Images on the Reel:
Mapping a Muslim Subject in
Post September 11 Movies

Dissertation submitted to the
University of Calicut for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

English Language and Literature

By

SHEEBA K.

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT
OCTOBER 2019

Declaration

I, Sheeba K., do hereby declare that the dissertation entitled **Images on the Reel: Mapping a Muslim Subject in Post September 11 Movies**, submitted to the University of Calicut in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy in English Language and Literature**, is a bona fide work done by me under the guidance of **Dr. K.M. Sherrif**, Associate Professor and Head, Department of English, University of Calicut, and that I have not submitted it or any part of it for any degree, diploma or title before.

University of Calicut
14th October 2019

Sheeba K.
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Certificate

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Acknowledgement

Siegfried Kracauer has once said, when he was attempting to learn English language, that "Every inch of ground that is won means a lot to me". When I submit my PhD thesis, I too feel the same. I fondly remember my family, teachers and friends with love and gratitude.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The films of a nation reflect its mentality in a more direct way than other artistic media. . . . What films reflect are not so much explicit credos as psychological dispositions – those deep layers of collective mentality which extend more or less below the dimension of consciousness.

-        Siegfried Kracauer *From Caligari* 5-6

When *I* use a word,' Humpty Dumpty said in rather a scornful tone, 'it means just what I choose it to mean — neither more nor less.'
'The question is,' said Alice, 'whether you *can* make words mean so many different things.'
'The question is,' said Humpty Dumpty, 'which is to be master — that's all.

- Lewis Carroll 124

The visual images replete on the television on 9/11 were very hard to get differentiated as the actuality from the familiar. Just like the first movie clip *The Arrival of a Train at the La Ciotat Station* (1895) that created panic among the audience in the Grand Cafe, the fall of the twin towers repeatedly cast on television was thought of at first as a scene from a Hollywood movie. The panic created by the attack and fall was so great that it undermined the number of casualties and laid stress on the psychological trauma and distress inflicted upon the survivors. Similar was the panic when H. G. Wells' *The War of the Worlds* was adapted as a radio program and broadcasted as interruptions in between a ballroom music. Interruptions

reported the landing of a flying saucer from outer space and about little green men being spotted near Princeton and New Jersey. Listeners took it for real and created a national panic, making calls to the loved ones. Even miscarriages and suicide-attempts were reported fearing the invasion of Aliens (Fabe 79). In the context of 9/11 attack, the immediate response was to believe the real as unreal whereas in the case of *The War of the Worlds*, the unreal was taken as the real. The panic of 9/11 came as an aftermath created a collective trauma.

Before the collapse of the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon, Hollywood had already anticipated the destruction of iconic monuments which later became a distinctive genre called disaster movies, started early in the 1970s and 1980s; producing blockbusters like, *Die Hard* (1988), *Independence Day* (1996), *Armageddon* (1998), *Deep Impact* (1998) and *Fight Club* (1999). As Stephen Prince in *Firestorm: American Film in the Age of Terrorism* rightly remarks, "In pursuing visions of epic destruction, filmmakers got there first, well before Al Qaeda did" (17). The collapse looked more like a déjà vu. This might be the very reason why the director Robert Altman criticized the Hollywood for the making of disaster movies (Riegler "Mirroring"). In terms of Zizekian psychoanalysis, "America got what it fantasized about" as cinema caters the object of fantasy (*Welcome* 16). The other extreme reaction to the attack was the provocative statement of Karl-Heinz Stockhausen, the German composer, that planes hitting the WTC towers was "the ultimate work of art"(11).

Amidst these diverse observations that the September 11 attacks have triggered, the first step was definitely towards the Manichean dichotomy of either

with the State or with the Terrorist. The entire world was shocked and forced to take stands. Islam was demonized as the enemy within the State and according to FBI, "hate crimes against Arabs and Muslims multiplied by 1600 percent from 2000 to 2001" (Alsultany 4). More than 300 assaults on Muslims took place in Britain in the wake of attacks in the US ("British Arab Muslim"). They faced discrimination at work places, received hate mails, subjected to physical assaults, bullying on the streets, damaging the mosque and cultural centers and so on. Alsultany notes that the organizations like Amnesty International, the Council on American-Islamic Relations, the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, and other such organizations filed hundreds of terrorizing incidents faced by Arab and Muslim Americans. Many airline passengers perceived as Arabs or Muslims were forced to cancel their travel or were removed from flights (Alsultany 5).

9/11 has clearly demarcated all the spheres of the socio-cultural life of the US and that has an inevitable reflection in movies also. Films, pre and post 9/11 have become two distinctive categories in American film history. Films do much more than reflect the cultures in which they are made; they contour a dialogical relationship with them and even influence the public's perception of the events they portray. John Markert, in his book *Post-9/11 Cinema: Through a Lens Darkly* (2011), argues that the word 'reflect' is inadequate in this context. He prefers to suggest that films 'refract' the cultural climate in which they are conceived and produced. Markert posits: "Refraction theory suggests that recurring exposure to a film's message may not just reinforce existing attitudes and beliefs but shape them" (xx). Thus American film in this decade plays a fundamental role in more than just

reproducing national fears and fantasies, but rather in shaping them, restructuring how audiences viewed the war on terror as an aftermath of 9/11.

The immediate post 9/11 Hollywood was busy removing the Manhattan skyline with the iconic buildings from the teasers and trailers of movies like *Spiderman* (2002), *Zoolander* (2001), *Serendipity* (2001), *People I Know* (2002) and *Men in Black II* (2002); the release of *Collateral Damage* (2002) was postponed (Dixon 3; Zizek *Welcome* 16). Hollywood rather stumbled on the production of visual imaginative narratives centered on 9/11. In the beginning the entire Hollywood was a bit apprehensive about the release of movies that were violent in nature. Efforts were made to make the cultural productions that we call as post September 11 movies to serve the country in the "war on terror" and to make patriotic films. The meeting of Karl Rove, the chief political advisor of the then President George W. Bush, with the top Hollywood executives in the beginning of November 2001with a clear agenda to spread patriotism and tolerance, points to this direction (Kellner 2). Noam Chomsky calls Karl Rove as the President's manager, "who teaches him what to say and do" (*Imperial* 24). One of the agendas in the two-hour meeting was to show that the war in Afghanistan was not against Islam but against terrorism ("Bush Adviser Meets"). The aim was to establish the way in which Hollywood can help in the war against terrorism by getting the politically correct ideological message across not only to Americans, but also to the Hollywood public around the world. A similar one has taken place after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor which led the major Hollywood studios to produce more patriotic and morale-boosting films. This obviously proves that Hollywood does, in fact, function

as "Ideological State Apparatus". Films always served the purpose of an ideological tool to germinate the ideas the dominant society wanted to cater to.

No national event has been more cinematic than the planes hitting the twin towers, one after the other, their fall to rubbles in an instant. The World Trade Centre had been undoubtedly the iconic image of New York skyline which had appeared in many Hollywood movies as the backdrop. The movies of the 1970s like *The French Connection* (1971) and *Klute* (1971) had captured its construction in the background. From1970's onwards the twin towers remained an element of the skyline of Manhattan and Hollywood in hundreds of movies. The towers became the geo-backdrop of the establishing shots of many movies suggesting the location as New York. Cinema goers around the world would not have forgotten the visual of a giant ape climbing up the towers in the movie *King Kong* (1976). In the 1990s the towers were visually destroyed in movies like *Independence Day* (1996), *Deep Impact* (1998) and *Armageddon* (1998).

Fig. 1 Pre 9/11 WTC attack, a shot from *Armageddon* (00:09:44)

A post September 11 film category resonates the decade's uncertainties, traumas, insecurities and sociopolitical and economic conflicts. The narratives and counter narratives on 9/11 were produced as documentaries with the release of Étienne Sauret's 2002 film, *WTC: The first 24 hours* followed by *9/11* (2002), *Inside 9/11* (2005), *Fahrenheit 9/11* (2006), *9/11: The Falling Man* (2006) and *102 Minutes that Changed America* (2008), to name a few. It took some five years to make a true visual account like *United 93* (2006) though the trailer was received with the critical hash tag "too early" and "shocking".

At the outset, the research intends to analyze films against the background of the political zeitgeist of the time after the September 11 attack. As one of the major media of communications, films are embedded in the cultural conditions by which society communicates and interacts. Movies are part of the discursive social practices that reflect the conditions and structures of society. Among the broad category of movies, there is no more potent cultural artifact than popular film. Popular film has become the most resonant and compelling cultural indicator that enables us to know about the turbulent social and political climate of the time. They are dynamic coded texts rife with the ambiguities and cultural discourses, paradoxes and contradictions that distinguished the period. The films discussed in the project thus display the visceral responses of the post 9/11 era or the zeitgeist of the time, consciously or unconsciously done by the filmmaker. The significance of film and popular culture in their appeal to masses also helps in disclosing how people manage the dead ends and the complexities of power, its execution and how they perceive

the acts of exploitation and repression. It is through movies and mass culture that such patterns can be identified.

Movies after September 11, thus, have a significant role in mirroring, visualizing and thus memorizing the entire trauma that gets faded over time. It becomes a highly mediated event through filmic representations; whether it be World War II, the Holocaust, the Vietnam War or 9/11. Andrew Hoskins argues how images work in *Televising War: from Vietnam to Iraq*. He describes the images or sequences as "media flash frames" that prove so potent that they can be later mis-remembered as memories rather than images on a screen. Film also functions as "media flash frames" that can influence our understanding of day to day life and it has the potential to shape our thoughts and experiences (6). Marita Sturken, in her book, *Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, the AIDS Epidemic, and the Politics of Remembering*, quotes a Vietnam veteran by the name of William Adams who stated, "When *Platoon* was first released, a number of people asked me, 'Was the war really like that?' I never found an answer . . . because what 'really' happened is now so thoroughly mixed up in my mind with what has been said about what happened that the pure experience is no longer there" (qtd. in Sturken 86). If the influence of films on a person who had firsthand experience of the event is so soaring, then how much it can affect those who experience it through media? So any ordinary event becomes a highly mediated event by way of films. It is reduced to a "spectacle", as Jean Baudrillard calls it in the context of Gulf War when he states that the Gulf War did not take place. He points out how Gulf War is conducted as a media spectacle enacted for the viewers as a simulation.

This project examines films with the assumption that film is particularly effective and potent in its persuasive powers. The research is built on various premises. Firstly, films "mirror" the society, pursuing the concept of Siegfried Kracauer and explore the impact of the "terror years", as Thomas Reigler calls it, in the aftermath of September 11 on Hollywood movies with a focus on Muslim representation. Kracauer argues,

> Films supplement real life. […] They stir our awareness of the intangible, and they reflect the hidden courses of our existence. They point out situations that are often difficult to grasp directly but show, under the surface, what we think about ourselves. […] Films mirror our reality. Let us look in the mirror. (*American Writings* 72)

 Though movies reflect or mirror the outer reality, this engagement of the films to the socio political realities of the outside world is less overt. But John Markert prefers to use the term "refraction" to analyze how films and documentaries are shaped and manipulated to change the perspectives of the viewer. Such refracted visual images may be taken as reflections of the outer reality. Exposure to such *refracted realities* contrives to make a distinctive worldview.

Kracauer's classic *From Caligari to Hitler: a Psychological History of the German Film* contends that the German films of the interwar period expose "a highly authoritarian disposition to submit to social authority and a fear of emerging chaos. For Kracauer, German films reflected and fostered anti-democratic and passive attitudes of the sort that anticipated the rise of Hitler and paved the way for Nazism" (Kellner 39). Kracauer's close analysis of films provided one of the first

coherent studies that revealed the "historical-political allegorical dimension of film". He strongly believed that films are compelling art form to study since they are "never the product of an individual" and films are always made for mass consumption. As mentioned earlier, as a product of cultural industries, films cater to the dreams, fears and fantasies of the mass. He asserts that the repetition of common motifs which become popular by way of reception in the theatres throws light on the collective unconscious. He states, "Persistent reiteration of these motifs marks them as outward projections of inner urges" (Kracauer 8). Thus cinema in the context of September 11 incidents becomes a collective space where history and global politics are imagined, mediated and circulated among the public.

Douglas Kellner approximates his thought in a portmanteau word "transcode" to extract his thoughts on how political discourses are translated and encoded into media texts (2). Thus cinemas *transcode* the existing sociopolitical struggles and contestations of the age. The project aims to probe into post September 11movies as cultural products reflective or refractive of the ethos of the age. Film images are the ones that we visually consume on a daily basis which inform our understanding of both the world and the political and social systems that govern it. It remains one of the keywords which unveils the interrelationships between culture and society. This study aims at a better understanding of the social and political world and aims at more social justice.

The identity of Muslims has been an evolving one like any other. 9/11 has become a watershed in the reformation and reassertion of the identity of Muslims. This is the second premise which helps in developing the thesis. In the context of the

twenty-first century's new imperialism and capitalist modernity it is highly problematic to perceive the discernible change that has undergone in the formation of the identity of a Muslim. The collapse of the twin towers was influential in the reframing of the world in its attitude towards Islam and has forced Muslims to undergo an introspection which helped them to know their religion better. After decades from the terrorist attack it is high time we looked back and analyzed how catastrophic this day was and how pivotal this day has become in the lives of Muslims. A close examination shows how the attacks were represented in popular culture and also how popular culture changed as a result of the attacks (Quay xi). After 9/11, a casual glance at the media reveals, there is a growing tendency to use the terms Islam and Muslim in a larger degree, instead of narrowing down the focus on religious fundamentalism. Islam, in the post 9/11 media and cultural sphere is being used quite often synonymously with Islamic fundamentalism. Ania Loomba says, "it is a measure of persistence of Orientalist discourses that Islam is often read as especially prone to fundamentalist appropriation (and to misogyny) than any other religion" (226). The Orientalist strategy of presenting the Muslims as the disturbing "other" still continues. At the outset my project analyzes the strategies of representation of Muslims in films after September 11.

Homi Bhabha says, "community is the antagonist supplement of modernity" (330). He explains that community disturbs the "grand globalizing narrative of capital" and disrupts the "homogeneity of the imagined community of the nation". The research would make an attempt to analyze the ideas of community, identity, and modernity highlighting filmic representations of Muslims. The study builds on

the following questions: has framing a Muslim subject become a really problematic issue especially after 9/11? Does a Muslim's singular non-changing affiliation to Islam and multiple, flexible affiliations to other social institutions create problems? How far does a Muslim appropriate him/herself to the modern rhizomatic metaphor in the age of "liquid modernity"? How are such Muslims represented in the movies? Is there any attempt to break free from the classical stereotyping of Muslims? To what extent have they been successful? Does 9/11 help to change Hollywood's portrayal of Muslims in contemporary cinema? How does the dominant ideology influence films of the present generation? Are Muslims framed and stereotyped in limited ways? Can sequence analysis and shot analysis help in bringing out the nuances of representation? Does the form determine the content? The project would attempt to address these issues.

The third premise upon which the project is developed is the proposition presented by Marilyn Fabe that the narrative film techniques are never neutral or innocent: every single nuance conveys an ideology (Fabe xvi). Fabe in her *Closely Watched Films: an Introduction to the Art of Narrative Technique* illustrates how film images work. Through close analysis of the shots and sequences of fourteen movies, she establishes the role of shot by shot analysis or sequence analysis in the meaning making process of films. The book focuses on commendable, almost classical, works of some fourteen film makers, whose careers together make the history of narrative film, ranging from D. W. Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation* (1915) to Spike Lee's *Do the Right Thing* (1989). This study gives an extensive and complete picture of visual narrative techniques that unearth the potential outcomes

of the film medium. The study introduces how cinematic narrative techniques corroborate the emotional and ideological effects of the film. This study, following the patterns of close analysis of shots and sequences, proposes to closely analyze formal technical devices like shots, frames, cuts, and sequences of movies that are produced after September 11 along with the content side. Thus the research gives due importance both to the form and the content to know how films make meanings overtly and covertly.

The research also departs from the category of "national cinema" to a transnational space of cultural production or "post-national". With the upcoming of supranational organizations and increased migrations and dislocations, post-national appears as a relevant category for the analysis of cultural productions. This term more satisfactorily captures the socioeconomic and political interdependencies that characterize inter-national networks under global capitalism. With regards to film studies, increasing attention is to be paid to the cultural hybridity that defines many, if not all, national cinemas. Confining cinema to a national art form has inherently some basic puzzling issues in the age of globalization where borders merge especially in the case of an art form like movie. At all events, any film made anywhere has the potential to achieve a worldwide audience and every film goes into the grain, beyond being in the confinement of domestic cinema. It has become sometimes very difficult also to determine a movie's nationality. Take for instance, the production of *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* or *Babel*. The production credits of *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* go to three companies which are all independent movie making production groups. One is Cine Mosaic which is centered in New

York, the second one being Doha Film Institute which is located in Qatar and last one is Mirabai Films which again is sited at New York. All the main actors and production team come from various parts of the world: the lead female from New York, the lead male from Britain, others from Turkey, India, and Pakistan and so on, joined hands to make an inter-national co-production in its true sense.

Film festivals and digital culture play a significant role in the promotion of post-national cinema. It is quite interesting to note the contradictory nature of the organization of film festivals. They help in making movies more accessible and making them global cinema transcending borders on the one side and simultaneously distinguishing the very same movies under the title "national cinemas". Moving beyond the "national cinemas" is like taking films out of the particular geographical context and freeing them from the salient features associated to it. Digital culture has gone to the extent of breaking the chains of keeping the cinema in theatres, bringing them to the cozy spaces of the homes and much closer to the palms of the spectator with their mobile screens. Thus when the project envisages analyzing movies breaking down the visual narrative to sequences and shots, the digital platform is of immense help.

The crisis unleashed by the events of September 11 is global and all-encompassing; binding many different countries into conflict; it affects a multiplicity of life's levels, political, economical, cultural and psychological (Aitchison, et al 1).The catastrophe is so great that the prejudices or understanding associated with it are deep rooted. As mentioned before, in this so- called democratic world which is quite often on the brim of attacks which gives us enough

signs of social injustice around the world it is high time we looked back at the various forms of it. The gesture of 9/11 gives out many significations which are worth studying. Substantial number of movies that can be listed under September 11 category epitomizes the cultural trauma of 9/11and the war on terror that followed. Chronologically, 9/11movies encompass all movies that are produced after 11 September 2001. But that categorization is not an adequate one for a detailed analysis as envisaged in this research. A clear demarcation is needed to categorize movies based on the themes sidelining the differences in genres. A post September 11 movie has to resonate the era with its apprehensions, tensions and paradoxes. The date 9/11 describes the period following the planned terrorist attacks on the US in which a series of hijacked planes were flown into the World Trade Centre of New York and the Pentagon of Washington D.C. that caused the death of around 3000 people along with countless more injuries. Thus the date became a symbol of American identity, though not reduced to it. The immediate blame was burdened on the massive failure of the intelligence and security agencies. This led to a dramatic reassessment of the security and safety of the nation. An overhaul of the country's immigration policy, expansion of the national security and the inauguration of a War on Terror in Iraq and Afghanistan followed suit. The creation of Homeland security and the implementation of the Patriot Act came as an aftermath. As a result, a new geopolitical era which can be called post-9/11 emerged in popular discourse. Thus the date 9/11 arrests the event, the relationship between the US and terrorism and its aftermaths that happened at domestic and foreign spaces.

Thus 9/11 movies as a category emerges with the zest to encompass all the characteristics of both the event and its aftermath. The research conveniently categorizes the movies of the post September era in two heads. "9/11 movies" as a broad classification which includes all movies with the ethos of the post 9/11 age and it covers a broader category of all movies after 9/11 where 9/11is a temporal marker. "Post September 11 movies" is another category the study proposes. It narrows down the list of movies to a smaller category with 9/11 and Muslim identity as focal points. In this context, September 11 becomes a metaphorical temporal marker. It metaphorically suggests the whole categories of issues, sites of contestations, and its aftermath and so on.

The discussions on the representation of Muslims in literature, films, history, advertisements, new media and other cultural products start with Edward Said's groundbreaking study *Orientalism* which is said to mark the beginning of postcolonial studies followed by Homi Bhabha, Gayatri Spivak and others. *Orientalism* reveals the relationship between the West comprising especially of Britain, France and the US on one hand and the Arab and Muslims on the other. Said outlines the various phases of the relationship starting from the Napoleonic invasion of Egypt and through the main colonial period. It later gave way to the rise of modern Orientalist scholarship in Europe during the nineteenth century, up to the end of British and French imperial hegemony in the Orient after World War II and how America emerged as the dominant power (*Covering Islam* xlix). *Orientalism* establishes how Islam has become a menace to the West. The use of Orientalism as the basis of this project helps appropriately in understanding the preconceived image

of Muslim as the "other" and more about the history of the geopolitical issues that still prevails. If *Orientalism* is a historical study, *Covering Islam* is about how American media have responded to Islam since the 1970s. Said explains how "media have therefore covered Islam: they have portrayed it, characterized it, analyzed it, given instant courses on it and consequently they have made it known" (li). The book details how Islam is both "covered' and "covered up" using the pun in the title word "covering". The media through their incessant coverage of the issues mounting on in Iran during the hostage crisis made an image that they have understood Islam well, reducing Islam as news. Thus they cover up the other side of Islam which is not geographically and theologically restricted to Iran despite the fact that Iran itself is not fully covered. Said exemplifies this strategy of media with an example of the news reporting done during Iran hostage crisis of 1981. Approximately three hundred new reporters were in Teheran to report the event and nobody was a Persian speaker. No wonder, almost all of them reported or repeated the thread bare versions of the incident. Thus the representation of Muslims and Islam in media is well covered by Said though films never got a prominent space in his thoughts. Ziauddin Sardar explores further and in the books *Orientalism* (1999), *Why Do People Hate America* (2003) and *American Dream, Global Nightmare* (2004) co-written with Merryl Wyn Davies, he examines how Muslims are perceived in books, films and television series. Sardar says,

> On the morning of 9/11, as the world watched in horror, there was no doubt
> about the identity of the people responsible. The first thought in everyone's
> mind was simple: the terrorists were Muslim/ Arab/ Islamic/ extremists/

fundamentalists; they were the "people", it was "Them". The conclusion

came before investigation or evidence because it is a generic idea, a

convention, a cultural cliche, the easiest assumption to which we have been

preconditioned. (*Why do People* 40)

Jack Shaheen is undoubtedly a well-known figure in this academic area of

the representation of Muslims and Arabs in Hollywood through his lectures, books

and documentaries. His magnum opus, *Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a*

People, is an indispensable historical record that best serves as an introduction to the

topic and he gives a comprehensive list of Hollywood movies which portrayed,

degraded and denigrated Arabs and Muslims. Shaheen calls this racist ideology that

dehumanizes the "Other" as "The New Anti Semitism" (6). The thousand or so

movies that he has documented cover the movies from the silent era of 1896 to the

contemporary blockbusters of 2001. He categorizes the entire list of movies under

five heads: "Villains, Sheikhs, Maidens, Egyptians and Palestinians" (40).

Shaheen's work is later made as a documentary of the same title directed by Sut

Jhally. Shaheen's own commentary is intercut with the most offensive scenes from

Hollywood movies which degrade Arabs and Muslims. The visuals cover the scenes

from the black and white era of *Arabia* to the post 9/11 era of *Syriana* to

successfully place his argument. The book *Reel Bad Arabs* is followed by *Guilty:*

Hollywood's Verdict on Arabs after 9/11 which traces the changes, if any, in

Hollywood's depiction of Arabs and Muslims after the discussion initiated by the

former work. Shaheen discusses at length the changes 9/11 have brought down to

the sociopolitical atmosphere. Though the racial profiling against Arabs and

Muslims on streets and by domestic acts is in full vogue, Shaheen notices visible changes in portraying them in Hollywood movies. Shaheen witnessed some "reel positives" (35). He comes up with a list of movies that portray positive representations of Arabs and Muslims including movies like Gavin Hood's *Rendition*, Ridley Scot's *Kingdom of Heaven*, Alejandro Inarritu's *Babel*, Sally Potter's *Yes*, Stephan Gaghan's *Syriana* and Speven Spielberg's *Munich.*

Shaheen's works and documentary have opened up a new area of academic discourse. Though the works as a whole establish well the argument in terms of statistics, they fall short in following an in-depth analysis. They also fail in closely looking at movies, especially of post 9/11, since the racist content in them have become more subtle and complex. The broad categorization based mainly on the plot line of the movies cannot capture the deeply underlying racist core. Another limitation of such an exhaustive study is that it is based fundamentally on the dichotomy of good and evil. The good Arab or Muslim that Shaheen recommends, for example, are the ones in the movie *Three Kings.* The characters in *Three Kings*, of course, are not terrorists but they are victimized muted persons who wait for outsiders like the US force to enable them to live a peaceful life. A close analysis of the movie gives a different reading. The close reading of the movie *Rendition* attempted in the third chapter of this research exposes the racist undertones. Shaheen has recommended this movie under the category of good Muslims. So the broad generalization and categorization of Shaheen's methodology fails to capture the subtle nuances of racist discourses.

Other major studies related to this area include Tim Jon Semmerling's *Evil Arabs in American Popular Film: Orientalist Fear* (2006) , Evelyn Alsultany's *Arabs and Muslims in the Media: Race and Representation after 9/11*(2013), Stephen Prince's *Firestorm: American Film in the Age of Terrorism* (2009), and *Douglas Kellner's Cinema Wars: Hollywood Film and Politics in Bush-Cheney Era* (2009).

Tim Jon Semmerling in his *Evil Arabs in American Popular Film: Orientalist Fear* attempts to critically analyze the depiction of "Evil" Arabs. The study helps to overcome the Manichean dichotomy of the good and the evil. As Semmerling establishes, "To get better understanding of the construction and use of "evil" Arabs in film, we must upset the prejudiced persons' project… in order to see their ideal ego lying underneath"(6-7). Semmerling tries at length to expose the fear that creates the "evil" Arab on the screen. Since stereotyping is a limited way of representing others, Semmerling, following the psychologist Gordon Allport, attempts an analysis of visual tropes and narrative structures of selected films to see the "Orientalist Fear" which produces the "other". Allport argues that eradication of stereotype will not happen just by attacking it and it can be understood properly by knowing the prejudiced minds that create the stereotypes. Semmerling discusses six American movies which are produced between 1973 and 2001 in detail: *The Exorcist*, *Rollover*, *Black Sunday*, *Three Kings*, *Rules of Engagement* and *South Park: Bigger, Longer and Uncut* along with a CNN documentary titled *America Remembers*. The study focuses on these films that portray Arabs, their desert landscape and their culture as villains and those which depict American dream,

economy, heroism, confidence, and the multicultural milieu. Through the in-depth analyses, Semmerling exposes the American fears, insecurities and deep-rooted prejudices that produce such "evil" Arabs.

The focus of Alsultany is on the portrayal of the war on terror in television shows and news reports. She noticed the growing increase in the sympathetic portrayal of Arabs and Muslims in television series like *24*, *Sleeper Cell* and *Law and Order*. The paradox is that such a portrayal is happening in an age when there is a steady increase in hate crimes against these people. The increase in sympathetic portrayals is sometimes taken as a progressive sign that subverts racism, which she challenges in her work. She also noticed that whenever an Arab or Muslim is portrayed in bad light, every attempt has been made in the dawn of "post racist" era to balance that with the portrayal of a positive character or vice versa. She calls this deliberate attempt as "simplified complex representation" which I further explore in the coming chapters.

Kellner analyzes the interconnections of film, politics and US culture focusing on movies and TV shows produced in the early 2000s which culminated in the cultural and political condition that elected Barack Hussein Obama as the President of the US. He adopts a dyadic proposition which represents the conservative political views of the Bush-Cheney government and the liberal outlook of the other extreme by radically criticizing the policies of the government.

Stephen Prince's *Firestorm* is the first work which focused on the influence of 9/11 on the making of Hollywood movies. Prince explores the ways in which Hollywood has understood and responded to 9/11, the Iraq War, domestic

surveillance, rendition, Abu Ghraib, USA Patriot Act and policies of torture. Prince

views movies and other cultural products as versions of social memory. The works

of Kellner and Prince together constitute the era of Bush-Cheney administration and

how 9/11 affected the Hollywood. Together they give a holistic picture about the

socio-political atmosphere and how Hollywood has attempted to overcome the

trauma and complexities of the era. Other works in this area include the edited works

of Wheeler Winston Dixon's *Film and Television after 9/11*(2004) and Jeff

Birkenstein, Anna Froula, Karen Randell's *Reframing 9/11: Film, Popular Culture*

and the "War on Terror" (2014). Both works focus on the responses of Hollywood

and other popular culture to the issues raised in the aftermath of 9/11.

Apart from the above mentioned works, the academic community has

extensively explored 9/11 and the impacts of it on other areas like comic books,

news reports, news papers, children's literature, television programs and music

(Reid 96). Literature of the post 9/11 world and the representation of Muslims in it

have drawn much academic interest recently. Geoffrey Nash covers a wide range of

texts which include novel, memoir, travel writing and journalism in his book *Writing*

Muslim Identity. Hanif Kureishi's *Black Album*, Monica Ali's *Brick Lane,* Azar

Nafisi's *Reading Lolita in Tehran: a Memoir in Books*, Asne Seierstad's *The*

Bookseller of Kabul, Don DeLillo's *Falling Man* and Ian McEwan's *Saturday* are

some of the works which have triggered discussions on the identity formation of

Muslims in a post September world. In the area of film studies, the academic world

has focused on the 9/11 and the war on terror and how Hollywood has changed after

9/11. Though Jack Shaheen's contribution to the field plays a vital role, his works

together present a survey: pre 9/11 films are surveyed in *Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People* and post 9/11 films in *Guilty: Hollywood's Verdict of Arabs after 9/11*. So prior studies become insufficient to encompass the category of Muslims as "others", though the category has gained much attention especially after September 11. Thus the entire discourse on the identity and the status of Muslim and how 9/11 has brought changes to it stays constrained. The academia has completely ignored the formation of Muslim subject which has become complex in the post 9/11 socio-political milieu. More than that, closer reading of movies has become imperative to look for nuanced and subtler ways of representation. The fundamental question of whether the very grammar of filmmaking supports its narrative intentions is left unattended and it remains an area unexplored.

The project is an attempt to analyze closely the complex narrative strategies of representation of Muslims and the creation of a Muslim subject in movies released after September 11, with 9/11and Muslim identity as the major themes. They are selected following the initial analysis of existing literature to identify productions which are significant contributions to the discourse. This strategy is complemented by a key word search of film database IMDb for terms such as 9/11, September 11movies and Muslims to ensure that most of the significant films dealing with both the themes are encompassed in the research.

Originally, the project was planned to analyze post September 11 movies in its entirety. It would have been an ambitious project. Within the scope of this research, it would be impossible to investigate all movies with Muslim representations during the period. More than that, since it would have been more like

a survey, a reorientation of the research was prompted. Of all the movies produced under the broader category post 9/11 movies, the research focuses on the movies which have both 9/11 as a major temporal point and also representation of Muslims. The focus of the research has made a whole lot of movies, that has one or the other as main themes, disabled their inclusion in the purview of research area. The methodology is largely discursive and eclectic in the understanding of representation of Muslims in movies. The selection of movies is not based on the "quality" of the film which is determined by critical acclaim, box office success, budget, or the stars and directors. Thus the project focuses on five movies which perfectly exhibit the ethos of the time, fears, anxieties, prejudices, paradoxes and complexities of the period. Five movies that would be closely analyzed are *Rendition*, *United 93*, *Mooz-lum*, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and *Brick Lane*. The first two movies are major mainstream Hollywood productions directed by established directors. *Mooz-lum* is an independent movie and *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* is an international co-production of the adaptation of a novel by Mohsin Hamid. *Dictionary of Film Terms: the Aesthetic Companion to Film Art* defines "independent film" or "indie" as "an American film that has been produced without the sponsorship of the Hollywood studios or produced outside an organized production house" (Beaver 129). *Brick Lane* is a British production based on the Bangladesh-British writer Monica Ali. Apart from these, the British movie *Yasmin*, some segments of the anthology movie *September 11* are also discussed to substantiate various arguments. From this point onwards, "post September 11 movies" categorize these movies which come under the purview of this research as already defined and demarcated.

There are many Indian movies that can be classed under 9/11 category. The research has identified eight movies: *Hope and a little Sugar* (2006), *Viswaroopam* (2013), *New York* (2009), *My Name is Khan* (2010), *Kurbaan* (2009), *Tere Bin Laden* (2010), *Yun Hota To Kya Hota* (2006) and *I am Singh* (2011) some of which have been released internationally. But the research has deliberately avoided the inclusion of analysis of Indian movies for multiple reasons. First, India has an entirely different context of contestation with Muslims that has another long history to outline. Anti-Muslim ethos started with the colonial period as an aftereffect of British "divide and rule" policy which got heightened during partition of India and Pakistan. It had a culmination in the demolition of Babri Masjid and Gujarat riots. Obviously, 9/11 and later the terrorist attacks in Mumbai in 2008 too had an influence on the Indian movies with regards to the portrayal of Muslims. Second, India is a nation which "celebrates" notions of multi ethnicity just like multicultural movements of the west. The domination of Hindu Nationalism, where Muslims are a minority, has made Bollywood – Hindi-cinema – the site of contestations for staging national, regional, religious and ethnic differences, though Bollywood remains one of the major film producing industries in the world. So a study on Indian movies opens up a plethora of multi-layered complex issues, a pandora's box. Third, the status of Muslim in India as an "other" has yet another dimension of placing the enemy within the nation itself rather than outside of it like the Hollywood. The entire Indian imagination of Muslims is somehow, overtly or covertly, linked to Pakistan. Indian movies have its own pattern of representation which gives thought for another research area. Still this study has made references to some of the Indian cinema in the first chapter on the history of representations keeping in mind that

Indian cinemas also have a share of visual imaginations about 9/11and Muslim

identity. A close analysis of any Indian movies has been avoided because of the

above mentioned reasons which would obviously deviate the line of thought

engaged in the development of the thesis.

The methodology includes the selection of some key sequences and shots

which are analyzed closely. Louis D. Giannetti's popular book *Understanding*

Movies gives a foundation for the key proponents in analyzing a mis-en-scene

analysis. Giannetti advocates a fifteen point scale which includes light, framing,

depth, angle, colour, shot length, character placement, character proxemics, staging

positions, composition etc to study a scene closely (Welsch 102-103). Since the

attempt in this thesis is to analyse sequences, some aspects propounded by Giannetti

is applied. Along with that, the analytical techniques of Slavoj Zizek, representation

theories of Stuart Hall, the ideological propositions on state apparatus of Louis

Althusser, semiology of films as suggested by Christian Metz and Sol Worth and

sociological philosophy of Zygmunt Bauman are some of the key theoretical

postulations used to build the argument. The analysis aims at exposing how Muslims

are represented and how the socio-political ideology determines the narrative. At

times, the study has incorporated and analyzed the experiences of the actors and

directors and interviews with the cast and crew that are circulated in print or visual

media to supplement the argument. In terms of its structure, the thesis is divided into

three major chapters with an introduction and a conclusion. Major inquiries of film

studies are broadly categorized as film history, film theory and film analysis. If the

second chapter discusses the history of representation of Muslims in Hollywood, the other two chapters follow analysis of select films.

