parlance, its effect on sustaining such prejudices cannot be discounted. For most audiences, the label is cathartic—a reflection of the frustration of many.
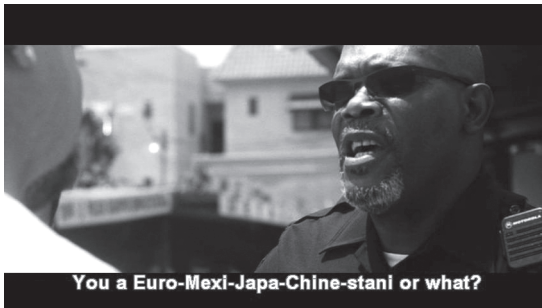
Still excerpted from: Lassiter,
J and W. Smith (producers);
LaBute, N. (director).
September 2008. *Lakeview
Terrace*. USA: Screen Gems.

It is not just Afghanistan that bears the brunt of insult but also Iraq. In, *Stop loss* an officer takes great care to describe the country for audiences saying: "Sand, Fleas, Flies, Heat, Boredom or you get shot at or blown up," he sardonically tells the camera—ending with "That's pretty much it." Iraq as a term for insult finds allusion even in films unrelated to the theme of war. Consider the film *The Departed*, another Academy-Award winner focused on the Irish mob workings post-civil rights, but whose 9-11 contextual adaptation sees overt spotlighting. Denigration of Iraq occurs in the form of a similie in the Oscar-winner *The Departed* where Inspector Dignam, played by Mark Walberg, calls the Boston Police Unit a "shithole" with "more leaks that the Iraqi navy."

It is perhaps this 'disgust' of place that Brad Pitt's character in the film *Babel*—a movie focused on the interconnectivity of violence on three continents seems keen on exposing. In *Babel*, an irate tourist in an unnamed middle-eastern country vents his geographical frustration with the following dysphemic diatribe: "This is your fucked-up country!" For viewing audiences, could such insult terms serve cathartic as well as subversive roles. The question is could these consistent insults possibly shape and re-shape fear, attitudes and feelings about people in faraway places?

NAME-CALLING OF PEOPLE AND CULTURAL PRACTICES:

Name-calling is rampant in the imprecations used to describe the clothing of individuals in the war zones evoked via novel compounding strategies. Consider for example the film, *Body of Lies*, a high-octane spy thriller which attempts to examine the global tentacles of terrorism presented from the point-of view of a CIA officer played by Leonardo DiCaprio. In, *Body of Lies*, a middle-eastern contact appropriates a co-opted invective to describe the government as: a "towel-head monarchy." The use of "towel head" as an invective is spotlighted in films which seek to question the fallout from 9/11 on Arab American citizens. Thus, in the film *American East* whose focus is just this, a restaurant proprietor confesses: "The rednecks yell: *towel-head* at me also."

It is not just customs but clothing preferences which are the subject of overt attack in several post-9/11 filmic productions. The deprecation of clothing sees overt attack in the film *Crossing Over*—a movie explicitly focused on border security in a post-9/11 America. In the film, an insult is levied out at a young Muslim girl when two schoolmates use the epithet to dually jeer and taunt her appearance and religion with: "Rag-head chick can hide her face and nobody even know she butt-ugly." This confirms Nuessel's (2008) finding: "Ethnopaulisms are pejorative names or designations for people who belong to an ethnic group and they are usually based on several observable phenomena including skin color, clothing customs, culturally determined eating and drinking practices and other aspects commonly associated with a particular group" (p. 29-30).

Still excerpted from: Kramer, W and Marshall, W. (producers); Kramer, W. (director). February 2009. *Crossing Over*. USA: The Weinstein Company

For critics who argue that such cinematic insulting exists merely to reflect current temperaments of a nation at war—a reflection of Islamophobia for instance—consider the manner in which anti-Islamic sentiment is deftly woven into the filmic content of this film. In the same movie, audiences are privy to the grisly details of an 'honor killing' of an Iranian girl murdered by her brother. How can audiences not leave the theater wondering about the mores of these screen-constructed 'enemies'.

