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Diplomarbeit

Titel der Diplomarbeit

"How the changes of self-perception of the US and the transformation of patriotism affect American popular culture since 9/11"

Verfasserin

Lena Katharina Netrval

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1. **Introduction**

First and foremost I am going to explain why I chose this topic and how my research was structured. Since I have lived in the United States from 2001 to 2002 and have been there on holidays and visiting friends frequently I have a close connection to this nation. Alongside my history studies with focus on contemporary history I also study English and American Studies at the University of Vienna, this explains why I decided to write my diploma thesis in English and not in my mother tongue, German.

When I was living in the United States from the beginning of 2001 until the summer of 2002 I was sitting in high school in History class when we were told to turn on the TV because „something terrible has happened". We watched the second plane crash into the World Trade Center - even though my high school and host family were more than 1.000 miles away (I went to school in Tifton, Georgia, close to the Florida border) the shock, grief and agony was astonishing. Phone lines were down until the next day and some friends of mine were stuck in London because their flights were scheduled to fly through JFK Airport into New York City and then on to Atlanta. The next day all the students were instructed to wear red, white and blue – the colors of the Star Spangled Banner. In the morning before class American[1] students usually have to „pledge allegiance to the flag" (this is widespread throughout the United States) but on September 12, 2001 we also sang the national anthem and the next couple of weeks were committed to concentrate on America and help raise money to aid the families of the victims that died during these four attacks. What I personally found intriguing about all this is the solidarity among Americans, no matter how far the distance is. Even though patriotism can also degenerate negatively, this solidarity shows tremendous unity and how close-knit a community of people can be (in this case an entire nation), but also how easily former members of this „circle" can be excluded (e.g. being American, but from a Muslim background became much harder after 9/11).

American Patriotism has a long history and has to be regarded as a crucial factor in the forming of the American nation. All this „American-ness" goes back - among other occurrences - to the Declaration of Independence in the year 1776 and the famous politicians such as John Adams and Benjamin Franklin that have signed this Declaration. The quote that "all men are created equal" has been and still is the mantra of the United States, even though at the time of the composing

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[1] When I use the term "American" it means "U.S. American" (this abbreviation is valid throughout the entire thesis).

of the Declaration "all men" did not necessarily include everybody - "everybody" referred to white males only (from a certain age onwards) and did not extend to African-Americans. The notion of the "American dream" (or "chasing the American dream") was first mentioned in the 1930ies by the historian and writer James Truslow Adams in his book "The Epic Of America"[2] and is still associated with the possibility of starting off as a dishwasher and coming out a millionaire, the classical rags-to-riches success story. How have these slogans reached new a new high after 9/11? Have they been awarded new attention? Also, does this kind of patriotism have and need borders in order to function properly and be a healthy kind of patriotism?

I found 9/11 to be extremely incisive for both American history and American self-perception. I posed myself the question how this self-perception has changed over the years since the terrible attacks and how a nation as big as the United States deals with such sudden impacts, also in comparison to how it was before. This change went about in many different layers of American Society – from politics to movies, music and behavior. I want to elaborate on how the self-perception of U.S. American citizens and politics/politicians changed in the light of the events of September 11, 2001, when two passenger planes hit the World Trade Center in New York City and two more of them went down in Shanksville, Pennsylvania and in the Pentagon and how this change influenced American popular culture productions of various kinds.

What is different now, how do Americans deal with newly posed „threats" to the country? How did the ones directly affected by it (i.e. relatives, co-workers, friends) react to this trauma directly after the events in contrast to now, nine years after 9/11? The main focus of my diploma thesis will be on the effects all these changes had on American popular culture. Many movies, TV-series, pieces of music and literature from that time often broach the issues of *terrorism*, *war*, *attack* or *Afghanistan* and emphasize on how important it is to be American and to form a strong union against possible *enemies* and *threats*. Is this a positive influence or does it make the children, teenagers and adults watching those movies and TV-series extremely paranoid and basically *ready for battle*? One has to keep in mind that many of those popular culture events (e.g. concerts in remembrance of the victims, even 9/11 merchandise) were also designed to help the Americans deals with their fears and grief.

I propose five different categories of popular cultural text production in reaction to 9/11 from 2001 until 2010 into which those cultural texts dealt with fit into: the

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[2] Adams, John Truslow. *The Epic of America*. Simon Publications, 2001.

categories of balance, suppression/ignorance, confrontation, negativity, and opinion. Furthermore, I contest that this change is visible right from the moments the twin towers fell and not only after a period of shock and grief - the lack of cultural text production is a statement and a cultural text in itself.

In the last and concluding chapter I will take a look on how the situation is today and I will summarize what I found out during my research. How were everyday life and politics before the attacks and if anything has changed, to what extend and how? How do the US Americans see themselves regarding the fact that they, too, are vulnerable? How did the changes of the self-perception of the United States and the transformation (or rather) continuity of American patriotism effect popular culture? What cultural texts were produced in relation to 9/11? The plans to build a mosque near Ground Zero was a major discussion on September 11, 2010 when nine years after the attacks had passed and will be closely looked at as well, along with the discourse about merchandise as either exploitation or "voice of grief[3]".

I started my research by browsing through my own library of books and then went on to visit many bookstores and libraries in Vienna, Austria; Phoenix, Arizona and Stanford, California for literature regarding American popular culture, popular cultural theory, contemporary American history, and politics. Furthermore, my own experience from living in the United States has helped me understand how certain phenomenon (such as patriotism) are displayed and are subject to constant and substantial change. In the beginning I was overwhelmed by the wide range of literature and essays from all kinds of perspectives and it was quite difficult to find a way through all of it but in the end I am positive that the bibliography I have assembled is a fine selection of literature and provides a broad overview. I then chose to focus on three fields of popular culture, namely the most prominent ones: movies/TV, music and literature. I picked examples for each genre that I consider most representative.

The essential starting point for my questions was ultimately the quote "What, then, is the American?" by Hector St. John de Crèvecœur. He coined this phrase in his book "Letters from an American Farmer and Sketches of 18th century America[4]" and I first discovered the quote in an introduction by Christopher Bigsby who edited the "The Cambridge Companion to Modern American Culture" (Cambridge University Press, New York 2006). This one simple phrase is the

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3 Havrilesky, Heather. *The selling of 9/11.* September 7, 2002.
http://dir.salon.com/mwt/feature/2002/09/07/purchase_power/index.html (Nov 17, 2010), p. 1.
4 St. John de Crèvecœur, Hector. *Letters from an American Farmer and Sketches of 18th century America.* Oxford University Press, New York 1997 (reissued 2009).

essential question that needs to be answered in order to understand how and why those transformations in American self-perception and patriotism happen and to what extent they are visible in American popular culture.

So, what is the American and how has his self-perception changed? How has the American changed popular culture and how has the American as a human adapted to these changes? What and how many varieties of texts were produced as results of those changes?

Note: All translations from German to English using German sources are my own.

2. **September 11, 2001 & Beyond**

2.1. **September 11, 2001 - Destruction of the World Trade Center**

In order to understand the aftermath of the attacks and why the public, the authorities, the media and the rest of the world responded the way they did it is indispensable to understand what happened this terrible Tuesday almost a decade ago.