The chapter titled "Representation of Muslims on Reels Pre and Post 9/11 and the American Political Zeitgeist" gives a broad historical study of the representation of Muslims in Hollywood movies. The chapter elaborates Edward Said's concept of the "orient" and outlines a brief history of Hollywood movies in the making of Muslims as the "other". The chapter attempts to trace the history of the deeply ingrained popular narrative of the "others" of Hollywood movies at various temporal references. How Islam and Muslims became the other is outlined. Different patterns of representations of Muslims apart from stereotypes are also identified. The chapter also highlights 9/11as an event that bookmarked the history of America as well as the history of Hollywood movies. The zeitgeist of the post 9/11 America is also traced through the movies.

The third chapter titled "*United 93* and *Rendition*: Cinema, Terrorism and Political Ideology" focuses on two of the selected movies: *United 93* and *Rendition*. As Steve Nolan underlines the objective of the Editors of *Cahiers* that "reading actively means regarding the film as a text overdeterminedly related to the ideology that produced it, making films 'say what they have to say *within* what they leave unsaid … (it) is not a case of finding 'secret meaning', but of revealing the, always displaced, 'structuring absences'" (59). The attempt in this chapter, thus in terms of Nolan, is to find out the ideology that produced the cultural products and to find out the "absent" presences of such ideology. The chapter intends to follow a syntagmatic study of the selected texts in its linear sequencing of events as they occur in the

films' narrative.   This chapter aims to analyze movies using both the cine semiotic or structural tools and the post structural tools. The methodology incorporates the ideas and approach adopted by Sol Worth in his ethnographic semiotic study of movies and the purpose is to find out the gaps and ruptures in film narratives which unravel the political content of compliance or subversion. Following the track of Noam Chomsky, Sol Worth conducted experiments along with the anthropologist John Adair with the help of six bilingual Navajo Indians. His aim was to find out whether there is a universal pattern of meanings in films and also to find out how meanings are inferred by the viewer. He discusses the experiment at length in the work *Through Navajo Eyes: an Exploration in Film Communication and Anthropology* published in 1975. Sequence analysis is adopted in this study after much deliberations on the ground that movement is one of the most fundamental features of cinema, the other being image. The chapter attempts to decode the political ideology inherent in films by means of the methodology of technical analysis of some sequences of these two movies. In this chapter, the focus is on the political ideology inherent in the making of the movies.

The chapter titled "Framing the Muslim Subject in the Age of Modernity", by contrast, focuses on the representation and formation of Muslim subject in the post September 11 movies category. Since the Muslim is not a unitary and predefined group, I focus in this study on the cinematic texts that produce Muslim men and women that ought to be categorized as 'the subject'. The chapter makes use of the sequences from the movies *Mooz-lum*, *The Reluctant Fudamentalist* and *Brick Lane* though references are made occasionally to movies like *Yasmin*, *The*

Battle of Algiers and some segments from *September 11*. The chapter examines the

Muslim male subject and Muslim female subject differently. Louis Althusser's

theory of interpellation and ideology serve as the foundation for the chapter. The

chapter examines the ways of interpellation and the formation and the status of the

Muslim subject within the context of representation studies. The chapter outlines

how calling or hailing an individual constitutes a subject especially in the context of

post September 11. The chapter exemplifies the theoretical postulations using the

sequences and shots from the selected movies. The complexities of the Muslim

subject in post 9/11era are also elaborated at various levels of identity markers like

the name of a Muslim, the dress, the prayer and their appearance. The chapter also

focuses on the trope of "home" in the age of modernity. The chapter examines the

ways of interpellation. The formation and the status of the Muslim subject are also

discussed within the context of representation studies. The trajectory of the thesis is,

thus, to map the Muslim subject in the post 9/11 scenario through the cultural

productions like movies.

Chapter 2

**Representation of Muslims on
Reels Pre and Post 9/11 and the American Political Zeitgeist**

> Watching a film [especially in cinema], we are certainly not *in* the
> film, but we are not entirely *outside* it either.

> - Jennifer M. Barker 12

> The starting point of critical elaboration is the consciousness of what
> one really is, and is 'knowing thyself' as a process of the historical
> process to date, which has deposited in you, an infinity of traces,
> without leaving an inventory; therefore it is imperative at the outset to
> compile such an inventory.

> - Antonio Gramsci 628

The studies on representation have been broad enough to include race, gender, class and sexuality. Stuart Hall, in his essay, "The Whites of Their Eyes: Racist Ideologies and the Media" argues how media become a part of the dominant means of ideological production and he states that what the media produce is "representations of the social world, images, descriptions, explanations and frames for understanding how the world is and why it works as it is said and shown to work" (19). Thus representing a black or a Hispanic or a woman or a sexually deviant or a Native American has always been a product of an insidious, yet invisible, dominant ideology. In Western societies the dominant white ideology naturalizes itself as the norm and becomes invisible like the whites of our eyes. But it remains ever as an insidious controlling force. As Hall argues, "The "white eye" is always outside the

frame – but seeing and positioning everything within it" (14). Even more dangerous is to make one believe as the "other" as argued by Stuart Hall in another work:

> It is one thing to position a subject or set of peoples as the Other of a dominant discourse. It is quite another thing to subject them to that 'knowledge', not only as a matter of imposed will and domination, by the power of inner compulsion and subjective conformation to the norm. ("Cultural Identity" 226)

In terms of Hall, it can be argued that identity is constructed within a cultural framework where media plays a major role.

Identity is also not a 'fixed' one; rather it appears to be a fluid phenomenon. As Zygmunt Bauman argues, identity is by its very nature elusive and ambivalent in times of liquid modernity. Stuart Hall says, "Perhaps instead of thinking of identity as an already accomplished historical fact … we should think, instead, of identity as a 'production', which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation" ("Cultural Identity" 222). Thus representations become key elements to get knowledge about ones identity. But Bauman also says, "The search for identity is the ongoing struggle to arrest or slow down the flow, to solidify the fluid, to give form to the formless" (*Liquid Modernity* 82). Hence every attempt to find the roots and the search for identity is like breaking that flow of the liquid modern world. But it is quite inevitable at the present moment to freeze the moment when the representations become prejudiced and partial and when xenophobia and racism flourish.

Among media, movies play a pivotal role in producing and regulating identities and subjectivities. As Bella Belazs asks, "Has any art ever enjoyed such widespread popularity? Indeed, has any expression of the human mind ever had such a large public (apart perhaps from religion)? In the imagination and the emotional life of the urban population film has taken over the role formerly assumed by myth, legend and folktales" (4). Since Hollywood has a transnational circulation and global appeal, the influence of such representations in the movies becomes more problematic. As Thomas Riegler notes, "cinema is often overlooked… Filmmakers play a key role in the creation of 'history' as the past is imagined, imitated, and envisioned on screen" ("9/11 on the screen" 155). Sardar notes that cinema, especially Hollywood, is "the driving force, the central engine of, empire" and it shapes the self-image of the nation (*American Dreams* 122). At this outset, the chapter addresses the history of representations of Muslims in Hollywood movies with 9/11 as a temporal point of demarcation. The history is analyzed to unravel the political zeitgeist of America. The political history of America and its geopolitical and foreign policies have apparent reflections and repercussions on the movies produced by Hollywood. The chapter makes an attempt to trace the history of "othering" the Muslims in the political context and how the "othering" process has found its own narratives in the schema of Hollywood imaginations. Though the thesis as a whole, focuses on the post September 11movies, this chapter outlines both the pre 9/11 and post 9/11 movies that have portrayed Muslim characters. But, as covering all the Hollywood movies with Muslim representation in a chapter would be an ambitious mission, only selected movies are discussed in detail.

A brief study on the history of "Othering" Islam would help in understanding more about the representation of Muslims in movies. Edward Said's seminal book *Orientalism* looks at the European colonial period's portrayals of the Arabs, their cultures, and their Middle Eastern land as a Western discourse. Orientalism narrates ways that the West perceives, anticipates, and reacts to the Arab world in the past, present, and likely in the future. Said shows how Western portrayals of the Arabs became a lopsided perspective that dominated the world creating a particular Western knowledge of the East. This only helped in dividing the world into a conceptually evolving, modern, and superior Occidental ''us'' versus a static, backward, and weakened Oriental "them".

 Orientalism as propounded by Edward Said is an ideological structure that functions as the foundation of this chapter. Said has focused on Arabs which is a term which encompasses Muslims, Christians or Jews from Arab countries. Jack Shaheen accounts that, "Only 12 percent of the world's Muslims are Arabs. Yet moviemakers ignore this reality, depicting Arabs and Muslims as one and the same people. Repeatedly, they falsely project all Arabs as Muslims and all Muslims as Arabs" (*Reel* 28). This very fact itself is an example of misrepresentation or distorted representation.

The framing of Muslims amounts to refraction not a reflection of reality. The real in itself is problematic – is double edged. The reality of the prejudiced world is mirrored in the movies and at the same time this "reality" is far removed from the real life of Arabs and Muslims. In such a context, refraction becomes a better

concept. Representation, as a concept, encompasses not only visual, narrative and other forms of mimetic expression but also political channels of empowerment.

September 11 incident has started a new era when Muslim was perceived as the known enemy inside and outside. It doesn't start with the 19 hijackers who were responsible for the attacks. It has a long history back to the crusades centuries before but the idea of Muslim as the other came surging after the cold war, after the "red menace" was over. The headline of "Week in Review" of *Sunday New York Times*, January 21, 1996 issue ran like this: "The Red Menace is Gone, But Here's Islam" (*Covering Islam* 15). Islam as a religion of terrorism had already been deeply ingrained in the psyche of many Americans prior to 9/11 through stereotypes in the media (Shaheen 2008; Gottschalk and Greenberg 2007; Mandel 2001). With the release and global success of *Die Hard* in 1988, Steve Nolan says that "terrorism could replace Communism as the enemy of choice" (60). Said explains how Islam has scarcely figured either in the culture or in the media before 1974 till the sudden OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) price rise. It was then that Islam became the focal point of international geopolitics. This shifted the western perception about Muslims; melding Arabs, Iranians, Turks and Pakistanis into a single group defined by their religion Islam (Nolan 70-71). Edward Said elaborates how the geopolitical strategies and the liberal intellectuals made use of Islam in the US. This was further accelerated by the Iran Hostage Crisis of 1978-79, holding 52 American hostages for 444 days. This incident was a downright humiliation to the US and the hostility was enraged. The best explanation of the impact of this crisis is presented by Edward Said in his text *Covering Islam* (1981), where he argued "how

the media and experts determine how we see the rest of the world" that Muslims are associated with militancy, danger and anti-Western sentiment, because, in all reports, the Iranian revolution symbolized the Muslim world and resulted in the perception of Muslims as terrorists holding the US hostages (42-43). Though Iran is not an Arab country, the hostage crisis has led to the creation of a flawed imaginary Arab landscape which included Iran too. Islam thus became the new signifier of the region. In 1980s and 1990s, America under the President Ronald Reagan retaliated against the imaginary Middle East and stood firm against terrorism.   9/11 had a curtain raiser in 1993 when the WTC was attacked for the first time, the first Islamist terrorism on American soil. This deepened the fears about the security threats associated with Islamists linking Muslims to domestic terrorism too. Consequently, Muslims were immediately implicated when there was an attack on the Federal Building in Oklahoma City in 1995. As Noam Chomsky says in an interview,

> When a federal building was blown up in Oklahoma City, there were calls for bombing the Middle East, and it probably would have happened if the source turned out to be there. When it was found to be domestic, with links to the ultra-right militias, there was no call to obliterate Montana or Idaho. Rather, there was a search for the perpetrator, who was found, brought to court, and sentenced, and there were efforts to understand the grievances that lie behind such crimes and to address the problems. (*9/11* 24)

Films feature little in Edward Said's thinking though he acknowledges that films play a role in 'delivering Islam' to the public (Nolan 71). Bradshaw says that

after the collapse of communism and the end of cold war, writers of action movies lost the villain and the solution was to find a new villain in the terrorist, specifically the Muslim terrorist. "The commies were over, in other words, all of a sudden we woke up and we couldn't use the commies for a villain, and peace and quiet is bad for, you know, action films"(qtd. in Nolan 71).   Jack Shaheen's extensive study on the representation of Arabs and Muslims in some 1000 Hollywood movies in his book *Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People* gives us a different picture. He says that the pre September 11 century, starting from 1896 to 2001, has always shown "systematic, pervasive and unapologetic degradation and dehumanization of a people" (*Reel* 1). Shaheen talks about a wide range of Hollywood movies which are as old as cinema, such as George Melies' *The Palace of Arabian Nights* (1905) which visualizes a clichéd Arab land where dancing maidens cheer up the Arab sovereign. Before that *Fatima* (1896) shows a Syrian born American belly dancer named Fatima Djemille in performance filmed by Thomas Edison. It appears to be the first movie to be censored, literally using strips of papers on the reel, for her 'erotic' body movements which created much controversies leading to banning its screening in some places. Shaheen further explains that,

> Seen through Hollywood's distorted lenses, Arabs look different and
> threatening. Projected along racial and religious lines, the stereotypes are
> deeply ingrained in American cinema. From 1896 until today, filmmakers
> have collectively indicted all Arabs as public enemy # 1 – brutal, heartless,
> uncivilized, religious fanatics and money-mad cultural "others" bent on
> terrorizing civilized westerners, especially Christians and Jews. (*Reel* 2)

Hamid Dabashi discusses in his article "Norway: Muslims and Metaphors Part 2"

how Muslim has become a "menacing metaphor" and how this syndrome has

become an epidemic. He argues that "the Muslim is a metaphor of menace, banality

and terror everywhere". This explains the dubious ways in which Muslim

stereotypes are circulated; often loaded with oppressive politics around gender and

sexuality. Thus the trajectory of the representation of Muslims in popular culture has

a long history of Orientalist tropes, according to Edward Said. In *Orientalism* Said

says, "the Orient is not an inert fact of nature. It is not really *there*" (4). In *Covering

Islam*, he argues that Islam is not really there, but is "freighted with fictional and

ideological accretions" (Chambers 4). Jack Shaheen calls the new phenomenon of

placing Muslim as the other as "the New Anti- Semitism", Arab Muslims like Jews

being Semites. He calls it "new" because it happens at such a time when Hollywood

has taken effort to reduce under representation and stereotypical representations of

other groups to certain extend (*Reel* 30). "You can hit an Arab free; they're free

enemies; free villains -- where you couldn't do it to a Jew or you cannot do it to a

black anymore", exclaims Sam Keen, author of *The Faces of the Enemy*.

The comparison of the representation of Muslims to that of Jews is rather

accurate. It was a clear political agenda that has been established in the forming of

the American film company Cannon in 1980s to produce the insidious, prejudicial

hate-the-Arab movies. They include *Hell Squad* (1985), *The Delta Force* (1986),

and *Killing Streets* (1991). Sulaiman Arti argues in his article "The Evolution of

Hollywood's representation of Arabs before 9/11: the relationship between political

events and the notion of otherness" that "*Delta Force* was part of a new wave of

unprecedented movies that associate Islam directly with terrorist activities, perhaps the most provoking part for the Middle Easterner is the association of the shouting of 'Allah Akbar' with awful actions" (12). Later Hollywood developed this theme in *Hostage* series (1982-1986-1990). The same has happened in Hitler's Germany when Viet Harlan made the movie *Jud Süss* (1940) which encouraged Germans to despise Jews. Many movements, incidents and wars changed the world: women's suffrage, the great depression, civil rights movements, two world wars, Korean, Vietnam and Gulf war and the collapse of the Soviet Union and 9/11 in the beginning of 21st century, to mention a few. 9/11 happened as the culmination point which made the line of terrorism prominent in the media more than ever, combined with Islamic fundamentalism. It may not be a catastrophe; but as a global spectacle September 11 distinguishes itself from previous acts of terrorism. Shaheen pointed out that the Arab contribution to America and other civilizations in science, arts, architecture, agriculture and literature is never shown. He argued that it is hard to find any Arabs represented as talented and hospitable citizens: lawyers, bankers, doctors, homemakers, engineers and environmentalists. From 1896, until today, filmmakers have projected all Arabs as a public enemy bent on terrorizing civilized Westerners (*Reel* 3-4).

"Islam" thus was represented as a resurgent atavism to Westerners and Americans, which suggests not only "the threat of a return to the Middle Ages but the destruction of what is regularly referred to as the democratic order in the Western world" (Said *Covering* 55). This persisted even today giving a reductionist meaning to Islam and Muslims. Islam is "news" of a particularly unpleasant sort for

the general public in America and Europe today. The media, the government, the geopolitical strategists and – although they are marginal to the culture at large – the academic experts on Islam are all in unison: "Islam is a threat to Western civilization" (Said *Covering* 144). Said remarks that, since the mid 1980s, the studies of political Islam – mostly aggressive studies of fundamentalism, terrorism and anti-modernism as principal aspects of Islam – have flooded the market. Most of them belonged to the school of the clash of civilizations propounded by Samuel Huntington and later on propagated by Bernard Lewis. The political milieu influenced the academics too. Academic interests on Middle East largely focused on Islamic Law and Arab-Israeli conflict disregarding its literature or culture, says Said. The entire stream of knowledge is produced with the exclusion of Islam and that pretty well explains why it is so far from challenging the stereotypical representations circulated in the media and popular culture. Mohja Kahf has shown how portrayals of Muslim women have changed over the centuries. He elaborates the varied depictions ranging from a medieval fascination with the symbolic figure of the powerful Eastern queen to post eighteenth century Romantic notions of the passive Oriental female, enclosed in the harem or behind the veil, waiting to be rescued by the Western male hero. Kahf points out how the representations of the Muslim woman has shifted and coincided with changes in European models of femininity, which themselves came more to emphasize the chaste middle class woman inhabiting domestic space (Morey 10). The idea of "freeing the woman " from Islamic male tyranny is a trope which was used to justify military interventions in the Gulf in 1991, the invasions of Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003.

Though Shaheen's contributions to this area are highly appreciated, the academic interest has not gone to the analysis of individual movies finding out nuances of representation. It rather takes a sweeping account of the representation of Arabs and Muslims in Hollywood movies, categorizing them as villains, heroes, sheikhs and so on. Tim Jon Semmerling (2006) made an attempt to explore in depth the construction of "evil" Arabs in Hollywood cinema. Semmerling establishes how the Soviet communists were easily replaced by Arabs in the Hollywood movies. Semmerling's main contention was that the reason for such "ethnic profiling" can be traced in the "anxiety" and "fear" of America in the possible loss in economic and political hegemony. This anxiety is directly associated to the subsequent wealth of Gulf Arab countries and the oil embargo of the seventies.

Film criticism has always been a prominent area of study of the cultural landscape of Hollywood. Filmmakers and film critics have pointed out the racism and stereotypes prevailing in Hollywood. *The Hollywood India: Stereotypes of Native Americans in Film* (1998), *From Sambo to Superspade: The Black Experience in Motion Pictures* (1976), *The Jew in American Cinema* (1984), *The Latin Image in American Film (1980)*, *The Chicanic/Hispanic Image in American Film* (1995), *Hollywood's Wartime Woman* (1988), and *The Kaleidoscopic Lens: How Hollywood Views Ethnic Groups* (1980) are some of the insightful books which discussed the representation of the various minority groups. But little was discussed on Muslims and their representation. Arabs-as-villains images have been there for more than a century; constantly repeated. Such stereotypes maneuver the thoughts and feelings of the viewers. The biased conceptions follow that they are conditioned

to rage and unreason and even going to the extent of persecution. Such damaging stereotypes have the power to alter reality: thus reel images are perceived as real. Shaheen argues that Arabs have never been depicted as simple people with ordinary occupations and interests. He also implicitly suggests that the idea of depicting Arabs as different and inferior on screen is essential to the construction of the superior self of Americans.

Major studies of representations have revealed two fundamental aspects: stereotypical representations and under representations. Researches and studies have brought the under representation of the blacks or the minority ethnic groups or stereotypical representations of women in movies to the limelight. For decades, many racial and ethnic groups, gays and lesbians, and others endured the stings of reel prejudicial representations. Hollywood made efforts to eliminate them or to reduce them to certain extent through the researches and studies suggested earlier. It is at this juncture the study of the representation of Muslims gains prominence. It is only very recently that Muslim organizations started paying attention, with the protests against 20th Century Fox Studio's release of *The Siege* in 1998. The protests were against the representation of Muslim fanatic extremists who detonate bombs in New York fuelling Islamophobia. The protest was not against negative portrayals in movies but that they were the only images. Shaheen has also found this complete absence of ordinary Muslims on screen problematic. The evil images of Muslim as the villains or terrorists or oppressor are the only ones. Here the problem is that the reduction of representation studies in terms of stereotyping and under representation is not enough to describe, define and include all aspects of representation especially

in the post 9/11 scenario. More patterns have to be identified apart from stereotyping and under representation.

Originally, stereotype was a printing term which was used to refer to a printing plate which could produce as many copies in print form (Hayward 358). In movies it meant "a fixed and repeated characterization" which has its origins in theatre and later carried on to movies (358). The stereotypical representations are reductionism of characters to a particular type or norms in a constant repetitive manner. An Arab proverb says, "By repetition, even the donkey learns" (*Reel* 1). Hollywood and almost all film industries use the same tool of repeating slanderous and insidious stereotypes. Semmerling borrows the idea of Gordon Allport and says that, "stereotype offers prejudiced persons a clear cut structuring of the world, a way of imposing order where there is none, a lifeline to tried and tested habits when new solutions are called for, and an opportunity to ''latch onto what is familiar, safe, simple, definite''(6). Jean Baudrillard argues that the demarcation between the real and its representation has shattered leaving only "clones of the real" but the viewers constantly exposed to stereotypes take them for granted and thus such stereotypical representations help creating prejudices. One of the elements that makes stereotyping so powerful, and so hard to eliminate, is that it is self-perpetuating. Huge inroads have been made toward the elimination of many racial and ethnic stereotypes from the movie screen, but Hollywood's stereotype of Arabs remains unchallenged.

Early stereotypical representations of Muslims include reducing them to sheikhs, rich, savage, vengeful, sneaky, repulsive, sex crazed, always after procuring

blonde women for their harems (Shaheen *Guilty* xv-xvi). The misrepresentation of

Muslims had its beginning from the early silent movies like *Fatima* (1897), *The*

Sheik (1921) and *The Thief of Baghdad* (1924) (Alsultany 7). The same persisted in

the eras of color and sound. Most often the Arabs and Muslims have been reduced to

"rich oil sheiks, sultry belly dancers, harem girls, veiled oppressed women and most

notably terrorists" (Alsultany 7). Instead of presenting sheikh as an elderly wise

man, he is always portrayed as hook-nosed, living in tents, always targeting in

capturing blondes for the harem. In *Sheik Hadj Tahar Hadi Cherif* (1894), *Power of*

the Sultan (1907), *The Sheik* (1921), *The Fire and the Sword* (1914) and *The Sheik's*

Wife (1922) and *The White Sheik* (1928) Arab Sheiks move to swiftly and violently

deflower Western maidens. Edward Said explained that "the perverted sheikh can

often be seen snarling at the captured Western hero and blonde girl…and saying

'My men are going to kill you, but they like to amuse themselves before they do'"

(qtd. in Shaheen, *Reel* 19-20). Shaheen explains how news media and international

politics have been pivotal in adding more features to the Muslim stereotype. 1945

emerged as a historical moment in world history marking the creation of Israel and

the emergence of the US as a global power. Thus erotic and exotic images of the

Arabs and Muslims began to shift to more ominous representations in no time. The

image of Muslims as terrorists came along with the coming of Israel and the Arab-

Israel war. As Shaheen writes:

> The image began to intensify in the late 1940s when the state of Israel was
>
> founded on Palestinian land. From that preemptive point on—through the
>
> Arab-Israeli wars of 1948, 1967, and 1973, the hijacking of planes, the

disruptive 1973 Arab oil embargo, along with the rise of Libya's Muammar

Qaddafi and Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini—shot after shot delivered the

relentless drum beat that all Arabs were and are Public Enemy No. 1. (*Reel*

28-29)

Israel's invasion of Lebanon (1982), Operation Desert Storm (1991),

Military incursions in Afghanisthan (2001) and Iraq (2003) are some of the critical

junctures in political history when Islamic Fundamentalism hit the headlines. Exotic

and erotic visual imaginations move way for violent, ominous representations of

terrorism. But a handful of movies were released during these times which

represented Muslims and Arabs as human beings worthy of heroism, sacrifice and

other noble virtues. Films include *The Battle of Algiers* (1966), *Lion of the Desert*

(1981), *Hanna K* (1983), *The Seventh Corn* (1992), *13ᵗʰ Warrior* (1999) and *Three*

Kings (1999) challenged the existing norms of one dimensional representation of

Muslims onscreen. But the number of negative portrayals and stereotypical

representations of Muslims in Hollywood only loom larger. *The Seige* (1998), *East*

is East (1999), *Aladdin* (1992), *Delta Force series*(1991,1993, 1999), *Ground Zero*

(1994), *Rules of Engagement* (2000), *True Lies*(1994), *The Black Stallion* (1979),

American Ninja Series (1989, 1991), *The Finest Hour* (1991), *The Hitman* (1991),

Hell Squad(1985) are a few to mention from the sweeping list of Hollywood movies

analyzed by Jack Shaheen. There has been undue attention paid to "fundamentalist"

Islam since the end of cold war. Most of these movies inaccurately or unfairly

portray Muslims in a pretentious light by associating the rituals and religious

practices of prayers and ablutions to terrorism. Most often the shots of the call for

prayer or the ritualistic washing of body before prayer are spliced along with an act of terrorism. Such conscious or unconscious sequencing has brought an understanding of Islam as a religion of terrorism or violence. The ubiquitous presence of the negative images of Islam especially in the media created the new face of the enemy within. Zachary Karabell says that "stories about the Middle East are often accompanied by a picture of a mosque or large crowds praying." thus reducing an entire landscape with its rich and diverse culture and heritage to a religion (qtd. in Said *Covering* xxvi).

The films like *Delta Force* (1985) and *True Lies* (1994) began the tradition of Arab terrorists as villains and a western hero killing the villains. *True Lies* set a new standard in the portrayal of enemy as having no purpose or objective in killing people. Later *Executive Decision* (1996) followed the standard and made the villainous terrorists uncertain about their mission. This trend was later carried forward by the *Indiana Jones Saga* (1981, 1984, 1989, 1992-1996, 2008). Said notices that, "One of the changes from the old habit of eroticizing the Orient in Hollywood films is that romance and charm have now been completely eliminated" (*Covering* xxvii). The tradition ruthlessly opened up dehumanizing and demonizing Muslims. The terrorists often had no name, "all they did is watching TV and eat Pizza" in the movie *The Siege* and such dehumanization went further a step in the movie *Rules of Engagement* (2000) where veiled women, bearded men and children are all firing machine guns at the Americans. The movie is described by American−Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, as "probably the most vicious anti-Arab racist film ever made by a major Hollywood studio" (Sardar *Why do People* 41). It is a

film that gradually attempts to transform the perception of the viewer on a specific

incident, repeatedly persuading to look more closely at the details till the message

reaches the audience. The central incident is set in Yemen, where the U.S embassy is

under siege by some protesters. The Marines come for rescue operation and the

Ambassador and his family are saved, the officer in command issues the order to

open fire. Instead of firing the snipers, the entire crowd of protesters including

women and children were brutally killed. In the later part of the film, which takes

place inside a court room trialing the Marine Colonel who gave orders, this specific

incident of brutal killing is shown a number of times from various vantage points.

Each time the incident is shown, the protesters gradually become extreme jihadists

with weapons hidden under their *chador* and even children are ready to fire. Thus

the civilian victims are turned to violent terrorists. Even the innocent faces of

children are later depicted as raged with fury and hatred. The movie does not have

any Muslim characters other than the veiled women, bearded men, and children. The

idea of the west as the standard for enlightened modernity is reasserted and thus

Islam and its culture became the frightening other. The clash of cultures is

repeatedly emphasized through the movie representations. *Collateral Damage*

(2002) filmed before 9/11 anticipated terrorist attack on the US and such attacks are

exterminated through violent measures. The film was shelved for some months

when 9/11 happened. Far from being naive or pragmatic accounts of Islam, the

images and the processes by which the media have delivered Islam for consideration

to the western consumer of news perpetuate hostility. This is how propaganda

works.

Language has been a means of communication used to shape attitudes and opinions and to induce compliance and subordination. Whereas, Noam Chomsky says that, propaganda became an organized and very self conscious industry only in the last century and it is intriguing to note that such an industry was created in the more democratic societies. Chomsky recounts the first coordinated propaganda ministry, the Ministry of Information, which was set up in Britain during the First World War; its task being "to direct the thought of most of the world". Its objective was to get the support especially of America, specifically the American intellectuals and through them to influence public opinion. The campaign was a success and it could turn "a relatively pacifist population into raving anti German fanatics. The country was driven into hysteria. It reached the point that the Boston Symphony Orchestra couldn't play Bach" (*Imperial Ambitions* 19). He argues how the public mind can be controlled and how consent can be manufactured among the public. Media, now a days, play this role of manufacturing, controlling and regulating the opinion and world view of the common men and direct them through "the engineering of consent" which Chomsky considered "the very essence of the democratic process" (20-21).

The arguments of Edward Said and Noam Chomsky are further reaffirmed by two media theories: agenda-setting theory and cultivation theory. Agenda-setting theory of the media is explained as "the media's capability, through repeated news coverage, of raising the importance of an issue in the mind of the people" (Severin 219). Thus the repeated news coverage of terrorism of Muslims lead to the affirmation that Muslims are really terrorists; hatred and distrust are endorsed. Media not only set the agenda but also suggest how the viewers should think and

talk about the identities of the "others" thus created. It has the capacity to shape the thoughts of the readers and viewers. Cultivation theory, as propounded by George Gerbner and his colleagues explains the effects of television viewing on people's perceptions, attitudes and values. The theory says how television monopolizes the ideas and perspectives of heavy viewers and how a common outlook of the world is cultivated. This has resulted in linking any terrorist activity happening around the world to Muslims though it may not be the case. The same is the case with the exposure to the ubiquity of evil Muslims in movies. As Sardar argues, "Popular culture and its conventions form part of the context and circumstances, the ideas and information, in which the question is framed and answers are offered" (*Why do people* 44).

Deepa Kumar has identified five orientalist myths connected with Islam and Muslims; Islam as a monolithic religion, violent religion and antidemocratic one; women as oppressed and men as fanatic. All these have found representations in movies. The portrayal of Muslim men is thus reduced to terrorists or villains. They do only one thing: killing, detonating bombs and grenades. They are often dehumanized to the extent of killing all without any motive or sometimes, their motives are beyond comprehension. The characters are reduced to terrorist #1, #2 or #3 i.e., they are reduced to hash tags and numbers without even a name. The situations are even worse when a Muslim is cast in a Muslim role. It is good to remember, at this juncture, that the last time a Muslim became a big star in America was back in 1962—Omar Sharif in *Lawrence of Arabia.* But the fact that Omar Sharif has played the role of an evil oil sheikh in *Ashanti* (1979) is a blemish to his career as this movie happens to be one of the worst portrayals of Arabs in the history of Hollywood. When Academy Award winner F. Murray Abraham was asked what

the "F" in F. Murray Abraham stood for, he said: "F stands for Farid. When I first began in the business I realized I couldn't use Farid because that would typecast me as a sour Arab out to kill everyone. As Farid Murray Abraham I was doomed to minor roles" (Shaheen *Reel* 32). These days the Muslim actors like Waleed Zuaiter, Sayed Badreya, Ahmed Ahmed and Anthony Azizi complain of getting type casted; offered terrorist roles only to hijack planes, to slaughter infidels and to shout Allahu Akbar with a swearing tone (Ronson "You may Know me"). The latest news being Rami Malek, the Academy Award winner for his role in *Bohemian Rhapsody* (2018), revealing that he agreed to accept the role in the upcoming James Bond movie as villain after he is assured that the villain character would have no religious or ideological affiliations. In the new 007 project, Rami Malek plays the role of a terrorist; but it would not be "an Arabic speaking terrorist" or "a villain who uses religion as justification for his crimes"(White).

Valentino's Ghost (2012) directed by Michael Singh is a powerful documentary that tracks how the foreign policies of the US have influenced the Hollywood in the representation of Arabs and Muslims. The documentary traces the shift from the Arab as romantic heroes to the negative portrayals or the embodiment of evil in Hollywood movies. This 100-minute film gives a totally different perspective about the early portrayals of Arabs and Muslims as romantic heroes in 1920s. Rudolph Valentino was an Italian-born actor who made successful the romantic films of the silent era. He played lead roles in the movies like *The Sheik* (1921), *Son of the Sheik* (1926) and so on. In the next stage, with the invasion of France and Britain to the Middle East, Arabs were no longer seen as romantic heroes. They were portrayed in the movies and media as savage and red skinned

desert tribesmen. Michael Singh quotes the news headlines of New York Times to prove the argument that the invasion by foreigners was portrayed as Arabs attacking the foreigners not as defending their homeland. The headlines of 10 June 1920 was "ARABS MASSACRE BRITISH" (Singh 00:06:47). The perspective of the other was never shown in movies too. With the establishment of Israel as an independent state, the status of Arabs became the losers. The making of the movie *Exodus* (1960) by the US production house delivered one of the most brilliant pieces of propaganda. The movie became the modern "Birth of a Nation" and it unraveled the role of the US in the geopolitical milieu. But Islam became an enemy only after the Iran hostage crisis and its consequences still linger on. 9/11 elevated the status of Muslims to International fundamental terrorists and it deterritorialised terrorism. Steven Spielberg's *War of the Worlds* (2005) depicts a scene when aliens attack New Jersey. A young girl asks her father, "Is it the terrorists?" (31:34). It was like she has been raised to view terrorism as an omnipresent fear in her life.

Fig. 2 "Is it the terrorists?" the shot from *War of the Worlds* (00:31:34)

Media through the repeated footage of 9/11attack and movies with their everlasting love for terrorism and disaster mediated the minds of the viewers and that is clearly depicted in that scene. The cultivation theory of media finds a good example here. The movie was Spielberg's attempt to iconographically reimagine 9/11 as a catastrophe that struck the world. As Spielberg has stated, "I think 9/11 reinformed everything I'm putting into [the film]. . . . We now know what it feels like to be terrorized" (qtd. in McSweeney *The War on Terror* 16). *The 'War on Terror' and American Film: 9/11 Frames per Second* postulates that American cinema's obsession with 9/11 and the war on terror evokes the Freudian notion of 'repetition compulsion' in which the traumatized individual is repeatedly compelled to return to the traumatic event in an attempt to come to terms with the trauma (McSweeney17). The trauma is repeated to get over it. In that case, the frequent exposure to the fall of the twin towers through the movies acted like a therapeutic healing. The collective trauma is healed through a collective cultural production and exposure to it.

However, in Jack Shaheen's latest book, *Guilty: Hollywood's Verdict on Arabs after 9/11,* he optimistically states that an important number of post-9/11 Hollywood films present a less biased portrayal of Arabs. He remarks that "refreshingly, about a third of the post-9/11 films […] a total of 29, projected worthy Arabs and decent Arab Americans: Arab champions–men and women–are displayed in 19 movies; Arab Americans appear as decent folk in 10 of 11 films" (xv). Is it a gradual shift in perception? Is it that the social and cultural atmosphere has changed? Is there any contradiction in the real and the reel regarding the status of Muslim? All

these questions will be addressed in this chapter. For this, films have to be closely analyzed to know the socio-political ethos of the age after September 11. More patterns of representations need to be identified moving away from stereotypes and under representation.