Across the Atlantic, we see the use of historical dramas with 'timely' showcasings of a post-globalization Britain unwilling to accept its multicultural diversity. In the acclaimed film, *This is England*, history is anachronistically rendered via a focus on present-day concerns—the attitude of some Britishers to Muslim immigrants. So, while the film is not about terrorism per se, its thematic treatment of anti-Muslim sentiment makes its release anything but coincidental particularly in a culture making industry such as filmmaking in which it is ticket sales which drive production content (Epstein, 2009). Thus, *This is England*, a film about a gang of 1980's pre-teen and teen skinheads becomes historically relevant to a 21st century English society still 'reeling' from its own bout of domestic terrorism. How else can one explain the consistent focus on Muslim discrimination in the film—a discrimination which overtly reflects at the very same time as it subversively asserts its bigotry. Islamophobic invectives see reoccurrence in the form of diminutive eponyms for a pair of young Muslim boys wearing traditional skull-caps—seen in the film *This is England*, where they are pejoratively called "Fucking Tweedledum and Tweedledee" by an angry British Gang.

So I suggest you take fucking Tweedledum and Tweedledee and fuck off home.

Still excerpted from: Herbert, M (producer); Meadows, S. (director). April 2007. *This is England*. UK: Film4

NAMES: SPOTLIGHTING PEJORIZATION

It is not just the cultural routines of clothing, but naming practices which see attack in a plethora of films produces in this decade. Screen-time is often used to 'comment' on names from these war zones. Consider the vigilante film *Domino* which uses the unlikely plot of a trio of bounty hunters to offer commentary on a post 9/11 America. The film opens with a voice-over by Keira Knightley's character who introduces audiences to their driver— shown ravenously devouring meat. "That's our driver Alf. He's from Afghanistan" she tells audiences, and then hastens to add: "He once ate a cat. We can't understand how to pronounce his fuckin' name, so we just call him the cat-eating alien." Allan and Burridge (2006) claim "An assault on one's name is treated as comparable with, or even worse than, an assault on one's body" (p. 125).

Perhaps the most 'innocuous' of insult-levying occurs in the genre of comedy where all seems to be fair in the art of making audiences laugh. Consider the following insult in the teenage-comedy, *Superbad*, where the pejorization of Muslim names forms the subject of protracted debate and ridicule. This direct assault on names occurs in, *Superbad* alongside other morphemes of dysphemia:

Fogell:	They let you pick any name when you get down there
Seth:	And you landed on McLovin?
Fogell:	Yeah, it was between that or Mohammed.
Seth:	Why the fuck would it be between that or Mohammed? Why not just pick a common name of a normal person?

The dyad demonstrates the power of film in establishing 'normative' versus unmarked naming trends. Few will miss the correlation of 'non-normalcy' with Muslim names. What better way to 'other' than to de-normalize? This spotlighting of non-normativeness is commented upon

even in films whose thematic focus is the Middle East. Thus, Middle-eastern names are presented as marked forms on both a sociolinguistic and semantic level in the film, *Body of Lies,* where via a strategy of pre-tend misunderstanding, the movie reiterates the seeming complexity and 'otherness' of these 'Arab-sounding' names which 'inherently' warrant confusion. This theme of 'foreignization' is played out in the following dyad:

> Ed: Thank you. You have done an incredible job developing this guy
>   Karoobi—Katoomi
> Hani: Karami.
> Ed: Karami [irritated].

How does one remember these 'similar' sounding names audiences are likely to ponder? The dual reality of both reflecting as well as sustaining insult comes in *Syrianna*—a left-leaning film which attempts to demonstrate the bigotry of state officials keen on pillaging the Middle-East at any cost. In the film, the titular forms of address of the Middle East are the butt of insult. We see a pejorative dimunitization and insult of a titular address form — a dyad in which 'Emir' is substituted for an insult.