The morning of September 11, 2001 was a warm and sunny Tuesday morning in New York City - no one expected anything out of the ordinary. The World Trade Center (WTC) had been the target of attacks once before on February 26, 1993 when a car bomb exploded in the garage of the northern of the two towers. There were critics who believed that the al-Qaeda (the organization that was pulling the strings behind the 1993 bombing) would strike again, but the general public felt secure. But there were also those who suspected that the bombing was not the first attack of its kind and would certainly not be the last. One of those men was 48-year-old George J. Tenet, director of the CIA, the American Central Intelligence Agency. He had been worried about the al-Qaeda, its alleged leader Osama Bin Laden and its tremendous influential network for many years and has always had a "gut feeling" that something might happen again - especially another attack involving the World Trade Center, a landmark in New York City.[5]

In his book "The War on Freedom" the British political scientist Nafeez Mosaddeq Ahmed gives a structured and concise overview of those 85 minutes that would change American self-perception and American history forever:

> 8:45 a.m. – American Airlines Flight 11 from Boston smashed into the north tower of the World Trade Center.
> 9:03 a.m. – United Airlines Flight 175 from Boston smashed into the south tower.
> 9:40 a.m. AA Flight 77 from Dulles hits the Pentagon.
> 10:10 a.m. – United Flight 93 from Newark crashed in Shanksville, Pennsylvania.[6]

Ahmed further raises the critical and crucial questions why so little action was taken right after the planes hit their targets and why emergency plans created for such purposes did not take effect.[7] Apart from how the situation was handled at that time and how it should have been dealt with according to the handbooks, the

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[5] Paragraph cf. Woodward, *Bush at War*. (Simon & Schuster, New York ²2003), p. 1 ff.
[6] Ahmed, Nafeez Mosaddeq. *The War on Freedom. How and Why America was attacked September 11, 2001*. (B&T, Sydney ³2002), p. 144.
[7] Cf. ibid., p. 145.

nation was out of breath for a few moments - nothing would be the same afterwards, no matter from what angle the situation is being assessed from. Even though the acts can be and have been dissected critically in many different ways with many different opinions (from conspiracy theories to alien abductions) they affected everyday life, politics and everything else immensely and in ways unthinkable prior to 9/11.

A great number of critics, such as the famous linguist Noam Chomsky, have their own opinion on the aftermath of the hijacking the planes and the crashing them into four meticulously selected targets (three of which were actually hit). In his book "Failed States" Noam Chomsky describes the war against terror and against the Muslim terrorist attackers as a war that gives boost to networks such as the al-Qaeda and violence in general in its country of origin and might also overflow to other nations: "The National Intelligence Council 'predicted that an American-led invasion of Iraq would increase support for political Islam and would result in a deeply divided Iraqi society prone to violent internal conflict.' hence engendering terror within Iraq and worldwide."[8] Terrorist acts in London such as the bomb attack on the underground trains in 2005 show that the terror has spread and has reached other heights. It is suspected that the closely to the United States connected United Kingdom is an ideal target because such acts would hurt the United States as well. On October 2, 2010 terror alerts were issued for the UK. The Telegraph Newspaper in England headlined "US to issue terror warning to Americans in Europe" and talked about "the threat of a new al Qaeda attack in Europe. Britain, France and Germany are thought to be at greatest risk[9]" and "to deploy extra caution when visiting tourist destinations, transport hubs and other likely targets[10]". But not only the United Kingdom is seen to be a target, France falls into this category as well because "on Tuesday night the Eiffel Tower in Paris was evacuated following a bomb threat called in from a telephone booth. It was the second such alert at the monument in two weeks[11]" the *Telegraph* headlined on October 6, 2010.

Studies, so Chomsky, show that in the UK it is feared that some of those who have fought in Iraq might attack their own country after returning home with methods acquired in combat and combat training in Iraq.[12] The only cause for the invasion

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[8] Chomsky, Noam. *Failed States*. (Penguin Books, London 2007), p. 19.
[9] Sherwell, Philipp et al:
http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/northamerica/usa/8039012/US-to-issue-terror-warning-to-Americans-in-Europe.html (Oct 6, 2010).
[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Cf. Chomsky, *Failed States*. (Penguin Books, London 2007), p. 19f.

of Iraq were weapons of mass destruction that were supposed to be detected, retrieved, and destroyed:

> The United States and United Kingdom proclaimed the right to invade Iraq because it was developing weapons of mass destruction. That was the 'single question' that justified invading Iraq, the president declared in a March 2003 press conference, a position stressed repeatedly by Blair, Bush, an their associates. Eliminating the threat of Iraq's WMDs [Weapons of Mass Destruction] was also the sole basis on which Bush received congressional authorization to resort to force.[13]

The presence of weapons of mass destruction was assumed because the country's president, Saddam Hussein, had been using them in the past. Before the outbreak of the 2003 war (*Operation Iraqi Freedom*) the country had to prove the fact that they did not possess weapons of mass destruction anymore.

The September 10, 2010 edition of the Wall Street Journal titled - one day in advance of the 9-year anniversary of 9/11 – that a "terror threat" is "more diverse[14]" than ever (see Image # 1) The author Siobhan Gorman refers to a report that does find that "terrorism is increasingly taking on an American cast, reflected in the growth of homegrown threats and the movement of terrorists recruited from the U.S. to areas like the horn of Africa and Yemen.[15]" He sees a tendency from big-scale attacks to more diverse methods and that this is due to actions taken "on Capital Hill and in the media [that] have arguably played into terrorists' hands and fuel anti-American sentiment[16]." The author draws his information from a report that was issued in 2010 about the various possible threats to American soil and the study provided information about the most

> (...) likely targets and means of attack. More likely targets include commercial aviation, Western brand names like U.S. hotel chains, Jewish targets and U.S. soldiers fighting in Muslim countries. Potential tactics include suicide operations, attacks by gunmen in he model of the 2008 assault on Mumbai, India, and assassination of key leaders.[17]

This article was published in relation to the anniversary of the attacks and destructs the American fear of "nuclear and biological weapons" because "[al-Qaeda] hasn't shown the capacity to mount attacks with them.[18]" This conclusion

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[13] Ibid., p. 24.
[14] Gorman, Siobhan. *Terror Threat More Diverse, Study Says*. September 10, 2010. The Wall Street Journal.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid.

seems to me a little bit far fetched because eve though there has not been an attack yet there is no indication that it is not possible in the (near or far) future. Still, focusing solely on such enormous possible attacks is the wrong way to go because then, the smaller possibilities are being disregarded. The main point of the report is, however, to emphasize on the lack of preparation regarding a variety of threats, an example is being named with the "recruitment of Americans to terrorist ranks.[19]"

Terror Threat More Diverse, Study Says

BY SIOBHAN GORMAN

The terrorist threat faced by the U.S. nine years after the 2001 attacks on New York and Washington is far more difficult to detect but less likely to produce mass-casualty attacks, according to the former leaders of the 9/11 Commission.

A report from a group led by the former commissioners, to be released Friday, finds terrorism is increasingly taking on an American cast, reflected in the growth of homegrown threats and the movement of terrorists recruited from the U.S. to areas like the horn of Africa and Yemen.

The report concludes some of the most-feared types of attacks are now unlikely, such as those using nuclear or biological weapons, or attacks on malls and shopping centers in less-populated cities. Despite al Qaeda's long-running interest in mass-casualty weapons, it hasn't shown the capacity to mount attacks with them, the report says.

The U.S. government is ill-equipped to counter the newest version of the terrorist threat, the report concludes, adding that "American overreactions," particularly on Capitol Hill and in the media, even to unsuccessful attacks, have arguably played into terrorists' hands and fuel anti-American sentiment.

"It's a much more complex and a much more diverse threat than it was" in 2001, said former 9/11 Commission Vice Chairman Lee Hamilton in an interview. "We lag behind still in developing responses to this threat." No agency in the U.S. government, for example, is charged with monitoring and stopping the radicalization and recruitment of Americans to terrorist ranks, he said.

"The White House is addressing this challenge through a process that attempts to leverage all the tools the government has to offer," said spokesman Tommy Vietor.

The report was written by terrorism analysts Peter Bergen and Bruce Hoffman for the national security group of the Bipartisan Policy Center, a Washington think tank. The security group is led by former 9/11 Commission Chairman Tom Kean and Mr. Hamilton.