Some of the major trends that have emerged after September 11 apart from the reductionist stereotypes are the portrayal of Muslims as good and saintly, sympathetic portrayal of Muslims and negotiated balancing. All these are the need of the time to muddle through the era of "post-racism" as addressed by Evelyn Alsultany (12). Alsultany calls the 9/11 era as post-race era because of the racist policies and practices after 9/11. Another pattern of representation which stands apart from these categorizations, cutting across the various strategies, is the humanistic portrayal of Muslims which is called in this thesis as "rhizomatic pattern" borrowing the term from Gilles Deleuze which will be elaborated later. All these strategies of representative visual narration can be supplemented with examples mostly from Hollywood movies. The movies that are selected and discussed in detail will be elaborately analyzed in the coming chapters. Other movies which can be classed under the broad head "9/11 category" and the narrowed down head "post September 11 movies" are discussed as examples for diverse patterns of representation. These representations together create a part of history: film as well as political history.

Saintly representations, as the word suggests, portray Muslims as "saints" without any human flaws. It will not be of any problem in the context of a plethora of representations. It becomes a problem when the meager number of

representations of Muslims turns to be saintly when the socio political reality is totally antagonistic and different. On the other hand such representations help to generate a different perspective. One such film of the post September 11 milieu which can be classed under saintly representation is *The Space Between* (2010). *The Space Between* is written and directed by Travis Fine that premiered at the 2010 Tribeca Film Festival. The film is a fictional account of a flight attendant who finds herself responsible for an unaccompanied minor on the morning of the September 11 attacks. Montine McLeod (Melissa Leo) is an alcoholic flight attendant whose husband died in the Oklahoma City bombing. Omar (Anthony Keyvan) is a 10-year-old Pakistani American flying alone across country to an esteemed Muslim school in Los Angeles; a destination to which he has no desire to arrive and so he locks himself in the plane's lavatory, falls asleep and wakes up to an empty plane. The day was September 11 and the plane was grounded in an emergency and the fall of twin towers is shown on TV. From that moment onwards Omar becomes Montine's responsibility. The movie develops as a road movie, Montine taking Omar in a car to New York to meet his father who works in the WTC during day time. Montine is portrayed as a gruff alcoholic woman who couldn't get over from the tragedy that struck her husband. All the Muslim characters are saintly. The innocence and saintly appearance of Omar is supplemented by his all-good father and the school authorities. The film's main focus is definitely on the relationship drawn between Montine and Omar where Omar's religious identity has mounted the differences between the two. The identity of Omar being a Muslim who hates the use of abusive words, despises alcohol stands apart in the cultural landscape of the US. The cultural difference is brought out in a positive way creating a bond between them. The film

tells about the loss of the loved ones in terrorist attacks and the path of survival.

Both the main characters are victims of terrorist act; Montine of Oklahoma City

Bombing and Omar of 9/11. The historical temporal points in the movie are

bookended by the Oklahoma City Bombing in 1995 and WTC attacks in 2001. By

placing the movie at these temporal references, the movie strategically talks about

domestic terrorism which caused the bombing of the Alfred P. Murra Federal

Building in Oklahoma contrasted to the global terrorism of 9/11. The Oklahoma

City bombing occurred on 19 April 1995 was regarded as the worst terrorist attack

on U. S. soil till 9/11. The blast was set off by anti-government militant Timothy

McVeigh along with his co-conspirator Terry Nichols (History). The film reminds of

domestic terrorism manipulated by American citizens against the policies of the

government. But that act was regarded as a crime. As Chomsky says, "there was a

search for the perpetrator, who was found, brought to court, and sentenced, and there

were efforts to understand the grievances that lie behind such crimes and to address

the problems (*9-11* 24-25). In the movie there is a deliberate attempt to link both

domestic terrorism and global terrorism.

The sympathetic portrayal of Muslims has emerged in the post September

11 milieu. Here we can see that Muslims are portrayed as victims. It is quite a

paradox to note that sympathetic portrayals of Muslims was enhancing in number at

a time when hate crimes against Muslims were rising high; bullying and assaulting

Muslim men and women on streets were getting high; pulling off veil or niqab in

public places were ruthlessly done; US patriot act was implemented curtailing the

individual rights of a particular class under the label National security and Terror

suspects. Alsultany argues that, "According to the FBI, hate crimes against Arabs and Muslims multiplied by 1,600 percent from 2000 to 2001" (4). It has become the new law of "neoracism": antiracial and multicultural on the surface and at the same time finding out ways of governance to legitimize racist ideology beneath. Alsultany says, "the Other is not demonized to justify war and injustice. Now the other is portrayed sympathetically to project the United States as an enlightened country that has entered a post racial era" (16). Alsultany says that post-racial discourses started off shortly after the civil war and such discourses reappeared at the end of civil rights movement of the 1960s and later after the multicultural movements of the 1990s. Such discourses ensured at each point that American cultural context is racially progressing and racial discriminations never occur in the land. When all such progressive discourses were going on at the surface level, the deeper reality was totally different. Alsultany argues by quoting Howard Winant that,

> … while on the surface institutions implemented policies that advocated
> racial equality, in practice a repackaged version of white supremacy in the
> guise of color blindness was produced. In this notion of color blindness,
> racial inequality persists by "still resorting to exclusionism and scapegoating
> when politically necessary, still invoking the supposed superiority of
> 'mainstream' (aka white) values, and cheerfully maintaining that equality has
> been largely achieved."(14)

The same antiracial strategy prevails when the prisoners of Guantanamo Bay are given copies of Quran and tortured at the other end. Stereotyping and demonizing the enemy or the other has become obsolete or it has found new forms. As Ella

Shohat, Robert Stam, Herman Gray, and other cultural studies scholars have shown,

focusing on whether or not a particular image is either good or bad does not

necessarily address the complexity of representation. Thus racism has to be

reconfigured; "accomplished through media projection of a diverse and united US

citizenry and simultaneous racialization and criminalization of Arabs and Islam by

the Bush Administration" (Alsultany 53). Sympathy has become a key emotion that

emerged after 9/11. It displays the humane elements that is present within the so

called racist society and such an emotion towards the chosen other, actually elevates

them from the doom of racism to an enlightened one who can differentiate between

"good" ones and "bad" ones.

According to the political Philosopher Giorgio Agamben, ambivalence – the

ability to regard the same act as both unjustifiable and necessary – is central to the

sovereign power of modern democracies (Alsultany 53). This ambivalence is well

found at all levels of the US governance in the post September scenario. The

established codes and procedures are suspended in the name of exceptions and the

state of exceptions, Agamben writes, becomes "the hidden foundation on which the

entire political system rests" (qtd. in Alsultany 53). This state explains the

institutionalized racism which became more targeted towards Muslim as the other.

The actual events that happened after 9/11 emphasize this point; within three months

after the tragic event "over one hundred Muslims reported to the Council on

American Islamic Relations that non-Muslim passengers complained about (and in

some cases refused to fly with) them; some of these people deemed untrustworthy

because of their skin color or their head dress were removed from flights" (Alsultany

51).Woes also included extra searches, racial profiling barring from flying, to name a few.

Hollywood took five years to film the September 11 incident. The movie *United 93* (2006) is the only Hollywood production which attempts to portray the true account of the hijacking of the plane by Muslim terrorists. Still the trailer of the movie was not received well since the trauma of the incident was not yet over. "Los Angeles audience members yelled "Too soon" at *United 93* trailer, which a New York theatre withdrew after complaints" (Morris 149). The movie is directed by Paul Greengrass, a British film director, screen writer and producer who is best known for his handheld camera shots. He is renowned for his movie *Bloody Sunday* (2002), which won him Golden Bear at Berlin International Film Festival, and *Bourne series* (2002-2016). His command of realist film style is well adopted in *Bloody Sunday* which portrayed an Irish protest march and how the British violently resisted it. *United 93* was nominated for Academy Award for best director and won for him BAFTA Award. *United 93* and *World Trade Centre* (2006), acclaimed as the only two direct accounts of 11th September, choose to focus on the heroism and redemption of the day rather than on the great loss of life or the historic-political context of the attacks. The former one is eager to focus on the public as heroes who saved the nation sacrificing their lives; the latter being tales of individual heroes.

The film recreated the hijacked flight in which the passengers revolted and made the plane crash in Shanksville, Pennsylvania. The film is notable for its highly realistic depiction of the incident with no typical individualized heroes of Hollywood. Ordinary men and women engaged in their mundane everyday lives

become the characters of the movie. No character rises to the position of the so called Hollywood hero. Even the terrorists are portrayed as with conflict and confused. The technical side of the making of the movie well compliments the content of the movie in the first watching. The handheld camera, sometimes erratic movements, low key, focus shifts and jump cuts help the film to be more realistic. The failure of the government agencies including the Military to tackle an emergency is depicted in the movie. "The hijackers are portrayed as frightened but committed young Muslim men, and there is no comic-book caricature or demonization of Arabs and Muslims such as one finds in typical generic Hollywood thrillers" (Kellner 103). At no point in the movie, *United 93* becomes a melodrama though the film is tragic. *United 93* will be analyzed in detail in the coming chapter.

The film begins with the chanting of Arabic verses from Quran even before the first visual of Quran is shown. The film is rich with visual metaphors which are suggestive of the clash of the East and the West. The film is a struggle between terrorists and common men where the common men become the heroes by sacrificing themselves for the nation. The terrorists, though not demonized, are presented as one dimensional characters. As Inga Meier in the thesis titled "Deconstructing 'The Abyss of the Future': Theatre, Performance, and Holes in the Discourse of 9/11" notes, "great care is taken to humanize the passengers whose characterizations are constructed based upon the recollections of family members and loved ones, no similar care is taken with the terrorists, who are instead dehumanized within the larger melodramatic framework" (192). The terrorists are there with a motive just because of the reason that they are different from the

ordinary passengers who are engaged in their mundane chit chats. The terrorists only exchange glances and once they succeed in terrorizing the passengers and hijack the plane, they utter Allah frequently; whereas the passengers depend on God. The same pattern of representing a terrorist with Quran, yelling "Allahu" is followed here. More such grey areas are elaborated in the third chapter.

World Trade Centre though categorized as a typical 9/11 movie, does not belong to the post September 11 category as discussed in this project. The movie perfectly well reflects the post 9/11 scenario and the ethos of a nation which has faced a deadly catastrophe. The film is directed by Oliver Stone who is famous for the critical approach on the domestic and foreign policies of the US in his earlier films like *Platoon* (1986), *Wall Street* (1987) and *JFK* (1991) and in his interviews. The movie narrates the heroic tale of two ordinary police officers on the September 11, 2001 caught up in the rubbles of the fall of the towers. The narrative focuses too much on the events happening to them thus excluding other narratives on the day. Unlike other movies of Stone, which are politically charged and critiquing, *World Trade Centre* is not at all political in its content. The casting of Nicholas Cage as the lead character also made this movie yet another Hollywood disaster movie with all heroic qualities.

The critical cultural studies approach this research wants to put forward argues that positive or negative portrayals will not sufficiently address the complexities of representation. Hence, the third pattern of representation can be called as negotiated balance; the one which seeks to balance a negative representation with a positive one, what Alsultany calls as "simplified complex

representations" (14). If an Arab or Muslim terrorist is portrayed in a film, then a "positive" representation of an Arab or Muslim is also deliberately included. This pattern is another trend which triggered after 9/11 when the entire cultural productions had a second thought about the portrayal of Muslims. This strategy challenges former stereotypical representation and contribute to an all inclusive multicultural world in the first glance. But such representations have a serious pitfall of fixing the roles in the binary boxes of good and bad Muslims. This echoes Mahmood Mamdani's claim that after 9/11 public debates have focused more on polarizing Muslims as either good or bad: though the goodness or badness is determined by the affinity and allegiance toward the nation state. Mamdani attempts to explain the dichotomy already placed by the then President George W. Bush that "bad Muslims" were clearly responsible for the terrorist acts and "good Muslims" would undoubtedly support the war against "them" (15). But he further argues that this dichotomy hides the central message of the discourse that says "unless proved to be "good", every Muslim was presumed to be bad" (15). This kind of representation juxtaposes the good Muslim and bad Muslim sidelining the hitherto way of representing Muslims as the other or enemy with all evil embodiments. It takes a step forward though superficially. Proving allegiance to the US nation has become the standard benchmark to qualify oneself as "good" Muslim. "Good Muslims" are obliged to fight against terrorism. Evelyn Alsultany elaborates "simplified complex representation" though in the context of representation of Muslims in television media. It can be applied in the studies of films also. The strategies include the inclusion of patriotic Arab or Muslim Americans, sympathizing with the plight of Arab and Muslim Americans after 9/11, flipping the enemy and humanizing the

terrorist. The injustice towards victims of violence and harassment are sympathized. The torture happening around in the detention centre and undue detaining of prisoners are sidelined and national security is projected. Throughout the discourses, the torture is presented as beneficial to save people's lives. These strategies create the atmosphere of antiracism and tolerance in the multicultural context despite the array of legal policies targeting Muslims and the harassments happening at the quotidian realm. The daily life tortures are burdened by the implementation of USA Patriot Act which shall be discussed in detail in the next chapter. Alsultany elaborates the post 9/11 reality thus:

> According to the FBI, hate crimes against Arabs and Muslims multiplied by 1,600 percent from 2000 to 2001. In just the first weeks and months after 9/11, Amnesty International, the Council on American-Islamic Relations, the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, and other organizations documented hundreds of violent incidents experienced by Arab and Muslim Americans and people mistaken for Arabs or Muslim Americans, including several murders ... And some non-Muslim women even began wearing the hijab (head scarf) as an act of solidarity. (4)

But movies and other media representations take a deliberate step to cover up these bitter realities by portraying good Muslims along with a bad one. This is one way of subverting history since movies are recorded histories. All these projects consciously or unconsciously help to project a politically correct multinational, multicultural society circumventing the accusation of racism. The Americans thus removed their guilt towards their enemy and thus avoided the critique of moral degradation.

Almost all post September film narratives make use of these strategies consciously or unconsciously. Such representations create a complex space of narration which is intentionally made to maintain larger viewership, perhaps. Since capital is fundamentally the base of films, such attempts pay lip service to post-racism. Since movie is an "industrial art" form, as Deleuze calls, it cannot dissociate itself from the capital (*Cinema* 6).

The best example for this pattern of representation is the movie *Rendition* directed by Gavin Hood. *Rendition* (2007), according to Shaheen, presents apparently "fair and balanced images" of Muslims (*Guilty* 36). Gavin Hood is a South African film maker, screen writer and producer who is best known for his Academy Award winning movie *Tsotsi* (2005). The movie *Rendition* tells the story of Anwar el Ibrahimi, an Egyptian born American Chemical Engineer as a victim of torture in one of the detention camps. The "good Muslim" Abasi Fawal and Anwar are juxtaposed with the "bad Muslim" Ahmed. The film reminds the audience of the fears and insecurities faced by Muslim community after 9/11. Jack Shaheen recommends the film as an "even handed and honorable" portrayal of Muslims (*Guilty* 155). This movie would be examined in detail to study the different strategies and nuances of representation or misrepresentation of Muslims in the third chapter. This offsetting of the negative and positive portrayals can be watched in some Bollywood movies also, which can be categorised under the 9/11 genre, like the movies *Kurbaan* (2009) and *New York* (2009).

Amidst a number of post 9/11 cinematic representation from Hollywood, the Pakistani movie *Khuda Ke Liye* (2007) has created an impact, worldwide, with the

burning issue of the global word: Islamic Fundamentalism. This movie is another

example which has deliberately adapted this strategy of negotiated balancing.

Khuda ke liye (*In the Name of God*) is a family drama directed by Shoaib Mansoor.

The film posits a clash of ideology between two strands of Islam; the fundamentalist

Mansoor (Shaan Shahid), views and sermons of Mullah Tahiri (Rasheed Naz) and

the liberal face of Islam advocated by Sarmad (Fawad Khan) and Maulana Wali

(Naseeruddin Shah). On the one side we have all the stereotypical versions of Islam:

an orthodox religion which treats music and arts as "haraam" (forbidden), denying

women their rights, giving sermons on "jihad", brainwashing the young Pakistanis.

These images are the ones which are so familiar to the Western audience.

Moreover, the oriental ideas are reasserted. But the liberal face of Islam as a religion

was quite a surprising one in the movie for the prejudiced racist minds. The

enlightened seer Maulana Wali wins the argument with the fundamentalists by

quoting from religious texts, going to the extent of proving that Islam is neither anti-

woman nor does it frown upon music and arts. He lashes against the outward rituals,

dogmas and conservative thoughts. Though some scenes in the movie appear to be

amateurish and sentimental, some stands out in its conceptual framework. The first

ten minutes set in three different countries, Chicago, Lahore and London, introduce

the theme of the movie. By setting in three different places with the same theme of

"What is Islam" and "How the world perceives Islam", the film achieves a

transnational outlook discussing a globally relevant theme in the post 9/11 world.

The movie is a reply to those audiences who have prejudiced perception about

Pakistan as a land of havoc and terrorist activities.

Another pattern of representation is by and large an idealist representation which portrays Muslim as one among the many in the *rhizomatic* structure of existence. Rhizome is a philosophical contribution by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari based on the botanical rhizome that grows perpendicularly and horizontally from all nodes. In philosophy, the concept of rhizome is based on the notion of multiplicity with non hierarchical entry and exit points. As Deleuze and Guattari summarises their thought in the introduction to *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schezophrenia* thus:

> … unlike trees or their roots, the rhizome connects any point to any other point, and its traits are not necessarily linked to traits of the same nature; it brings into play very different regimes of signs, and even non-sign states. The rhizome is reducible neither to the One nor the multiple. It is not the One that becomes Two or even directly three, four, five, etc. It is not a multiple derived from the One, or to which One is added (n + 1). It is composed not of units but of dimensions, or rather directions in motion. It has neither beginning nor end, but always a middle (milieu) from which it grows and which it overspills. (21)

Zygmunt Bauman's idea about liquid modern living perfectly coordinates with Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy. Bauman explains how liquid modern living is constructed as a map rather than a closed book with rooted and structured existence which is the same as that of rhizome as a metaphor. Unlike the reductionist and essentialist approach of representations discussed earlier, this pattern shows the existence of the individual in a constant state of becoming rather than being. The

individual under question has every possibility of expansion, and a sort of unpredictability is inevitable. It emerges out of the liquid modern state of living where it is constructed as an open map without the privilege of any particular direction or rootedness. It undergoes incessant modifications which are quite unpredictable. This is how Bauman elaborates the liquid modernity and its rhizomatic identity. These identities thrive on its ambivalences.

The best examples for this category in the pre September 11 movies are *Three Kings (1999)*, *Hanna K* (1983)and *13th Warrior* (1999). In the post September 11 category as discussed in this study, we have some characters which fulfill this feature. Best ones are some of the characters in *Mooz-lum* (2011), *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2012), *Brick Lane* (2007) and *Yasmin* (2004). No film completely falls in a category; they have overlapping features. So these categorizations are not water tight compartments.

Mooz-lum is one such movie that depicts Muslims as "normal" human beings. It is an American independent film written and directed by Qasim "Q" Basir. Basir's intention in the making of such a movie was to "shed some light and humanize a group of people who have been demonized for far too long" (Martin). It tells the story of an African American Muslim family whose lives are changed by the September 11 attacks. The movie narrates the story of a young Muslim boy Tariq Mahdi (Evan Ross) growing up as a Muslim in America revealing his challenges, his rebellion and most of all his emotional struggle in accepting the religion that he was born into while living in the country that sometimes reject and ridicule it. Tariq was raised in a strict Muslim family and later in a rigid Muslim school. His father Hassan

Mahdi (Roger Smith) wants his son to be a scholar in Koran, though his mother

Safiya Mahdi (Nia Long) wishes her children to fit in with their peers and difference

of opinion regarding their son's education leads to their separation. Thus Tariq was

sent to the religious school to learn Koran. After school, Tariq finds trouble to adjust

to the secular life once he joins in a college in Michigan University and later he joins

the group with effort. Tariq or "T", as he likes to be called, is not comfortable with

Muslim friends or his family members after the torturous incidents that he has to

face from his school. He represents a confused Muslim in the US which is torn apart

on 9/11.The coming of age of Tariq is well narrated in the movie in the backdrop of

the anxieties of the Muslims on and post September 11. The movie has given space

to a strong woman representation in the character of Tariq's mother Safiya Mahdi

(Nia Long). She plays the role of a skeptical but modest, committed and determined

Muslim who has the potential to take a stand at times of disagreement with her

husband. Muslim women as a matter of convention are always portrayed as veiled

and thus oppressed and the role of Safiya, though not fully developed in the movie,

is an exception.

The Reluctant Fundamentalist, though not a Hollywood movie, wholly fits

into post September 11 category that the research has framed. The movie is "the

enigmatic coming of age story" of Changez khan, who loves America, pursues

American dream and then, as the world changes after 9/11, seeks his true self and

identity. The film was directed by Mira Nair based on the novel of the same title by

Mohsin Hamid. The movie was premiered at Venice International Film Festival and

Toronto International Film Festival. The film encounters the dialogue between

Changez and Bobby, the East and the West, with all the mutual suspicions. Mira

Nair has made every attempt to showcase Pakistan, unlike the usual ones we are

familiar with through media and Hollywood portrayals. Mira Nair says, "One of the

joys of making *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* was revealing Pakistan … with its

extraordinary refinement, the searing poetry of Faiz, its heart-stopping Sufi music

and ancient culture that is confident in fashion, painting and performance"(*From*

Book to Film xii).

If *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* is a movie about a Lahori with American

dream and how 9/11 changes the perspectives about oneself and the world, *Brick*

Lane is a movie about a Bangladeshi Muslim woman whose attempt to cope with a

post 9/11 environment that liberates her from the traditional gender roles of the

patriarchal world. *Brick Lane* (2007) is a British film directed by Sarah Gavron;

adapted from the novel of the same title written by Monica Ali. Brick lane is a long

narrow street in London Borough of Tower Hamlets often called the East End, a

place where most Bangladeshi immigrants are concentrated. The film tells the story

of emotional growth of Nazneen who was born and brought up in Bangladesh.

Nazneen had an early marriage at the age of 17 to Chanu Ahmed who was twice her

age and she was taken to London. Living through a multicultural urban milieu

radically different from that she was born into, she was not social enough, even slips

away from the camera. A young man named Karim enters in her life. He was the

window to the outside world for Nazneen and she discovered Bosnia, Palestine and

Chechnia. Much of the film takes place within Nazneen's cluttered home. While

racism prevails in the community, especially from white supremacists groups, the

tension escalates after the events of September 11, 2001, compelling a debt-ridden Chanu to consider re-locating back to Dhaka. 9/11 has changed Karim; he started wearing Pyjama and skullcap. The uprisal of Muslims in the name of Bengal Tigers has started well before 9/11; but it got strengthened after September 11 to defend their religion. The movie discusses well the topics of gender inequality, religious conflicts, racism in the era of globalization. The film temporarily imprisons the world-view of the audience who watch it behind the bars. The entire world is peeped at through the curtained windows of Nazneen's home.

The collapse of the twin towers is watched on television and it is with fear mounted to despair that Nazneen sees it. The village girl Nazneen may not know the repercussions of the event but she knows the gravity of the situation through the words of two men of her lives: Chanu and Karim. Chanu immediately takes a decision to leave Britain, to go home. He is frightened of the back lashing which he was very much sure of. Karim, instead, wants to stay there since he believes it as his home. The Bengal Tiger Activism is strengthened to keep up the dignity of the believers of Islam. 9/11 changes the life of Thazneen also. She becomes a woman bold enough to turn down the proposal of Karim, not because she doesn't love him, and to say her mind for the first time to Chanu Ahmed, her husband that she doesn't want to go to Bangladesh. She takes up the responsibility of her two daughters and decides to live in London, which she calls "a pile of bricks". Sarah Gavron reveals about the film, "We're saturated with images of radical Islam, suicide bombers and wife beaters… all those stereotypes of the extreme version of the Muslim community" (Hillis *Interview*). The film moves ahead of the traditional stereotypes.

The framing of the film is found interesting in close analysis. The foregrounding of Nazneen's voice over, subjective camera shots and medium close-ups of the character show that Nazneen is the main character of the movie. But the way in which the main character Nazneen is framed within a shot produce a different reading. Though Nazneen is the central figure in the story, she is often seen marginalized within the frame shot along with other characters. She is always seen as standing uncertainly in doorways giving size and volume of the frame for other character or characters. The frame connotes the uncertain cultural status of the female generally and the Bangla Muslim world specifically. Though she is shocked at the 9/11 attacks and Chanu's precautious statement that nothing would be the same hereafter and it is going to be a difficult world for them, Nazneen seems to be cut away from the daily political life. She is daring enough to stay on in England for the sake of her daughters and herself. These movies *Mooz-lum*, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and *Brick Lane* are closely analyzed in the fourth chapter to trace the formation of Muslim subject. The rhizomatic nature of the characters like Tariq of *Mooz-lum*, Changez of *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and Nazneen of *Brick Lane* will be further explored in the upcoming chapter.

The often repeated statement by way of hate words or slogans or postures in almost all these movies is "Go back to home". In the movie *Yasmin*, it was written on the shutter of the shop run by Yasmin's father. *Yasmin* is a 2004 British film directed by Kenneth Glenan set in a Pakistani British community before and after the events of September 11. *Yasmin* is a condensed experience of a strong Pakistani woman of the same name who has to take her stand after 9/11. Yasmin Husseini

lives with her father, a staunch believer, her brother, and her husband. Divorce is at hand since Yasmin, an educated well bred Muslim, does not want to stick on to the family arranged marriage with Faysal who astonishes her with his rather non English and uncivilized existence. Living a traditional Muslim woman at home and a typical western woman at work place, Yasmin is forced to take sides after 9/11; she has to face harsh indifferent treatment from her colleagues at her workplace. She witnesses the atrocities and discrimination faced by Muslims on streets and later at home. Faysal gets arrested just for being different and for making phone calls to his brother in Pakistan, a teacher at a school suspected to be funded by Kashmir Liberation Force. The film is remarkable for its wide portrayal of characters ranging from the newly recruited Islam activist brother of Yasmin, her hopeful father Khalid Hosseini who mops off the hate words from the shutters of his radio repair shop, a White man John who woos Yasmin despite herself being a Muslim though her suggestion to accompany her to mosque one day bigot a look of shock on his face. The film is a solo journey of a Muslim woman to know about her heritage and identity. Though the film makes an attempt to achieve an inclusive multicultural society, the film is not without the stereotypical representations.

The major patterns of representation, thus, have moved away from stereotypical representations prying open some liminal spaces. These spaces help in opening up debates and discourses on Muslim identity in the post 9/11 scenario. 9/11 may not be a catastrophe or a global incident of immense impact; but it remains a watershed for Muslims as long as it transformed the representations on screen.

New terms like anti-Arab racism, post-racism and Islamophobia gain momentum in this context.

Islamophobia, which has its roots from xenophobia, has been studied and published by the British NGO, The Runnymede Trust in 1997. Their studies have influenced European Union to issue many reports on the same subject in the post 9/11 scenario. One such study of 104 public opinion polls conducted between 1998 and 2006 in Britain says that Islamophobia was on the rise because Muslims were viewed as "slow to integrate into mainstream society, feeling only a qualified sense of patriotism, and prone to espouse anti-Western values that lead many to condone so-called Islamic terrorism"(qtd. in Al-Rawi 154). The Runnymede Trust defines Islamophobia as "an 'unfounded hostility towards Islam' or the 'practical conse-quences of such hostility in unfair discrimination against Muslim individuals and communities, and to the exclusion of Muslims from mainstream political and social affairs" (3). Media plays a major role in shaping and controlling such discriminatory and hostile images about Muslims and Islam as a religion.

Post September 11 America has witnessed a clear line of demarcation between "Us" and "Them". The then President George Bush's words "They are targeting our way of life"; "they have attacked America because we are freedom's home and defenders" point to this direction ("President's Remarks"). This demarcation has been evident in the cultural trauma too; the Muslims facing a trauma totally different from that of the non Muslims. The movies analyzed in the research also emphasize this. The Muslims of the post September milieu are burdened with the constant pressure of displaying allegiance to their nation and their

religion. The identity of Muslim has undergone a tremendous change in the post September era. As Kracauer has noted, films are able to function as potent embodiment of national discourse.

Major movies of the Hollywood of the post 9/11milieu substantiates the argument that movies reflect the outer reality. A casual look at the films produced after 9/11 provides the political zeitgeist. The movies of Steven Spielberg, for example, give out the concerns of the American society. He is one of the major directors of Hollywood who took effort in finding out the larger meaning of 9/11. Through his movies he largely enquired the impact of 9/11 and how 9/11 has to be placed in a larger global political domain. If *Minority Report* (2002) imagines a future of domestic surveillance which perfectly synchs with the Bush administration of the era, *The Terminal* (2004) sketches the statement that "America is closed". After 9/11, the Bush administration was keen on enhancing domestic surveillance and the US patriot law was soon implemented which took away the civil liberties of those under suspicion. Similar to the situation, in the movie *Minority Report*, the government manifested interests in tracking evidence for pre-crime. Though it can be called as a 9/11 movie, it portrays a futuristic society where even the very thought of a crime begets a punishment which can find its parallel in the American political context. The justification for torture is always given as to "to save people's lives". Donald Trump, during his election campaign in 2015, has stressed the point that he approves "waterboarding", an interrogation or torture method, which involves simulative drowning, scrapped by the Bush administration after years of protests from the Human Rights activists. Water boarding was banned in US in 2006.

Trump's first contention was that "it works" and later he added "… and if it doesn't work, they deserve it anyway for what they do to us" (Jacobs "Donald Trump").

War of the worlds (2005) is a movie by Spielberg about a panicked world where trust is lost. Spielberg could evoke the day in the movie by his use of the 9/11 image of crowds of Manhattan fleeing on the street. The images can be summarized thus: the destruction of an American city street; large number of people fleeing and running havoc, falling down of huge buildings; men covered in ash and dust; photos of missing people pasted on boards. All these are reminiscent of the day September 11, 2001. *Munich* (2005) is a direct visual rendering of the violence caused by terrorism and the movie places 9/11 in a global context. Though the incident that is portrayed in the movie took place more than quarter of a century ago, Spielberg and the screenwriter Tony Kushner bring out connections between the terrorism at Munich and 9/11 as an aftermath. Simon Reeve wrote that "the events in Munich were the beginning of the modern era of international terrorism. The Munich attack was the 9/11 of the 1970s. Millions of Germans, and hundreds of millions of other viewers around the world, watched transfixed as hooded gunmen stepped onto the global stage and orchestrated a theatrical and bloody day-long siege that ended in a massacre" (260).

9/11 has created a cultural trauma. Major share of the films categorized under Post September 11 movies can be classed under trauma studies. In *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity* Jeffrey Alexander argues that a cultural trauma occurs "when members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness,

marking their memories forever and changing their identity in fundamental and irrevocable way" (W L T Mitchell 9). It is this cultural trauma which makes the young girl in Steven Spielberg's *War of the Worlds* asks her father when aliens attack New Jersey, "Is it the terrorists?" Or is it the ubiquitous circulation of terrorist images in movies and TVs that posed such a question?

Post September 11 movies showcase some of the traumas and conflicts the individuals have gone through; major movies being *Reign Over me* (2007), *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* (2011), *World Trade Centre* (2006), *Knowing* (2009), *WTC View* (2004), *25th Hour* (2002), *Dear John* (2010), *Remember Me* (2010), *Julie and Julia* (2009) *and The War Within* (2005). Among these if *World Trade Centre* gives a survivor's account, *WTC View* renders a witness account of the incident. All these movies depict 9/11 as a backdrop or culmination point but some of them do not have either Muslim representations or 9/11 as their main themes which happened to be the line of demarcation for the project.

Douglas Kellner argues in *Cinema Wars: Hollywood Film, Politics and Bush-Cheney Era* that movies can also provide allegorical representations of the contemporary socio-political milieu. *There will be Blood* (2007) and *V for Vendetta* (2005) can be cited as best examples for the allegories of the post 9/11 period. *There will be blood* is an adaptation of the novel titled *Oil!* written by Upton Sinclair and filmed by Paul Thomas Anderson. The film is widely acclaimed by both the audience and critics. It tells the story of the oilman Daniel Plainview (Daniel Day Lewis) and his greed for power and money. Kellner argues that the movie can be read as "an allegory about the Bush-Cheney Iraq invasion" (16). The movie

allegorically narrates the rise and fall of the hyper masculine American power. Though the movie does not have any direct connection to the September 11 attack or post September milieu, it places American geopolitical strategies in the Middle East under harsh criticism.

Other movies cited as examples for allegorical representation about the Bush administration are *V for Vendetta* (2006), *No Country for Old Men* (2007), *The Manchurian Candidate* (2004), *Batman Begins* (2005) and *Syriana* (2005) (16). *No Country for Old men*, written and directed by Coen Brothers, can be read as an allegory of the impotence of law and order in the age of Terror, though the film opens up possibilities of multiple readings. *V for Vendetta,* directed by James McTeigue with the script by the famous Wachowski Brothers, clearly tells us about an age where Quran is forbidden, homosexuals are punished, and torture is the watch word of the time (Kellner 190). Though the movie talks about a future dystopic Britain, the film makes conspicuous references to the words like "rendition", "collateral" and "terror" which critique and directly signify Bush-Cheney America. These associate the movie to the post September milieu where detention, rendition, extraordinary rendition, war on terror, collateral damage etc have become everyday terms.

Syriana (2005) directed by Stephen Gaghan takes a tour to the geopolitical history of oil business and the production of terrorism as a byproduct. The film operates at multiple locations and multiple plots moving at a fast pace making it a complex narration. It could prompt the viewers to question the existing world

policies. The film successfully attempts to map the contemporary geopolitical policies and the struggle in the West Asia. Kellner comments that:

> *Syriana* transcodes mistrust of oil corporations and Arab sheiks, the CIA and government agencies, and their imbrication in criminal activities and terrorism. In intertwining stories about the Middle East, oil corporations contending for markets, Gulf emirs pushing competing national and US/corporate interests, Islamic terrorists and the CIA, and politicians acting with the various interests, the film comments allegorically on the nexus of powers wreaking havoc. (169)

Another Hollywood movie that focuses on the issues of the US with West Asia especially the Arab countries is Peter Berg's *The Kingdom* (2007). The movie addresses the highly sensitive issues in US foreign policy particularly the relation with Saudi Arabia and the connection to terrorism. But the movie as a whole pictures Arabs in the Manichean terms of good and bad. Good Arabs are futile, impotent and "imperiled" Saudis who seek the help of the FBI to eliminate the bad and "dangerous" terrorists sacrificing their lives for more murder. The film follows the features of a political thriller and ends dramatically in "civilized" Americans succeeding in blowing up the entire terrorist group. The movie perfectly well acted as a justification for the American "war on terror" on Iraq and Afghanistan. The movie has helped in reaffirming the western Oriental perspective about the Arabs and Muslims.

Post 9/11 movies which render a multicultural perspective include movies like *Amreeka* (2009) and *AmericanEast* (2008). *Amreeka* is a movie directed by

Cherien Dabis and it portrays the struggles and trauma that a Palestinian family has to face in the post September 11 America though they were not Muslims. The physical and mental harassment and bullying faced by the members of the family on public places like streets, workplaces and schools are picturised in the background of the attack on Iraq. The film addresses the prejudices and preconceived notions about Palestine and the people from there. The "relation" between US and Palestine is brought to the foreground. *AmericanEast*, directed by Hesham Issawi, depicts the story of Arab Americans in times of terror. The plot centers on Habibe's café in Los Angeles run by an Egyptian immigrant. The café is a meeting place for Arab Americans mostly coming from the West Asia. The movie reveals the pain and struggles of Arab Americans in the post September 11 cultural and political landscape. A subplot of the life of Omar who is a regular customer to the café is thought-provoking. Omar (Kais Nashef) struggles hard to become an actor in movies by working part time as a cabdriver. Because of his Arab accent and looks, he always gets chances to play the role of a terrorist in American TV shows. He is tired of doing that stuff and when gets a chance for audition to cast in a film, he could not reach there in time and he was rejected. The film represents the pressure and struggle that a Muslim Arab American has to go through in his pursuit of a living and happiness.