> Board-head: So, I want to talk about the gulf and how a god-damn Emir…. What is an Emir anyway?
> Member: King. It's a King.
> Board head: A king. Well, how some Podunk king tossed you out on your ass.

The lack of any real need for this dialog leaves one wondering whether in reflecting prejudice, films successfully manage to sustain such attitudes.

It is not just clothing, but also the culinary traditions of the Arab world which form food for insult in a plethora of post 9/11 films. Consider the off-handed remark in the bizarre comedy: *You Don't Mess with the Zohan*—a film which attempts to examine post 9/11 ethnic tensions among multicultural residents in New York City. In the film, an impre-cation is levied out in the form of an innocuous comment on hummus as: "it's a very tasty, diarrhea like substance." This same pseudo qualifica-tion occurs in *War Inc.*, when John Cussack's character invites a fellow journalist out for tea with: "Would you like to go out for a cup of tea? I hear they make it great here, cardamom mace—the good kind?" With

a people 'prone' to violence, this qualification of edible mace in its contrast with explosive mace is anything but coincidental. After all, in film where every milli-second of action is a product of careful orchestration (Epstein, 2009) nothing is accidental.

I hear they make it great here. Cardamom, mace-- the good kind.

Still excerpted from: Cusack, J. et al (producers); Seftel, J. (director). May 2008. *War. Inc*., USA: First Look Studios.

Sometimes the denigration is matched with harsher semantic pejoratives. Consider for example, the overt denigration of the cuisine of Pakistanis as the subject of insult in the coprolalia-rich dialogue of the award-winning film, *This is England* where bigoted, skin-head gangsters harass a group of Pakistani boys with: "Now run home 'cause mommy's cooking curry. Go on." Later in the film, there is an all-out affront on a Pakistani proprietor with a machete matched with the following verbal assault: "I will slay you now where you fucking stand, you fucking Paki cunt. And clean the place up. It fucking stinks of curry. Fucking stinks! Reeks of the fucking shit!"

NAME-CALLING OF LANGUAGE: LINGUICISM

It is not just the physicality of place that bears the burden of cinematic name-calling, but also the linguistic practices contained in the war zones. The role of Hollywood in sustaining attitudes towards people (Bogle, 1991) and languages is well chronicled (Lippi-Green, 1997; Pandey 2001; Bleichenbacher 2008). Note for example the 'ancillary' comments made about Arabic in the film *Traitor*, which examines the counter-intelligence enterprise in a post 9-11 world keen on dismantling global terrorist cells. In *Traitor*, linguicism (Phillipson, 1992) against Arabic emerges in the following dialog between two FBI agents in which there is a clever conflation of Arabic with Jihad.

Officer 2:   Claims he's been selected to become *shahid*.
Officer 1: You picking up a little Arabic?
Officer 2: Ah! Just your basic "Jihady"

The synchronization of Arabic with Jihad (war) is again anything but innocuous. Similar 'peripheral' comments occur in several post 9/11 films. Take note for example of the following utterance in the film *Lions for Lambs* where a young recruit asks of his superior: "So, Jihadi and Wahhabi terrorists are moving through Shiite Territory sir?" Most audiences may not catch the conflation of terrorist activity: 'Jihadi' (warring) with an entire sect of the Muslim faith 'Wahhabi' (religion) in the uncontested interrogative.