The study tracks with recent assessments from the director of national intelligence and the Central Intelligence Agency highlighting the increasing reliance of al Qaeda and affiliates on people who can easily and legally enter and travel in the U.S, to plot and mount attacks.

Officials at intelligence agencies and the Department of Homeland Security zeroed in on the homegrown threat following a series of attacks and botched plots, including the Fort Hood, Texas, shootings and the attempted Times Square bombing.

Last year, there were 10 U.S.-linked jihadi attacks, plots or incidents involving individuals traveling outside the country to receive terrorist training, the report found. Meanwhile, at least 43 American citizens or legal residents aligned with militant groups were charged or convicted in terrorism cases in the U.S. and elsewhere in 2009.

Al Qaeda and its allies have established "an embryonic terrorist recruitment, radicalization and operational infrastructure" in the U.S., the report concludes.

The report also identifies more and less likely targets and means of attack. More likely targets include commercial aviation, Western brand names like U.S. hotel chains, Jewish targets and U.S. soldiers fighting in Muslim countries. Potential tactics include suicide operations, attacks by gunmen in the model of the 2008 assault on Mumbai, India, and assassinations of key leaders.

The group hopes its findings will encourage the U.S. government to focus more of its limited resources on the most likely attack scenarios. "It's very hard to get the government to establish priorities," Mr. Hamilton said.

As public attention in recent years has turned to the global economic crisis, the report says, attempted terror attacks have climbed. "The polls say Americans are turning their attention away from the terrorist threat," Mr. Hamilton said. "This report says they better not."

Image #1 Wall Street Journal Article (September 10, 2010)

Noam Chomsky made a statement about America being a "leading terrorist state" itself and in his book "9/11" (the book is an anthology of questions asked by reporters regarding Chomsky's view on 9/11) he elaborates on this further:

> (...) the U.S. is the only country that was condemned for international terrorism by the World Court and that rejected a Security Council resolution calling on states to observe international law. (...) Beirut (...) supporting Turkey's crushing of its Kurdish

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[19] Ibid.

> population (...) destruction of the Al-Saifa pharmaceutical plant in Sudan (...) this only scratches the surface.[20]

No matter what the outcome - this political dispute about the weapons of mass destruction, Bin Laden, Saddam Hussein, the al-Qaeda and the Operation Iraqi Freedom greatly influenced the American people. The focus in nearly every TV documentary, movie, TV series episode or talk show right after 9/11 was on the tragic events and their aftermath, or on how to deal with what followed the crashing of the towers mentally as well as physically. Even though everyone copes differently with hard times and has his/her personal way of overcoming tragedy, there are some similarities that connect all Americans: the overwhelming fear of other attacks, the longing for putting a halt to the terrorist attacks and the wish for the grief, fear and anger to end.

The main question now evolves around how to deal with the debris of the events, the aftermath. Daniel J. Sherman and Terry Nardin introduce their book "Terror, Culture, Politics. Rethinking 9/11" with the words "In the weeks and months following 9/11, observers scanned the cultural landscape of sighs of some fundamental shift. It seemed inconceivable that an attack as sudden, as murderous, and as apparently unprecedented as that of 9/11 could have left no trace in the cultural domain.[21]" This search of Sherman and Nardin, however, was not very successful at the beginning and this might be because the nation seemed not to be ready to face what has happened so soon. Sherman and Nardin discovered fear in American culture to deal with a delicate topic such as 9/11 right after the event itself but "in 2003, after two years of self-restraint, Halloween retailers were able to report a return to horror as usual.[22]" But what is this "usual"? Hasn't the "usual" been transformed as well? Sherman and Nardin connect the year 2003 with the year of the expansion of the 2001 Patriot Act which, according to Stephen J, Schulhofer, "represented for many Americans the epitome of mindless overreaction, a tragically misguided grant of law enforcement power that will end by destroying our liberties in order to save them (...)[23]" Schulhofer does point out that the Patriot Act is not all dangerous but that there are some restrictions included that are quite useful, even though "(...) the Patriot Act does deserve much of its dark reputation (...) legitimate criticism and public uneasiness about the act have been swamped by skillfully manipulates

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[20] Chomsky, *9/11.* (Seven Stories Press, New York 2001), p. 44ff.
[21] Sherman, Daniel J. Nardin, Terry (Ed.). *Terror, Culture, Politics, Rethinking 9/11.* Indiana University Press, Bloomington 2006. p. 1.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Schulhofer, Stephen J. *The Patriot Act and the Surveillance Society.* p. 124 in: Leone, Richard C. Anrig, Gray Jr. *Liberty Under Attack: The War on Our Freedoms in an Age of Terror: Reclaiming Our Freedoms in an Age of Terror. (*Public Affairs, New York 2007).

fears of a new terrorist attack.[24]" This points directly to another question: was this "fear of a new terrorist attack" only coined by the Bush administration's efforts to emphasize on the nation's need to defend itself against enemies that are denoted to be jealous of its wealth? Or did the media by constantly replaying the images of 9/11 do the rest to convince the Americans that such an attack is possible everyday and can affect every household?

Noam Chomsky, however, has his own view on the American superpower and its self-esteem as he writes in "Hegemony or Survival. Americas Quest for Global Dominance" bluntly: "High on the global agenda by fall 2002 was the declared intention of the most powerful state in history to maintain its hegemony through the threat or use of military force, the dimension of power in which it reigns supreme.[25]" There are two things that Chomsky assumes the Americans take for granted: that the United States is the most powerful state in history – uncontested – and that the "use of military force" is what America does best. To undermine this "military force" Chomsky refers to the National Security Strategy Declaration, where the United States clearly sees itself as the strongest and most dominant nation of all and therefore will conquer every obstacle it is provided for by the enemy. He refers to "the imperial grand strategy [that] asserts the right of the United States to undertake 'preventive war' at will (…). Preventive war falls within the category of war crimes.[26]" Chomsky points out the negative views on the war in Iraq, quoting Arthur Schlesinger (who worked for President John F. Kennedy) who puts the war in Iraq in connection with Pearl Harbor. Since Franklin D. Roosevelt spoke about the Japanese attacking in a dishonorable fashion Schlesinger now speaks about the Americans doing exactly the same thing they criticized about the Japanese: attacking in "infamy.[27]" Further in his book, Chomsky points out the obvious: 9/11 is often referred to as the first attack since 1814 (or since Pearl Harbor, depending on the definition of American soil) and the garage bombing of the World Trade Center referred to in my introduction only gets a small, short mention. But this 1993 attack should have evoked the same fear that the 2001 attack did: the "awesome threat of terror.[28]" About patriotism during these times he cynically says, "(…) [they - the government] declare that it is unpatriotic and disruptive to question the workings of authority – but patriotic to institute harsh and regressive policies that benefit the wealthy, undermine social programs that serve the needs of the great majority, and

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[24] Ibid., p. 125.
[25] Chomsky, Noam. *Hegemony or Survival. America's Quest for Global Dominance.*
(Metropolitan Books, New York 2003), p. 11.
[26] Ibid., p. 12.
[27] Cf. ibid.
[28] Ibid., p. 217.

subordinate a frightened population to increased state control.[29]" Chomsky, being extremely critical of the Bush administration (especially on these pages of the book) does not deny that the "threat of international terrorism is surely severe[30]" but that "the threat of terrorism is, however, not the only abyss into which we peer. A much more grave threat to biology's only experiment with higher intelligence is opposed by weapons of mass destruction.[31]" These weapons of mass destruction were the main arguments that the Bush administration used to initiate and ignite the war in Iraq.

Has this government-based production of trepidation and anxiety led to this over-sensitivity of an entire nation towards terror, violence and attacks from both the out- and the side? If so, when did it start and from what point onwards was it visible in American popular culture; when did it start to reflect? Right after this Tuesday in September of 2001 or some months or even years later, when the first moments of astonishment had passed and reality – if even possible – has started to set in?