Post 9/11 movies as a category is not without its share on love story and comedy. The movie *Yes* (2004), written and directed by Sally Porter, is a British production. It is described by Jonathan Rosenbaum in *The Chicago Reader* as "Love in the Time of Terror" or love poem in the age of terror as it is written in verse-

iambic pentameter. September 11 has its repercussions on the rest of the world and this movie tells the story of a love story of an Irish-American woman scientist and a Lebanese Muslim doctor working in England as chef. Sally porter said in a discussion on the making of this movie: "I thought a good starting point was a love story between a man from the Middle East and a Western woman, in which love and attraction initially transcend difference. But when world events, history, and national identity can no longer be kept out of the relationship, they have to slug it out" (Rosenbaum). *Harold and Kumar Escape from Guantanamo* (2008) is an American comedy from the Harold and Kumar Series. The movie is directed by Jon Hurwitz and Hayden Schlosberg. The film adopts a lighter vein of mistaking themselves as terrorists in an airport and the adventures/struggles that follow.

Far more interesting are the number of Indian filmic imaginations on 9/11. The research has found out eight Indian movies out of which two are English movies, one Tamil movie and six Bollywood contributions. The number reveals that 9/11 has been an interesting topos in the Bollywood especially. All have migration, hybridity and Muslim identity as the common major themes apart from love, fears and prejudices. The movies are *Hope and a little Sugar* (2006), *Viswaroopam* (2013), *New York* (2009), *My Name is Khan* (2010), *Kurbaan* (2009), *Tere Bin Laden* (2010), *Yun Hota To Kya Hota* (2006) and *I am Singh* (2011).

Hope and a Little Sugar, directed by Tanuja Chandra, is an English movie set in New York in 2001. The film portrays the cultural locale of New York before and after the attack of the twin towers. The film focuses a Muslim protagonist Ali Sidiqi who left India to find a better place. He is a victim to anti-Muslim violence in

his homeland and his migration was in pursuit of American dream. Indeed, the film makes use of 9/11 as a background to go deeper into the status of Muslims in India and abroad. Indian domestic context has a complex history of conflicts and clashes between Hindus or Sikhs on the one end and Muslims on the other hand. All these issues are set in the background of a global space where multiculturalism becomes the catch word. In the global space of cosmopolitanism Muslim identity poses a question. The image of the traitors of the national space becomes a terrorist at the global space. In one scene, Sidiqi faces a slew of question from his lover's father Harry:

> HARRY: what do those people want? Do they want to burn this world? Why don't you go back to your homes? Why don't you burn your own home? Why don't you kill your own people?

The initial "they" as the distant other is spontaneously changed to the proximate "you". Sidiqi becomes, at once, answerable for the terrorist activities that killed Harry's son on September 11.

New York, directed by Kabir Khan, depicts the story of three people who study at New York State University and how 9/11 has changed their lives. It narrates the tales of detention centres and torture and attempts to justify how militant Muslims involve in terrorism. The film is a typical Bollywood movie with the usual music, songs and flashbacks. In John Abraham's words in an interview, the movie tells "the way America looks at a certain section of a community and the way that community looks at America" (Jamkandikar). Like any other post September movies, New York too brings out the trauma and horror that Muslims have to go

through during the days of the strike and after. It was after *New York* that commercial Bollywood industry produced a hit like *My name is Khan* in 2010 with Shah Rukh Khan in its lead character.

My Name is Khan, directed by Karan Johar, tells the story of a Muslim man named Rizwan Khan who suffers from Asperger's syndrome. The film entirely focuses on the Muslim identity of Rizwan Khan in India and the US. Rizwan khan embarks on a journey to meet the President of USA to tell that his name is Khan and he is not a terrorist. His meeting with many ethnic communities living in the margins along his journey tries to bring out the trauma and conflicts that the war on terror has inflicted. The point of view of narration shifts from the centre to the margins. Though presented as a melodrama, the film was a blockbuster in India as well as abroad. But the film was criticized for its binary pattern of classifying men as good and evil. The film explores the ways in which Muslim names, images, prayers, reciting *Bismillah* at public places and wearing skull cap or hijab are perceived and interpreted or misinterpreted by the dominant gaze. In an article entitled, "Being a Khan," Shahrukh Khan wrote:

> We create little image boxes of our own. One such box has begun to draw its lid tighter and tighter at present. It is the box that contains an image of my religion in millions of minds. I encounter this tightening of definition every time moderation is required to be publically expressed by the Muslim community in my country. Whenever there is an act of violence in the name of Islam, I am called upon to air my views on it and dispel the notion that by virtue of being a Muslim, I condone such senseless brutality. I am one of

those voices chosen to represent my community in order to prevent other communities from reacting to all of us as if we were somehow colluding with or responsible for the crimes committed in the name of a religion that we experience entirely differently from the perpetrators of these crimes.

Thus, 9/11 has reaffirmed the identity of a Muslim as the "other". He is constantly at stake to prove his innocence and thus to show his commitment to the state. All the Indian visual representations of 9/11 focus on the identity of the Muslim and 9/11 has changed it or whether 9/11 has brought any change to it. The cultural significance of 9/11 has not only demanded representations from India or Pakistan. It has global significance and many attempted to conceive the global perspectives on 9/11.

The best example for global standpoints on the incident 9/11 is the omnibus movie *September 11* (also titled as *11'09''1*). In part, the attacks have provided an opportunity for some overseas film makers to address the U.S. on its foreign policies and standing in the world. As *11'09''1* demonstrates, the international views are diverse and, at times, are more skeptical and critical of U.S. foreign policy than what one finds in American movies. It is an international collection of films of 11 minutes and 9 seconds duration directed by 11 directors from across the globe thus placing 9/11 in a global scenario, aiming at a global audience too; the film got released on September 11, 2002 at Toronto Film Festival. It is reminiscent of the collective films *Far From Vietnam* (1967) which was made as an act of conscience against the war in Vietnam and *Germany in Automn* (1978) that portrayed the terrorist incidents of the 1970s which came to be called German Automn. *September 11* has

documentary, fiction and experimental mode of visual narratives. The producer Alan

Brigand was the man who wanted to make this project keeping the formalistic

design intact. All the films follow a uniform conceptual design focusing on time and

space as insisted by the film maker, i.e., 11 minutes, 9 seconds and 1 frame. The

film very well shows how the language of movies crosses boundaries, cultures and

politics. Out of these 11 movies, Imamura's film avoids acknowledging the attack.

Some directors employ sound as a powerful tool to communicate the trauma created

by the attack either in muted form or as a cacophony. Three segments that focus on

Muslim identity are that of Mira Nair, Danis Tanovic and Samira Makhmalbaf. The

films of Makhmalbaf and Tanovic are discussed in detail in the fourth chapter.

Mira Nair accounts a true story of a New York Pakistani Muslim Family

whose missing son Salman Hamdani was suspected to be one of the terrorists behind

9/11. Till the body is recovered from the debris, the family undergoes shame and

humiliation from even their neighbors and friends. Salman becomes a hero when it

is known that he has rushed to the spot to rescue the victims. The double edged

visual representation says volumes about Muslims not just terrorists but they are also

victims. The visuals are redundant in American flags in almost every frame showing

allegiance to patriotism and American spirit.

The segment by Danis Tanovic, the Bosnian film Maker, connects 9/11 to

the Srebrenica massacre of 1995 where some 8000 Muslim Bosniaks were killed in

the name of ethnic cleansing. The film narrates the peaceful demonstration of

Srebrenica women in the Square to commemorate the biggest genocide in Europe

after II World War. The frames of the segment are almost barren and women

characters build the time and space through their dialogues. The genocide of men is suggested by the haunted streets and roads and except for a male handicapped character Nadim, there are no kids or men. The heaviness of silence dominates over sound, music or even image. Demonstration is held on 11th of every month and it is on September 11 the film is set. Women, sitting in a room of Association of Women Srebrenica amidst the pictures of their lost ones, listen to radio and came to know the tragedy that befell New York. At first they are reluctant to go for demonstration, but Selma, the main character says that the demonstration is "for them and for us" thus drawing parallel the victimhood of Srebrenica and the people of New York.

Post 9/11 cultural production included documentaries like *Fahrenheit 9/11* and *Path to 9/11*. Michael Moore's *Fahrenheit 9/11* opened a new page in the history of documentary. It is one of the two highest grossing documentary films in history; the other being *Bowling for Columbine* (2002). Since Moore is interested more in politics than techniques, his documentaries, though make some attempts in montages, are not technically worth studying. His main aim is to dissect the politics of the time and he wins in it by clearly communicating with the audience. *Fahrenheit 9/11*, though the most influential and daring documentary in history, evoked fierce criticism. It is "a fierce assault on the Bush-Cheney administration, using satire and parody to mock the President and his administration, raise questions about its connection to corporate elites, the military industrial complex and middle east oil interests and demonstrate the horrific effects of the Iraq War"(Kellner 152).

All the major film productions that can be classed under post 9/11 category share the same fears, angst, prejudices, struggles and trauma of the time. As Walter

Benjamin and T. W. Adorno argued, cultural forms like films can provide "dialectical images" that illuminate their social environments (qtd. in Kellner16). All the films discussed here throw light on the ethos of the traumatic event that killed and injured thousands and traumatized and "othered" millions around the world.

The urgency of the present day is to show the world especially the lives of Muslims "unedited, unscripted, and unfiltered", to borrow the words of Jordan's Queen Rania al-Abdullah. Queen Rania is well aware of images that damage the Arab Muslims. Hoping Hollywood's future films might bring Americans and Arabs closer together, the queen is trying to connect cultures using YouTube as a platform to create a much-needed Arab-American dialogue. The queen asks Hollywood's producers to show viewers the real Arab world rather than reducing them as "invisible humans" and "hyper-visible terrorists" (Rania "Send me your Stereotypes"). The contemporary situation reveals how the minorities are perceived and represented as invisible and absent as human beings whereas the images of hyper-visible terrorists predominate.

From the movies of the 1990s (*True Lies*, *The Siege, Executive Decision*, *Rules of Engagement*) to the post 9/11 movies, a gradual shift can be noticed in the representation of Muslims at the surface level. The villainous, often nameless (except for the generic character Salim-Abu-Aziz, the leader of the fictional "Crimson Jihad" of *True Lies*), terrorists who do not know the purpose of their suicidal deed, are slowly transformed to characters with names and identity, who are ready for a dialogue. In *Body of Lies* (2008) the CIA agent implores fundamentalist Muslim leader caught in action that "There is no room in the Quran for murder; you

misinterpret the one book you believe in." The FBI agent asks the terrorist in the movie *Unthinkable* (2010); "Allah loves watching you do good deeds not evil ones, I read the Quran." Another major alteration that Hollywood was ready to make on the wake of September 11 is the change of Arab terrorist as villains to "neo-fascists" in the movie *The Sum of All Fears* (2002). It is an adaptation of a novel of the same name written by Tom Clancey directed by Phil Alden Robinson. But Jack Shaheen points out in *Guilty: Hollywood's Verdict on Arabs after 9/11*, that today's reel Arabs are more rich and sophisticated. He continues, "They are portrayed as the civilized world's enemy, fanatic demons threatening people across the plane; Islamic radicals kill innocent civilians; bearded, scruffy "terrorists," men and women ..." (*Reel* Preface).

In the movie *Ae Fond Kiss* by Ken Loach, there is a scene in a school where a girl is addressing her class. She says that it is ridiculous to reduce

> … one billion Muslims in 50 countries with hundreds of different languages and countless ethnic groups as one and the same … I reject the West definition of terrorism which excludes the hundreds of thousands of victims of state terror...I reject the west's simplification of a Muslim. I am a Glaswegian, Pakistani, teenager, woman of Muslim descent who supports Glasgow Rangers in a Catholic School. (00:03:04 – 00:04:09)

It is completely pointless to say that a word Muslim or Islam captures the entire identity in its fullness in a world of fragmented subjectivities. The final scene of Citizen Kane says "I don't think that any word can explain a man's life"; similarly the tag Muslim is also a word that cannot explain any man's life. But the recent

portrayals of Muslims as human beings in movies like Alejandro González Inarittu's *Babel* (2006), Ridley Scot's *Yes* (2005), Stephen Gaghan's *Syriana* (2005), Stephen Spielberg's *Munich* (2005), Roberto Benigni's *The Tiger and the Snow* (2005), Arab-Israeli co-productions like Hani Abu-Assad's *Paradise Now* (2005)*, Rana's Wedding* (2002)`, Eran Riklis' *The Syrian Bride* (2004) offer hope for a better cinematic world, a less prejudiced world a much more inclusive world. The emergence of young film makers like Cherien Dabis (*Amreeka*), Hesham Issawi (*AmericanEast*) and Qasim Basir (*Moozlum*) promise towards a more inclusive space in the visual imaginations of Hollywood. Several young moviemakers, mostly from Palestinain or Egyptian or Arab American background are making their presence felt in the industry: Annemarie Jacir (*Salt of the Sea*, 2008); Jackie Salloum (*Slingshot Hip Hop*, 2008); Rolla Selbak (*Three Veils*, 2009); Alain Zaloum (*David and Fatima*, 2008); Ruba Nadda (*Cairo Time*, 2009); Eyad Zahra (*The Taqwacores*, 2009); Ali F. Mostafa (*City of Life*, 2009); Cherien Dabis (*Amreeka*, 2009); and Nabil Abou-Harb (*Arab in America*, 2009). Many of these movies won critical acclaim and they focus mainly on the lives of Arabs, Arab Americans, and Muslim Americans.

Thus reading a film closely reveals the socio-cultural context in which it has been produced. Film tells the history of the time. The study of the history of representation shows how they articulate sociopolitical events and struggles of the time though the political discourses of the period are often relational, depicting contrasting positions in a specific situation over war, gender or sexuality, religion or the state. In this context, too liberal or conservative discourses of the political

atmosphere may definitely influence the making of the movies. So study of films with reference to its context is highly substantial. The upcoming chapters attempt to closely analyze movies within the socio-political context of the US policies, both domestic and foreign, towards Muslims. Such interpretations can contribute to political enlightenment or philosophical understanding of the age.

Chapter 3

United 93 and *Rendition*:
Cinema, Terrorism and Political Ideology

In order to understand today's world, we need cinema, literally. It's only in cinema that we get that crucial dimension we are not ready to confront in our reality. If we are looking for what is in reality more real than reality itself look into the cinematic fiction.

- Slavoj Zizek *Pervert's Guide to Cinema* 2:20:46

… the view point was fixed, the shot was therefore spatial and strictly immobile… The evolution of the cinema, the conquest of its own essence or novelty, was to take place through montage, the mobile camera and the emancipation of the view point, which became separate from projection.

- Gilles Deleuze *Cinema 1* 3

Structuralism has offered film analysts a method for thinking about the production of signification in cinematic texts. In the analysis of cinematic texts, the relation between shots and images are sought after to develop semiotics of cinema. Roland Barthes, in *The Third Meaning* says, "Born technologically, sometime even aesthetically, the film is yet to be born theoretically" (qtd. in Cook 41). Film theory was then in an embryonic phase. Moving further away from the small arena of Eisensteinian montage theories and Bazinian composition in depth, film theory has enlarged to embrace the cine-semiotics of Christian Metz, Pier Paolo Passolini, and Umberto Eco and the vidistic analysis propounded by Sol Worth apart from the psychoanalytical studies recently expanded by Slavoj Zizek based on Freudian and Lacanian theories, gender theories based on Laura Mulvey's contribution on gaze

and gender and Neo-formalism as propounded by the American Scholar David Bordwell. The 1970's, 80's and 90's witnessed this expansion of the theories of film from what Barthes has pointed out earlier. The structural approaches of films, to some extent, apply the Saussurean linguistic analysis to the structure of film.

The chapter intends to follow a syntagmatic study of the selected texts in its linear sequencing of events as they occur in the films' narrative. A syntagmatic study demands the choosing of the semiological unit. Christian Metz has pioneered in locating a semiological unit in cine semiotics. Metz has probed in detail about the possibility of linking cinema to language and whether cinema can be broken down to units like words in a language. Metz has failed in locating the unit of film as easy as a language since every attempt he has made moved film further from the structures of language. Shot happens to be the ideal choice; since shots cannot be reduced further to smaller units. Metz thought of filmic images primarily as *parole*, in Saussure's terms, without a coded system. Once a movie camera films a shot, it becomes a filmic utterance or an actualized discourse. Thus Metz concluded that cinema is a *language sans langue* since it lacks a system or code equivalent to *langue*. Moreover, to Metz, cinema is a one way expression which lacks signs and filmic images are motivated (Miller 92). Further he elaborated arguing that there is no system – each image is an invention (Balazs 92). Meanings are generated not from the system of paradigms and syntagms, but the shot itself is motivated. Metz argues that even a close up shot, for example, though a fragmentary shot, represents a compete segment of reality. Metz establishes it with his classic example:

The image is *always actualized.* Moreover, even the image — fairly rare,

incidentally — that might, because of its content, correspond to a 'word' is

still a sentence: this is a particular case, and a particularly revealing one. A

close-up of a revolver does not mean 'revolver' (a purely virtual lexical unit),

but at the very least, and without speaking of the connotations, it signifies

'Here is a revolver!' It carries with it a kind of *here* (a word which André

Martinet rightly considers to be a pure index of actualization). (67)

Metz concludes that film belongs to a group of languages that is "mechanically

produced multiple moving images" (97). He thus failed to locate a system of

syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations in filmic images similar to that of language.

But despite this failure in semiology of films, Metz's contribution established a new

area of film studies and a new approach to film. Francesco Casetti argues that

Metz's 1964 essay "Cinema: Language or Language System?", "introduces a shift in

the approach to the filmic phenomenon and in the kind of topics leading to this

approach. A new research *paradigm* is born, as well as a new *generation* of

scholars" (Buckland *Conversations* 21). This new object of study is the focus on the

latent level of filmic signification and the possibility of new interpretations through

the decoding of coded filmic texts. For Sergei Eisenstein "Art is always in conflict"

and in the cinema it is achieved through montage (qtd. in Miller 75). This dynamic

notion of creation achieved well through montage relates to Eisenstein's embrace of

revolutionary soviet politics. Further he has remarked: "According to Marx and

Engels the dialectic system is only the conscious reproduction of the dialectic course

(substance) of the external events of the worlds" (qtd. in Miller 75-76).

In determining the unit of film, the shot happened to be the natural choice, but it is neither symbolic nor arbitrary but laden with meanings and hence it cannot be counted as a unit; whereas Pasolini had a different stand and claimed that cinema had double articulations: one at the level of what he called as *cinemes* – objects, events, actors etc – and the other at the level of shots. All these discussions showed the difficulty in deciding a semiological unit that would help to render a better understanding of the cinema. With the emergence of post structuralism and psychoanalytical readings of cinema, the cine-semiotics had increasingly lost favor.

But my attempt in this chapter is to analyze movies using both the cine semiotic or structural tools and the post structural tools focusing on the latent significations. The methodology incorporates the ideas and approach adopted by Sol Worth in his ethnographic semiotic study of movies and the purpose is to find out the gaps and ruptures in film narratives which unravel the political content of dominance, compliance or subversion.

Sol Worth of the Annenberg School of Communications, University of Pennsylvania followed the analytic paths laid down by linguists in describing and analyzing the structure and functioning of lexical communication toward the construction of a semiotics of film. His strategy was, in fact, heuristic: "that film can be studied as if it were the 'language' of visual communication and as if it were possible to determine its elements and to understand the logic of its structure" (qtd. in Gross 6). Worth called this "vidistics", and proceeded to elaborate a model of filmic elements and principles based on those of structural linguistics. He came up with five parameters to distinguish and define the structural elements of cinematic

narrative: "an *image* in *motion* / over *time* in *space* with *sequence*" (Worth "Development" 27). As Sol Worth says,

> Vidistics in this early stage is concerned, first, with the determination and description of those visual elements relevant to the process of communication. Second, it is concerned with the determination of the rules, laws and logic of visual relationship that help a viewer to infer meaning from an Image Event, and the interaction of Image Events in sequence. Film as if it were language, as studied vidistically, is thus thought of as the study of specified elements, elements in sequence, operations on these elements, and cognitive representations of them that act as a mediating agent in a communication process between human beings-between a filmmaker and a viewer-between a creator and a re-creator. (qtd. in Gross 6)

Worth's solution to the fundamental question of identifying the basic filmic unit, or visual element after a thorough study of the development of the film medium and of the theories that accompanied its growth was to accept Sergei Eisenstein's concept of "shot" as the basic element of film. His idea was propounded first in his 1968 paper, "Cognitive Aspects of Sequence in Visual Communication", and was elaborated in the 1969 paper "The Development of a Semiotic of Film". Shot as the smallest unit of film that a filmmaker uses seemed to him the most reasonable choice not only because it is the way most of the film makers construct films, but because it is possible to describe it precisely and to manipulate it in controlled ways. The research done by Sol Worth and John Adair among the people of Navajo Indians who were taught only the technology of film-making without any rules for

combining units seemed "intuitively" to discover the shot as the basic sign for the construction of their films ("Development" 24). Sol Worth calls *videmes* or the "Image-Event" as the basic unit (24-26). Worth distinguishes between *cademes* and *edemes*, that is, camera shots and editing shots. Thus the process of filmmaking involves the shooting of *cademes* and their process of transformation to *edemes* and at a later stage the *edemes* are arranged in a sequence as intended and determined by the filmmaker. Thus a film maker has an almost infinite number of choices of *cademes* which he later chooses, shortens, arranges or manipulates in numerous possible ways. *Videmes* also are manipulated at the level of the various ways in which the film maker chooses to shoot. At each and every point of the making of films, selection and arrangement demonstrates the manipulation involved.

Sol Worth's contributions differed from other theorists in his attempt for linguistic application. Following the track of Noam Chomsky, Sol Worth conducted experiments along with the anthropologist John Adair with the help of six bilingual Navajo Indians. His aim was to find out whether there is a universal pattern of meanings in films and also to find out how meanings are inferred by the viewer. He discusses the experiment at length in the work *Through Navajo Eyes.* The six Navajo Indians who had never seen a film were taught to photograph and edit. They were not given instruction on cinematic conventions and the experiment paved way towards an understanding of how sequence brings out meanings and how film communicates across cultural boundaries.

Sequence becomes the pivotal point upon which Worth supported his analysis of filmic communication. Sol Worth argues that,

Sequence is a strategy employed by man to give meaning to the relationship

of sets of information, and is different from series and pattern. As I will use

the word here, sequence is a deliberately employed series used for the

purpose of giving meaning rather than order to more than one Image Event

and having the property of conveying meaning through the sequence itself as

well as through the elements in the sequence… Man imposes a sequence

upon a set of images to imply meaning. (qtd. in Gross 7)

Later he took a turn from the meaning making process of sequences to finding out a universal syntax comparable to that of linguistics and later to ethnographic semiotics. Still he remains one of the key theoreticians who examined the broader scope of semiotics for an understanding of the rules by which we make inferences from sequences of signs. All sequences are mediated and intended. It is a deliberate ordering of edited shots to get an intended meaning. At all levels of filmmaking, various degrees of choice and intentions are present; from the inclusion/exclusion of a camera shot, through the editing process through to the mediated sequencing of shots. As Metz says, "…the sequence is a complex segment of *discourse*" (65).

Sequence analysis is adopted in this study after much deliberations on the ground that movement is one of the most fundamental features of cinema, the other being image. There is no cinema without movement. The movement involves the movement of both the camera and the movement of the image within the frame. The relationship between movement and image is dialectical: movement without image is absurd and impossible and image without movement reduces it to a still photograph. So for cine-semiotics, movement and image constitute the

fundamentals. Shot analysis though comprises of these two fundamentals has its limitations; shots are not complete and once they are complete, it becomes a sequence.

Both Raymond Bellour and Christian Metz have tried to develop a system of film language focusing on the repetitions and "regulated differences" in classical cinema (Flisfeder 23). The attempt was to find out a pattern in narration that makes film intelligible. In other words, the structure and signification of a film works on a recognizable system which is based on a network of structural repetitions and differences. If there is a "recognizable" and specific structure of signification, then the questions follow: how is it possible to create a political meaning or ideology in a film and how is it possible to deviate from the norm and network of significations and how to break from the ideological structure? Film theorists have given the answers too. As Philip Rose notes, the possibility of oppositional cinema emerges at this juncture (Flisfeder 23). If it is possible to discern the ways in which ideology is constructed into the text and the way in which the spectators get identified with the ideological content of the text, then it may also be possible to subvert ideology. Oppositional cinema challenges the dominant mainstream practices and critiques the larger socio cultural context which functions as ideological apparatuses. Subversion of ideology is also possible if it were likely to understand the manner in which ideology is structured in a text.

The ideological function of cinema was further extended by the contributions of Louis Althusser's theories of ideology, ideological interpellation and ideological state apparatuses. Althusser's theory of ideology came from his inclusion of a notion

of subjectivity into inquiries about the representational aspects of ideology. Ideology, for him, has a material existence embodied in both the subject and the institutions with which the subject engages (Bordwell *Post theory*). Althusser argues in his seminal essay, "Ideology and ideological state apparatus" that, "a social formation which did not reproduce the condition of production at the same time as it produced would not last. The ultimate condition of production is therefore the reproduction of the conditions of production" (232). Ideological state apparatuses, thus, reproduce the hegemony of the reigning order ideologically, without the use of force.

Althusser differentiates two types of institutions necessary for "the reproduction of the conditions of production". They are the ideological state apparatuses and the repressive state apparatuses. The former includes the institutions like the church, the educational institutions, the family, the law, the culture, the political system and the media. As mentioned before, such ISAs condition the individuals; teach the "know-how" without using any force. But this teaching or conditioning ensures the "subjection to the ruling ideology or the mastery of its practice" (Althusser 236). Movies are, thus, ISAs produced without any external force which reproduces the conditions of production. On the other hand, the repressive state apparatuses use force to bring order. The institutions like the military fall in this category.

The analysis of films also raises the questions on content and form. The basic question of the universality of the form or stylistic aspects attributed to films is highly debatable. Bordwell, in *Figures Traced in Light*, argues that cross-cultural or

transcultural norms exist in films at the level of stylistic devices and techniques that enable to "bind film makers" across cultures resulting in a "craft tradition" that crosses boundaries. But theorists like Slavoj Zizek resist the idea of "transcultural norms" though he believes in universality of form and the particular cultural and temporal specific nature of films (Bordwell 260). He argues that cinema has been a global medium from the very inception onwards. He further states, "Today massive theatrical distribution, television and cable, home video, archival screenings, and film festivals allow filmmakers unprecedented access to artistic strategies and tactics from many points in film history" (Bordwell 260). For Bordwell, the interest resides primarily and finally in films and the comprehension at the level of form or style. The ideological content is delivered both by way of the form and the content.

In his work *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, Zizek in terms of the Hegelian dialectic of form and content says, "truth is of course in the form" (217). Later he added, "One should distinguish between constituted ideology – empirical manipulations and distortions at the level of content – and constitutive ideology – the ideological form which provides the coordinates of the very space within which the content is located" (*Living in the End* 55). Here Zizek's concern is with the particular content that is elevated to the structuring detail of the form. Zizekian theory of film aims at the unraveling of the ideological content in the form of the cinema. It is similar to that of Freud's analysis of dreams. It is not in the latent content of the dream that Freud found interesting; but in the unconscious desire that itself structure the dreams. Thus the debate focused on whether the form determines the content or the content is elevated to the level of the form. In any case, ideology operates just beneath it, hidden and below the surface. Zizek says, "Ideology here exists between the symbolic and the sublime, and the critique of ideology requires

bringing to the surface the disavowed content that makes submission and subjectivization to the reigning ideology possible" (Flisfeder 166).

Slavoj Zizek's commentary on the catastrophe in the *Welcome to the Desert of the Real* specifically mentions the movie *The Matrix* (1999) in which the main character Neo awakens to the real 'reality' of post-global war and apocalyptic ruin, his previous reality being recognized as nothing more than computer-generated virtuality. Zizek recalls this to substantiate the perception of the common man about the fall of the twin towers. These perceptions are mainly corrupted by Hollywood, which facilitate the fall of the towers to be gazed at with awe like a breath taking shot of a catastrophic Hollywood production (*Welcome* 15). At the outset, this chapter attempts to decode the political ideology inherent in films by means of the methodology of technical analysis of sequences. The US foreign policies of the time and their political and their philosophical implications as discussed in the movies are brought to light. At this juncture, two major Hollywood productions titled *Rendition* and *United 93* are selected for analysis.

2.1 Rendition: The Politics of Torture

"Rendition" is short for "extraordinary rendition," a CIA-program instituted under the Clinton Administration that permits the CIA to extradite and detain "suspects" against international law to/in secret prisons outside of the United States. The plot of the film *Rendition* revolves around "extraordinary rendition" of the main protagonist, an Egyptian citizen and U.S. Green Card holder Anwar el-Ibrahimi. In the film Anwar, an engineer, is unlawfully extradited to a secret prison facility in North Africa after U.S. authorities suspect him of assisting an Islamist group in a terrorist attack. After his arrival in North Africa, Anwar is stripped off his clothes,

interrogated, and tortured (Lehnguth 133). The subplot focus on a suicide bombing which is stationed in 'North Africa', no country specifically mentioned. "The term "North Africa," as used in the film, as well as the production practices thus ultimately reproduce a geographic imaginary of the Arab world that is akin to the "Orient" that Edward Said discussed in *Orientalism* – a culturally uniform, pre-modern, and ahistorical landscape that harbors mystery and violence" (Lehnguth 133). It serves as a framing device for the plot and it is shown twice; first in one of the opening scenes and in one of the concluding scenes. It establishes the circular nature of violence that the film unfolds. Violence begets violence confined to North Africa sparing America.

The initial frames of the movie place Anwar el Ibrahimi (Omar Metwally) in his bright side of his career, well praised for his mettle. He is married to an American woman Isabella (Reese Witherspoon) and settled in Chicago with his kid and mother. A happy American family, with a pregnant wife waiting for her husband from his overseas business trip, playing soccer with their son, watched by Anwar's mother, is disturbed by the "extraordinary rendition" of Anwar. Extraordinary rendition, as it is called, is government's moving of suspected terrorists to undisclosed detention centers for torture without any formal legality. The torturer is Abasi Fawal (Igal Naor), an Arab official observed by the CIA agent Douglas Freeman (Jake Gyllenhaal) who does not support this system of torture and he firmly believes that the torture may create more enemies only. The scenes of torture have a triadic relationship between the tormentor, the observer and the victim.

Fig. 3 Tormenter on the left, observer on the right and the victim in the centre: *Rendition* (1:19:18).

The film offers many Muslim representations. It includes a secular Westernized Muslim like Anwar, Islamic radical who became a suicide bomber like Khalid (Moa Khouas), a strict father figure like Abasi, and a playful lover like Abasi's daughter Fatima (Zineb Oukach). The film was a success in the sense that it brought rendition to discussion. Instead of the one dimensional portrayal of Muslim characters, the film has taken efforts to add more human aspects to the characters.

A closer analysis of the film raises some poignant questions regarding the political content of the movie. The first ten minutes of the movie introduces all the major characters in the movie with frequent cuts showing different frames set in Cape Town, Chicago, North Africa and Washington D.C. At the eleventh minute, immediately before the rendition of Anwar, an eleven second shot places the time of the film. The frame includes a moving plane and a tower like building in the skyline. In the figures 4, 5 and 6 the plane approaches the tower in the skyline, passes it with the horrendous reminding of 9/11 and the plane passes relieving the audience from

an imminent reenactment of 9/11 attack. The time reference is not suggested

anywhere else in the movie except in a scene which tells about Douglas joining the

service on September 12.

Fig. 4 Building up fear: *Rendition* (00: 11:13)

Fig. 5 Marking the time: *Rendition* (00:11:17)

Fig. 6 A moment of Catharsis: *Rendition* (00:11:24)

Anwar is shown in an establishing scene of twenty seconds duration among a group of passengers walking out of Washington DC air port (figs 7 to 9). It has three shots of short durations which frame a microcosm of the US multicultural society; Whites, colored men and women, Muslims with skullcaps; men and women of all walks of life, executives, business men, dressed in casuals, and tees. Deep focus is used to show the passengers which do not foreground Anwar. The image shows how Anwar amalgamates with the group of Americans. The assimilation of all races and ethnicities are well placed. Anwar is an ordinary man with no visible signs of his ethnicity or religion. Still he is taken. Later Anwar is singled out.

Who is Anwar el Ibrahimi is a poignant question to be asked here. Anwar, though the name indicates his Muslim identity, is not *any* Muslim. He is a New York University post graduate who speaks good English and can easily pass off as a White man. He is married to a white woman. Like any other American citizen, he knows his rights. He demands to meet his lawyer immediately after his rendition like any other American citizen. He represents not just a Muslim, but an upper- middle class American who has to get out of his comfort zone only because he is a Muslim. It is only after rendition that his Muslim identity comes to the fore front. The leading character Douglas Freeman is supposed to observe the torture and elicit answers for their questions regarding his association with terrorists. The thriller takes a turn when Freeman, the white hero, like in any other action super hero movies, rescues Anwar from the tormentors. The name "Freeman" obviously is suggestive of the mythical nature of his Hollywood character engaged in the activity of freeing the under privileged from the tyranny of the "dark" world.

Fig. 7 The celebrated multicultural pot:*Rendition* (00:11:25)

Fig. 8 Anwar in shallow depth of field: *Rendition* (00:11:32)

Fig. 9 Anwar in the centre: *Rendition* (00:11:43)

The interesting part is that the US officials make use of Arabs as instruments of torture and repeatedly chant the words of President Bush that "US does not torture". Abasi Fawal who is in charge of the torture camp very well knows his job and he thinks it is sacred. The most successful form of colonization is the one which makes the colonized carry the message of the colonizers. He echoes the words of the CIA head Corrine Whitman (Meryl Streep) when he says that torture saves lives. Whitman in another scene says the same to Isabella's friend in DC, Alan Smith (Peter Sarsgaard). The dominant ideology of the 9/11 scenario represented by Whitman is taught to the Arab torturer Abasi Fawal and he is made to believe that torture saves lives and that torture is sacred. They echo the words of the then President Bush and the present President Donald Trump who has said in his election campaign that torture "works" (Jacobs "Donald Trump"). Thus the film has a nuanced perspective of a demonized Muslim torturing an American; though the torture images evoke the media images of Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay prisons widely circulated on media. Thus there is an obvious role reversal: it is not US torturing an Arab but an Arab tortures an American. Oppression gets inverted: the oppressor becomes the victim who tries to defend his nation. The terrorist is tortured for what he may know and to save many lives.

The movie came out in the political context of redefining and altering the language of the law. Rustom Barucha argues quoting Tzvetan Todoro that torture gets redefined. He says,

> Detainees at detention centres like Gunatanamo and the former Abu Ghraib
> prison can no longer be considered 'tortured' if they are 'regularly raped,

hung from hooks, immersed in water, burned, attached to electrodes,

deprived of food, water or medicine, attacked by dogs and beaten until their

bones are broken.' … All these 'deprivations' are better designated as

'abuse', not 'torture', as the former Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfield,

confirmed in his equivocal response to the atrocities at the Abu Ghraib

prison. (5)

Thus such inherently blatant crimes are euphemistically named as abuses or

"enhanced interrogation technique" not tortures (Zizek *Its time*). When the language

is changed, the atrocious violence performed by the state is made publicly

acceptable. That is why it is repeatedly affirmed in the movie that "US does not

torture". The political and moral correctness of the state is asserted.