Even 'independent' (Thomsen and Krewani, 2005) movies with seemingly liberal political agendas seem eager to define the personality type of middle–easterners. Consider the following extraneous filmic detail introduced as an 'innocuous' toast in the Oscar-nominated film, *Rachel Getting Married*. Once again, a family drama centered on the difficulty of homecoming as experienced by a recovering addict forms the thematic focus of the film while still manages to insert its own 'liberal' dose of denigration of middle Easterners. Here, via the use of an interruptive, overlapping conversational turn (Coates, 1994) highlighting the name: 'Mahmood' in the dialog, audiences are subjected to a semantic stereotype framed as a conversational claim which denies at the very same time that it asserts the stereotype:

> Toaster: So, anyway, when the cab-driver finally caught up with us, she talked him down from his middle-eastern fury and like… []
> Rachel: [] Mahmood! Such a nice man! [sarcastically]
> Toaster: In like, um pretend Arabic, Farsi, Urdu, I don't know…

Rachel's inability—her non desire to distinguish between these languages goes uncontested—another example of foreignization at work. The reassertion of the stereotype of "Muslim rage" (Lewis, 1990, p. 47) coded as "middle-eastern fury" confirms that "these stereotypes and semantic scripts function as part of a collective cultural memory" (Karim, 1997, p. 153) and sees a sourcing in films.

Overt statements about Arabic abound in several movies. The conflation of Arabic with terrorism forms the opening sequence of the blockbuster, *Eagle Eye* for example. In this action-packed film which zooms in on a fantastical U.S governmental take-over by rouge agents, the threat of terrorism is ever present. In the opening of the film, audiences are carefully apprised of the following details: "Four males, one of them is speaking in a Rashkani dialect consistent with our Intel on Al-Khoei." The use of the suffix "-ani" as well as the proclitic marker "Al" make the allusion to 'afghani' and Al Qaeda sufficiently clear. A similar

conflation of Arabic as a language of terrorist activity emerges in *The Kingdom*, where Arabic is simultaneously heard as a visual of a man with mutilated fingers shakes the hero's hand, confirming Karim's (1997) observation of "thematic clusters" (p. 157) with "entrenched images of Muslims as innately prone to violence" (p. 165).

Still excerpted from: Mann, M and S. Stuber (producers); Berg. P. (director). October 2007. *The Kingdom*. USA: Universal Pictures.

It is this seeming attention to ancillary content, but gruesome content nonetheless, presented within the context of biographically inspired truth-based film which is perhaps most powerful in its effect on audiences. One such film, is the Academy-Award nominated film, *A Mighty Heart*. The film chronicles the disappearance of journalist Daniel Pearle in Pakistan. Here, actress Angelina Jolie, playing the wife of the slain journalist takes great care to identify the language of the perpetrators of the heinous crime. She tells mortified audiences in monotonic detail the following: "They found Danny's body cut into 10 pieces. […] Then one day, probably February first, three men who spoke Arabic were brought to the compound."

It is this very palpable 'fear' of the other which is the subject of cinematic comment in the film *Babel*, where a 'frightened' tourist informs fellow travelers with the following warning: "In Egypt, in a town like this they slit 30 German tourists' throats. They might do the same to us." Such verbal and visual indexing of violence confirms Karim's (1997) assertion of the persistence of "core images that can be efficiently manipulated to influence public opinion, especially when strong action is to be taken against nations whose populations are primarily Muslim" (p. 155). Arabic as a language of jihad is reinforced in *Body of Lies*, via a carefully construed but concocted suicide mission which is orchestrated entirely in Arabic and carefully translated on screen in real time for audiences to see —indeed confirming the stereotype that Muslims "revel in acts of terrorism" (Karim, 1997, p. 157). With such overt spotlighting of language, why would audience members want to learn Arabic?

ANIMAL IMPRECATIONS

The term 'camel' as a cultural marker and denigrator of the Middle East is another common insult form. In the highly acclaimed film, *Happy Go Lucky*, a psychological drama which cinematically juxtapositions normalcy against rage in a post-London bombings England, we are privy to the pent-up frustrations of a xenophobe who is given free license to utter the following racialized rant. In his role as a driving instructor, he testily yells out:

> Come on! Drive the car. You're not driving a camel. Okay? This is not a bazaar. We have rules in this country. We have regulations and you keep to them!