My theory proposes a change in American popular culture that went about - both consciously and unconsciously – right from the second the World Trade Center towers were torn down and is visible in every aspect of American pop culture and everyday life. Sherman and Nardin opine that this change has not really started until the year 2003 when the fear of horror seemed to decrease (see above), which is a statement that I do not share because it is clearly visible that there have been cultural texts that refer to 9/11 in the years 2001, 2002 and early 2003 (see later chapters of this thesis for examples). The lack of dealing with 9/11 in many of the cultural texts provided for after 9/11 actually *is* dealing with the trauma (also see Chapter 2.2. "What is trauma?"), but in a way that is not visible at the first glance. When it comes to this *blind spot* it is necessary to ask for what is missing and figure out why this *it* is missing and to what extent. A blind spot in the medical sense of the word is also called "scotoma" and refers to a blind spot in our eye that can blacken out part of our vision, there are some parts of our vision that we then just cannot grasp. Such a blind spot in the historical sense can be found almost everywhere. Either only the parts that we enjoy are dealt with and the displeasing ones are left out or – in this case – only the necessary information is given but the painful information is omitted, often intentionally. A good example is Zombie-film director George Romero's try to hand in a script for a 9/11 zombie movie shortly after September 11, 2001 and how he was rejected for the sake of

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[29] Ibid.
[30] Ibid., p. 218
[31] Ibid.

romantic, light comedies. I will elaborate on this incident later in this thesis (see Chapter 3.2.2.).

Eva Male, a Vienna-born Austrian teacher and journalist, contests in her 2006 book "Amerika. All inclusive" that shortly after 9/11, many journalists, writers, and experts doomed the entertainment industry, but, so Male, the black humor section of the big entertainment world prevailed and - after a respectful mourning period – comedies, sitcoms as well as stand-up comedians boomed more than ever. Fun and amusement became a sanctuary where the world is still normal and "real.[32]" Citing Reinhold Wagnleitner, a historian from Salzburg, Male describes his theory that the United States is always associated with "democracy, chances, freedom, wealth, success, and youth[33]" but then comparing this to a commercial, where reality often is different than the advertisement but still connects the United States closely to popular culture, as America being almost non-existing without it. America is the center of capitalist consumerism and at the same time its most successful product.[34] Furthermore, family also received a new meaning and was more important than ever because being alone and single was no longer *en vogue* and staying at home was the new going out. Renting videos, nourishing friendships and family relations, and eating together at the dinner table were the newly re-found favorites past times.[35] Renting videos, as it is, was very important and also an entry point to pop culture to what I will be dealing with on the following pages. These movies, documentaries and TV-shows functioned as either exiles to flee to when reality became too much or, on the other hand, as ways to face what has happened and digest it.

The TV Channel CNN's website has a "War on Terror" online section that features a subcategory that is called "American Remembers. A Changed World", which is a collection of related online articles to the change in the American "soul" and nation. One of those articles is called "Entertainment, a year later. Pop culture bobs along the surface in wake of 9/11" and was published on September 6, 2002, almost a year after the attacks in 2001. Todd Leopold contents that "since September 11, 2001, entertainment and pop culture don't appear to have changed much.[36]" The movie industry's focus in 2002, so Leopold, was on producing sequels and he calls the productions of 2002 "light, escapist.[37]" But exactly this "light, escapist" range of movies shows the change in popular culture because this

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[32] Cf. Male, Eva. *Amerika. All inclusive. Von Air-Condition bis Zero-Tolerance.* (Molden Verlag, Wien 2006), p. 139.
[33] Cf. Ibid. p. 217.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid., p. 137 f.
[36] Leopold, Todd. *Entertainment, a year later.* http://edition.cnn.com/2002/SHOWBIZ/News/09/06/ar911.entertainment/ (Oct 21, 2010)
[37] Ibid.

refusing to deal with 9/11 is a change in pop culture itself. He refers to Paul Levinson from Fordham University in New York who characterizes Americans as seeking an "escape and fun and thrills[38]" but contents that this seeking is normal and that, alongside this longing for entertainment, there is "an awareness of terrorism, of weapons of mass destruction, of war, of life's fragility.[39]" This statement clearly shows that distraction from real life, especially in movies, is much needed, this is what Todd calls "Audiences gravitated to lighter fare.[40]" When talking about TV series he sees the role of 9/11 as a background setting. Another interesting and crucial point Leopold makes is that the networks lost quite a lot of money because they aired TV specials without commercials and therefore could not earn money in their usual way but that they were not the only ones facing an economic crisis.[41]

I concur on one argument with Sherman and Nardin - when they "call attention to the ways that the pre-existing structure of image circulation prefigure the terms in which a given society remembers its past.[42]" These "pre-existing structures" are the very structures that provide the basis for every change to come but this does not mean that they cannot be altered as well. The way filmmakers portray violence in war movies has changed from pre-9/11 to post-9/11, the way filmmakers portray Zombie characters has changed from pre-9/11 to post-9/11 as well. Another key term is vulnerability, which has made the American nation especially prone and – very importantly – maybe even *oversensitive* to influences from all kinds of corners: media (newspapers as well as TV shows and reports) politics, pressure groups, or even religion. This over-sensibility is also the key why the first movie about the survivors of 9/11 was released no earlier than 2006 (Oliver Stone's "World Trade Center", see Chapter 3.2.3) and why the audience was still extremely delicate about its release. This vulnerability, I contest, is a vulnerability the Americans have not had for a long time. The last successful attack goes way back (depending on how one defines "American soil[43]"), at least until 1814 (see Chapter 2.2.) when British troops burnt down today's capital of the United States, Washington D.C. This feeling of being open for attack - even partly homemade - has not been prominent for almost more than 200 years, even though it is common around the world in other countries; many nations' citizens

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[38] Ibid.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Cf. Ibid.
[42] Sherman, Daniel J. Nardin, Terry (Ed.). *Terror, Culture, Politics, Rethinking 9/11*. Indiana University Press, Bloomington 2006. p. 3.
[43] Even though Pearl Harbor (Hawai'i) was attacked and successfully destroyed by the Japanese on December 7, 1941, it cannot – technically – be considered American soil because Hawai'i became the 50th state of the United States on Aug 21, 1959 and was not American soil at the time of attack.

have to live in fear of daily bombs or other kinds of violence. Another important argument I want to make is that this vulnerability has become the engine in this new kind of American popular culture is driven by: the nation has to show that they are not vulnerable at all, that they are stronger than the enemy. Now this category can further be divided into the kind of popular culture that questions the politicians, does not take everything for granted and has a quite grim perspective, an skeptical one, and the kind that helps cope with what has happened and that wants the strengthen the American self-esteem and self-perception.