The film's trailer came as a desperate wife's quest for her disappeared

husband. The trailer of the movie talks about the political message they intend to

deliver, to stop torture and detention centres. The film is noted for the good cast with

four Academy Award winners coming together with a larger propaganda against the

war on terror. The interviews with Jake Gyllenhaal and Reese Witherspoon, the lead

actors of the movie, also suggest the pertinence of its political content in times of

war on terror, broadly speaking and racial profiling and intolerance faced by

American Muslims after 9/11, to be specific (Sterren; Archive).

But a close analysis of the movie deconstructs the political message that the

film is said to deliver. *Rendition* becomes another action thriller where one man is

suffering in the hands of the tormentors and a white man comes to his rescue. This is

not forgetting the fact that it was the US who runs the detention centres and

officially running this programme of extraordinary rendition. But the tormentor has a power to elicit answers at any cost and there is no space for doubt or humanity in the tormentor and the film strategically places an Egyptian Muslim as the tormentor who victimizes Anwar, a middle class American. Language plays a great role in fixing the identity and for its reassertion. Abasi Fawal is apparently a nonnative speaker of English who speaks Arabic at home. Though fluent in English, he has a heavy accent. In sharp contrast, Anwar does not leave a trace of his Egyptian identity in his highly accented English. In one scene, he talks to his son over phone in English which suggest his preference of English to Arabic. Throughout the three torture scenes, Anwar answers in English except for once. After enough tortures, he speaks in Arabic only to confess an act of crime that he has not committed. The conversation of this sequence is as follows (the embedded English subtitles are marked with underlines and italics):

(Anwar is tied up and electrocuted with the tormentor and the observer on both his sides (fig. 3))

ANWAR: Please! Please! Please! God! No more!

ABASI: I want to know what else Rashid is planning.

I want name. I want addresses.

I want to know about future attacks. Do you understand?

ANWAR: I don't know.

ABASI: If you died here today, right now, who would miss you? Your wife would eventually remarry. Your son would call another man "father". Why are you doing this to yourself?

(Abasi makes to a gesture for electrocution)

ANWAR: No, No, No, No, No.

DOUGLAS: Enough! Enough! Enough!

ABASI: This is my interrogation. You observe, Douglas, nothing more.

Put the gag on. Put the gag on.

ANWAR: No. No. No. No. No. No

Wait! Wait! Wait! He contacted me a year ago

ABASI: *Who contacted you?* (in Arabic)

ANWAR: Rashid

ABASI: *How?* (in Arabic)

ANWAR: *He called me on my cell phone.* (in Arabic) (*Rendition* 1:19:17 –

1:22:00)

The remaining conversations are in English where Anwar narrates how he

has passed the information regarding chemical composition to increase explosive

power for forty thousand dollars and he gives a list of names who have been aides to

Rashid. He thus embraces an Arab identity through his language only to admit the

crime that *he has not done*. Thus violent crime/act of terror is subtly equated to Arab

identity; thus conforming to the mainstream dominant ideology of violence and

crimes associated with the intolerance of Islam as a religion and Muslims in general.

In the movie *Rendition*, the first scene of torture is strategically placed along

with the first meeting of radical Islamists. Two sequences are intermittently spliced

together by way of cross-cut: one that of torture and the other the meeting of the

radical Islamist group. Cross-cutting is usually used to build suspense. It can also be

used to show the relationship between the different sets of actions. This cross-cut is

spliced together with a split edit. Sloganeering of "Allahu Akbar" which has been so

problematic after 9/11 connects the shots.

Fig. 10 Faith and infidelity: *Rendition* (37:50)

Fig. 11 Stripping scene: *Rendition* (38:12)

Fig. 12 Call for Jihad:Rendition (38:22)

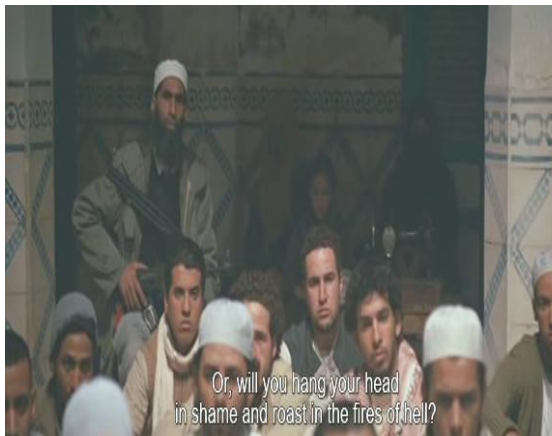Fig. 13 The retribution: *Rendition* (38:58)

Fig.14 Woman and child : *Rendition* (39:19)

Fig.15 Fist of fury: *Rendition* (39:50)

The sequence can be explained in the following segments:

1.   The leader of group preaching which is shown as an over-the- shoulder shot which establishes the scene. Tracking from below and out. Shallow depth of field. The small group remains in soft focus. The diegetic sound of the leader's speech dominates.

2.   Reversal over the shoulder shot revealing the speaker. Panning to left. A slow suspenseful non-diegetic sound starts. Dissolves

3.   Cross-cut to the scene of torture. Ripping Anwar.

4.   Cross-cut to the meeting. Medium shots isolating Khalid and his friend from the group. Shallow depth of field.

5.   Cross-cut to the ripping. Darkened background.

6.   Cross-cut to the concluding words of the leader. Panning right

7.   Cross-cut to the ripping. Anwar's face in medium shot

8.   Cross-cut to the leader. Panning right

9.   A cut. Close-up of Khalid

10.   A cut. Over the shoulder shot of the leader

11.   A cut. Panning and tracking down to the right of the group of men - bearded and wearing skullcaps- showing a child, a man with a gun and a woman clad in burqa in the background (Fig. 14). Pauses on Khalid as an over the shoulder shot

12. A cut. A medium shot of the leader when he concludes and the camera shifts to the next person who continues asking for thaqbeer. Non diegetic sound stops.

13. A cut. Medium shot of the group sloganeering Allahu Akbar. Deep focus. Panning left and tracking down. Zooming in Khalid.

14. Cross cut to the entry of Douglas Freeman and Abasi Fawal to the darkened scene of torture which seems to be a basement. Sound advance of thaqbeer which connects these two shots together. Closed space.

15. Long shot of Anwar, naked and seated on a chair, gaze at the camera

16. Medium shot of Douglas watching the camera

17. Medium shot of Anwar, handcuffed. Special light. Not centrally placed

These sequences play a major role in the narrative of the movie. One sequence shows the meeting of the radical Islamists for the first time and the involvement of Khalid in the group. The other shows Anwar getting ripped off in a brutal manner, making him ready for the first scene of torture in the film. Both scenes take place in a claustrophobic environment. The cross-cutting technique employed in the sequence highlights the connection between these two sequences. They are balanced and symmetrical. The dissolve used further helps in smooth transition as opposed to the cut. It connotes a similarity between the two spaces or events. The highly contrasting lighting is used in both the sequences. The scene of meeting is in broad day light or realistic light; whereas the scene of torture takes place in a darkened room, dimly lit and special focus light on Anwar. The position

of these segments gives further meaning to the sequences bringing along torture as a penalty for terrorism.

The sequence of the Radical Islamists' meeting dominates in the beginning which later subtly dissolves into the torture sequence. Throughout the ripping scenes the diegetic sound of the talk of the Islamist leader continues. This links both the scenes. Figure 14 that shows a child, a woman in burqa and a man with a gun in the background gives more meaning to the shot. It signifies that the shot is placed inside the courtyard of a home. In later scenes also the presence of women are made more visible. It conveys a potent meaning of the presence of terrorists everywhere and the happening of radical thoughts and their dissemination inside a family; whereas the scene of torture is set in a basement of a clueless place. The military installations of the US in other countries which are used as detention centers and torture houses are reminded of.

Zizek writes about torture on Kathryn Bigelow's movie *Zero Dark Thirty* as an endorsement. The depiction of torture in a neutral way is an endorsement. In the article he establishes his argument using two comparisons: one of holocaust and the other of rape. Zizek argues that "a documentary that depicted the Holocaust in a cool, disinterested way as a big industrial-logistic operation, focusing on the technical problems involved (transport, disposal of the bodies, preventing panic among the prisoners to be gassed)" embodies either a deeply immoral fascination for the topic, or it may dismay and horror the viewers by the neutrality of its style (Zizek "Zero Dark Thirty"). The neutralization or normalization of torture in filmic representations has to be viewed seriously as such normalizing tendencies

consciously or unconsciously support the dominant state mechanisms. Zizek further

parallels torture to rape and he questions, "what if a film were to show a brutal rape

in the same neutral way, claiming that one should avoid cheap moralism and start to

think about rape in all its complexity?" Thus the argument is well placed.

The first torture scene is significant in determining the perspective and the

viewer's complying with the perspective of Douglas. The sequences do not address

the spectator directly. The montage of the interrogation scenes creates an

impression that the narrative is watched by the viewer from Douglas' point of view.

During the interrogation, Abasi and Anwar repeatedly look at Douglas (the camera)

and thus the point of view is established and Douglas's perspective becomes the

dominant one. The silent presence and observation of Douglas aligns with the

presence of the spectator who does not have any role in the human rights violations

unfolding before the eyes. It denotes the American silence and unaffected distance

from the human rights violation around the globe and at the same time, its

complicity to it. Both Douglas and the viewer maintain a safe distance from the

torment that Anwar goes through.

Mr. Smith, who is a friend of Isabella El Ibrahimi and a senator, elaborates

about rendition in the movie. He says that CIA calls it 'extraordinary rendition'. Its

history dates back to the authorisation by President Bill Clinton in the mid-90s to

dismantle the militant Islamic organizations of the Middle East. It was originally to

move suspected terrorists without having to formally apply for extradition in

extraordinary circumstances. But after 9/11 it took on a whole new life. The Bush

administration expanded the policy after 9/11. It has been used as a tool in the US

led "war on terror". Basically the government has authorized the seizure and transfer of anyone who is suspected of being involved in terrorism to secret prisons outside the U.S. US Patriot Act came into being as an immediate after effect of September 11 attacks on 26 October 2001. Evelyn Alsultany summarizes the US patriot act thus:

> The USA PATRIOT Act, passed by Congress in October 2001 and renewed in 2005, 2006, 2010, and 2011 legalized the following (previously illegal) acts and thus enabled anti-Arab and Muslim racism: monitoring Arab and Muslim groups; granting the U.S. Attorney General the right to indefinitely detain noncitizens whom he suspects might have ties to terrorism; searching and wiretapping secretly, without probable cause; arresting and holding a person as a "material witness" whose testimony might assist in a case; using secret evidence, without granting the accused access to that evidence; trying those designated as "enemy combatants" in military tribunals (as opposed to civilian courts);and deportation based on guilt by association (not on what someone has done). (5)

All these have obviously added trauma to the already stricken people. The trauma added with the suspicion from the public has excluded the 'other' from the mainstream even from the act of grieving (Alsultany 5). After the 9/11incident, many Americans started asking the question "Why do 'they' hate us?" and the answer was given without further thought by the then President George Bush that "They hate us for our freedom" which was widely circulated on the media ("Address to a Joint Session"). The trouble with this answer is that it foreclosed all the other

possibilities of discourses about the US foreign policies and their impacts around the world, the prevailing social injustices created by the proxy wars sponsored by the US and the creation of Al Qaeda which longed back to the cold war era.

This discourse of 'they hate us for our freedom' provides enough justification for the implementation of antiracist domestic and foreign policies on the ground of suspicion and while limiting the freedom of the Arab, Muslim US citizens or immigrants, it contradicts itself. This situation of detention of Arabs and Muslims in post 9/11 scenario can be compared to the American history of the internment of Japanese-Americans after the Second World War, immediately after the attack of the Pearl Harbor in1942. From February 19, 1942 to March 20, 1946 around one lakh Americans of Japanese origin were incarcerated in internment camps and these camps are regarded as one of the worst violations of constitutional rights in American history. In 1980 President Jimmy Carter kept a commission to investigate the camps and concluded that the incarceration had been the product of racism and recommended that the government pay reparations to the internees (Glass).

History repeats itself. It is interesting to find that Donald Trump administration's proposed travel ban imposed on Muslims, which was first proposed in 2017, draws parallel to the internment of Japanese Americans. The Supreme Court also upheld Trump's travel ban after a year of legal battle. The comparison between this new policy of the US to the internment camps is well pointed out in the documentary *And Then They Came for Us* (2017) by Abby Ginsberg and Ken Schneider. The reason for such a comparison is that the Roosevelt administration's Executive Order 9066 which ordered the internments is being used as a precedent by

President Trump's administration as a basis for the current Muslim travel ban and immigration policies. It is highly paradoxical that the US Patriot Act contains a section that condemns discrimination against Arabs or Muslims (Alsultany 12). This is perfectly how post-racist era of political correctness works; how the discourse of multiculturalism in America comes as a resolution.

Douglas Freeman after witnessing a series of interrogation and brutal torture led by Abbasi Fawal realizes that torture triggers a vicious circle, creating more number of new enemies (1:31:33). The narrative structure too takes a different approach. After witnessing the very second day of torture, when Douglas Freeman reports his higher authority that Anwar doesn't have any relevant information, the film reveals the humanitarian aspect of the white man which is absent in the Muslim tormentor. The more perilous thing is, as Stuart Hall has suggested earlier, deluding one to the knowledge of the dominant ideology. Here Abasi fawal believes strongly that torture is sacred and it saves lives. He echoes the words of the US governmental policies to place and target the enemy outside, forgetting the war of terror implemented by the state. The President of US has already casted the roles of heroes and villains within the post September 11 political discourse as "Us" versus "Them". The political rhetoric further takes a step when it is said "If you are not with us, you are with the terrorists." Forced choice is forced upon one – one is free to decide, on condition that one makes the right choice. This dichotomous formulations perpetuate the "clash of civilizations" germinated by Samuel Huntington and propagated by Bernard Lewis in academic discourses.

Jon Wiener's 2005 article in *The Nation* examines the basic ideological division between the conservative and liberal perspectives in the context of how 9/11 is being taught in history courses. He says, "George Bush and other conservatives maintain that the attacks were acts of evil; liberals, while they condemn the attacks, see them as having a social and political context that we need to understand" (Wiener). This conservative perspective clearly justifies the position adapted by George Bush as the then President asking nations to choose sides. In an address to a joint session of Congress, nine days after the attacks, he vehemently announces the 'war on terror': "[W]e will pursue nations that provide aid or safe haven to terrorism. Every nation, in every region, now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists" ("Address to a Joint Session"). In the same speech, Bush explained that the reason the terrorists had targeted the United States was because they hated the American way of life, its freedoms and its democracy.

Sergei Eisenstein always emphasized the film making process. For him, shots were the raw material for the process of making a film. Meanings are created from this raw material through editing. Narratives in any form are never innocent. The raw material constitutes the mis-en-scene and mis-en-shot of a movie. Warren Buck land calls the filmed events as mis-en-scene. It covers what appears in front of the camera, light, character movement and set. Whereas mis-en-shot is the way the mis-en-scene is filmed. It includes camera position, camera movement, shot scale, duration of the shot and the pace of editing. The choice of technique will influence the way the spectators respond to the film. The sequencing of edited compositions is

equally important; what comes before and after a shot gives added meaning to the film. Lev Kuleshov wrote that the "essence of film lies in its composition; as well as in the alteration of the photographed pieces/shots" and that "for the organization of impression it is not important what is shot in a given piece, but how the pieces in a film alternate with one another, how they are structured" (Petric 8).

Mosque, Quran and prayers are often shown as a part of mis-en-scene in movies before. Often, the terrorists were portrayed with a Quran in one hand and a semi automatic rifle in another shouting "Allahu Akbar". In many films like *United 93*, the terrorists are visually imagined as praying immediately before and during their act of hijacking or suicide attacks. Such stereotype images have become an everyday phenomenon and nobody seems to be bothered about them. But such images strategically or unconsciously associate terrorism to the religion Islam. The persistent visualization of such images through popular culture, media, comic books and TV series emphasizes 'Islamic Terrorism'. The Egyptian immigrant Anwar is covertly arrested and taken to a North African town when a CIA operative is killed unintentionally in a suicide bombing. Stripped naked, slapped and put in a "hole". Abasi tries water boarding and electrocution to gather information regarding his association with terrorists. This main plot is linear in narration but the sub plot of the romance of Abasi Fawal's daughter Fatima with Khalid, a terrorist and the suicide bombing of Khalid are not linear in narrations. But it complements well with the main plot. Khalid's plot reveals how a terrorist is born. But the causal relationship that is established between the terrorism/suicide bombing and torture by splicing the shots in dissolves to make it a sequence is quite a misleading one.

2.2 *United 93*: United 'We' stand against 'Them'

United 93 (2006), directed by Paul Greengrass, is perhaps the first movie to recreate the catastrophic day as witnessed by the air traffic control administrators in the Newark centre. The film was one of the most critically acclaimed films of 2006 and it also received two Academy Award nominations including the Best Director. *United 93* is a visual narrative of what might have happened inside the fourth plane hijacked by terrorists on September 11, 2001which crash landed in Pennslyvania by the resistance and protest of the passengers leaving nobody alive. So the narration was visually imagined by the help of the families and friends' of the deceased with whom the passengers had contacted over phone. The screenplay also used the *9/11 Commission Report* as the only available data.

The movie stands out for many reasons. Paul Greengrass has moved away from the Hollywood style of casting stars or even familiar faces. The film features a cast mixed with non professional actors and professional actors whose faces or names are not familiar ones. Greengrass thus wanted to establish a real docudrama with real life characters and thus breaking the convention of unexpected twist and turns or any Hollywood heroics that the audience would expect from the stars. He has attempted this technique before in his movie *Bloody Sunday* (2002), which narrates 1972 civil rights march in Ireland. Stephen Prince says, "Instead of the fantasy superheroes fighting terrorism that viewers had enjoyed in Hollywood movies for more than a decade, Greengrass shows average people caught in a situation that was unimaginable and unthinkable and in which they nevertheless had

to act" (107). Many of the characters in the air traffic control scenes are played by actual persons who have witnessed the events of the day.

The style adopted by Greengrass is naturalistic in the sense that editing, camera and other techniques are completely eschewed. The visual narrative employs cinema verite, which is a style of documentary filmmaking initiated by Jean Rouch inspired by Dziga Vertov. Susan Hayward captures the essence of this style thus: "Cinema verite is unstaged, non-dramatized, non-narrative cinema. It puts forward an alternate version to hegemonic and institutionalized history by offering a plurality of histories told by non-elites" (59). In *United 93*, Paul Greengrass adopts camera setups that purposely block viewer's line of sight and often the main narrative focus is either out of focus or sidelined or partially glimpsed which helps in creating in intentionally "bad" scene compositions, which included "the camera setups tend to be off-angle, with unclear and often blocked sight-lines on the violence, and the editing imposes a choppy, staccato rhythm that serves to occlude details about the killings as they are happening" (Prince 112). Greengrass is somehow responsible for the "worst" changes that have taken place in action movies over the years. Nathaniel Lee establishes this argument by placing together action sequences from *Bourne* Trilogy by locating the drastic changes in the average shot length (ASL) that Greengrass has deliberately reduced added with "jittery handheld cameras". He says that in the first *Bourne* series if the ASL was 4 seconds, it was reduced to 2 seconds in the third, *Bourne Ultimatum.* The camera shots became "shakier and closer to the action" (Lee). The very same cinematic techniques are used in *United 93*; but here they serve the purpose of creating a realistic docudrama.

Stephen Prince argues that this camera style is adopted to 'simulate' reality. He substantiates,

> Scenes in the control centers and on the airplane were shot using multiple cameras, with staggered start and reload times. This permitted Greengrass to obtain takes of up to one hour and offered the performers the extraordinary advantage of performing in real time for extended intervals. The sense of authenticity conveyed in these scenes is undeniable. Real air traffic controllers, flight crew, and military personnel played their roles in the film in an uninterrupted span of time that broke down the artificiality of the filming process. By working in ways that emphasized realism and authenticity, Greengrass was aiming to evoke what he has called "a believable truth."(108)

The stylistic analysis of the movie shows that it is driven by persistent camera movements and made up of shots of short duration, fragmented and blocked shots, and only few establishing shots. Together these elements allow for only a cursory and partial glimpse at characters and their spatial relations. Though the close-ups of individual passengers identify them as specific individuals engaged in their small but specific activities like reading a magazine, eating an apple and looking at a map for hiking, the cursory camerawork and montage transforms them into a collective. The positioning of the viewer also enables them to identify themselves as the collective passenger experience rather than an individual experience: thus transcending the narrative to the story and struggle of 'everyman' emulating it to a national myth.

United 93 is regarded as a memorial. Paulgrass has taken the efforts to weave a plot, collecting information from all the available sources including   the recollections of the family members and friends. In that sense it is a speculative movie rather than real life story. Paul Greengrass has called it a "hypothesis" (qtd. in Lynchehaun 111). The film also details the actions and disorder of the officials at the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and Northeast Air Defense Sector (NEADS) who struggle hard to handle the situation. These two, along with the hijacking plot, intercut to maximize the tension though the film is undermined by the fore-knowledge among the audience. The anticipations of the filmgoers and the memories make the movie more painful and traumatic to watch than any of the disaster movies like *War of the Worlds.* Since the movie does not open up any political question in the movies overtly either by questioning or by supporting, America's innocent victimhood is highlighted. Zizek makes this point on the absence of political stance in *United 93* and *World Trade Centre* thus:

> The realism means that both films are restrained from taking a political
> stance and depicting the wider context of the events. Neither the passengers
> on *United 93* nor the policemen in WTC [sic] grasp the full picture. All of a
> sudden they find themselves in a terrifying situation and have to make the
> best out of it. This lack of cognitive mapping is crucial…The omnipresent
> invisible threat of terror legitimizes the all-too-visible protective measures of
> defence. ("On 9/11, New Yorkers")

World Trade Centre and *United 93* are the two major Hollywood productions which depicted 9/11 directly. Oliver Stone's movie *World Trade Centre*

raised controversy immediately after the announcement itself just because Oliver

Stone was supposed to direct. Stone has a background of critiquing US domestic and

foreign policy both in his interviews and in his movies like *Platoon* (1986), *Wall*

Street (1987) and *JFK* (1991). But Stone astonished everyone by celebrating the

heroism of the policemen and the moral uplift without including any social or

political perspective on the attack. "In his audio commentary, which appears on the

DVD release of the film, Stone admits that, while the script moved him deeply, it

was not the kind of depiction of September 11 that he typically would have created.

He called it a microcosmic portrait, one that concentrated on the lives of five people,

sacrificing a more expansive point of view for a perspective constrained by what

these individuals saw on that day"(Prince 101). Both the movies in their own way

endeavor to apoliticize the context that culminated in September 11 incidents. The

films thus become the ISAs of the State which deliberately want to create or write a

distinctive sort of history that supports the dominant order. It is hard to accept the

innocent creative spirit behind the making of such histories when plane crashes on

9/11 are suggested, along with Islamic terrorists but without a reference to American

involvement in the Middle-East.

The camera can function, to borrow the term of Frederick Jameson, as the

"political unconscious" of our everyday reality. Though cinema has the potential to

become an alternative medium; most often, it restricts itself to the formal and

established patterns reflecting the dominant ideological order. The formal elements

of mainstream Hollywood cinema, according to Mulvey, "reflect the psychical

obsessions of the society that produced it", alternate cinema operates by "reacting

against these obsessions and assumptions" (Mulvey 306). Though *cinema verite* has said to offer "alternate version of hegemonic and institutionalized history", the close watching of the movie *United 93* raises some significant questions regarding the ideological content in it. Though every attempt has been made to make the movie a realistic one, certain key points have been neglected. In the movie the usage of language has been strategically exploited to project differences. The significant one is the portrayal of the hijackers and how they are made an 'other' through the language and subtitles. Meier notes,

> To further highlight the difference between the hijackers and the terrorists, the former are depicted as speaking predominantly in Arabic to one another and to the passengers once the plane has been hijacked, though one of the terrorists is depicted as having a near perfect command of English when he turns down an offer of a drink from one of the stewardesses. Nonetheless, once the terrorists take over the plane, their English is broken, ruptured and monosyllabic as one of the terrorists commands the passengers: "Sit, sit. No talk!" In truth, the hijackers' command of English was likely more sophisticated. The film favors a representation consonant with the reification of the 'us and them' binary over a potentially more accurate portrayal. (198-199)

The clash of civilization is again established and cemented through visual imaginations of the "Us" and "Them". Even in using language also, film has created a demarcation of good English and weird English when they are made to speak. The translations of Arabic or other languages are made broken or distorted. The other is

always kept as an alien figure by way of his unkempt representation and awkward language.

Research on subtitles in films has been a recently added interdisciplinary approach that connects the disciplines cultural studies and translation studies. Elaine Espindola and Maria Lúcia Vasconcellos argue in their article "Two facets in the subtitling process: Foreignisation and/or domestication procedures in unequal cultural encounters" that, "Subtitling is … seen as a point of contact and as a culture procedure, where which different social practices meet in the shaping of oral and written exchange and by means of which 'the other' is represented" (45). The role of subtitlers seen as "culture mediators insofar as they are able to interfere in the representation of the other by means of abusing, foreignising and/or domesticating source cultural elements"(45).

The use of subtitles plays a sinister role. It is not as innocent as a translation of the dialogue of a foreign language. It is much more than that. The theories on the study of subtitles mainly focus on Philip Lewis's view of culture-bound terms as "knots of signification", that is, those particular items in the source text that constitute a translation problem when it comes to decision making as regards their representation in the target environment (Lewis 271). Elaine Espindola and Maria Vasconcellos argues that, "Translating culture-bound terms in or out of subtitles is here seen a political act of cultural representation" (46). Translation in films, that is subtitles, can be influential in the construction of national identities for foreign cultures (Espindola 46).

Zizek gives the example of the subtitle of the movie *Dances with Wolves* (1991) to substantiate the argument that subtitles play an ominous role in projecting the dominant ideology. The subtitle of the film subverts the attempt to portray racism against Native Americans though the film assumes a racist subjective position. Translation of a foreign language, usually, transforms not only a foreign language to the local but also a foreign culture is appropriated to the local. This will attempt to incorporate local expressions, slangs, figures of speech etc so as the complete meaning is transferred across the audience. Direct translations are of no help here. Subtitles also face the constraints of time and space. It has to keep up the pace of the dialogues of the speaker or actor on screen and the space is a very limited one. Here, a detailed translation does not serve any role. But there should be an ethics in the selection, editing, choice of words. In this way, subtitles are used to convey meaning rather than language. In the movie *Dances with Wolves*, direct translation is employed thus making the translation appear as broken sentences in English. The subtitle of the movie *Dances with Wolves* projects the racist subjective position of the movie. The direct translation of the language of the Native Americans to English makes it sound awkward. The syntax of the English is quite different from the language of the Native Americans and this difference is highlighted and covertly mocked at by the usage of broken English. The same happens in the movie *United 93*.

The subtitles of the foreign language uttered by the terrorists in the movie do not follow the syntax of English. The broken English used in the subtitles make the terrorists' language alienated or foreign. The strategy takes a step further by not

giving subtitles for some of the exchanges between the terrorists after the hijack. They talk in a language that is not known for the passengers inside the aircraft as well as for the viewers thus alienating both from the scene of narration. Subtitles are completely omitted in the scenes 1:09:29, 1:13:13 - 1: 13: 31, 1: 14: 04, 1:14:52-1:15:04, 1:23:45 – 1:24:20, 1: 26:10,1:26:56, 1: 27:06, 1: 29:39 – 1:29:50, 1: 30 :44, 1:35:36- 1:35: 43,1:35:59 -1:36:04, 1:36: 35, 1:36:58,1:37:15,1:37:49 – 1:37:54,1: 38: 11 and 1:38:36. However some conversations between the hijackers are given as subtitles and it is clear that a sort of prioritizing has been done in the case of subtitling/ translating. For instance, subtitle has been given to the dialogue when a message comes saying that "TWO AIRCRAFT HIT WTC"

> ZIAD: The brothers have hit both targets.
> SAEED: Shall I go and tell them?
> ZIAD: Tell them our time has come. (1:08:00 – 1:08:14)

The possible reason behind such a strategy of omission might be to evoke a sense of estrangement and distancing from the hijackers. This enables them to be treated as people from an alien world, another civilization. At times when it is translated, it is in broken English making those hijackers morons. The ideology behind such a translation is obvious. It reveals the racist core and subjective position. To put it in terms of Zizek, the film appears liberal at the constituted ideology and antiracist at the constitutive level. In other terms, the film represents a homophobic, extremist intolerance contrasted well with the tolerant, liberal ideology which accepts otherness and difference. Norween Mingnant's chapter "Beyond Muezzins and Mujahideen: Middle – Eastern Voices in Post-9/11 Hollywood

movies" in *Muslims and Americans Pop Culture* notes that Hollywood films took several tactics for presenting Middle-Eastern voices: speaking in English, speaking in subtitled indigenous languages, speaking in unsubtitled indigenous languages or not speaking at all (Henson 11). Mingnant even notices, rather cynically, a new trend after 9/11 to introduce Hollywood characters speaking in Middle Eastern languages "showing a linguistic and cultural openness" (11). But the politics of subtitling is revealed when no translation has been given through onscreen subtitles or when only portions have been translated.

Stuart Hall argues in *Representations: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices* how meaning or meanings of an image get privileged. In the chapter *Spectacle of the Other*, Hall analyses the practices in which the 'other' is represented. Hall establishes his argument by analysing the cover image of Olympics special *Sunday Times* Magazine of 9 October 1988(226). The cover page displays the image of the black sprinter Ben Jonson, winning in record time from Carl Lewis and three other athletes in action. The caption of the issue was "Heroes and Villains" which tells about the growing menace of drug among international players and Hall analyses the image with respect to the caption given to it. He says that instead of a right or wrong meaning of an image, "we need to ask "which of the many meanings in this image does the magazine mean to privilege"?"(226). He comes up with the concept of "preferred meaning". Among many meanings that can be inferred from the image, one meaning becomes the privileged or preferred one. Hall says that "The meaning of the photograph, then, does not lie exclusively in the image, but in the conjunction of image and text. Two discourses - the discourse of

written language and the discourse of photography - are required to produce and fix the meaning" (228). Similarly, image and motion of the movies along with the subtitles create multiple meanings and some meaning becomes the preferred one. The omission of subtitles and the very subtitling process itself has got a clear cut political agenda.

Since *United 93* is an attempt to visually narrate the real incident that could have happened inside the flight that was hijacked on 9/11 with a specific target like the other three planes that hit World Trade Centre twin towers and Pentagon. Of the four aircrafts hijacked that day, United 93 was the only one that did not reach the target. It crashed near Shanksville, Pennsylvania at 10:03 am and no one survived. According to Paul Greengrass, the film's narrative was backed up by the interviews with more than 100 family members and friends of the passengers and crew; the other main source being the *9/11Commission Report* submitted by the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States in 2004 (Young 128). So there is every reason to argue that how the terrorists hijacked the flight, how they got into the cockpit, how the terrorists behaved and communicated to each other are only assumptions and imaginations and a few were based on the records in *9/11 Commission report*. That may be a valid reason for the creation of characters of hijackers in a filmic way. But that does not validate the absence of translation or bad translation of their language. The argument that the authenticity and originality of the language of the terrorist is maintained through the 'absent presence' of the missing translation is rather an outrageous one. The language of the "other" is further "othered" by this strategy. At first, the film created an impression that

'terrorists are everywhere', among ourselves reminding the words of Jean

Baudrillard that "Terrorism, like, viruses is everywhere" (10). But after the initial

step of taking control of the cockpit, they change their language, their attitude, their

behavior and their body language. They become aggressive and the real life

characters turn into filmic villains. As Zizek says, "…the terrorists are turned into an

abstract agency—abstract in the Hegelian sense of subtracted from the concrete

socio-ideological network which gave birth to it" (*Welcome* 33).

Fig. 16 Lord's prayer: *United 93* (1:33:51)

Fig. 17 Voiced prayer: *United 93* (1:33:57)

Fig. 18 Thy kingdom come:*United 93* (1:34:03)

Fig. 19 Forgive "Them": *United 93* (1:34:06)

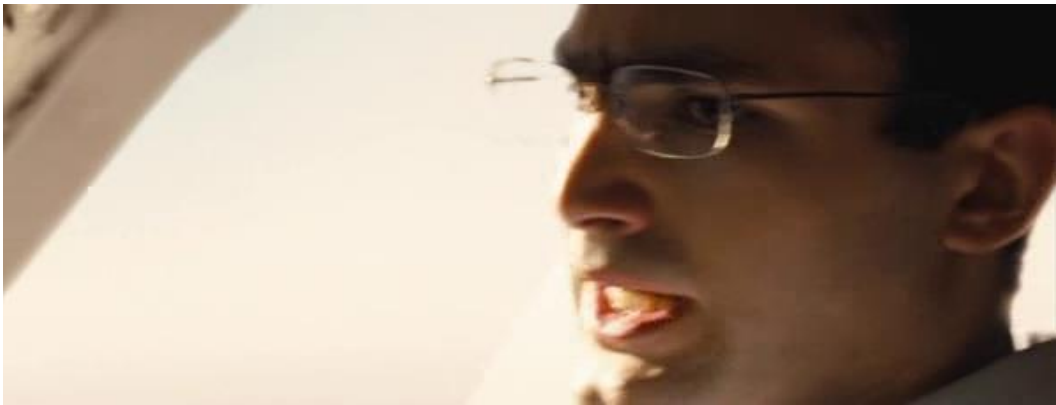Fig. 20 Personal to collective:*United 93* (1:34:08)

Fig. 21 Muted prayer: *United 93* (1:33:57)

Fig. 22 Censored!: *United 93* (1:34:17)

The film exemplifies the established ideologies of Islam and Christianity in the use of prayers by the terrorists who are in a suicide mission and by the passengers of the aircraft. The Quran verses in Arabic are not translated and the terrorists engage in a wild chanting from the very beginning of the movie itself whereas the Christian prayers said by the victims are in English. It gives out the dominant mainstream ideology of the all forgiving Lord's prayer: "Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on Earth as it is in heaven, And forgive those who trespass against us"(1:33:56). Interesting thing is that the shots of Lord's Prayer are spliced with the prayer uttered by the hijackers

in their language which does not find a translation. The politics of othering is very well established. Differences in culture and the 'clash of civilization' are emphasized.

The sequence 1:33:49 – 1:34:17 (figs 16-22) is a series of close-ups of the passengers and the hijackers chanting their prayers. Figure 16 shows the hijacker praying in Arabic which is not subtitled but the Lord's Prayer uttered by passengers are fore grounded in the shot which begins thus: "Our Father, who art in heaven" followed by "Hallowed be Thy name" in figure 17, "Thy kingdom come" in figure 18, "And Forgive us those who trespass against us" in figures 19 and 20.The remaining figures 21 and 22 show the close-ups of other two hijackers reciting prayer but not subtitled or translated.