The conflation of camels with lawlessness is not lost on audiences able to pick up on other semantic links to the Middle East in the form of "bazaar". So, while the victim of the insult is never within the view of the camera, this covert yet potent insult's intent remains overtly obvious to viewers. A similar allusion to camels for insult occurs in *The Departed*, where Inspector Dignam reports on the danger of missing computer processors to a laughing audience with: "These are the kind they put into computers that could put a cruise missile up the ass of a camel." Once again, the allusion to a medieval technology-culture geopolitically sign-posted by the give-away "camel" makes it clear to audiences who the target of the insult really is. Animalistic denigration occurs in *Superbad* in angry overtones. An angry adolescent yells: "These fucking terrorists multiply like bunnies." Why is film so keen on spotlighting this anger? While most audiences may explain this seemingly peripheral comment, as a joke, it confirms Said's (1980) prediction of a generation ago, namely: "So far as the United States seems to be concerned, it is only a slight overstatement to say that Muslims and Arabs are essentially seen as either oil suppliers or potential terrorists."

Still excerpted from: Apatow, J. et al. (producers); Mottola, G. (director) August 2007. *Superbad*. USA: Columbia Pictures.

In *This is England*, animal imprecations occur in the form of diminutives matched to a series of stringed invectives in the form of: "Look at these little, fucking sewer rats"—an insult yelled by an irate skin-head (another spotlighted angry person!) at the very same time that the camera positions the Muslim boys at the feet of the gangsters in the form of a deep-scope shot.

Still excerpted from: Herbert, M (producer); Meadows, S. (director). April 2007. *This is England*. UK: Film4

The eye of the camera semiotically as it hierarchically positions westerners vs. Arabs in this concocted world of hate. This trope of asymmetry encapsulated in a majority of films produced in this post 9/11 decade is worth spotlighting. Again, we see film functioning in the dual capacity of reflecting while it sustains the very asymmetry it attempts to spotlight.

Such duality of filmic imprecation sees occurrence in comedic films such as *Soulmen*—a film which explores the reuniting of two estranged friends. Again in and through peripheral comments Arabs become the victim of angry insult (anger again). On-screen verbalizations of dysphemia occur in this film as a tirade from an irate employee by the name of Hinds played by Samuel Jackson who provoked to anger by a bigoted middle-eastern boss yells out the following outburst:

You know there was a time, I would have knocked your teeth down your throat for saying shit like that to me. But I'm a changed man. Now I could'a called you a unibrow-shaving, pilaf-eating, greasy-ass, goat fucker, but I didn't, did I? Because I didn't want to hurt your feelings, and I didn't want to piss you off.

Again, verbal and visual violence are conflated. Also semantically significant is the manner in which the dysphemism is framed—as a possibility rather than an actuality—in a sense, it is an insult which is denied at the very same time that it is asserted—a brilliant strategy of Hollywood's doublespeak.

Still excerpted from: Friendly, D. T et al. (producers); Lee, M.D. (director). November 2008. *Soul Men*. USA: MGM.

POST-LONDON BOMBINGS: THE CINEMATIC AFTERMATH

Cinematic acquiescence for group insult is often framed in films attempting to spotlight the theme of ethnic 'warfare' in a post global-ization multicultural metropolis—the subject of scrutiny of the film *Rocknrolla*. In this film, the sociological analysis unfolds in the form of multicultural gang warfare in 21st century London. This same screen-anger as seen in countless other excerpts sees verbalization in the dysphemic rich film called RocknRolla where a bigoted crook is given free cinematic license to bully and insult. In one scene, he man-ages to match verbal threats with violence by threatening a banker of Pakistani origins with: "Don't you ever swear at me, you yellow puddle of immigrant piss. . ." (see, still below).

Still excerpted from: Clark-Hall, S. et al. (producers); Ritchie, G. (director). September 2008. *Rocknrolla.* USA: Warner Bros.