American author Andrew J. Bacevich, whose son - a lieutenant in the U.S. army- fell during the war in Afghanistan, refers to Robert Kagan who described the change in the United States not as an actual change but as a transformation of the United States into its real self: "America did not change on September 11. It only became more itself.[44]" President Bush, so Bacevich, counted on the volunteers of the war to fight and prevail by themselves, he never contemplated to reintroduce military draft or any action of that kind. Unlike during World War II where everybody around the nation was expected to cut short on something in their life (food, clothes,...) for the cause, now, in the 21st century, the Americans now should rather pretend that the war does not exist and that there is no problem at all. The emphasis of every single American now should be on concentrating on his- or herself. This concentration included buying items of many different kinds, mostly luxurious goods – the act of spending has become a symbol for freedom.[45] How this spending would have turned out if the war had taken another turn nobody knows, but the way President Bush handled the war clearly has shaped the way Americans behaved after 9/11. Apart from the commodity-issue (to go into greater detail would go beyond the scope of the subject), the behavior of American citizen was transformed – or rather, transformed itself in interaction and interdependency with human nature, politics and the media – by 9/11, as human acting is always transformed by such tremendously big incisions. This attitude conveyed by President Bush is described by the aforementioned Austrian journalist Eva Male, simply as "The show must go on,[46]" George W. Bush himself puts it as follows, only nine days after September 11, 2001 in a Joint Session of Congress:

> Americans are asking: What is expected of us? I ask you to live your lives, and hug your children. I know many citizens have fears tonight, and I ask you to be calm and resolute, even in the face of a continuing threat. I ask you to uphold the values of America, and

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[44] Kaga, Robert as cited by Bacevich, Andrew J. *The Limits of Power. The End of American Exceptionalism?*. (Metropolitan Books, Henry Holt and Company, LLC, New York 2008), p. 10.
[45] Cf. ibid, p. 61 ff.
[46] Male, Eva. *Amerika. All inclusive. Von Air-Condition bis Zero-Tolerance.* (Molden Verlag, Wien 2006), p. 139.

remember why so many have come here. We are in a fight for our principles, and our first responsibility is to live by them.[47]

Image # 2 below shows the photographed front page of the New York Times from September 12, 2001 that headlined "U.S. attacked" and calls September 11, 2001 the "day of terror" and "a creeping horror". These terms speak from the hearts of the victims and are quite colloquial, everyday language. Especially the headline-references to President George W. Bush can be interpreted as reassuring and comforting, announcing, "terrorism cannot prevail" and vowing, "to extract punishment for evil". This special production of popular culture through media coverage so shortly after the attacks and how the reader is addressed is representative for most of the post-9/11 media coverage with the main aim to soothe and calm the American nation.

But this collective American trauma has to be defined to deal with it. What is trauma?

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[47] Bush, George W. Address to Joint Session of Congress and the American People. September 20, 2001. http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/gwbush911jointsessionspeech.htm (Nov 12, 2010).

"All the News That's Fit to Print"

The New York Times

U.S. ATTACKED

HIJACKED JETS DESTROY TWIN TOWERS AND HIT PENTAGON IN DAY OF TERROR

A CREEPING HORROR

Buildings Burn and Fall as Onlookers Search for Elusive Safety

By N. R. KLEINFIELD

It kept getting worse.

The horror arrived in episodic bursts of chilling disbelief, signified first by trembling floors, sharp eruptions, cracked windows. There was the actual unfathomable realization of a gaping, flaming hole in first one of the tall towers, and then the same thing all over again in its twin. There was the merciless sight of bodies helplessly tumbling out, some of them in flames.

Finally, the mighty towers themselves were reduced to nothing. Dense plumes of smoke raced through the downtown avenues, coursing between the buildings, shaped like tornadoes their sides.

Every sound was cause for alarm. A plane appeared overhead. Was another one coming? No, it was a fighter jet. But was it friend or enemy? People scrambled for their lives, but they didn't know where to go. Should they go north, south, east, west? Stay outside, go indoors? People hid beneath cars and each other. Some contemplated jumping into the river.

For those trying to flee the very epicenter of the collapsing World Trade Center towers, the most horrid thought of all finally dawned on them: nowhere was safe.

For several panic-stricken hours yesterday morning, people in Lower Manhattan witnessed the inexpressible, the incomprehensible, the unthinkable. "I don't know what the gates of hell look like, but it's got to be like this," said John Maloney, a security director for an Internet firm in the trade center. "I'm a combat veteran, Vietnam, and I never saw anything like this."

The first warnings were small ones. Blocks away, Jim Farmer, a film composer, was having breakfast at a small restaurant on West Broadway. He heard the sound of a jet. An odd sound — too loud, it seemed, to be

A Somber Bush Says Terrorism Cannot Prevail

By ELISABETH BUMILLER with DAVID E. SANGER

WASHINGTON, Sept. 11 — President Bush vowed tonight to retaliate against those responsible for today's attacks on New York and Washington, declaring that he would "make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbor them."

"These acts of mass murder were intended to frighten our nation into chaos and retreat, but they have failed," the president said in his first speech to the nation from the Oval Office. "Our country is strong. Terrorist acts can shake the foundation of our biggest buildings, but they cannot touch the foundation of America."

His speech came after a day of trauma that seems destined to define his presidency. Seeking to at once calm the nation and declare his determination to exact retribution, he told a country numbed by repeated scenes of carnage that "these acts shattered steel, but they cannot dent the steel of American resolve."

Mr. Bush spoke only hours after returning from a zigzag course across the country, as his Secret Service and military security teams moved him from Florida, where he woke up this morning expecting to press for his education bill, to command posts in Louisiana and Nebraska before it was determined the attacks had probably ended and he could safely return to the capital.

It was a sign of the catastrophic

President Vows to Exact Punishment for 'Evil'

By SERGE SCHMEMANN

Hijackers rammed jetliners into each of New York's World Trade Center towers yesterday, toppling both in a hellish storm of ash, glass, smoke and leaping victims, while a third jetliner crashed into the Pentagon in Virginia. There was no official count, but President Bush said thousands had perished, and in the immediate aftermath the calamity was already being ranked the worst and most audacious terror attack in American history.

The attacks seemed carefully coordinated. The hijacked planes were all en route to California, and therefore gorged with fuel, and their departures were spaced within an hour and 40 minutes. The first, American Airlines Flight 11, a Boeing 767 out of Boston for Los Angeles, crashed into the north tower at 8:48 a.m. Eighteen minutes later, United Airlines Flight 175, also headed from Boston to Los Angeles, plowed into the south tower.

Then an American Airlines Boeing 757, Flight 77, left Washington's Dulles International Airport bound for Los Angeles, but instead hit the western part of the Pentagon, the military headquarters where 24,000 people work, at 9:40 a.m. Finally, United Airlines Flight 93, a Boeing 757 flying from Newark to San Francisco, crashed near Pittsburgh, raising the possibility that its hijackers had failed in whatever their mission was.

There were indications that the hijackers on at least two of the planes were armed with knives. Attorney General John Ashcroft told reporters in the evening that the suspects on Flight 11 were armed that way. And Barbara Olson, a television commentator who was traveling on American Flight 77, managed to reach her husband, Solicitor General Theodore Olson, by cell phone and to tell him that the hijackers were armed with knives and a box cutter.

In all, 266 people perished in the four planes and several score more were known dead elsewhere. Numerous firefighters, police officers and other rescue workers who responded to the initial disaster in Lower Manhattan were killed or injured when the buildings collapsed. Hundreds were treated for cuts, broken bones, burns and smoke inhalation.

But the real carnage was concealed for now by the twisted, smoking, ash-choked carcasses of the twin towers, in which thousands of people used to work on a weekday. The collapse of the towers caused another World Trade Center building to fall 7 hours later, and several

SECOND PLANE United Airlines Flight 175 nearing the trade center's south tower.

Kelly Guenther for The New York Times

Awaiting the Aftershocks

Washington and Nation Plunge Into Fight With Enemy Hard to Identify and Punish

By R. W. APPLE Jr.

WASHINGTON, Sept. 11 — Today's devastating and astonishingly well-coordinated attacks on the World Trade Center towers in New York and on the Pentagon outside of Washington plunged the nation into a warlike struggle against an enemy that will be hard to identify with certainty and hard to punish with precision.

News Analysis

The whole nation — to a degree the whole world — shook as hijacked airliners plunged into buildings that symbolize the financial and military might of the United States. The sense of security and self-confidence that Americans take as their birthright suffered a grievous blow, from which recovery will be slow. The aftershocks will be nearly as bad, as hundreds and possibly thousands of people discover that friends or relatives died awful, fiery deaths.

Scenes of chaos and destruction evocative of the nightmare world of Hieronymus Bosch, with smoke and debris blotting out the sun, were carried by television into homes and workplaces across the nation. Echoing Franklin D. Roosevelt's description of the attack on Pearl Harbor as an event "which will live in infamy," Gov. George E. Pataki of New York, a Republican, spoke of "an incredible outrage" and Senator Charles E. Schumer of New York, a Democrat, spoke of "a dastardly attack."