Lawrence Venuti's major work on translation *The Translator's Invisibility* elaborates the two main practices that are followed in the process of translation which can be applied to the translation of subtitles in films. He talks about domestication and foreignisation as two categories and he equates domesticating and foreignising practices with two types of translation, namely transparent or resistant translation. In the former, "transparent discourse is perceived as mirroring the author, it values the foreign text as original, authentic, true and devalues the translated text as derivative, simulacral, false, forcing on translation the project of effacing its second-order status with a fluent strategy" (Venuti 289-290). The latter, resistant translation is "based on an aesthetic of discontinuity, it can best preserve that difference, that otherness, by reminding the reader of the gains and losses in the translation process and the unbridgeable gaps between cultures" (306). The illusion

of transparency in translation is severed by resistant translation, thus promoting the representation of other realities so as to recognize linguistic and cultural differences of foreign texts. The choice of how to represent the other is a deliberate process. It moreover depends on the target audience. When two unbalanced cultures are involved, power differentials play a major role in the representation of the other. The strategy of translating/subtitling purely is target oriented, and in the case of *United 93*, it is obviously the wounded American audience who is targeted. Omission can be regarded as the perfect strategy to domesticate a text for the target audience by complete deletion which may appear foreign to them.

Dionysis Kapsaskis in the article "Translation and Film: On the Defamiliarizing Effect of Subtitles" says that "… the resistance to subtitling can be interpreted in geopolitical terms, in the sense that dominant languages and cultures refuse to come to terms with the heteronomy of aesthetic representation in general" (48). The imbalance of culture is better reflected in the imbalance of language used in subtitling, especially when the target language is a dominant language.

The sequence of prayers foregrounds Christianity as the dominant religious principle and Islam as the 'other'. This can be explicated against the background of Roland Barthes' analysis of his seminal example of the 'French Negro' in *Mythologies*. He examines the denotation and connotation of the picture on a magazine cover which shows a black man in French uniform saluting the flag. Barthes analyses how the presence of the black man in that single visual erases the French colonial history, "whitewashing presence of racism within the French identity" (115). In the sequence analyzed, the foregrounding of Christianity

strategically place Islam as the 'other' and even makes an attempt for complete

erasure. The hijackers remain as muted beings when their language is muted. In

United 93, no audience wants to listen to the 'other'. The film is multilingual with a

clear domination of English and Arabic and German languages are muted; thus

muting an entire culture. No measures to suture the cultural and linguistic

differences are attempted in the movie.

Another tendentious casting included the German citizen Christian Adams

(Erich Redman). He was the only European travelling that flight. Adams is

portrayed as a man of appeasement but there is no historical evidence regarding the

character of Adams in the flight. The presence of a Japanese citizen Toshiya Kuge

(Masato Kamo) was also inconspicuously absorbed into the American collective by

being in the background. Adams' characterization has become controversial in

treating him as the 'fall guy', "the token cowardly German amid a band of brave

Americans" as *The Guardian* calls him (Brooks "United 93"). His physical

appearance can easily fit into the American collective by being white, middle class,

young and athletic. Still he is presented as an obstacle to American collective which

emulated as a myth of American innocence and heroism. When the aircraft is

hijacked, he advises the fellow passengers to comply with the hijackers. He recalls

similar hijacking incidents that happened in the past when they asked for ransom and

freed the passengers. But when the film moves to the final phase, exactly at

01:33:39, when the passengers plan to revolt realizing that it is a suicide mission,

Adams is put in bad light, shown as an 'other' who jumps from the seat shouting

"Ich bin Deutscher, ich bin kein Amerikaner, ich bin Deutscher" (*I am a German, I*

am not an American, I am a German) (Lehnguth 70). The interesting part is that the translation of these lines is not given in the movie. It is only after the German Americans' protest on the release of the movie that the 'treacherous and cowardly act' of Adams was known to the public. *9/11 Commission Report* does not make any mention about such a character who acted so cowardly on board and it was hard to imagine the genesis of a racist thought like this. Since there is no evidence to Adams' act, obviously the film makers were playing with the deep rooted cultural prejudice among the Americans, placing them as brave heroes and Europeans as cowardly appeasers.

Movies like *United 93* and *World Trade Centre* are categorized under the title trauma studies. In the chapter "Rituals of Trauma: How the Media Fabricated September 11" Fritz Breithaupt describes how the news institutions presumed itself as a national therapist and he talks about how trauma works. He argues that the replaying of a painful traumatic moment and exposing oneself to it, though it reopens the wound, helps in the healing. Revisiting the traumatic moment aids in healing the initial wound and protects ourselves from future assaults. He elaborates that the proliferating images of American Flag, images of Ground Zero and the fall of the twin towers helped Americans to get over from the trauma and to form a protective layer. These may account for the making of movies like *United 93* and *World Trade Centre*. The trauma is faced once again and thus healed. Both the movies attempt to portray the ways in which Americans faced the situation; heroically with a Hollywood hero like Nicholas Cage in *World Trade Centre* and more heroically without any Hollywood heroes in *United 93*.

Ross Lynchehuam in her PhD thesis on *American Cinema After 9/11* argues in terms of Colin MacCabe's concept of "classic realist text" that films like *United 93* and *World Trade Centre* cannot and do not mount any challenge to the dominant ideology of the historical period in which they are produced. Moreover, a close analysis of *United 93* and its subtitles clearly show how the dominant ideology is projected and emphasized. However, post 9/11 movies like *Syriana* (2005) and *Babel* (2006) do allow such a challenge to take place. These films' strategies of subversion and the way they organize their discourses that refuse a dominant discourse are well established (122). Both *United 93* and *World Trade Centre* correspond to and support the dominant ideology of the 9/11 context.

The dominant ideological content of *United 93* is revealed in the exposition shots of the movie itself. The sequence starts with a shot of a person who is praying and his friend comes to inform him that "Its time." The shots that follow, from 1:44 to 2:01, show the illumined space of the urban skyscrapers of a city in America. The significance of the shot is that it is a bird's eye shot with the background of prayer from Quran. The warning is clear and the relation between the hijackers, the cityscape and their religion is brought out and it is further established in the shots that follow.

The shot that followed is a single frame where a bus carries the hijackers going to the airport and it passes a freight container near the airport with a huge inscription on it. It says "GOD BLESS AMERICA". Nigel Morris argues that this frame that comprises this slogan along with the flag and the towers implicates "religion in patriotism, politics, and commerce" that is very much prevailing in the

U.S. (153). This frame is placed before the hijacking as a foreboding. In the shot, an image of the twin towers can also be seen which is a deliberate choice and remaking of it. The mis en scene of each shot and frame are deliberate and monitored to achieve the desired effects. The flag of the US, the inscription along with the towers, the prayer, the ritualistic ablutions of Muslims are all mediated images that reveal the political content and relates the act of terrorism to a religion, not to an act of fanaticism or fundamentalism. All assemble to form the contrived mis-en-scene that denotes patriotic content. As Sol Worth has argued, as discussed earlier, all the shots and mis-en-scene within a shot are intended and manipulated.

Fig. 23 Bird's eye shot from *United 93* (00:1:44)

Fig. 24 God Bless America shot from United 93 which shows the Twin Towers in the background (00:03:20)

Hollywood, just like any other nation's film productions, has a well-known history of responding to crises and challenges that America has faced: like the way allegories of the communist threat during the cold war can be traced in many science-fiction films. Stephen Prince examines the first visual imagination of terrorist bombing on camera. In *Sabotage* (1936), Alfred Hitchcock first visualized a terrorist bombing on camera; he was working in the British cinema then (Prince 6). It was a time when Hollywood was not engaged in such themes. What we would today call terrorist themes begin to emerge in Hollywood's disaster movies of the 1970s.

Post 9/11 American social context and cultural productions portray and respond to the issues of the Iraq War on Terrorism, controversies of domestic surveillance, forcible rendition, Abu Ghraib and torture sequences in the backdrop of the legacy of 9/11. Though Steven Spielberg's *Minority Report* (2002) is a pre 9/11 production, its release in 2002, marks the changing political scenario in a futuristic way. The film is an adaptation of a short story by Philip K. Dick. The film uses science fiction to portray the future world of political repression and surveillance. It portrays a future world where a department of pre-crimes is set amidst the growing number of crimes. The film envisages world where even thinking of doing a crime itself becomes a crime. The film perfectly replicates the post 9/11 war on terror milieu `where intense monitoring and tracking was done on Muslim Americans. As Eric Hobsbawm suggests, "The extraordinary rise of technological and other means of keeping citizens under surveillance at all times – CCTV cameras, phone-tapping, access to personal data and computers – has not made state and law more effective,

though it has made citizens less free"(38). The post 9/11 domestic surveillance

implemented by the Bush administration is anticipated well in the movie. "America

is closed" in the movie *The Terminal* (Spielberg 2004) which tells the story of a

foreigner who visits America and how his basic freedoms are stripped of in post

9/11 America. *War of the Worlds* (2005), another post 9/11 meditation by Steven

Spielberg, unlike that of *ET*, is a grim, dark, violent portrayal of an alien invasion to

America. The movie imagines the 1898 H. G. Wells's novel and also a remake of

the 1953 film directed by Byron Haskin. It is an apocalyptic version of 9/11 attack

and Spielberg himself has acknowledged that "the film speaks to the anxieties

roused by the Al Qaeda's attacks on Manhattan and Washington D. C" (Prince 86).

It is an imaginative reworking of the events of 9/11, although on a larger and more

apocalyptic scale. As Prince observes,

> The horrific imagery of New Yorkers fleeing through the streets as the trade
>
> towers fell provides the film with its basic narrative premise— run from the
>
> invaders— and the visual design of its action scenes. As Ray wanders
>
> through one scene of devastation, a blizzard of detritus— clothing, papers,
>
> and pieces of hundred of victims who have been vaporized by the aliens—
>
> floats down from the sky. The imagery is modeled on the iconic storm of
>
> papers and other bits of the Twin Towers that rained down on Manhattan
>
> after the planes struck and again after the buildings fell. (87)

The War Within (2005) is an indie film which narrates the dilemmas and

conflicts between the two brands of Islam; the violent fundamentalist Islam and the

progressive assimilative Islam. Stephen Prince says, "The film's title evokes the

multilayered conflict that the story dramatizes, a war within America, within Islam, and within the minds and hearts of those individuals who are affected" (99). He argues,

> …terrorism is not a new phenomenon, but I use this phrase— the age of terrorism— to refer to the distinctive features of our own period. Terrorism has furnished a defining experience for our time, encompassing policy, politics, emotion, perception, insurgent strategy, aesthetics, and violence in ways that seem insurmountable. (3)

But as *11'09''01 —September 11* (2002) demonstrates, the international views are diverse and, at times, are more skeptical and critical of U.S. foreign policy than what one finds in Hollywood. It is an anthology movie that brings together eleven directors from eleven countries as a response to September 11 attack. Many filmmakers in the collection made an attempt to compare September 11 to the larger geopolitical landscape. The film review by Dave Kehr appeared in *New York Times* on July 18 2003, narrates some of the themes thus:

> …the great and undisputed damage done to the United States is compared to the long-running conflicts in Bosnia (in the episode of Danis Tanovic,the director of No Man's Land); the CIA directed Coup d'état on September 11,1973, against the democratically elected socialist government of President Salvador Allende in Chile (as movingly recounted in Mr. Loach's sequence by a Chilean refugee living in London); and the enduring struggles of Afghan refugees in Iran in Samira Makhmalbaf's sequence. (Kehr)

All these are attempts to place the 9/11 incident in the continuum of the global geopolitical space. Present problems can only be analyzed from the perspective of the past. It reminds the views of philosophical commentators like Derrida, Butler and Baudrillard who viewed it as an opportunity to have introspection in the foreign policies of the US and as an opportunity to establish more friendly relations with the rest of the world. Instead of taking sides in the clash between American imperialism and Islamic fundamentalism, a dialectical category of totality needs to be adopted. As Hobsbawm proposes, "…we should modestly accept that all our positions are relative, conditioned by contingent historical constellations, so that no one has definitive solutions, merely pragmatic temporary solutions" (78).

Spielberg's *Munich* (2005) very well captures the post 9/11 dilemma of terrorism and its roots. The movie concludes with an image of the soaring Twin Towers. *Munich* tells the story of a team of Israeli assassins, led by Avner Kauffman (Eric Bana) who is assigned with the charge of hunting down members of Black September. Black September is the Palestinian Terrorist Organisation responsible for killing eleven Israeli athletes at the 1972 Olympic Games. The movie suggests the cycle of violence. The film's final scene depicts an exchange between Avner and his handler Ephraim (Geoffrey Rush):

> AVNER: Did we accomplish anything at all? Everyman we killed has been replaced by worse.
>
> EPHRAIM: Why cut my finger nails, when they grow back. (02:34:26-32)

When they go their separate ways, the camera zooms out to reveal the Twin Tower clearly apparent in the distance. This powerful and poignant final image speaks

eloquently and forcefully to the futility of vengeful retaliation. The digitally inserted
image of the Towers clearly points out the cycle of violence and brings out the
meaningless void words of peace and security offered by Bush's War on Terror.

It is worth connecting post 9/11geopolitical scenario to the story that Zizek
shares in his book *Welcome to the Desert of the Real*:

> In an old joke from the defunct German Democratic Republic, a German
> worker gets a job in Siberia; aware of how all mail will be read by the
> censors, he tells his friends: 'Let's establish a code: if a letter you get from
> me is written in ordinary blue ink, it's true: if it's written in red ink, it's
> false.' After a month, his friends get the first letter, written in blue ink:
> 'Everything is wonderful here: the shops are full, food is abundant,
> apartments are large and properly heated, cinemas show films from the
> West, there are many beautiful girls ready for an affair – the only thing you
> cannot get is *red ink*.' (1)

Though the worker could not communicate as prearranged, he passes the message
through a coded language effectively. Likewise the present day movies, if watched
closely, if analyzed closely, are self referential and the analysis reveals the politics,
both dominant and muted, of the current times. Even the rooted cultural and social
biases which cannot be projected on to the screen as it had been done earlier in an
overt way can be unveiled. The editors of *Cahiers* argue that "Reading a film means
regarding the film as a text that is related to the ideology that produced it, making
films 'say what they have to say within what they leave unsaid'" and "it is not a case
of finding 'secret meaning' but rather revealing the, always displaced, 'structuring
absences'" (qtd. in Nolan 59). Watching a movie closely and every attempt to

analyze shots and sequences unravel the overt and covert levels of meanings and thereby their socio cultural and political context.

Stuart hall in his chapter "The spectacle of the other" examines how power operates, keeping "the dominant and the dominated within its circuits" (261). He borrows the ideas of Gramsci and Foucault in arguing that "power is to be found everywhere"; "power circulates". Hall elaborates,

> The circularity of power is especially important in the context of representation. The argument is that everyone – the powerful and the powerless – is caught up, *though not on equal terms,* in power's circulation. No one – neither its apparent victims nor its agents – can stand wholly outside its field of operation. (261)

This justifies for the representation of all the 'others'. Thus representation has its own politics. Post September movies become a category of its own which disseminates the current dominant ideology. Thus any product of reproducing ideology ends up in succumbing to it though it has the potential to subvert it. The movies *Rendition* and *United 93* completely invalidate the totality of the geopolitical context which culminated in 9/11. The absence of political content and context deliberately manipulates and recreates history. Though the movie *Rendition* claims to protest the US foreign and domestic policy on torture and widely acclaimed as an anti-torture movie by content, the sequence analysis has proved otherwise. The film joins the chorus of the dominant power order in asserting that torture saves lives and US does not torture. The act of torture, depicted to save human lives, naturalizes and neutralizes the violence in it. The sinister role played by the use/abuse/absence of language by way of subtitles also emphasizes the prejudiced dominant ideology.

Chapter 4

Framing the Muslim Subject in the Age of Modernity

> The individual which power has constituted is at the same time its vehicle.
>
> - Michel Foucault 98

> Culture is created through the telling of stories. We tell each other stories, and then later forget that they were stories, they then become our realities.
>
> - Peter Senge

The establishing shots of the British movie *Yasmin* (2004) directed by Kenneth Glenaan starring Archie Panjabi and Renu Setna place it in the times immediately before and after September 1, set among the British Pakistani community. *The Guardian* describes: "Kenny Glenaan's film, based on six months' research in Asian communities in Pennine mill towns by two white, middle-class men, is evidently an important picture dramatising how Muslim communities in Britain have been tormented in the wake of 9/11" (Jeffries). The socio political milieu is perfectly located through the establishing shots. The shots can be narrated thus:

> Shot 1: A middle aged man enters the frame from the centre followed by a young man and both walk to the right. Camera slowly pans to the right.

Shot 2: Both stop before a shutter and the mis en scene reveals the place as a Masjid. On the grating, it is written "Pakis Go Home" with spray paint. Both open the shutter gate.

Shot 3: They enter the Masjid and cross diagonally from top left through the red mat on the floor.

Shot 4: The young man enters from the right and through the half open door he is seen to recite the Islamic call to prayer.

Shot 5: Medium shot of a minaret of mosque in half frame and the rest of the frame is occupied by a wall.

Shot 6: A long shot of the entire place

Shot 7, 8 & 9: Three Muslim women in medium shots but the frame is blocked by a car, kids on the streets prepared to go to school, bearded skull caped Muslim men carrying craters to the car.

Shot 10: The suburbs of the town where a purple color shawl is thrown and a Muslim woman in scarf is shown to change her dress from salwar to tight jeans and T-shirt. All shots are in close-ups.

All these shots are significant and play a major role in establishing the political and socio-geographic location of the movie. Shot 2 brings out the racist town and it sets the mood of the film. Shots 4 – 9 narrate the social milieu of the locality and it is predominantly a Muslim populated part of England. The last shot visually depicts the transformation of a Muslim woman, clad in Salwar and head

covered with scarf, to a woman in tight jeans and tees. In the consecutive shots she is portrayed as humming to the music of the western beat coming from the stereo player of her car; her hair dancing in the wind. This makeover repeats quite often in the film which reminds of the veiling/unveiling that takes place in the historical classic movie *The Battle of Algiers* (1966) directed by Gillo Pontecorvo. In *The Battle of Algiers* the veiling/unveiling was manipulated by the Algerian women in their effort to help the resistance movement against the French occupation, which led to Algerian Independence in1962.

The Battle of Algiers concentrates on the combat in Algiers during the period 1954-1957 that was directed against colonialism with an aim to attain independence and to restore the Algerian state, and the respect of fundamental liberties, regardless of race or religion. It was the period when National Liberation Front (FLN) was formed and guerrilla insurgencies were organized. The main Arab quarter Casbah was sealed off and checkpoints were set up and the film narrates how the civilians were forced to show ID and they were subjected to searches. When Casbah was sealed, at first the veiled women were let off without searching and they became easy carriers of weapons. Later when the French army fought back killing many Algerian women and children, the act of protest took a turn: women joined the group. They started smartening their hair, coloring them, wearing makeup and trimming their waists. The women unveiled and became carriers of bombs in their hand bags. Even when the men and veiled women found it hard to pass the checkpoints, a westernized woman can, with ease. Franz Fanon elaborates the

participation of Algerian women in the struggle for independence at length in his essay "Algeria Unveiled".

Franz Fanon begins the article "Algeria unveiled" thus: "The way people clothe themselves, together with the traditions of dress and finery that custom implies, constitutes the most distinctive form of a society's uniqueness, that is to say the one that is the most immediately perceptible"(35). It is their dress which reveals the cultural identity of a group or a person; veil and its visible constant presence characterize the Arab Muslim world. But veil is always a matter of contention in the past and the present. The colonial society of the past as a whole with all its diversities and philosophy views the veil in a rather homogenous way. The popular narratives about the veil thus become the narrative of oppression, humiliation and sequestration. The veiled woman who never left her home without the accompaniment of her parents or husband before the revolution had to take off her veil and was entrusted with the mission of passing messages for the militants or carrying pistols or bombs. Fanon explains,

> Carrying revolvers, grenades, hundreds of false identity cards or bombs, the unveiled Algerian woman moves like a fish in the Western waters. The soldiers, the French patrols, smile to her as she passes, compliments on her looks are heard here and there, but no one suspects that her suitcases contain the automatic pistol which will presently mow down four or five members of one of the patrols. (58)

Later the veil reappeared when the mission became difficult and when patrolling was made strict. Veil came handy to conceal the goods. Fanon says, "The Algerian

woman's body, which in an initial phase was pared down, now swelled. Whereas in

the previous period the body had to be made slim and disciplined to make it

attractive and seductive, it now had to be squashed, made shapeless and even

ridiculous"(62). Algerian women in the act of participating in the revolution thus

adapted veils again; the veil thus lost the age old patriarchal oppressive narrative

attached to it. The possibilities of concealed bodies were explored for the grandiose

purpose of independence struggle. Franz Fanon summarizes the history of the

veiling/unveiling of Algerian women thus:

> There is thus a historic dynamism of the veil that is very concretely
>
> perceptible in the development of colonization in Algeria. In the beginning,
>
> the veil was a mechanism of resistance, but its value for the social group
>
> remained very strong. The veil was worn because tradition demanded a rigid
>
> separation of the sexes, but also because the occupier was bent on unveiling
>
> Algeria. In a second phase, the mutation occurred in connection with the
>
> Revolution and under special circumstances. The veil was abandoned in the
>
> course of revolutionary action. What had been used to block the
>
> psychological or political offensives of the occupier became a means, an
>
> instrument. The veil helped the Algerian woman to meet the new problems
>
> created by the struggle. (63)

The veiling/unveiling process has the political dynamics of femininity to

unveil the hitherto veiled absent presence of women and their role in an anti-colonial

struggle. Franz Fanon talks about the visibility and subjectivity of Algerian women

and he says the ways in which an everyday dress has the potential to transform into a

"revolutionary fashion" (59). "Algeria Unveiled" thus describes how representation can be manipulated by the marginalized subjects and how power can be operated from behind the veil during decolonization. But the agency and subjectivity of these Algerian women are contestable debates which do not fall in the purview of this research. Though the comparison of *Yasmin* and *The Battle of Algiers* is a far-fetched one; both represent the marginal world, the marginal-subject position of the British Pakistanis in England in the former and the marginal-subject position as colonial subject in the latter.

Yasmin is the story of a young Muslim Pakistani woman named Yasmin living in the North of England. The plot reveals the struggles that she has to go through as a Muslim woman both before and after 9/11. She fights hard not to reveal herself as a Muslim in the work place and that is the sequence detailed in the beginning of this chapter. Both *Yasmin* and *Battle of Algiers*, though of different eras, talk about the manipulation of subject positions which are otherwise understood as oppressed in the Eurocentric ideology. Both narrate transformation, manipulation and even going to the extent of camouflaging identity to fit into the changing political situation. If the women in *Battle of Algiers* veil and unveil as a political decolonizing strategy of resistance, Yasmin undergo transformation to find a place in the Eurocentric White dominated world where a Muslim woman in scarf is always looked down as demeaning and repressive.

At this outset, this chapter aims to analyze the representation and formation of the Muslim subject in the selected movies. Since the Muslim is not a unitary and predefined group, I focus in this study on the cinematic texts that produce Muslim

men and women that ought to be categorized as "the subject". The selected movies include *Brick Lane*, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, *Moozlum* and *Rendition*. The chapter would examine the Muslim male subject and female subject differently. The concept "subject" is used in the research as Nick Mansfield introduces it in his book *Subjectivity: Theories of the Self from Freud to Haraway.* He distinguishes "subject" from "self", though sometimes used interchangeably, in "the way our immediate daily life is already caught up in complex political, social and philosophical – that is, shared – concerns" (3). He further explains that subjectivity refers "to an abstract or general principle that defies our separation into distinct selves and that encourages us to imagine that … our interior lives inevitably seem to involve other people, either as objects of need, desire and interest or as necessary sharers of common experience"(3). Judith Butler in *The Psychic Life of Power* argues that the subject, "rather than be identified strictly with the individual, ought to be designated as a linguistic category, a place- holder, a structure in formation" (10). "Muslim subject" is thus a lived subjectivity, as Butler calls it, "the linguistic occasion for the individual to achieve and reproduce intelligibility, the linguistic condition of its existence and agency" (11). Power plays a major role in making and maintaining subjects intact. Thus it is both an act of subordination and subjection. Butler states it thus:

> According to the formulation of subjection as both the subordination and
> becoming of the subject, power is, as subordination, a set of conditions that
> precedes the subject, effecting and subordinating the subject from the
> outside….Power not only *acts on* a subject but, in a transitive sense, *enacts*

the subject into being. As a condition, power precedes the subject… A

condition does not enable or enact without becoming present. Because Power

is not intact prior to the subject, the appearance of its priority disappears as

power acts on the subject, and the subject is inaugurated (and derived)

through this temporal reversal in the horizon of power. (*Psychic*13-14)

The post 9/11 socio political and media discourses emphasize the "Muslim

Subject" as 'terrorists' bent on attacking the liberal democratic multicultural world.

The dominant ideology, in Foucaultian terms, constructed on "power/knowledge"

creates the subject and in this context the Muslim subject is created as the

fundamentalist panicking the world peace and security. Muslim subject thus became

an embattled category especially since 9/11. Butler quotes Foucault, "the point of

modern politics is no longer to liberate a subject, but rather to interrogate the

regulatory mechanism through which 'subjects' are produced and maintained"

(*Psychic* 31-32). Thus the regulatory mechanism needs to be questioned in the

production of the subject, if a distortion or refraction happens. Butler further quotes

Foucault, "the political, ethical, social, philosophical problem of our days is not to

try to liberate us both from the state, and from the state's institutions, but to liberate

us from the state and the type of individualization which is linked to the state. We

have to promote new forms of subjectivity through the refusal of this kind of

individuality which has been imposed on us for several centuries" (101). Edward

Said summarizes his ideas about subject formation in his "Afterword" to

Orientalism thus:

The construction of identity… involves establishing opposites and "others" whose actuality is always subject to the continuous interpretation and re-interpretation of their differences from "us". Each age and society recreates its "Others". Far from a static thing then, identity of self or of "other" is a much worked-over historical, social, intellectual and political process that takes place as a contest involving individuals and institutions in all societies. (Said 332)

Thus in Saidian paradigm the self and the other are indispensable for the formation of subjectivity. As Stuart Hall puts it: "It is only through the relation to the Other, the relation to what it is not, to precisely what it lacks, to what has been called its *constitutive outside* that the 'positive' meaning of any term – and thus its 'identity' – can be constructed" ("Questions" 4–5). Said further asserts that "the construction of identity is bound up with the disposition of power and powerlessness in each society" (*Orientalism* 332).

Contemporary debates on subject formation still structures around the concept of interpellation as propounded by Louis Althusser. Althusser argues that "the category of the subject is constitutive of all ideology, but we also immediately add that the category of the subject is constitutive of every ideology only insofar as every ideology has the function (which defines it) of 'constituting' concrete subjects (such as you and me)" (Althusser 188). As a way of representing why the category of the subject is constitutive of ideology, which exists only by constituting concrete subjects, Althusser employs a mode of exposition. As the first formulation he suggests that, "all ideology hails or interpellates concrete individuals as concrete

subjects, through the functioning of the category of the subject" (190). He argues that ideology functions in such a way as to transform individuals into subjects through interpellation. Althusser formulates that "The existence of ideology and the hailing or interpellation of individuals as subjects is one and the same thing" (191). Butler summarizes the doctrine of interpellation thus: "The theory of interpellation appears to stage a social scene in which a subject is hailed, the subject turns around, and the subject then accepts the terms by which he or she is hailed" (*The Psychic* 106). An individual even before his birth itself becomes a subject and various ideologies postulate him as familial subject, religious subject, legal subject, moral subject, political subject and so on. Althusser concludes saying that "Ideologies never stop interpellating subjects as subjects, never stop 'recruiting' individuals who are always-already subjects. The play of ideologies is superposed, criss-crossed, contradicts itself on the same subject: the same individual always-already (several times) subject" (193-194).

Ideological interpellation happens to be the foundation of the discourses on the formation of subject which is applicable in the case of Muslim Subjects especially in the way the dominant structure demands the Muslims to deprecate association with violent extremism. Interpellation is the way in which people are addressed by the dominant authority. This calling positions the addresser in the hierarchical structure of power at lower strata and they implicitly confirm the social order without any protest. Butler argues,

> "Submission" to the rules of the dominant ideology might then be
>
> understood as a submission to the necessity to prove innocence in the face of

accusation, a submission to the demand for proof, an execution of that proof,

and acquisition of the status of the subject in and through compliance with

the terms of the interrogative law. To become a "subject" is thus to have

been presumed guilty, then tried and declared innocent. Because this

declaration is not a single act but a status incessantly *reproduced,* to become

a "subject" is to be continuously in the process of acquitting oneself of the

accusation of guilt. (*Psychic*118)

In the case of Muslims across the world, a general sense of mistrust has

developed and established after the series of violent terrorist attacks pre and post

9/11and quite frequently whenever an attack takes place Muslims need to prove their

innocence and to condemn any extremist act. They are caught up in the dyadic

choice of either a sympathizer of terrorist/terrorist or a patriot who demonstrates

loyalties to the state. Thus the often repeated demand of proving innocence by the

Muslim subjects is a form of interpellation both by the state and by the dominant

society. The notion of interpellation does not provide a space of complete innocence,

eliminating mistrust, but rather legitimizes the gaze of mistrust towards Muslims.

Peter Morey and Amina Yaqin says, "the Muslim presence in the West has for some

years now – at least since the Rushdie affair – operated to trouble the self image of

normalized liberal secular society" (37). Thus the liberal political discourse responds

to it with the ceaseless insistence on integration or assimilation which takes different

forms like the tightening of border controls and entry to the nation state, questions of

freedom of expression which is a burning issue around the world, niqab ban in

France and so on.

The nation state produces and determines the other and proclaims the Muslim as the enemy. As Althusser points out, the structure of all ideology is *speculary* or having a mirror structure: the process of interpellating individuals to subjects is in accordance with a "Unique and Absolute Subject" (196). This leads to the centeredness of all ideology and the process of interpellation subjects the subjects to the Subject. This relation between the Subject and its infinite subjects is what Althusser calls as "double speculary". When the subjection of the subjects to the Subject is duly respected, the subjects will be rewarded. In the case of political ideology, "… the speculary relation is that of the Subject (variable: the Fatherland, the National or General Interest, Progress, the Revolution) and the subjects (the members of the organization, the voters, the militants, and so on)" (198). After 9/11 the political ideology of the US has grown through considerable changes. Security of the State becomes the Subject here and the Muslims become the subjects to be subjected. The agencies of power/knowledge decide that such subjects can be taken to undisclosed detention centers and tortured like that happened to Anwar El-Ibrahimi in *Rendition*. Thus the US patriot act is implemented which took away the civil liberties and rights of the Muslim subjects as citizens of America. It sounds quite contradictory to the words of the then president George Bush after the attack said that "they hate us for our freedom" ("Address to a Joint Session"). All these are done in the name of public security, to protect nation from any further attack and this ideology circulates the detrimental message that this sort of oppression against the Muslim subject is natural. The surveillance, detention, torture become the repressive state apparatuses, in Althusserian terms, just like the way media, schools, family, church and other such institutions become ideological state apparatuses.

Somehow the nation is protected at the expense of a religion which is labeled and reduced as anti-modern. Kaja Silverman elaborates ideology as a suturing device in cinematic viewing in her work *The Subject of Semiotics*. She argues that the filmic narrative is laden with ideological positions that interpellate individual viewers and thereby suture them into subjective positions within the film. Ideologies are often challenged in the film, but are also reaffirmed, strengthened, and proven righteous in the end.

The cumulative effect of Marxism, Psychoanalysis, Feminism, contemporary theories of language and the work of Foucault is to deconstruct the essentialist notion of the unified agent, that is, a subject who possesses a fixed identity. Instead, antiessentialist conceptions of identity within cultural studies stress the decentred subject i.e., the self as made up of multiple and changed identities. It is quite a conflicting situation to enquire the production and maintenance of a Muslim subject in all these modern theoretical postulations. Who is a Muslim subject? What is the status of Muslim subject in modernity? Is Muslim subject a unified homogenous entity? How is the Muslim subject filmically presented? Do they reflect the social reality or are there any nuances which subvert the dominant ideology? These are some of the questions which lead the research in this chapter.

In the movie *Rendition*, there is a short sequence where Isabella and Alan Smith have a conversation after realizing that Anwar is taken to a detention centre.

> ALAN: CIA calls it extraordinary rendition. It started under Clinton. The
> agency wanted to be able to move suspected terrorists without having to
> formally apply for extradition. Now it's supposed to be used only under

extraordinary circumstances. But after 9/11, it took on a whole new life.

Basically, the government has authorized the seizure and transfer of anyone

they suspect of being involved in terrorism to secret prisons outside of the

U.S.

ISABELLA: Alan, Anwar is not a terrorist. There's nothing extremist about

him.

ALAN: I know.

ISABELLA: He coaches Jeremy's soccer team, for Christ sakes. What do

you mean prison?

…

Alan, Okay, What I'm asking is that the FBI checks him out, you have to

promise me they're not gonna find anything unusual. A meeting he might

have attended, all right, A friend, or an acquaintance that's had some contact,

any contact, with an extremist group. Uh, like a mosque he attends?

(00:52:18 – 00:53:44)

Isabella, wife of Anwar, tries to prove that he is not guilty and he is not an

extremist. She tries to prove it by telling Alan that Anwar coaches Jeremy's soccer

team. Soccer is one of the popular games of the US and playing soccer and coaching

a soccer team is projected by Isabella as a sign of patriotism. Each and every sign

serves a purpose and the game soccer is deliberately chosen instead of hockey of

football to show that Anwar very much belongs to the culture of American dream

who ardently love soccer. Isabella tries to prove that Anwar does not have any

association with terrorism or any form of extremism. For this, she uses soccer as an alibi. Alan, though he knew Anwar during the NYU days, does not fully depart from the suspicion about Anwar since he believes that there might be some reason why Anwar is taken. From Alan's detailed questioning, it is understood that it is not only Anwar who has to prove allegiance to the nation, but also his friends, even his acquaintances and the mosque that he attends to must be free from any extremist activities.

The film *Rendition*'s central plot tells the extraordinary rendition of an Egyptian born US citizen Anwar El Ibrahimi to an undisclosed North African country. The movie has a subplot of the love story of Fatima and Khalid and this is well knitted to the main plot of the detention of Anwar. Fatima is one of the leading female characters who leads the subplot. She is the daughter of Abasi Fawal, the torturer who works at one of the US detention centers. She is also the lover of Khalid with whom she runs away. The torture and murder of Khalid's brother by Abasi Fawal has led him to join the Islamic militants' group and his suicide attack links both the plots.   In the movie, "the gendered, possibly subaltern figure of Fatima is only recognisable in her relations to two, highly politicised, class-stratified, male figures in the film: her father, Abasi Fawal, an interrogation officer who is complicit with the US military, and Khalid El-Emim, a member of the Islamic resistance forces"(Parker 223). It is Fatima's character that makes legible the political, economical and legal conflicts in this North African state. "Her figure is undecideable because she serves as what Ewa Ziarek might term a differend, who can never call the US to account; throughout the film she not only remains outside

the terms of capitalism, education, democracy, and legality**,** but her erasure in these ways and the absence of her narrative voice is precisely what allows these central conflicts and the other characters to make sense to us" (Parker 223). Ziarek takes a feminist turn through the concept of "differend" proposed by Jean Francois Lyotard which has become the basic imperative of post modern politics noted for heterogeneity, conflict and dissensus. For Ziarek "differend" signifies "not a post modern celebration of the fragmentation of meaning but rather the obligation to redress an injustice that lacks the means of expression" (Ziarek 86).