We have already examined several examples of such xenophobic hate encoded in the film aptly titled: *This is England*, where a temporally adapted (post-London terrorist sentiment) finds angry verbalization. In one scene in *This is England* a bigoted gang-member openly vents his frustration against Pakistani immigrants. It might be noted as an aside that the film uses 20 tokens of the dysphemic outburst "Fuckin Paki"—often hurled out by a child, and in the company of other explosive invectives such as: "filthy Paki bastard" (see, still below)

Still excerpted from: Herbert, M (producer); Meadows, S. (director). April 2007. *This is England*. UK: Film4

In the visual below, anger is conflated with a weapon of violence, when a machete-wielding, gang-leader threatens a Pakistani shopkeeper with: "I will slay you now where you fucking stand, you fucking Paki cunt." In their thoroughly comprehensive taxonomy of strategies of name-calling, Allan and Burridge (2006) state "It is generally accepted that 'cunt' is the most tabooed word in English" (p. 52). Again, the release of a film focused on a 1980s, neo-Nazi gangster group sees 'timely' applicability in present-day Britain—a timing of filmic production which is anything but coincidental in an industry where profit margins remain wedded to audience tastes in very real terms (Epstein, 2009).

Still excerpted from: Herbert, M (producer); Meadows, S. (director). April 2007. *This is England.* UK: Film4

SEMANTIC STEREOTYPING: TERRORISTS

Ultimately, it is the conflation of Arab peoples with Terrorists that sees dizzying occurrence either as an implied act (seen in previous examples), or used as a direct linguistic insult. Since the wars are causally linked to the 9/11 attacks in the mind of most, the predominant form of name-calling 'on-screen' pertains to the revival of the word: 'terrorist' consistently used as a metonym/semantic stereotype (Karim, 1997). The conflation of 'Terrorist' with the people encapsulated in the two wars occurs even in moves unrelated to the thematic issue of war. Consider the following offhanded comment made in *Rush Hour 3*—a martial arts comedy which manages to conflate Iranians with terrorism—confirming Nuessel's (2008) claim that "ethnophaulisms are metonyms, i.e., a particular physical trait or a behavior pattern stand for an entire ethnic group." (p. 30), and often form "the basis of stereotyping" (30). In *Rush Hour 3*, the following uncontested claim occurs:

Captain: Last week you put 6 Iranians in jail for a week.
Carter: You and I both know them Iranians was terrorists.
Captain: They were scientists at UCLA!
Carter: Big deal! 'cause they cure cancer in rats that doesn't mean
        they won't blow shit up!

Still excerpted from: Birnbaum, R. et al. (producers); Ratner, B. (director). August 2007. *Rush Hour 3*. USA: New Line Cinema.

While most audiences 'laugh off' this ridiculous assertion, the 'terrorist' fear remains uncontested. A similar phobia forms the opening claim uttered by a CIA officer in *Body of Lies*. He is heard saying: 'Listen to me! I am not getting my head cut off on the internet? If something happens, shoot me!' while in the film, *Brothers*, a whimpering hostage-soldier, vocalizes his fear with: "Are they going to cut our heads off?"

This same obsession with terrorism occurs in the Oscar-nominated film, *Frozen River*, a film which uses the post 9/11 world of American immigration to concoct a story of human trafficking across a Canadian border evoked in the form of an unlikely partnership forged between a Mohawk and Caucasian single-mother team trying to eek out an existence. In one scene in the film, Ray, the Caucasian-American heroine cautions her Mohawk partner as they get ready to smuggle a Pakistani couple with: "I just hope these aren't the ones who blow themselves and everyone else up." Having second thoughts, she tosses what she deems to be a suspicions bag out her car window saying: "Nuclear power, Poison gas! Who knows what they might have in there. I'm not gonna be responsible for that."