But mere words are inadequate vessels to contain the sense of shock and horror that people felt.

As Washington struggled to regain a sense of equilibrium, with warplanes and heavily armed helicopters crossing overhead, past and present national security officials earnestly debated the possibility of a Congressional declaration of war — but against precisely whom, and in what exact circumstances? Warships were maneuvering to protect New York and Washington. The North American Air Defense Command, which had seemed to many a relic of the cold war, adopted a pos-

MORE ON THE ATTACKS

RESCUERS BECOME VICTIMS Firefighters who rushed to the trade center were killed. **PAGE A7**

SEARCH FOR SURVIVORS Some people trapped in the rubble for hours were rescued. **PAGE A7**

OFFICIALS SUSPECT BIN LADEN Eavesdropping intercepts after the attacks were cited. **PAGE A21**

TERRORISTS EXPLOIT WEAKNESS Investigators had criticized precautions against hijacking. **PAGE A17**

CASUALTIES IN WASHINGTON An unknown number of people were killed at the Pentagon. **PAGE A5**

AMERICAN TARGETS A ball of fire exploded outward after the second of two jetliners slammed into the World Trade Center; less than two hours later, both of the 110-story towers were gone. Hijackers crashed a third airliner into the Pentagon, setting off a huge explosion and fire.

Paul Hosefros/The New York Times

Steve Ludlum

Justin Lane for The New York Times

Ruth Fremson/The New York Times

2.2. **What is trauma?**

One of the crucial topics regarding 9/11 is the issue of *trauma*. Obviously, the victims' families, the survivors as well as the American "soul", so to speak, have experienced trauma through 9/11. The discourse of trauma theory and trauma analysis is extremely complex but I want to outline the basics of trauma theory that are necessary to understand individual and collective reactions to terror in general and to 9/11 in particular. In her book "Trauma. Explorations in Memory" Cathy Caruth, Professor at Emory University, introduces the reader to the concept of trauma and trauma theory. Trauma theory was only created in the 1980ies after the Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (short: PTSD) was "officially acknowledged[48]" in 1980 in the United States and what has been previously known as "shell shock, combat stress, delayed stress syndrome, and traumatic neurosis.[49]" Of course Viennese psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud has analyzed the topic of trauma before, but the actual field of *trauma theory* was coined only about thirty years ago.

To find an accurate definition of trauma is extremely difficult and discussed diversely. E. Ann Kaplan, among others, includes "suffering terror[50]" in her concept of trauma - alongside violent and/or overwhelming situations - thereby referring to 9/11. As she connects 9/11 with trauma theory she does so because

> (...) the experience of 9/11 (...) demonstrates the difficulties of generalizing about trauma and its impact (...), how one reacts to a traumatic event depends on one's individual psychic history, on memories inevitably mixed with fantasies of prior catastrophes, and on the particular cultural and political context within which a catastrophe takes place, especially how it is 'managed' by institutional forces.[51]

Many know Sigmund Freud's trauma theories even though he never articulated on an actual trauma theory but the "concept of trauma," so Kaplan, "emerges in their work on hysteria as if already assumed[52]". This work on hysteria is the groundwork for the trauma work Freud and his colleagues have done, as hysteria is direct result of trauma, so Kaplan, going back to the late 19th century and from that moment on currently evolving, changing and being altered by – among other

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[48] Caruth, Cathy. *Trauma. Explorations in Memory*. John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore 1995. p. 3.
[49] Ibid.
[50] Kaplan, E. Ann. *Trauma Culture: The Politics of Terror and Loss in Media and Literature*. Rutgers University Press, Piscataway 2005, p. 1.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Ibid., p. 25.

events – the main "causes" World War I, World War II, the Holocaust and the Vietnam war.[53]

Now back to the trauma of 9/11. E. Ann Kaplan goes on to call it "the supreme example of a catastrophe that was experienced globally via digital technologies (Internet, cell phone) as well as by television and radio, and responded to in a myriad of ways depending on peoples' national and local contexts.[54]" These "digital technologies" were and still are crucial to the perception of terror worldwide, crucial to the perception of the events nationwide, and crucial to the way information was/is conveyed. E. Ann Kaplan's account of the events – she lives in New York City but was born in England – is a very personal and scientific one. She took photographs the days after the hijacking of the planes and describes a feeling of guilt she had while doing so, she felt as if she had invaded people's privacy.[55] This alleged *invasion of privacy* will be a featured topic in the literature chapter when the image of "The Falling Man" and its perception is discussed (Chapter 3.4.). She describes her paranoia about attacks on subway trains and connects this with her angst and her experiences as a teenager during World War II in England. She came to the United States as a student, already laden with many traumas rooting in World War II and now, after the 9/11 attacks, those were brought up all over again.[56]

She calls Ground Zero "a space full of horror, but also of heroism. Their [the twin towers'] absence was traumatic: That is, it was impossible to comprehend that they were gone.[57]" This lack of the twin towers, she explains, can be seen as a "castration (the Towers were huge, phallic), the infants loss of the mother, a loss standing in for death, abandonment, and abjection[58]." This lack, this gap, then "was filled with other images – of burning people jumping out of the Towers, of firemen rushing up to rescue people and being crushed when the buildings collapses, of the huge cloud of smoke pursuing fleeing people (…).[59]" Interestingly enough, two of those images she describes (the falling man and the firemen crushed beneath the ruins) went on to become central parts of several popular culture productions following the events – the falling man as a subject of various literary outputs and the crushed firemen as the heroes in Oliver Stone's "World Trade Center" in 2006.

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[53] Cf. ibid., p. 26 ff.
[54] Ibid., p. 2.
[55] Cf. ibid.
[56] Cf. ibid. p. 2ff.
[57] Ibid., p. 12.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Ibid., p- 13.

Kaplan describes the media as helping

> (...) the attempt to present a united American front [when] reporters presumably felt they had to stick to what United States and other leaders were doing and saying as they tried to calm and to unify the nation as they desperately figured out how to respond [and] shaping how the traumatic event was to be perceived.[60]

She contrasts two reactions to 9/11 (both reactions coming from Americans as well as from non-Americans), these reactions are either close or distant, rather emotional or rather theoretical. Kaplan refers to Slavoj Žižek, who stands for a theoretical, rational approach, with whom we will deal later in this thesis as well. The main point is that events such as 9/11 are perceived differently by different people in different situations and points in life and time - this call for unity from the media and the politicians was also exercised by many people (no matter what gender, age, race or religion), independently from what the government and the media attested. Did the U.S. dig its own grave with its self-esteem that is often perceived as exaggerated and politics that have been criticized to be too self-centered? Or were the attacks not a result of anything but greed and envy?

Kaplan further differentiates between individual and collective trauma, going back to Sigmund Freud, Marguerite Duras, and Sarah Kaufman, illustrating how the personal alongside the cumulative reactions in post-9/11 America were acted out. Then she adds a third category in addition to the categories of individual and collective trauma, the family trauma, "that is trauma of loss, abandonment, rejection, betrayal[61]" which she sees as the most applicable category of trauma to 9/11.