In the context of the movie, Fatima remains outside of the hegemonic discourses without a means of expressing herself. Fatima does not question the capitalist order or even her father. When she has to assert her feminine identity, she just runs away with her lover. She does not think in terms of the political 'other' as Khalid does. If it was easy for Khalid to take a political stand, Fatima is confused or stands outside of it. In the case of Fatima, indeterminacy haunts the viewers and it is difficult to place her or appropriate her in the terms of democracy or any other forms of legibility. The viewer remains confused about her position, whether she affiliates herself to her father Abasi Fawal's US imposed post colonial democracy or to the form of Khalid's resistance. Her positioning in the liberal, post colonial democracy, modernity and extreme fundamental thoughts is quite a confusing one when we look closely at the images placed in the movie. But it creates an opening for a thought which is beyond the narrow binaries of oppression or/and liberation.

Mira Nair's adaptation of Mohsin Hamid's T*he Reluctant Fundamentalist* aims to offer a counter-narrative to earlier Hollywood productions on 9/11. *World*

Trade Centre, *United 93*, *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* (2011) offer a sort of cultural amnesia in commemorating 9/11. Nair's adaptation helps us to think of 9/11 as a culturally and racially encoded event. In the age of "clash of civilisation", a dialogue of both the worlds is endeavoured. In the movie, there are two sequences which proclaim the act of interpellation as experienced by Changez Khan, the protagonist. Changez was in Philippines, on a business trip, when World Trade Centre was attacked. The entire nation became alert immediately after the event and airport security was tightened. Though Changez was travelling with his boss and his colleague, he was singled out and he had to undergo a thorough checking. He was even stripped naked. Later when he met his girl friend Erica outside the airport, the brief conversation is the first sequence.

> ERICA: Lunatics hijacked planes from two different states killing thousands
> of people, not to mention themselves. It's beyond human comprehension.
> How does that happen? How does that happen?
>
> CHANGEZ: What makes you think I'd know? (00:52:44 – 00:53:00)

Erica's question "How does that happen?" does sound innocent but it provokes Changez. It was like the "hailing" in Althussserian terms. He is immediately provoked to answer how does he know which shuts down the conversation between the two. The humiliation that Changez has experienced from the airport security has made him irritable. He becomes the subject. Though he has an American dream, lives like an American, immediately after the event he becomes a Muslim or he is reduced to a Muslim identity. Changez's identity suddenly becomes singular and choiceless.

The second sequence happens on a street where a crazy man was ranting out words like "We're home-grown bombers." The mis-en-scene includes the street vendors selling American flags which was a common gesture in post 9/11scenario. The street happens to be in front of the building where Changez works as a promising financial analyst for Underwood Samson and he was walking down the street when the commotion was going on. Policeman appears on the scene and calls out "Hey, hold up!" The typical calling out in the act of interpellation happens and Changez turns back.

> COP: Hey, hold up! You in the black coat, stop right there.
> (Changez looks back)
>
> COP: Put your hands on the car.
> CHANGEZ: I didn't do anything. The guy you're looking for is back there.
> COP: Yeah, we'll get him.
> CHANGEZ: I work on the 53rd floor of that building at Underwood Samson.
> (1:15:07)

Changez's repeated statement to prove that he is innocent does not help him. His prestigious job at Underwood Samson does not prove his identity. His position as a "global elite" does not come for his rescue. He has to repeat "I am not f--- terrorist" (1:17:02) and a bit later he says that "I'm sick of trying to prove negative" (1:17:09).

The post 9/11 insecure American city made Changez a bearded Muslim guy which started freaking out some of the colleagues at Underwood Samson. The beard is referred twice in the movie as a marker of cultural difference (1:11:42 & 1:13:04) by the majoritarian non Muslims, though as Changez says Phil's moustache or beard

doesn't make any problem. Though the plot does not abide by a linear narrative, the movie is symmetrically structured on the identities of Changez Khan in the pre 9/11 and post 9/11 milieu. Changez was a lover of America who plays football wearing Princeton T-shirts; who believed America could offer an equal chance to win. Once he joins at Underwood Samson, Changez felt that he was entering in New York the same social class his family was falling out in Lahore. The frames in the US are seen to be inclusive of the multiculturalism that the nation boasts of. Changez's black colleague Wainwright is one among them. The shots portray how the US cultural milieu has dropped the racism prevailing for centuries against blacks and how Muslims have emerged as the new enemy. The post racist era, discussed in the second chapter, marked its culmination in the election of Barack Obama as the President of the USA. The recent Muslim travel ban introduced by the President Donald Trump signifies the discrimination towards them. Changez enjoyed his work in the corporate world. He becomes "the global elite" or "the secessionist" as Bauman calls it (*Community* 56). Becoming a secessionist or global elite is like entering into a "community free zone" (57). Bauman says that,

> It is a site where a togetherness understood as a sameness … of casually encountered and "irrelevant on demand" individuals – and an individuality understood as a trouble-free facility with which partnerships are entered and left – are daily practised to the exclusion of all other socially shared practices. The "secession of the successful" is, first and foremost, escape from community. (*Community* 57)

Bauman borrows the term from Robert Reich's *The Work of Nations*: it refers to "the new detachment, indifference, disengagement and indeed mental and moral exterritoriality of those who do not mind being left alone providing that the others, who think differently, don't bid for them to care and above all for a share in the perks of their 'do it yourself' life."(*Community* 50) A close analysis of the life of Changez in the US reveals that he is typical global elite who believed in equality and equal opportunity to pursue a life of happiness.

Mira Nair has used the world of Underwood Samson to explore the concept of economic fundamentalism alongside that of political fundamentalism. Mira Nair says,

> The film suggests there are many belief systems, based on their own fundamentals that ignore the views and fate of those people who do not share their opinion. The worlds of finance, the film implies, is based on the notion of profit at all costs − a notion where the end justifies the means. This is exemplified by Jim's and Changez's ruthless rationalization of companies, which results in hundreds of faceless employees losing their jobs and their livelihoods. (*From Book to Film* 57)

While at Underwood Samson, he falls in love with an American artist Erica. Changez, an American lover who pursues the American dream is transformed to a Pakistan nationalist after the events followed by 9/11. Soon his identity was picked for him after 9/11. Changez tells Bobby, "You picked side after 9/11and I don't have to. It was picked for me" (00:49:18). This point to the direction of what the then President Bush has told about choosing sides: either with America or with terrorists.

So there is a choice. But Muslims like Changez did not have a choice. Bauman notes:

> …identification is also a powerful factor in stratification; one of its most divisive and sharply differentiating dimensions. At one pole of the emergent global hierarchy are those who can compose and decompose their identities more or less at will, drawing from the uncommonly large, planet-wide pool of offers. At the other pole are crowded those whose access to identity choice has been barred, people who are given no say in deciding their preferences and who in the end are burdened with identities enforced and imposed by others; identities which they themselves resent but are not allowed to shed and cannot manage to get rid of. Stereotyping, humiliating, dehumanizing, stigmatizing identities . . . (*Identity: Conversations* 38)

As Bauman notes, people are at two poles: at one end they have the right to choose and opt their identity and at the other extreme there are people for whom the choosing is already done. Changez's identity is already envisaged by the state and he just need to fit into it. He does not have the option of customizing it. The state imagines a subject just like the state does when it puts up notice boards saying 'Do not spit here' or 'Do not urinate here'. The state imagines a literate person, who can read, as the subject here. But the problem with this imagination is that state does not have the potential to imagine a subject, educated and cultured, who does not engage in such anti social activities. Similarly the state has already envisaged the identity of Muslims by means of refraction and every time Changez is stopped and verified, the state wants to ensure whether he fits into its imagination.

The scene which has brought a structural shift in perspectives takes place almost in the middle of the film i.e. at 00:52:00 which is placed after 9/11. From that point onwards Changez is interpellated when his friends at office talk about the WTC attack and how brutal Muslims are. Till then his life was not determined by his Muslim identity or even the identity of an immigrant from Pakistan. He was proud enough to believe in his intellect and rationalization that were very much the qualities of modernity. The film boldly includes a shot in which Changez stands in a hotel room, watching the demolition of the towers on television and he describes his first emotion as one of awe. He even grins over the fall. Even at that moment his identity as a Muslim is not projected. Mira Nair explains that, this shot was "… intended as a very honest description of differences that exist in the world. There are people who had that reaction. The film is not trying to celebrate them or to say that this is good, but it does not flinch away from saying, 'This is the way things are'" (*From Book to Film* 56).

The sequence which brought down a paradigm shift is shot with extra care revealing the media tactics of the globalised America for a close observer. Changez Khan experiences the humiliation of being a Muslim in a nation like America for the first time and after the thorough security checking at the airport, he wears his dress. The scene is quite a unique one with an overlapping of television images. Changez's image is overlapped with the television images of news footages of 9/11.
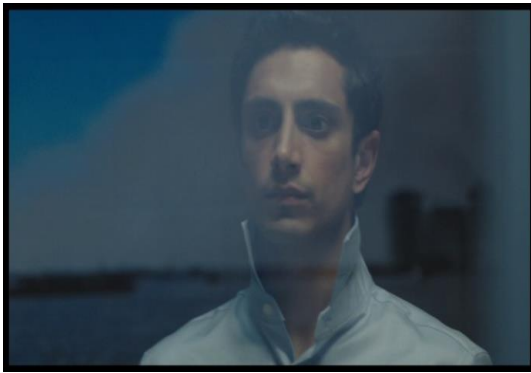
Fig. 25 Man from the rubbles *RF*
(00:52:00)

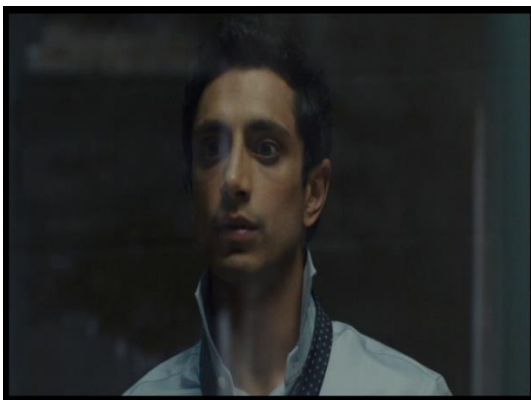Fig. 26 The Amercan Muslim *RF*
(00:52:06)

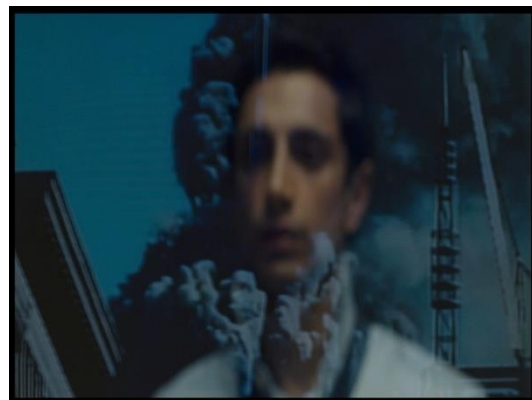Fig. 27 The interpellated subject *RF*
(00:52:11)

Fig. 28 Identity annihilated *RF*
(00:52:16)

A close look at the images expose that the images are arranged in a pattern through the presentation of cuts. The image of people walking around in the debris is followed by the image of the smoking towers, later by the hit and fall of the towers and a close up of the fall. This is a deliberate attempt to remediate the incident. The debris is shown first and later the smoking towers and then only the attack of the twin towers are shown in close up. It is in the reverse order and this strategy of the media consciously asserts the fall and such patterns of images impact the minds of the viewers. The overlapping of the image of Changez Khan onto this pattern of images clearly points out the western attitude towards the Muslims immediately

after 9/11. The background and foreground of the shot reveals the new Changez with a restructured identity. The shots reveal the stoic nature that Changez has to adapt to live in the post 9/11 US. Though he belongs to the corporate global world, his identity as a Muslim projects out. The shot captures the impact of 9/11 on ordinary Muslims like Changez Khan. He has to move on but with an element of passiveness. He wears the dress of the corporate world and returns to his routine. The tragedy is that Changez has to return to his corporate life with this wound at his heart. He is part of the world of financial fundamentalism which becomes equally disturbing and painful for him. It is then that the tale of the janissaries is told which clears the dilemma of Changez Khan and helps in taking a stand with regard to his identity.

Nazmi Kemal, perfomed by the great Turkish actor Haluk Bilginer, is a publisher in Istanbul and Changez along with his boss Jim Cross visit the firm to assess it. It is then that Kemal tells the story of janissaries to Changez. Janissaries were Christian boys captured by the Ottomans to be soldiers in the mighty Muslim army. When they were of age, they were sent to kill their former families and to destroy their homes. They were devoted to their new caretakers, to serve their adopted empire (1:27:00). Kemal nails down the notion that American liberal democratic global outlook has the features of an empire and it draws people across the world to the high sounding thought of American dream. Obviously Kemal hints that Changez is the modern janissary to which he resists by saying that he is not devoted to the Empire. Kemal concludes the story with a moral: "When you determine where you stand, the colour will return to your world" (1:28:27). This sequence helps Changez in deciding to chase a Pakistani dream, if there is any.

Thus Changez Khan decides to leave the Western Nation state to embrace the community in his own home town. It was like an act of departing from Benedict Anderson's view of nation-state as "imagined community" to hold tight the notion of "community" as Zygmunt Bauman says. When the imagined nation state falls apart, community comes as an asylum. As Bauman argues in *Intimations of Postmodernity* that if individualization is thoroughly a modern concept, community is a set of social relationships associated with traditional society and the modern men and women embrace it closely today. He argues that liquid modernity is the age "of lust for community, search for community, invention of community, imagining community" (134).

The Reluctant Fundamentalist makes an attempt to portray the fundamentalisms of both the West and the East. If America is blinded by economic fundamentalism, Pakistan is shown as blinded by religious fundamentalism. Mira Nair and Mohsin Hamid strike a balance well. American economic fundamentalism is represented by Jim Cross, Changez's boss at Underwood Samson. The company's job is to assess other companies and to suggest ways of financial efficiency. This is done mainly by cutting short manual labour and Jim Cross and Changez do that perfectly well. While in the US, Changez was reduced to the frame of a Pakistani Muslim and when he feels tired of this, he gets back to his hometown Lahore. He is trying to seek refuge in his community where he belongs. From the western individualistic identity, he gets back to the community. He tells Bobby,

I was tired of deciding from a distant perch the fate of people I did not know. Yes, I am a Pakistani. Yes, I am a Muslim. Yes, I am an opponent of your country's assault on mine. But that's not all that I am. We are both more than these things, Bobby. (1:45:34- 1:45:55)

In a liquid modern world, where identities become fluid, a consciousness of identity becomes possible only when the self is detached or deracinated from the community. As Bauman argues, "Identity sprouts on the graveyard of communities" (*Community* 16). If this is true, it would be good to argue that after 9/11 when Muslim identity is reaffirmed on an individual like Changez, it does not refer the individual identity as a Muslim. It is the identity of the community as a whole that falls on his shoulder. So Bauman's thought becomes a complicated one in the case of men and women coming from Islamic background especially when the person comes from Pakistan.

But the situations are not much different in Lahore too. Here he is suspected as an ally to terrorist since he has met the Mujahideen leader Fazil. He has to prove that he is not associated with Asad Mujahideen, the extremist group who kidnapped Anse Reinier, a colleague of Changez Khan at Lahore University. The sequence of meeting with Fazil reveals the fundamentalisms of both the worlds. When Fazil tells that "Our only hope as a people are the fundamental truths given to us in the Quran" (1:45:45), this shot is spliced with the shot of Jim Cross lecturing at Underwood Samson, "We do that focusing on the fundamentals"(1:45 :56). Here the fundamentals of capitalism are addressed and brought as sharp contrast to the religious fundamentalism alleged to the East especially to Pakistan.

Both economic fundamentalism and religious fundamentalism are addressed in the movie. September 11 is a warning, a wakeup call, for that matter, pointing at the obscenities and wrongness of the contemporary world. To point out this, Zizek conducts a mental experiment using a letter from a seven year old American girl whose father was fighting in Afghanistan. The letter said about her love for her father and her readiness to let him die for the country. The letter was quoted by President Bush as a mark of Patriotism and widely celebrated by the media. At this point Zizek introduces the experiment of imagining an afghan girl instead of the American girl saying the very same words that she loved her father very much and how proud she was about her father fighting for Taliban. Zizek says that these words will be immediately labeled as morbid Islamic fundamentalism which goes to the extent of exploitation and cruel manipulation of innocent children. Zizek concludes that, "Every feature attributed to the Other is already present at the very heart of the USA" (*Welcome* 43). The global capitalist liberalism which opposes Muslim Fundamentalism is, quite interestingly, itself a mode of fundamentalism. Arundhathi Roy too makes a call for the shedding of presumptuous arrogance and says that,

> It's absurd for the US government to even toy with the notion that it can stamp out terrorism with more violence and oppression. Terrorism is the symptom, not the disease. Terrorism has no country. It's transnational, as global an enterprise as Coke or Pepsi or Nike (233).

The conception of Muslim female subject has a different story to narrate. If the Muslim male subject is remediated or hyper mediated as terrorists, the woman subject is always portrayed as an oppressed class waiting for the western man to

liberate her. In both cases abstraction and reduction play key roles. Ghazi-Walid Falah explores the visual representation of Muslim and Arab women in American newspapers where he finds that the use of certain images of Muslim women reflect the dominant ideology. The photographs analyzed supported the western notion of liberating Muslim women from oppression and providing support to the downtrodden among the Muslim societies. The relationship between the sociopolitical consequences and the media representations is dialectical: media representation is influenced by sociopolitical decisions and in turn these decisions are further supported and influenced by the production and maintenance of representations. Thus representations become a vehicle for reproducing and maintaining ideology. Potent ideologies are disseminated through the representation in movies where their consumption is said to be superficial.

There is a direct link between dress and subjectivity. The veil is often associated with traditionalism, backwardness and premodernity (Balasescu). Yet this is only true if its wearing is not a matter of individual choice but is imposed by an authoritarian modern state, by a religious establishment or by patriarchal traditions. On the other hand, it becomes a fashion statement if worn voluntarily. Veil has turned in the history of some Islamic nations as the potent political tool to consolidate power either to ban it or enforce with a clear objective of creating an image. For instance, Turkish President Mustafa Kemal Ataturk condemned the wearing of veil as backward and uncivilized and he discouraged its use in public spaces in the act of secularization of Turkey (Aitel 5). His contemporary Reza Shah of Iran decided to ban it in Iran and it was effectively banned in 1936. In 1979 when

the Shah was ousted and the current regime took control of the government, veil was reinforced and made compulsory for women. Another familiar example is Frantz Fanon's study on the adoption of veil during the Algerian War of Independence as a means of resistance against the French colonial rule, as discussed earlier in the chapter. Veiling not only covers the body; it veils the voice and even the house. Veiling of the voice involves the usage of formal language with unrelated males (and females); a decorous tone of voice and the deliberate avoidance of emotional displays like singing or laughter though grief and anger are allowed. That gives the reason for the news footage and documentary reels of Muslim nations which show the angry women and men with fists raised in the air. Little access is allowed to the private spaces and private nuanced emotions.

Metaphoric and spatial interpretation of the veil has often presented as a recurrent theme when Muslim female subjects are analyzed. It operates within the system of Orientalist narratives and ideology that qualifies the female subject to the realm of interiority. But veil does not come as a site of metaphorical representation in any of the movies under discussion; the presence of Muslim female subjects subordinates the veil. But the female Muslim subjects like Nazneen and Razia of *Brick Lane*, Zafiya of *Moozlum* and Fatima of *Rendition* discussed in this chapter project their identity from the realm of the interior space; the only exceptions being Taqwa of *Moozlum*, the teacher in Samira's segment and Selma of Tanovic's film who find a space in the public realm. In other words, it is the interiority of the private space/home that provides the 'veil' of female Muslim modesty and thus the female Muslim subject. Nazneen at a closer look, though don't cover herself in veil,

is not without a veil. Her mis en scene presence of humbling herself to the margins of the frame, keeping her to herself, as one of her neighbors say, the reluctance to welcome Karim to the private space and so on illustrate how Nazneen has a veiled identity. When she comes out of the veiled private space, she makes a relationship outside of her marriage vows with Karim. The female sexuality of Nazneen is rendered through a shot where she tries glittering Western attire instead of the usual saree that she wears. Though she knows that she has committed "sin" in making a relationship with Karim, she does not want to make it right by divorcing Chanu or by marrying Karim. She moves on and chooses her life.

The Muslim men subjects in the movies *Rendition*, *United 93*, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and *Moozlum* fit into any of the four patterns of representations as already described in the first chapter. The four patterns of representation include the stereotypical, sympathetic portrayal, negotiated balance and a modern rhizomatic figure. Apart from these movies, the Muslim characters in other movies of post 9/11 milieu are presented as ones who desperately try to fit into and to integrate or assimilate to the multicultural American society. These movies include *American East* (2008), *The Kingdom* (2007), *Yes* (2004), *Syriana* (2005) etc.

Moozlum is an American independent movie written and directed by Qasim Q Basir. He made this film with an intention "to shed some light and humanize a group of people who have been demonized for far too long" (Martin "Moozlum"). Regarding the title, Basir has said in an interview that Mooz-lum points to the misspelling and mispronunciation of the word, though it is not a difficult one to pronounce. The misspelling of the title resonates the misunderstanding of the faith,

largely approached with a strange feeling. The film is narrated technically by the oscillation between the past and the present and different color tones are used to bring out the non linear narration. Basir further says that he is tired of the consistent negative portrayal of Islam and Muslims in the media (Martin "Moozlum").The film narrates the story of Tariq, son of Hassan Mahdi (Roger Smith). Hassan wants his son to become a scholar of Koran despite the wishes of his wife to let their children fit in with their American peers. The film is primarily a narrative of horrific child abuse taking place inside religious institutions. Tariq associates religious belief with the child abuse he faced and there is an element of honesty in Tariq in rejecting his faith.

Though the family of Tariq has an Afro American background, it is never contested in the movie. The history of under representations of African Americans has the story of racism to its core. But no such references to racist content is made anywhere in the movie. It shows the sign of Muslims going down in the strata of the other. More than his color or his roots, Tariq is obsessed with his Muslim identity. Similarly, in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, Changez Khan has a colleague named Wainwright who is a black man. The corporate world seems to accommodate Wainwright and Muslims like Changez transforming them to become global elites.

The film *Moozlum* unravels the complexities of Muslim identity at various levels. The identity markers like name, the way one dresses and the prayer of Muslims are problematised. Tariq Madi which is predominantly a Muslim name is denounced by Tariq when he joins college. From the very childhood itself the name Tariq has created troubles in his school and when he becomes independent he

prefers to be called as 'T'. Since name happens to be the first signifier, he succeeds in concealing his identity as a Muslim. When Tariq was sent to a Muslim school, he started wearing the Islamic dress 'thaub', the ankle length robe. The dress happens to be the second signifier asserting the identity of Muslim and Tariq discards that too when he reaches college. Historically, on the level of form, Muslims are often invoked in one of two ways. Much favored one to indicate difference is through metonymy: Muslim women wear *hijab*, men appear bearded, praying: such metonymical condensation later become stereotypes. The second category is identified by Peter Morey and Amina Yaqin as "post-Huntington stereotype" who emerged ain the recent years (116). They are Muslim characters who are depicted as "Westernised" in outward appearance but pose a threat to the nation by being unidentifiable. In each case, dress, beard, acts stand for the identity of the whole person, denoting cultural orientation, religious commitment and thus, to secular society (Morey 115). Post September 11 geopolitical world has a visual metonymic condensation which points out the cultural difference. Both the dress and name are the markers of community which are completely shunned by Tariq. He keeps himself aloof from familiar people in an attempt to hide his past and his identity as a Muslim.

The third marker of identity as a Muslim is the prayer which happens to be more public than a private affair. Prayer for Muslims is a part of their daily life and in the movie prayer scenes occur at regular intervals, like that of in real life. Going to Mosques and asking Muslim friends to join for prayer is shot as a normal affair. Tariq deliberately keeps himself distanced from the Muslim day to day life. When

his roommate Hamza, a pious Muslim boy, asks him to join for prayer, Tariq goes out to party. He resists himself being a Muslim as he is haunted by the abusive life at his Muslim school.

The film is an exceptional one in portraying the diversities and complexities present in the Muslim community keeping aside the homogenizing tendency of other Hollywood movies. The characters like Tariq, Hamza, Taqwa, Hassan and Zafiya give us at least five different aspects of being a Muslim. Tariq does not live like a Muslim, he does not pray or attends mosques. Tariq does not even give a reply to the Muslim greeting of peace. Though his schooling has enabled him to learn more than half of the Quran by heart, once he gets out of the school, he attempts to move away from his religion and he does not recite Quran. Hamza is portrayed in the movie as a foil to Tariq. Hamza's rearing keeps him close to his religion and his Islamic way of life.

The leading female characters in the movie are Taqwa and her mother Zafiya. Both are religious. Zafiya is ready to assimilate to the American way of life keeping abreast her religion as her private affair. She wants her children Tariq and Taqwa to fit into the peer group. It is for her strong determination that she does not want to send Tariq to a Muslim school, and she leaves her husband along with Taqwa. Taqwa goes to concert and she is even ready to take off her scarf at times of crisis (1:19:33). When Muslims were harassed verbally and physically on the streets immediately after 9/11, Taqwa is so scared that she tries to pull off her scarf. Faith comes only second to her when it comes to life and death situations. When Tariq's classmate Jason and his team gets crazy on the 9/11 attack, they take control of the

streets shouting "it's payback time" (1:20:18). Tariq in the attempt to save Taqwa,

his sister, from the angry mob led by Jason shouts that they are not terrorists.

Matthew, Tariq's classmate, who has lost his sister at WTC points at the crazy group

of students and asks, "Look at us. Who is the terrorist?"(1:21:25).The film subtly

points at the terror that is within the state. The state terrorism that has been part of

American power politics is subtly pointed out. The subtle suggestion of the terror

that is present everywhere and that anybody can become a terrorist is well located in

the movie. In declaring war against terrorism, President Bush has done the same. It

reinforces the system by filling the gaps without having a Hegelian perspective of

"totality". For Hegel, only the whole is true. Each stage or phase or moment is

partial and therefore partially untrue. Hegel's notion of totality preserves within it

each of its phases or moments that it has passed through or subsumed. Who is the

most terrorist, is a question that doesn't need an answer but needs to be considered

as significant at this juncture. According to Baudrillard, "Terrorism, like viruses, is

everywhere" (10). He argues further that, "Current terrorism is not the descendant of

a traditional history of anarchy, nihilism and fanaticism. It is contemporaneous with

globalization…" (87). Any hegemonic power will dream of a day of its own

destruction and 9/11 is the d-day of its monstrous economic hegemony.

The crazy mob getting agitated over Muslims do not get provoked only by

the WTC attack. The film from the very beginning onwards shows the prejudices

and hatred of non Muslims towards Muslims and immigration. Both the classroom

scenes in the beginning are fine examples for this. When Tariq was at school, he was

laughed at for wearing his *kufi* and for his Muslim name which was mispronounced

by classmates as Moozlum. That is the way he was introduced to the teacher

(00:08:06). But when he reaches college, situations change. He conceals his identity

by introducing himself as T, Tariq. Tariq reveals his Muslim identity and T conceals

it.   It is not a mere name or a dress that is ridiculed or looked down; the entire faith

of Islam is mocked at. When the professor of World Religions initiated a discussion

about the US being the melting pot, some of the comments and arguments put forth

by the classmates of Tariq unveil the deep rooted prejudices. The immigration of

Muslims to the US seeking better prospects is criticized by one of his classmates

(00:35:24-00:37:30).   Such deep rooted hatred makes them an agitated group and

they take arms when an incident like September 11 happens. It triggers the hitherto

suppressed feelings of intolerance.

"Intolerance" is another important attribute charged against fundamentalism;

tolerance being one of the key concepts of globalization which I have elaborated in a

research paper titled "Spirit of 9/11". The French movie *Welcome* (2008), directed

by Philippe Lioret tells the story of the lives and dreams of refugees trying to reach

UK from France. In the movie, the young protagonist, a Kurdish boy, makes a

desperate attempt to swim and cross the English Channel assisted by a French

Swimming coach to meet his lover. The film makes a clear cut statement of how the

foreigners or others are not "welcome" at home though the welcome mats are always

"welcoming" us at the doorsteps. Jacques Derrida deconstructs the Christian matrix

of the notion of tolerance. It has always been a patriarchal gesture in which the other

is not accepted as an equal partner but subordinated. He calls it as a kind of

"condescending concession" (Borradori 127). Derrida argues that,

Indeed, tolerance is first of all a form of charity. A Christian charity,
therefore, even if Jews and Muslims might seem to appropriate this language
as well ... In addition to the religious meaning of tolerance ... we should also
mention its biological, genetic or organicist connotations. In France the
phrase 'threshold of tolerance' was used to describe the limit beyond which
it was no longer decent to ask a national community to welcome any more
foreigners, immigrant workers and the like (Borradori 16).

The character of Tariq is rather a complex one. He is portrayed as rebellious
and he has to prove at both levels of his existence. First and foremost, Tariq has to
prove his allegiance to Islam among his Muslim friends. When he is asked to join
for Muslim Student Association's annual dinner, he refuses. At the other end, among
his non Muslim friends, he has to prove that he is a patriot and not a terrorist.
Towards the end of the movie, Tariq reconciles with his identity as a Muslim among
Muslims. 9/11 becomes a turning point in his life in embracing his identity as a
Muslim. It becomes a point of de tour to open up with his parents and his sister. His
life at the Muslim School does not remain a mystery. The struggle with his self
reaches a climax there. He attends the MSA annual dinner. He goes to his school to
find that the teacher who tortured him is finally removed from school. He could see
only happy faces of kids playing hockey on the ground. He replies at the end to the
Muslim greeting of peace.

 But Tariq's identity as a "Moozlum" among non Muslims is still
troublesome as long as Muslims remain the other. Hegel's phenomenology of self
consciousness in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* proposes that it is through inter-

subjective communication and recognition by others that one gains a sense of

self. Charles Taylor says,

> The thesis is that our identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence,
>
> often by the misrecognition of others, and so a person or group of people can
>
> suffer real damage ... If the people or society around them mirrors back to
>
> them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves. Non
>
> recognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression,
>
> imprisoning someone in a false, distorted and reduced mode of being. (75)

Brick lane is not a Hollywood production; but a British production based on

the fiction by Bangladeshi-English writer Monica Ali. Unlike other movies

discussed so far, *Brick Lane* portrays the Bangladeshi community living at the East

End of London. The entire movie is from the perspective of a woman named

Nazneen. The film "unveils", to use the Orientalist trope, the lives of immigrant

inhabitants of Tower Hamlets. Monica Ali says that in the novel she tries to bring

out the lives of Bangadeshi community "neither [from] behind a closed door nor in

the thick of things, but rather in the shadow of a doorway" (Nash 36).The filmic

adaptation has done perfect justice to the author's intentions by technically adapting

verbatim "the unveiling" process.

Nazneen is the protagonist and the entire visual narration is through this

woman's perspective. The camera sticks onto Nazneen and how she perceives the

world. Geoffrey Nash captures the character of Nazneen thus:

> Fortuitously married off at eighteen to Chanu, a gentle garrulous failure
>
> twice her age, who she grows both to despise and feel affection for, Nazneen
>
> is gifted her green card to self-discovery. In Britain she slowly outgrows her
>
> mother's fatalism. (37)

Nazneen thus escapes the fatalism of her mother who committed suicide. She was

fortunate enough to seek liberation in its pure Western terms; whereas her sister

Hasina is unfortunate enough to struggle hard in the patriarchal life that is prevalent

in Bangladesh. Nash says that "Her [Hasina's] fate is conquered by Third World

poverty and patriarchy" (37). The film gives a clear picture of an immigrant's

perception of what it is like to live in the West especially during times of 9/11 and

after. Thus the film visualizes an immigrant Muslim woman's point of view on life

in London and how a catastrophe like 9/11 has transformed their lives. Though the

attack of September 11 has nothing to do with England, the terrorist attack has been

perceived as a global one which has repercussions around the world. The Muslim

immigrants all around the world have been looked down. Karim says in the movie,

"The way people look at you now in the street, so much mistrust" (00:51:13).

The exposition sequences of the film capture the set, mood, time and space

of the film in an amazing way. The sequences last almost seven minutes. The scenes

from Bangladesh which visualize the childhood days of Nazneen and her sister

Hasina are gradually shifted to the piles of bricks of London where Nazneen lives at

the moment. It is like the colours of the paddy fields and the ponds with lilies

suddenly changed to the dull brick color of the Hamlet Towers of the East London.

All the issues discussed in the movie are introduced in the exposition shots. The

issues include feminist perspective which focuses on Islamic way of life, multiculturalism, immigration and so on. Though a docile female subject, Nazneen recalls her mother saying, "If Allah wanted us to ask questions, he would have made us men" (3:34). Another premise which dominates the movie is the theme of "home".

From the exposition shots till the concluding shots, "home" becomes a pivotal point which connects Nazneen to other characters in the movie. "Home" happens to be a different feeling and idea for each of the characters. For Nazneen, home is where her sister is. She longs to go home and through the letters that she writes to Hasina, she tells,

> You can spread your soul on a paddy field; you can feel the earth beneath your toes and know that this is the place. The place that it begins and ends. But what can you tell to a pile of bricks? I think of my sister. I think of my mother. My husband promises me that he would be coming home soon. (05:00-30)

Nazneen never subscribes to the fatalism of her mother. Her mother used to say, "What cannot be escaped must be borne" and her mother could not endure the hardships of her life. Thus she ends her life committing suicide. She breaks the cord and frees herself from the patriarchal bond and she puts an end to the fatalism that her mother has passed over. Hasina, Nazneen's sister, thinks of Nazneen as a princess living in a far off land, seven seas and thirteen rivers away.

Nazneen, throughout the movie, thinks and talks about going home, back to Bangladesh; but when her husband decides to quit England and to settle in Bangladesh, Nazneen takes a bold decision not to accompany him. She decides to stay back along with her daughters for whom England is the home. Towards the end of the movie she denies the proposal of Karim, her younger lover. Even in the relationship with Karim, Nazneen wants to feel like at home. "Home" becomes a trope in the movie to denote the identity of each character.

For Chanu, Nazneen's husband, Bangladesh is the home that he always boasts of. But he is a lover of Thackeray, Brontes, Chaucer, Hume and so on and he believes strongly that his reading and his ability to memorize lines from literature would bring acknowledgments and promotions. He has taught Bengali to both his daughters. Whenever a guest comes home, he flaunts the reading of Tagore by his daughters. More than a Muslim, he is a Bangladeshi. When post 9/11 scenario gets worsened for Muslims with physical or mental bullying on streets, Chanu immediately takes a decision to leave England. Before leaving, Chanu attends a meeting of a Muslim group named Bengal Tigers. He violently resists the idea of Muslims joining together to fight injustice across the world. Chanu argues that most violent incidents have happened in history when Muslims have killed Muslims. He reminds the group that their brothers had killed other Muslims during the events leading to the creation of Bangladesh. This scene is a deliberate addition done by the scriptwriter and reveals the role played by the production team in curtaining the sympathetic vision towards Muslims as victims in the aftermath of September 11. History is called for this purpose that brings the other image of Muslims: Muslims as

murderers. When the story moved from a single authority of the novelist to a much more public sphere of film production, audience and market play a great role in this sort of insertion to bring about equilibrium in representation and history.

Karim's home is England. He was born and brought up in England though his roots are in Bangladesh. He at times speaks Bangla but he stammers when he attempts. In the intimate scene between Nazneen and Karim, They have a brief conversation about "home".