We see several of such overt ethnopaulisms in current movies. Consider for example, the abundance of insult levied out in the film, *From Paris with Love*—a big-budget blockbuster starring John Travolta in the role of a CIA operative on the hunt for global terrorist cells. In the film, the conflation of crime with ethnic group is overt. In one scene, a CIA operative inquires of John Travolta's character, "What am I looking for?" as he peers out a pair of binoculars. He is given the following shocking description: "You're looking for a Pakistani with a big bag of coke or a raghead pushing a wheel cart filled with cash." A few minutes later,

at the sound of a knock on the door, Travolta's character announces to audiences: "It's probably that Pakistani pimp. Kill the fucker!" A few scenes later at a dinner party, in the same film— *From Paris with Love*— the following conversation transpires:

Girlfriend: And what type of people did you kill today, James?
James: The usual. Bad guys.
Charlie: Bad guys? Baddest-ass, suicide vested, cold-hearted Pakistani
             motherfuckers this side of Karachi. No… well seriously I mean
             we took down a whole terrorist cell today.

The use of five invectives concatenatively structured in the dyad above serves as a final example of the working of *cinematic acquiescence*. After all, why wouldn't one want to exterminate a terrorist cell with suicide vested terrorists—a scene carefully rendered as an act of self – defense. Perhaps the same kind of self-defense argument underpinning the two ground wars in the mind of most?

CONCLUDING REMARKS:

The analysis above raises some final questions. Firstly, how exactly do we analyze the consistent name-calling levied out on the silver screen against the people and places in the current wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. What are the implications of these "labels of primary potency that act like shrieking sirens, deafening us to all finer discriminations that we might otherwise perceive" (Karim, 1997, p. 155). Thomsen (2005) alludes to the powerful role of film in shaping perceptions saying: "In the age of moving images, the film industry is deeply involved in the creation of a set of collective mind patterns from the very beginning" (p. 9). Do such invectives have an effect on audiences? What is the implication of this asymmetrical portrayal of the 'other', and finally, How is power in the hegemonic sense evoked via "the internalization of the norms and values implied by the prevailing discourses within a social order" (Mesthrie, et al 2009, p. 316).

We cursorily examine these effects on three journalistic outputs. Why journalists? Perhaps because they are often supposed to stand in diametric contrast to state-sanctioned hegemony. Said (1980) is quoted for claiming that: "Very little of the detail, the human density, the passion of Arab-Moslem life has entered the awareness of even those people whose profession it is to report the Arab world." One recent case may serve as appropriate evidence. Consider the esteemed journalist Juan

Williams' infamous commentary on the famed Fox TV channel:

> When I get on the plane, I got to tell you, if I see people who are in Muslim Garb and I think, you know, they are identifying themselves first and foremost as Muslims, I get worried. I get nervous. (Stelter, 2010, p. 1)

This comment cost Williams his job at *National Public Radio* at the very same time that it landed him a "three-year contract worth nearly $2 million in total" (Stelter, 2010, p. 10) with the right-wing news channel, *Fox News*. So while, the press debates whether Juan Williams had the right to voice his internal fears in a public sphere, the real question worth asking is: How did the erudite Juan Williams internalize such fears? Thomsen and Krewani (2005) allude to film's role in the internalization of attitudes claiming: "We owe much of our interior landscapes to the visions, the characters, and the stories of that most characteristic ingredient of American culture" (p. 8).

There is sufficient evidence in the data-analysis presented of the subversive role played by the film industry which reflects at the very same time as it sustains consenting attitudes about the people and places encapsulated in the wars—in some cases reflecting as well as endorsing the continued necessity for the two wars. The juxtaposition of the verbal violence of name-calling presented against a cinematic backdrop of visual violence it is argued serves a key mimetic function—one of filmic catharsis. After all, Allan and Burridge (2006) claim "There is no doubt, we are living in times of high anxiety" (p. 105). Name-calling in Hollywood serves a key socio-semiotic function: it provides an inventory of invectives in current war parlance while at the same time permits a viewing citizenry with free license to define and describe a faraway enemy—perhaps in the entertainment industry's bid to gain continued public approval for the wars.