This notion of the *collective trauma* explains why the definition of trauma (which is normally associated with being something individual and personal) is applicable to larger groups, i.e. nations, as well. In his book "9/11 as a collective Trauma and other Essays on Psychoanalysis and Society" the German psychoanalyst Hans-Jürgen Wirth calls 9/11 a predictable event because "each of us carries within himself the potential toward destructiveness.[62]" He concludes that "such a scenario has been painted in detail by creative minds within Hollywood's movie industry years earlier, and a public numbering in the millions came to be entertained, fascinated, and horrified by it.[63]" This fear and these fantasies of destruction are interrelated to "concepts of malignant narcissism,

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[60] Ibid.
[61] Quotes and paragraph cf. ibid., p. 19.
[62] Wirth, Hans-Jürgen. *9/11 as Collective Trauma and other Essays on Psychoanalysis and Society* (Psychosozial-Verlag, Grießen 2004), p. 14.
[63] Ibid.

delusions of grandeur, feelings of powerlessness, individual and collective traumatizations, fanaticism, fundamentalism, and paranoid world views.[64]" These individual and collective traumatization that Wirth refers to are the crucial to the discourse of 9/11 because the products that I will be discussing later in this thesis are all closely related to this collective trauma. The American nation as a whole can be seen as a huge individual reacting to this trauma because this attack is something that has to be and can only be overcome collectively, together, as one big unit. In his book "Narcissism and Power" Hans-Jürgen Wirth clearly connects the individual notion of trauma with collectiveness and personalizes the American country as one individual:

> Should the Americans not succeed in collectively dealing on a psychological level with the trauma they have suffered, they will risk developing a post-traumatic stress syndrome which could manifest itself through constant reliving of the traumatic event, as a mental fixation on the trauma, as uncontrolled panic attacks, and as equally violent and abrupt outbursts of aggression against others. American society might be tempted to ward off the collective trauma by fixating on the trauma and making it the central reference point of its national identity. As a "selected trauma" - as Vamit Volkan calls it - it would be constantly present and provide steady justification for the country's own paranoid aggressive attitudes. America would endlessly have to prove its military superiority by - more of less randomly - defining enemies, pursuing, and annihilating them.[65]

Furthermore, Ann E. Kaplan named her book "Trauma Culture" and associates trauma automatically with a culture that is produced via this traumatic experience. In my thesis the focus is on the culture that is produced through the trauma of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 and not on trauma theory in general. Therefore the next chapter will illuminate the history of the American nation with a special focus on the history of its self-perception and self-esteem.

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[64] Ibid.

[65] Wirth, Hans-Jürgen. *Narcissism and Power. Psychoanalysis of Mental Disorders in Politics.* (Psychosozial-Verlag, Gießen 2002), p. 381 f.

2.3. **"If you want to understand today, you have to search yesterday" (Pearl S. Buck)**

At first, to understand what is happening in the present it is crucial to understand what has happened in the past. Why do the American people have the kind of self-perception they possess and why does it seem that patriotism is rooted much stronger in the American nation than it is in any other country?

Ever since the North American continent has been in "US-American" hands there has been violence. At first it was the fighting against the Native Americans and then the rebellion against the British rule. After that, the Northern and Southern states fought each other; they fought liquor and the Great Depression in the 1920ies and Adolf Hitler during World War II. Every time a war was over, the next began. This indicates that fighting somewhat lies in the American nature - the next war soon arose out of the September 11, 2001 attacks. But this continuous fighting has also united the Americans as one and made them a very strong community. Now I will briefly outline the sources of American patriotism since those sources are crucial for any further development.

In general it can be said that Americans have always seen themselves as a superior people, not necessarily because they are superior than others in an arrogant kind of way but as a privileged and blessed community, a feature that they earned their ancestors with their own, bare hands and that is well deserved.

Christopher Bigsby named his aforementioned essay "What, then, is the American?" after a question that Hector St. John de Crèvecœur (a French born writer that moved to America in the middle of the nineteenth century) posed: "What, then, is the American, this new man?" in 1782.[66] Crèvecœur answered the following:

> He is an American, who, leaving behind him all his ancient prejudices and manners, receives new ones from the new mode of life he has embraced, the new government he obeys, and the new rank he folds. He becomes American by being received in the broad lap of our great Alma Mater. Here individuals of all nations are melted into a new race of men whose labours and posterity will one day cause great changes in the world. Americans are the western pilgrims who are carrying along with them that great mass of arts, sciences, vigour, and industry which began long since in the East; they will finish the great circle.[67]

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[66] Cf, Bigsby, *What, then, is the American?,* p. 6 in: Bigsby (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Modern American Culture* (Cambridge Univ. Press, New York 2006).
[67] St. John de Crèvecœur, *Letters from an American Farmer* (Penguin, Harmondsworth 1981) p. 70.

When Crèvecœur talks about "leaving behind all (…) ancient prejudices and manners" he does not talk about forgetting one's past in general but about embracing the new life in the newly formed United States and overcoming what has happened in the past for the sake of a more glorious future. The American that he describes is the one that built the very basis on which all his descendents can build their future life on. Christopher Bigsby also refers to the French writer and publicist Alexis de Tocqueville[68] (1805 – 1859) who was convinced that "Whatever they do, the Americans of the United Sates will turn into one of the greatest nations in the world (…) One day wealth, power, and glory cannot fail to be theirs.[69]" The self-esteem that the North American nation has today has its roots right there and this assertiveness, paired with tremendous faith in it has led Americans to believe that they can overcome every obstacle they meet.

Manfred Henningsen in his critical book "Der Mythos Amerika" (engl.: "The American Myth") describes the American *self-made society* as a society that has never been able to elude itself from its own legends and historical tales. The "evil[70]" in those legends and tales comes from "another world: the old world of Europe, Africa and Asia, the world that the Americans voluntarily left.[71]" He goes on to describe this point of origin (Europe, Africa, Asia) – in the eyes of the Americans - as the place were "injustice, disparity, exploitation, and poverty[72]" are/were bred. Within their own society, according to the theory of Henningsen, those deficiencies have been eliminated and they saw themselves as having created a "new world": "The experiences with violence that are closely connected to the historical foundation of the USA and to their two-hundred-year history until the Iraqi war did not leave any traces of doubt in the collective memory. America did not learn from the experiences of breakdown and defeat, but relived in eternal recurrence the same pattern of comparable disaster.[73]" He blames the "conservative Elites" as the one being responsible for planning and defending the war in Vietnam and the war in Afghanistan an Iraq.[74] He goes on to name a transformation in American history: from the history of a republic to the history of an empire. Henningsen refers to Alexis de Tocqueville as well and quotes him stating that the Americans have an advantage because they do not have to overthrow old habits and constructs, but can have a fresh start that makes further development easier. Henningsen describes de Tocqueville as a person who

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[68] Cf, Bigsby, *What, then, is the American?,* p. 6 in: Bigsby (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Modern American Culture* (Cambridge Univ. Press, New York 2006).
[69] de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (Penguin, London 2003) p. 451.
[70] Henningsen, *Der Mythos Amerika.* (Eichborn, Frankfurt 2009), p. 65.
[71] Ibid.
[72] Ibid.
[73] Ibid,. p. 65.
[74] Ibid,. p. 66.

brushed aside the problems of the Native Americans and of slavery, describing them as unsolvable problems, and emphasizing on the beautiful landscapes, rural life and idyllic scenery. But what he did do was alert the people of the danger of the rule of an individual. He feared that the equality of the masses might lead to despotism. These assumptions and theories were often interpreted as anti-American by the elites in Europe.[75]

This feeling of the superior was carried on by George Bush sen. (41st president of the United States and father to George W. Bush, 43rd president of the United States) who, in his Nomination acceptance speech in 1988, said that he sees

> America as the leader – a unique nation with a special role in the world. And this has been called the American Century, because in it we were the dominant force for good in the world. We saved Europe, cured polio, we went to the moon, and lit the world with our culture. And now we are on the verge of a new century, and what country's name will it bear? I say it will be another American century. Our work is not done - our force is not spent.[76]

Analyzing this statement, Bush uses the word "culture" here as a general term and does not define it any further. We do not know if he means popular culture, just art, only literature or even architecture since the definition of *culture* is complex and debated. The fact that the country we know today as "North-America" has only been discovered in 1492 often leads to the assumption that its culture cannot be as ancient as, for example, what we know as the culture of ancient Rome or Egypt. It has also to be said that this *youth* does not make the American culture any less valuable then any European or Asian or African culture, even though often people do not think of America as a host to great cultural works. As just mentioned, the term *culture* needs to be defined as well to have a valid basis for discussion: what is culture, what does it include, what doesn't it include, how is it produced and how is it represented.