> NAZNEEN: Why do you like me?
>
> KARIM: There are two types of girls: one the westernized, going out, having a laugh…short skirts as soon as she is out of her father's sight. Then you have your religious girl and you think they would be good wife material; but they ain't, because all they wanna do is argue.
>
> NAZNEEN: So what about me?
>
> KARIM: You are the real thing, the girl from the village.
>
> NAZNEEN: Don't you ever want to go home?
>
> KARIM: This is my home. (50:23-51:12)

The home as a trope is used differently in Samira Makhmalbaf's segment in the omnibus movie *September 11*. *September 11* is an international omnibus collection of films of 11 minutes duration directed by 11 directors from across the globe thus placing 9/11in a global scenario, aiming at a global audience; the film was released on 11 September, 2002 at Toronto Film Festival. The film has documentary, fiction and experimental mode of visual narratives. The producer Alan Brigand wanted to make this project keeping the formalistic design intact: all the

films follow a uniform conceptual design focusing on time and space as insisted by the film maker; i.e., 11 minutes, 9 seconds and 1 frame. Film makers Youssef Chahine (Egypt), Amos Gitai (Israel), Samira Makhmalbaf (Iran), Mira Nair (India), Gonzalez Inarittu (Mexico), Ken Loach (UK), Shohei Imamura (Japan), Claude Lelouch (France), Idrissa Ouedraoga (Burkina Faso), Sean Penn (US) and Danis Tanovic (Bosnia) interpret 9/11 through different genres as well as from different political and geographical vantage points making the movie with a transnational spirit. The film very well shows how the language of movies crosses boundaries, cultures and politics.

Samira represents Afghan refugees of Iran in her movie. She portrays Afghan kids, men and women who are engaged in draining water from a deep well to make bricks for shelters to protect them from American bombs. A teacher comes and tries to make them understand that "atom bombs cannot be stopped with bricks" and that there are 3 million Afghan refugees in Iran." Teacher compels the kids to come to class promising books to them. In the class, teacher says that an incident has happened in the world and that is of utmost gravity. She asks the kids if they can guess what it was. Kids respond in their own innocent ways about digging a well and how 2 persons lost their lives; how a woman was stoned to death in Afghanistan, how a flood might have killed many people etc. The teacher explains the attack on the twin towers and kids don't know what exactly a tower is. Kids are shown the chimney of brick klin and she appeals for a minute silence in honour of the dead. The film is taken in long takes with minimum editing. Except for the teacher and the kids no face is shown though the mis-en-scene reveals many male

and female figures moving around in a backdrop of countless number of bricks. Teacher reminds that there are around 3 million Afghans living in Iran metaphorically represented by the rows of bricks laid ahead; countless, faceless refugees. It is only then the identity of those people gets revealed. The film's mis-en-scene is so fresh that the often repeated stereotyped images and videos of a refugee camp are shattered. The last shot which shows the smoking chimney from a low angle brings the whole catastrophe in a single image without showing the collapse of the towers. Low angle shot reveals the power and dominance of the subject; and here the subject is definitely the Chimney. Kids and the adult teacher are looking up to see the dominating, over whelming, intimidating power of Capitalism represented by the Chimney and their helpless positions in the hierarchy. The home that everyone thinks about is not a nostalgic feeling for the refugees when their survival is a matter of chance. Home becomes a shelter here and homeland is never mentioned with hope or love or attachment as it is used in the movie *Brick Lane*.

In *Brick Lane*, it is immediately after Karim's assertion that England is his home that 9/11happens (00:52:06). The visuals of the fall of the twin towers appear twice in the movie. Firstly, when Nazneen meets Karim on the street and the incident came as a shock to her when people push her apart and rush to watch it on television in a shop (00:52:10). The visual is again shown for the second time on the TV in the bedroom, when Chanu, Nazneen and their daughters watch it with a shock. Chanu foresees a backlash and predicts that it won't be good to stay there in

England. He right away asks to start packing and to cut down the expenses at home to add savings for their return to their homeland (00:52:43)

The film visually presents the changes 9/11 has brought down to the Hamlet Towers. 9/11 has actually triggered to surface the deep lying prejudice and fears about the "other". At the same time, 9/11 has also interpellated the Muslims to identify their own identity as the "other". Bauman shares the incident of how his identity as a 'Polish' did not surface till the brutal awakening of March 1968 when he says "Polishness was publicly cast in doubt" (*Identity* 12). Likewise 9/11 has become a temporal marker which brought the issue of 'being of a Muslim' on to the surface. Bauman says,

> Because once I had been set in motion, pulled out from wherever could pass for my "natural habitat", there was no place where I could be seen as fitting in, as they say, one hundred per cent. In each and every place, I was – sometimes slightly, at some other times blatantly –'out of place'. (*Identity* 12)

Karim's belongingness to the group Bangla Tigers clearly shows how connected these immigrants are to their home country. As Bauman has said, community becomes an asylum and Karim, along with others, cling to each other forming a community, seeking comfort in the age of modernity. Bauman notes, "To insecure people, perplexed, confused and frightened by the instability and contingency of the world they inhabit, 'community' appears to be a tempting alternative. It is a sweet dream, a vision of heaven: of tranquility, bodily safety and

spiritual peace" (*Identity* 61). 9/11 changed their lives and in the meeting it is said that Bangla Town needs defending.

> KARIM: Out there people are twisted with hatred for us and Islam! We are gonna show them how wrong they are. We become victims. But not for long! We stand arm in arm with our Muslim brothers ready to defend. (1:11:39)

This provokes Chanu and the questions that Chanu raises obviously point to the political stand that Chanu stands for.

> CHANU: What is it that you plan to defend? … You think Islam unites us all? You think Islam is the place you come from? Islam is not a country. You think you are my brother more than the next man on the street because we are both Muslims? All this fighting talk that we are all brothers. Three million, three million died in East Pakistan in this lifetime. … What was that? Brotherly love? It was Muslim killing a Muslim. (1:11:41-1:11:56)

Chanu's outlook is a typical cosmopolitan one in the sense that he could think beyond the binding limits of a religion. His questions throw light on the violence that Muslims have created. His perspective is unlike that of Karim's who focuses only on how Muslims become victims of violence.

But Chanu's character is with contradictions. He is traditional and purely conventional in his attitude towards his family. Whenever there is a rift between Chanu and his elder daughter, he says that he is cursed with daughters. He frequently utters this. His dream is rather a limited one: he dreams of a house in Dhaka, a holiday in Coxes Bazaar and a little trip along with family to Sunderban.

He always sidelines his wife Nazneen. The camera plays a vital role in showing

Nazneen on the margins especially when Chanu is in the frame. She is always seen

in the hallway or corridors of narrative literally, where she is always a listener or a

spectator. At last when she speaks her heart out to her husband Chanu that she does

not want to leave England, her decision is passed to their daughters as their decision.

The voice of the father is upheld till he leaves for his homeland.

Fig. 29. Shadow : *Brick Lane* (00:24:06)

Fig. 30 Sea/see-ing within: *Brick Lane* (00:10:46)

Fig. 31 Dreaming big: *Brick Lane* (00:11:28)

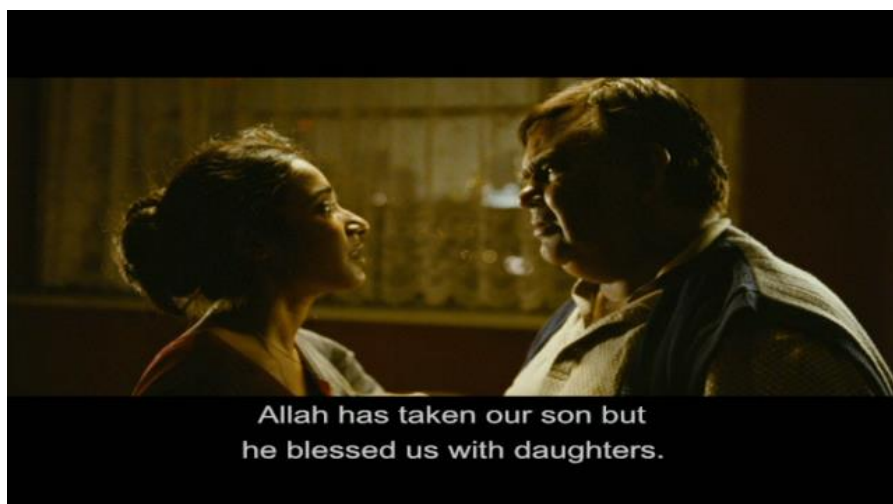Fig. 32 Balancing the frame: *Brick Lane* (00:38:48)

Fig. 33 Home is where we are: *Brick Lane* (01:26:32)

Fig. 34 Love for life: *Brick Lane* (01:27:41)

Fig. 35 Soaring high: *Brick Lane* (01:31:37)

These images show the status of Nazneen from being the margin transformed to the one in the centre. The first four images illustrate how Nazneen's character is reduced to a mere existence though she is the leading character. Later on she emerges from the twenty year old cocoon to slowly flutter her wings which enabled her to speak from her heart. As her daughter says about her that for twenty long years she has never talked about what she needs. At last she speaks out, rejects the proposal of

Karim and tells her husband that she wants to stay in England. She becomes financially independent when she starts sewing at home and this motivated her to stay alone in England. She develops the confidence to take care of her daughters all alone. The last four images explain the gradual growth of the character of Nazneen. She shares equal space in the frame with Karim in the first shot, her husband in the next two shots and she fills the frame completely in the last shot. A close analysis of the movie unveils the position of woman in Islam, though Nazneen attempts and succeeds to cross the borders set by her husband. Nazneen becomes a liberated woman in the true Western sense of individualism. She acquires the agency over herself which hitherto was quite outside her thoughts.

Another important woman character in *Brick Lane* is Razia. She is an inspiration to Nazneen to come out of the castle. Razia is a newly shifted neighbor of Nazneen in Hamlet Towers. She is a single mother with two grown up children. She is a tailor and makes good enough money to send her son and her daughter to college. She has short hair and she smokes. All these are new and strange for Nazneen and she looks at Razia with bewildered eyes. It was Razia who introduces Nazneen to the world of financial empowerment. Razia gives Nazneen an old sewing machine when she buys a new one for herself. Razia introduces Karim to Nazneen for sewing orders and this relationship grows making Nazneen an independent woman. But the women characters analyzed in the movies, though only a few, are breaking the codes and conventions of Muslim representations. Fatima (*Rendition*), Zafiya, Taqwa (*Moozlum*), Nazneen and Razia (*Brick Lane*) are determined characters who have chosen their own lives. They do not fall into the

trap of stereotyping. But over all these movies tell men's stories except for *Brick Lane* and Samira Makhmalbuff's segment of *September 11*. It seems like women are not interested in the political affairs or religious lives. Or is it that women do not have any role in both these or are they strategically kept apart from such quotidian realms? The emergence of Islamic feminism as a political discourse does not find a space in any of these visual imaginations. All women characters are affected by 9/11; but nowhere in the movies such a perspective has been drawn except by the segments of Samira Makhmalbaf and Danis Tanovic in *September 11*.

Fig. 36 Getting home: a still from Tanovic's segment in *September 11* (00:35:33)

Tanovic attempts to connect 9/11 to the Srebrenica Genocide of 1995. On 11 July, about eight thousand Bosnian Muslim men and boys who were under UN protection were massacred. It was a clear act of ethnic cleansing and perhaps the largest genocide since World War II.

Fig. 37 Mothers of Srebrenica: Tanovic's segment in *September 11* (00:45:39)

The segment depicts Selma as the leading character who attends demonstrations at the square in Srebrenica on 11th of every month commemorating the deaths of her husband and children. The film opens on11 September, 2001 and it was when she reaches the square that she comes to know of the attack on the towers and the killing of thousands. While the other women gathered were reluctant to demonstrate after hearing the news from radio, Selma tells them that "We have to demonstrate. For them and for us" (00:43:59). Thus she makes a bold political statement against all sorts of atrocities. War and hostility has brought definitely not peace. Tanovic's use of low lighting and close angle shots could bring out the somber atmosphere predominating among the community of refugees in Srebrenica. The use of lipstick to write placards appears as a gesture of resistance to the dominant fashion myths. Tanovic has deliberately placed radio to connect to the world instead of a television. The images of the fall were, thus, removed from the

segment giving more focus and gravity to the plight of the women of Srebrenica for years. Tanovic depicts Selma as a hopeful character who believes in demonstrations in an age of hostility and prejudices. Selma hopes to go back to her home though it has been six years that she is a refugee there and she hasn't even unpacked her boxes. The political content of the segment makes it more pronouncing in the act of demonstration against any sort of violence. "Home" is used as a trope in the segment to show displacement and deracination of refugees.

The status of Muslim subject in modernity is a very complex situation. As Althusser argues that the functioning of ideology is rather a complex one:

> … each subject (you and I) is subjected to several ideologies that are relatively independent, albeit unified under the unity of the State Ideology. For there exist, as we have seen, several Ideological State Apparatuses. Hence each subject (you and I) lives in and under several ideologies at once. Their subjection-effects are 'combined' in each subject's own acts, which are inscribed in practices, regulated by rituals, and so on. (199)

He further says that this complexity automatically arouses "conflict of duties" (200). So for Muslims like Changez Khan, Karim, Chanu, and Tariq conflict between the ideology of the state and the religious ideology along with others occurs in the post 9/11 era. At this juncture one has to make a choice. Chanu chooses to return to his homeland; Tariq chooses to accept his identity as a Muslim; Karim chooses to fight back to retain dignity of life for Muslims; but Changez at first was reluctant to choose. But as Althusser says, when one does not choose, the choice makes itself (200). In the case of the female characters discussed above, only Nazneen makes a

choice when a conflict arises. She rejects the proposal of Karim and stays strong

with her familial order and later again when her husband decides to return to their

homeland Bangladesh, she chooses to stay back with her daughters in England.

   Jack Shaheen strongly demands that the only way to avoid such

stereotypical or under representation of Muslims is by shattering the stereotypes.

Shaheen's extensive discussion focuses on the (mis)representations of the Arab and

Muslims in Hollywood in the post-September 11 movies. There is a shift, though a

subtle one in the patterns of representation of Muslims after 9/11, as argued in this

chapter. Some of the movies under discussion like *Moozlum*, *The Reluctant

Fundamentalist*, *Brick Lane* challenge the dominant Western ideology of

representation of Muslims whereas popular movies like *Rendition* and Academy

award winner *United 93* have left some dark spots. These dark spots that have been

discussed in the second chapter definitely support the dominant ideology. Such

nuanced perspectives help in identifying the racism still prevailing in different form.

Commercial interests may be one of the reasons for the inclusive world that is

celebrated in the movies since films target all sort of audience and as Neal Gabler

gives out the statistics regarding the box office income. Gabler says that at least

"sixty percentage of the studios' income come from abroad" (Shaheen *Guilty* xvii).

Muslim countries make up "about ten percentage of the overseas box office" and

"Arab viewers are regularly exposed to reel demeaning stereotypes of themselves

and their culture" (*Guilty*). This may be one of the many reasons for a slow and

gradual change in representation. Other reason can be the grand notion of projecting

the romantic concept of multicultural society to circumvent the accusations of racism.

Paul Petrovic says that,

> Against America's larger post 9/11 monomyth that includes films such as Paul Greengrass' *United 93*(2006), Oliver Stone's *World Trade Centre* (2006) and Katherine Bigelow's *The Hurt Locker* (2008), which highlight an American will to recover and a single-minded impression of Muslim extremism, Joseph Castelo's *The War Within* (2005) and Hesham Issawi's *AmericanEast* (2008) operate as dynamic counter-narratives....These two early post-9/11films pivot on the real and imagined threat of Muslim terror in America, but, crucially, criticise American governmental and media systems. Furthermore, they erect multiple subjectivities and narratives for the Arab American beyond the master narrative's narrow conscript of the radical terrorist which also dominates the television series *24* and Iraq War films including Clint Eastwood's *American Sniper* (90).

All these underline one thing: "Every film is ideological regardless of its genre or subject matter" (McSweeney "Introduction" 22). So the struggle for control of representation should ceaselessly persist as representations help in shaping perceptions about the living world. It is imperative to continue research with a critical eye, interrogating representations in movies.

The status of Muslims can be read as being similar to that of the 'stranger' concept in the project of modernity, as propounded by Zygmunt Bauman in his

Modernity and Ambivalence. According to Bauman, "We can think of modernity as of a time when order – of the world, of the human habitat, of the human self, and of the connection between all three – is *reflected upon*" (*Modernity* 5). Bauman describes how the stranger invades and disrupts the cozy insider – outsider binaries of friends and enemies through which modernity constructs its social order. They are neither friends – since they represent a culture which is quintessentially the other of the Occidental Christian; nor are they enemies – they reside in the same nation becoming citizens. They "commit the unforgivable sin of late entry" who did not belong to the "life-world" as Bauman calls it, of the host community, "from the very start". It becomes emblematic of the position of all the Muslims of the post 9/11West. Such strangers always have to prove their fidelity like the characters of the movies that are analyzed. Tariq of *Moozlum*, Changez of *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, Karim of *Brick Lane* and Anwar of *Rendition* have to prove their love and allegiance to their nation state.

As Bauman says, "The search for identity is the ongoing struggle to arrest or slow down the flow, to solidify the fluid, to give form to the formless" (*Identity* 82). Hence every attempt to find the roots or the search for identity and to fix the subject is like breaking that flow of the liquid modern world. In the liquid modern world, once the Muslim as subject is interpellated and identified, then the attempt breaches the existing fluid course of modernity. The subjects under question sever connections from the liquid state and get solidified. Searching for the roots and going back to the fixed notion of "home" make them more solid. Such solid identities are triggered by the interpellation and by the treatment of Muslims as

"strangers" as explained in this chapter. 9/11 occurred as a paradigm shift. At the same time, when the other is "otherised", the dominant subject attains the identity of the Subject. The interpellator too becomes the Subject which makes him capable of asserting his differences and dominant positioning. The same solidification of identity happens. The ambivalence of the liquid modern existence fades away.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

One has to wait till the end of history to grasp the material in its determined totality.

- Wilhelm Dilthey qtd. in Bauman *Modernity and Ambivalence*

The "post September 11 category", as demarcated in the introductory chapter of the dissertation, incorporates both the sociopolitical ethos of the time and the changes inflicted on the identity of Muslims by the incident. The violence presented as a global spectacle distinguishes September 11 from previous acts of terrorism. The research examined how 9/11 has changed the course of the world as far as Muslims are concerned in the filmic imaginations. The project is fundamentally based on four basic premises that are amalgamated to form the structure of the thesis. The premises are that: films either reflect/refract/transcode the socio-political reality, all films are ideological, new patterns of representation of Muslims have evolved after 9/11 and a steady shift has occurred from national to trans-national identity of movies in general. The reflective – refraction dimension of films are found to be more appropriate in order to understand various dimensions of identity formation as illustrated by the categories of movies examined in the thesis. This suggests how popular media especially movies mediate and manipulate the actual incidents and shape the thoughts and perspectives of the spectators. The thesis examines how 9/11 has brought changes to the identity of Muslims by the ever increasing synonymous usage of the terms Islam and Muslim for fundamentalism in visual and print media. The movement from national cinemas to trans-national ones

also helps in the selection and analysis of movies which would otherwise be culturally and socially bordered and compartmentalized. As a whole, the study examined whether the very structure of filmmaking supports its narrative intentions focusing on the 9/11 category.

The project analyzed closely the complex narrative strategies of representation of Muslims and the creation of a Muslim subject in movies released after 11th September, 2001 with 9/11and Muslim identity as the major themes. The thesis selected and analyzed five movies: *Rendition* and United *93* in the third chapter and *Mooz-lum*, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and *Brick Lane* in the fourth chapter. The research analyzed films against the background of the political zeitgeist of the September 11 attack. The selected movies, as well as others of post September 11 category, become a collective space where history and global politics are imagined, mediated and circulated among the public. The movies share the fear, uncertainties, trauma, loss, prejudices and hostility of the period as promulgated by various platforms of visual and print media.

Different patterns of representation of Muslims are identified in the course of the research project and they are elaborated in the second chapter. The work outlined a brief history of the representation of Muslims on screen in the background of Edward Said's *Orientalism* and *Covering Islam*. The history of placing the "other" in Islam and Muslims has a very old story to tell. But the representation of Muslims in cinema started with the invention of movie camera. Jack Shaheen in his book *Reel Bad Arabs* and Michael Singh in his documentary *Valentino's Ghost* trace the history quite differently, though the conclusion is the same, that Muslims and Arabs

are dehumanized and denigrated on screen for over a century. The pre 9/11

Hollywood displayed a consistent stereotypical pattern of representation or there

was no proper representation at all in terms of the quantitative as well as the

qualitative aspects of the movies. The portrayal of Muslims or Arabs as terrorists in

movies started from the 1970s only (Prince 6). The terrorists thus portrayed rarely

are identified by a name or proper nationality. They are all engaged in ruthless

killing of the White men shouting *Allahu Akbar* without any justification of either

ideology or religion.

But the research has observed that post 9/11 movies have displayed gradual

shift in the patterns of representation. In this context the research has taken a step

further in categorizing new patterns of representation and identified four different

patterns apart from the stereotypical representation. These patterns include

sympathetic portrayal, saintly representation, negotiated balancing and rhizomatic

representation which are explained in detail in the second chapter. The ambivalences

and contradictions of the era is perfectly reflected and refracted in such

representations. These entire patterns mirror the post 9/11 milieu which is called

"post-race" period (Alsultany 11). The post-race era indulges in the elimination of

racism at the legislative and judicial sphere. But since 9/11, with the coming of a

new known enemy in Islam and Muslims, racism emerged in a totally different form.

Now the enemy is out in the light but the enlightenment of the dominant cannot

stoop all the time to act in a savage way to combat the enemy. Racism is deeply

ingrained and as Chomsky says, "When you have your boot on somebody's neck,

you cannot just say, 'I'm doing this, because I'm a brute.' You have to say, 'I'm

doing it because they deserve it'" (*Imperial* 48). This is the obvious reason why the President Donald Trump is keen to sign an executive order to keep the Guantanamo Bay Prison open reversing the policy of Obama's administration to shut it down (Borger "Donald Trump signs"). New legislations are implemented as a cover up for such savage acts and that gives the explanation for the implementation of the US Patriot Act in October 2001 which is later made more stringent and renewed in 2005, 2006, 2010 and 2011(Alsultany 5). This Act takes away the individual liberties and privacy of a section of people and according to this Act many Muslim Americans and Muslim Arabs were taken to detention centers and tortured. Domestic surveillance reached its peak in a nation which celebrates the notion of individual freedom and liberty. The same has happened in the past also when the Japanese-Americans were sent to internment camps after the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1942. It took forty one years to realize that "a grave personal injustice" was done to the American citizens (of Japanese ancestry). In 1983, the Commision of Wartime Relocation reported that "the broad historical causes that shaped these decisions were race prejudice, war hysteria and a failure of political leadership" (The Commission 5). The Commission has strongly stated that "no amount of money can fully compensate the excluded people for their losses and sufferings. Two and a half years behind the barbed-wire of a relocation camp, branded potentially disloyal because of one's ethnicity alone-these injustices cannot neatly be translated into dollars and cents" (7). Recalling the events of exclusion and detention of Japanese Americans in the internment camps, the commission has vehemently argued for the recall of such measures of segregation and incarceration as a "critical immunization" against "infection by the virus of prejudice and the emotion of wartime struggle" (7).

The message that "It did happen here" is reiterated by the commission as an admonition for the future (7).   In spite of the strong recommendations of the Committee as a measure for avoiding such acts of exclusion and detention in the future, history has repeated in a more gruesome manner. This time it is the Muslim/Islam that has been deemed as the antagonistic other and a potential threat to the Western culture in general and American way of life in particular. It is not the terrorists who are persecuted; it is the religion of the terrorists that is discriminated.

The various patterns of representation in movies, as a whole, provide a good image about the sociopolitical ethos of the post 9/11 America. Thus sympathetic portrayal or saintly representation or even negotiated balancing of negative and positive characters talk about the time in which Muslims are harassed on the streets and some taken to unknown detention centers in the name of extra ordinary renditions and they are sympathized or honored on screens. The ambivalence of the time is perfectly encoded. The only way of representation which was stereotypical in nature gradually gave way to more ominous patterns which could put forth a debate of negotiations and balancing. Favorable liberal arguments can be made in pointing out the balance that has been created on screen with regards to the number of saintly/sympathetic/ negotiated balancing portrayals. Such patterns in a way distort the representation of history too. Such distortions can be better identified through a close reading of a film. The categorization of the patterns of representation has the setback in finding out the nuances of representation in a movie. Close analysis has become imperative to look for nuanced and subtler ways of representation and the third chapter does such a task of analyzing two movies, *United 93* and *Rendition*.

The analysis of selected sequences from *United 93* and *Rendition* exposed the dominant liberal political ideology inherent in them. A closer look at the frames, shots and sequences revealed the deep rooted prejudices against Muslims and Islam. Breaking away from the stereotypical way of portraying Muslims and Arabs as bearded fanatics and sheikhs, the movie *Rendition* has created a global "Muslim", an academically brilliant chemical engineer named Anwar el Ibrahimi who visits different foreign countries for academic presentations. He speaks accented English and can easily pass off as a westerner in his dress and manners. But this "global" Muslim is suspected of associating with terrorist activities and he is taken to the detention center. The classic Hollywood master narrative emerges through the character of Douglas Freeman who acts as the observer of the torture. As his name suggests, he is burdened to free the "global" Muslim. The chapter analyses in depth the sequences that are put together especially during the torture scenes. It has been observed that sequences are sliced together in such a manner that evokes torture as a punishment to the very act and thought of terrorism. Though the cyclical pattern of murder begetting murder is shown in the movie, the film subtly complies with the dominant ideological order. After 9/11 when the entire nation was against terrorism, it was easier for the film makers to succumb to such an ideology. So obviously the point that whether Anwar has some connections with terrorist activities is left unresolved, leaving his wife, their friend and the spectators suspicious.

The film, along with the other movie *United 93*, completely misses the larger framework of the geopolitical scenario and the role of America in triggering terrorism. Apart from the frames, shots and sequences selected from these movies,

the interviews with the cast and crew are also examined. The interviews with the

director and main actors of the movie *Rendition* have revealed the larger agenda of

propagating against torture. The often repeated imperative statement by the US

officials that "US does not torture" is highlighted in the movie. Torture is depicted

as to save human lives and this act naturalizes and neutralizes the violence in it.

According to Zizek, such neutralizations are even more hazardous as explained in

the third chapter. The trailer too came out rallying against torture. But the close

analysis of the sequences of the movie revealed a different picture. Though the

movie claimed that it is against rendition, the close study done in the second chapter

establishes that the movie endorses rendition as the punishment for the deviants.

Such a reading is possible only when sequences or placements and distribution of

various shots are given a close analysis. The movie has subverted the position of

tormentor by replacing the US officials with Arab Muslims. The shift in roles of the

torturer gives a clean sheet to the US. Thus the movie though claims itself to be an

anti-torture movie; it is the Arabs torturing the US citizen which is emphasized. The

latent content of the movie thus projects how the dominant ideology perceives the

other. The American monolith of innocence is popularized consciously or

unconsciously. Thus the patterns of representation have gone a long way from

stereotypes and under representation. The unveiling of the present pattern can be

done through such sequence analysis.

Though the movie *United 93* is without any visible stereotypical

representation of terrorists, the sequence analysis discloses that it is not without any

stereotypes. The detailed sequence analysis done in the second chapter shows how

the movie entirely projects the dominant political as well as religious ideology to the highlight. The geopolitical history is forgotten for a while and it is pictured like terrorists come from another planet like aliens, which is quite a familiar scene in Hollywood movies. The dominant Christian belief is covertly emphasized by muting the prayers of the Muslims. The politics of subtitling which are non-diegetic insertions to a film is also analyzed. The subtitle that is added by the film maker to throw light on any foreign language is focused. In *United 93*, the analysis of subtitles has brought out the exclusivist dominant order of muting the unwanted foreign elements and thereby silencing a people and culture. The political intentions, conscious or unconscious, of omissions and muting are examined and questioned. The deep rooted prejudices and fears are brought to day light in the close analysis of some of the sequences of *United 93*. The prejudice against the prayers of Muslims and the prevailing fear of Germans as traitors are unveiled through the close examination of subtitles. The chapter examines how a German character acts rather cowardly in the movie which does not match any records of the phone calls of fellow passengers and how this man is made to disclose to the terrorists that he is not an American but he is a German (Lehnguth 69-70). The religious and repeated omissions and muting of subtitles were recorded and it shows the deliberate nature of its political intention.

The formation of Muslim subject is another philosophical departure that the research has incorporated. The fourth chapter focuses on the representation and formation of Muslim subject in the post September 11 movies category. The research examines how the attack on the World Trade Centre and Pentagon by the

Islamic terrorists on 11 September, 2001 has changed the identity of Muslims. The event acts as interpellation and the chapter examines the ways in which 9/11 interpellates the Muslim individual to Muslim subjects. Muslim male subject and Muslim female subject are studied distinctively.

Three movies are selected at this stage of the thesis: *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, *Brick Lane* and *Mooz-lum*. All these three movies have strong leading Muslim characters and the chapter explores how 9/11 has changed their lives, their outlook and their subjectivities. Hitherto marginalized and silenced Muslim characters are brought to the centre stage in an attempt to express the struggles and crisis they have gone through in the post 9/11 socio-political space. The close reading of the content reveals how these characters are reduced to their religious identity in the age of modernity when plural identities are stressed. The movie *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* has the broader perspective of placing it in the larger geopolitical context. As Changez requests in the movie, "I ask only one thing. That you please listen to the whole story. From the very beginning. Not just bits and pieces. Do I have your word?" "You do," Bobby replies (00:12:20). This single conversation has taken this movie to a global political space and time and there is a marked shift in the perspective. The film has given equal voice to the East and the West, which is absent in the novel. As the film progresses Changez realizes that economic fundamentalism has the same form as that of religious fundamentalism; one is acclaimed as "dream" and the other as a "menace" for the progress of the nation. The film is presented as an attempt to reconcile between the disparate extremes of the Pakistani and the American counterparts of his identity to suture him

to a rhizomatic whole. Changez refuses to be "othered" which happens to be the only viable solution. His transformation occurs through various phases: starting from "the global elite" or "the secessionist" to the "janissary" and finally to the "academic Lahori" who inspires students to pursue a Pakisthani dream that does not involve emigration.

Brick Lane addresses the issue of 9/11 and Muslim identity from a female Muslim perspective. The film is the narrated from the viewpoint of Nazneen. The close watching of the movie gives the picture of dominant/submissive nature of Nazneen and Chanu family. The camera often literally marginalizes her in the frame. The film presents how 9/11 has changed the life of an immigrant Muslim woman's life in England. Though larger political issues are discussed in the movie, they never suppress this woman's dreams and ambitions and the perspective sticks onto Nazneen. Her identity is never undergoing a drastic transformation after 9/11 like that of Changez in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. The fourth chapter also brings sequences from the movies *The Battle of Algiers*, *Yasmin* and the segments of Samira Makhmalbaf and Danis Tanovic from *11'09"01* to elaborate and substantiate the arguments.

Tariq Madi, the leading character of *Mooz-lum*, by contrast is caught up in his identity as a Muslim and strives hard to come out of it. The child abuse he has to face in his Muslim School has distanced him from his religion, family, and friends and from his own Muslim subjectivity. 9/11 though had bitter implications, later sutured him to his family and his own Muslim self. The film unravels the complexities of Muslim identity. The chapter examined how Muslim men and

women are metonymically reduced or condensed to bearded/ veiled bodies. The thesis contends how in all these movies, the Muslim characters like Tariq of *Moozlum*, Changez of *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, Karim of *Brick Lane* and Anwar of *Rendition* have to prove their love and allegiance to their nation state. They are caught up in the dyadic choice of either a sympathizer of terrorist/terrorist or a patriot who demonstrates loyalties to the state. Thus the often repeated demand of proving innocence by the Muslim Subjects is a form of interpellation both by the state and by the dominant society.

All these movies tell men's stories except for *Brick Lane*, *Yasmin* and segments of Samira Makhmalbuff and Danis Tanovic from *September 11*. It seems like women are not interested in the political affairs or religious lives. All women characters are directly affected by 9/11; but nowhere in the movies such a perspective has been drawn except for the character created by Samira Makhmalbaf. Samira has made a bold step to globally locate the 9/11 incident in the context of refugees of Aghanistan in Iran. Other movies depict how 9/11 has brought changes to the personal and familial spaces.

In the process of representing 9/11, a series of liminal spaces opens up that expose possibilities of the (re)configuration of identity, representation, and history. The thesis has attempted to pry open these spaces, "structuring absences", to expose the ideology that operates behind the text. Thus the thesis explores on the fundamental relationship between 9/11 and the cinema; how the events that succeeded 9/11 influenced the cinema has been a fundamental issue that is addressed here. The ways in which the movies have treated post 9/11 issues like racism or

post-racism remain the focal point. The strategies of representation in the post-race period show that racism has taken an altogether new form in popular media. The acknowledgement of a new painful reality of a post-race era cannot be sidelined. Sequence analysis has been of immense help in decoding the filmic representation. The thesis unravels how a sequence is imposed on a set of images to get the implied meaning. The research has understood that the dominant ideology is present in various dubious forms in movies which claim to be countering dominant power structures.

"Terrorism did not begin on September 11 2001 and it will not end there", thus says former M15 Chief Stella Rimington. This prophetic statement captures the incident in its totality. Jacques Derrida philosophically argues that 9/11 is "the symptom of an autoimmune crisis occurring within the system that should have predicted it. Autoimmune conditions consist in the spontaneous suicide of the very defensive mechanism supposed to protect the organism from external aggression" (Borradori 150). Derrida tracks three phases in the autoimmune crisis, of which 9/11 happens to be the second symptom. First is the Cold War when the Islamic terrorists were trained and given arms and funds by the American government and the last symptom is the war against terrorism which Derrida calls as "the vicious circle of repression" (151). Zizek quotes Derrida's words from the speech made on receiving the Theodor Adorno award on September 22 2001, "My unconditional compassion, addressed at the victims of September 11, does not prevent me from saying aloud: with regard to this crime, I do not believe that anyone is politically guiltless." Further Zizek concludes that "This self-relating, this inclusion of oneself in the

picture is the only true 'infinite justice'" (*Welcome* 57). If the totality of the issue at hand can be comprehended well, we can truly call ourselves on the path of Kantian "Enlightenment" where enlightenment is a process in constant need to progress and promises freedom and social justice for all. Thus by placing 9/11 in the continuum of historical acts, philosophy addresses the issue from a different plain which happens to be quite remote in the case of films. The larger political ideology of placing the 9/11 incident in the geopolitical scenario is not attempted by any of these movies except by the harsh and loud criticism by *11'09"01* or by the subtle suggestions that *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* offers.

The thesis emphasizes and establishes one postulation: "Every film is ideological regardless of its genre or subject matter" (McSweeney "Introduction" 22) and as Marylne Fabe has said, narrative film techniques are never neutral or innocent: every single nuance conveys an ideology (xvi). Cinemas, thus, "transcode" the sociopolitical struggles and contestations of the age and enable to perceive the world through a prism that either supports the dominant power and ideology or opening up counter narratives which happen rarely. So the struggle for control of representation should ceaselessly persist as representations help in shaping perceptions about the living world. Let us keep on looking at the mirror. It is imperative to continue research with a critical eye, interrogating representations in movies.

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