This paper has demonstrated the *how* of othering—in particular, how innovative, word- manufacturing processes in cinematic wars serve to manufacture consent for real ground wars. In effect, perjorization precedes dehumanization in its trajectory towards exploitation. So, while the strategies of cinematic *reminiscing* and *acquiescing* seem to reflect at the very same time as they sustain the othering of the people, places and cultures encapsulated in the war-zones of Iraq and Afghanistan, audiences subjected to a decade of such linguistic bombardment are less likely to ask for clarification on the real question namely, the cause of these wars.

In the machinery of war, film serves as a powerful conduit in the manufacture of consent. The construction of 'suitable enemies' on reel screens subconsciously if not consciously we could argue sanctions real killings of real 'enemies' on the ground. After all, the lack of any sustained public or institutional outcry—particularly journalistic, against a war founded on concocted causation—'weapons of mass destruction'—in the invasion and subsequent occupation of Iraq for example, lends support to the claim that filmic 'othering' can indeed inoculate viewers into asking for accountability in the decisions to war—i.e. why stage fake reasons for a war? Instead, the causation of war continues to be shrouded behind current cinema's fog of reel enemies, and in its incessant focus on the effects of war on U.S. troops—not Iraqi or Afghani citizens for instance.

Perhaps the most potent output of cinematic creations rests on the effects that such portrayals have on a broad sociological level. Consider for instance the largely unopposed acquiescence of the state's expanded military incursions both domestically and abroad. Such a 'spotlighting' of the 'war on terror' either via the indirect strategies of *linguistic reminiscing* or via direct thematic focus in the form of *cinematic acquiescing*, guarantees unqualified institutionalized license for militaristic expansion at the very same time as it grants permission for an equally expanded machinery of national security operation. Consider for example, the fear-mongering which Hayworth (2006) appeals to in a bid to conflate a rightward shift in immigration policies in the post 9/11 decade.   In the preface to his book, journalist Sean Hannity, is quick to inform readers of the impending 'doom' of illegal immigration cautioning readers with the following 'frightening' scenario:

> …unless we act soon, we could be facing another catastrophe on the order of September 11. By allowing people to cross our borders unchecked, we invite a security risk into our homeland. There is no way of knowing if any—or how many terrorists have already slipped across our border. (p. ix-x)

Others seem eager to market the fear of 9/11 for expanded global control. In his uniquely titled publication, *Schmoozing with Terrorists*, journalist Klein (2007), utilizes a chronoscope of edited interviews with what he calls "jihad-urging sheiks" (p. xv) to call for an expansion of the war on terror, or what he calls "the war against America" on a global scale (p. xvi). For him "global jihad" is on the rise because,

We have failed to carry out a coherent policy against terror. We have failed to understand global terror and how to annihilate it. As a result, the terrorists are much stronger today than before September 11, when our war on terror began. (p. xviii).

For journalists, such as Klein (2006) the war on terror is not just political, but rhetorical namely: a "war for our existence" (p. 191).

A final point concerns the one missing piece: the financial burden of these wars. Rarely do films focus on the financial cost of these two wars—a financial drain described most aptly by Chalmers (2010) as "running up the imperial tab" (p. 2) at the generous rate of "an estimated trillion dollars a year spent on the defense establishment" (p. 8). In 2009, the cost was at "30 billion per annum to maintain the war in Afghanistan alone" (Chalmers, 2010, p. 8). So, while the wars rage on the ground, Hollywood seems to be doing its part of selling public policy by waging its own verbal battle on the silver screen, and in viewers' minds—in and through its war of words. It is against such a backdrop of rhetorical contest that post-9/11 films I the last decade engage in their own trademark procedures of systemic 'forgetting' in a bid to spotlight a strategic 're-remembering' of 9/11 and the continued need for war.

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