The "force" mentioned by George Bush sen. was much needed by his son, George W. Bush, during his two terms as president from 2001 until 2009. America has always been able to focus on its unity without many interruptions from the outside and has always been a nation that emphasized on its own strength and (military) power in times of trouble. This strength was very much needed after the 9/11 attacks. Former president Bill Clinton (42nd president of the United States) said at the 2004 Democratic National Convention that

> Americans long to be united. After 9/11, we all just wanted to be one nation. (...) All we wanted to do was to be one country, strong in the

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[75] Ibid., p. 282ff.
[76] http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/georgehbush1988rnc.htm (Aug 30, 2010).

fight against terror, helping to heal those who were wounded and the families of those who lost their loved ones, reaching out to the rest of the world so we could meet these new challenges and go on with our democratic way of life.[77]

Being united is crucial for the American self and the American spirit because it is something to hang on to and to rely on in times of trouble. Even though Bill Clinton and George W. Bush did and do not have the same political opinion - the address in which Clinton calls for American unity was a speech to promote his Democratic colleague John Kerry for the upcoming presidential election - they both see a strong community that acts in concert as the lynchpin of the nation.

The both highly criticized and praised book "A Patriot's History of the United States" by Larry Schweikart, an Arizonian historicist lecturing at Dayton University, summarizes the American history evolution as follows:

> (...) we remain convinced that if the story of America's past is told fairly, the result cannot be anything but a deepened patriotism, a sense of awe at the obstacles overcome, the passion invested, the blood and tears spilled, and the nation that was built.[78]

Schweikart, who wrote this book as a counterpart and answer to "A People's History of the United States. 1492 - present" by Howard Zinn (published in 1980), goes on to what puts our focus on the 1776 Declaration of Independence and the 1787 Constitution of the United Sates, both major steps in the history of the American nation:

> The ideas they fought for together in 1776 and debated in 1787 were paramount. And that is what American history is truly about–ideas. Ideas such as 'All men are created equal'; the United States is the 'last, best hope' of earth; an America 'is great, because it is good'.[79]

Even though Schweikart's choice of words throughout the book is exaggeratedly patriotic and seems sometimes - for Europeans - too ego-centric, Schweikart wrote an accurate and extremely detailed account of American patriotic history. The "ideas" Schweikart mentions, namely the Declaration and the Constitution, are both still considered the cornerstones of American politics. He names the key terms for American success to be *character*, *liberty* and *property* because, so Schweikart, "character was tied to liberty, and liberty to property.[80]" Those three

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[77] Clinton, Bill. 2004 Democratic National Convention Address July 26, 2004. http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/convention2004/billclinton2004dnc.htm (Sept 1, 2010).
[78] Schweikart, Larry. Allen, Michael. *A Patriot's History of the United States. From Columbu's Great Discovery To The War On Terror*. (Sentinel Penguin Group, New York 2007), p. xxi.
[79] Ibid.
[80] Ibid., p. xxiii.

characteristics made it possible for such writings as the Declaration and the Constitution to come together as a basis that he calls "the fabrics of the founding documents.[81]"

2.3.1. The Declaration of Independence - The roots of Patriotism

It has to be said that the Declaration of Independence does not create patriotism out of nowhere and it cannot be assumed that there hasn't been nationalism or patriotism of any kind before 1776. The colonies felt that they belonged together due to their shared history, even though a legal background had yet to be established:

> Long before separation from Great Britain was considered, American colonists felt a kind of apolitical pride in their native land. For some, this was a spiritual pride, the sense that America was the Promised Land and that New Englanders were God's chosen people. For others, it was pride in the tremendous natural resources of the North American continent. Such pride allowed the colonists to think of themselves as a people apart.[82]

My emphasis in this chapter lies on the Declaration itself and its importance for the roots of American patriotism and self-esteem but, again, the preceding events are those that shaped the outcome, i.e. the Declaration, enormously. From the discovery of the United States by Christopher Columbus in 1492 (the Bahamas, to be exact) to the Declaration of Independence it was a long way to go, from the colonies in the Carolinas, the Indian wars, the Salem witch hunt, the French and Indian war and eventually the decision to separate from British rule. Triggered, among other issues, by the Proclamation Line of 1763[83], the Stamp Act of 1765[84], and the Boston Tea Party of 1773[85] the colonies and its people were more than fed up with the behavior of the British government under King George III. The battles of Lexington and Concord of 1775 then mark the beginning of the Revolutionary War, also known as the American War of Independence (1775 – 1783).

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[81] Ibid.

[82] Cf. Teachout, *Capture the Flag* (Basic Books, New York 2009), p. 13.

[83] "Fearing a full-blown uprising, England established a policy prohibiting new settlers and trading charters beyond a line drawn through the Appalachians." (Schweikart: 2004, p. 58).

[84] "The Act required a revenue stamp on "virtually every paper transaction." (Schweikart: 2004, p. 63).

[85] "The Boston Tea Part relates to the Tea Act of the very same year that provided the East India Trading Company with the monopoly on tea. In December 1773 Bostonian men went about tea shipping boats and "threw 341 chests of tea overboard wile the local authorities condoned the action." (Schweikart: 2004, p. 67).

At the same time, the famous words "Give me liberty, or give me death!" were coined by Patrick Henry (who will later become the first senator of Virginia) at the Virginia Convention - a convention voting on whether to take military actions against England or not; a convention that was already attended by George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, who later signed the Declaration of Independence 1776 during the Second Continental Congress. Many international inventions followed and the war was fought intensely until the infamous surrender of Lord Cornwallis and his British Army at Yorktown on October 19, 1781. The Treaty of Paris eventually ended the Revolutionary War in 1783.[86]

Also, Thomas Paine's pamphlet "Common Sense" was published in 1776 just before the Declaration was signed and it advocated that the Americans had only one chance to secure liberty and prosperity: independence.[87] Thomas Paine himself was English and had been living in the colonies for less than two years and yet supported the colonists in their pursuit of independence against the political system of Great Britain.[88] Schweikart summarized the coming about of the Declaration shortly and precisely:

> As the momentum toward separation with England grew, Congress appointed a committee to draft a statement announcing independence. Members included Adams, Franklin, (...) and the chairman Thomas Jefferson, to whom the privilege of writing the final draft fell.[89]

The Declaration was then issued on July 4, 1776 and this date is being celebrated until today throughout America as the *Day of Independence*. By announcing the Declaration, the thirteen colonies freed themselves from the dependence from their home country, Great Britain. North Carolina was the first to authorize its delegation to the continental congress to vote for independence in April 1776, quickly followed by Virginia and Rhode Island. Famous politicians, among them Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin and John Adams, were part of the committee that drafted the Independence. On June 28, 1776, it was presented to Congress. On July 2, 1776, twelve of the thirteen colonies accepted this resolution, except for New York, which abstained from voting. 56 delegates signed it.[90] The Treaty of Paris in 1783 that ended the America War of Independence then recognized the Declaration of Independence under international law.

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[86] Paragraph if not otherwise indicated cf. Dippel, Horst. *Geschichte der USA*. (C.H. Beck Verlag, München [8]2007). p. 24ff.

[87] Cf. Depkat, Volker. *Geschichte Nordamerikas*. Böhlau UTB, Köln, Weimar, Wien 2008), p. 216.

[88] Cf. Dippel, Horst. *Geschichte der USA*. (C.H. Beck Verlag, München [8]2007), p. 27.

[89] Schweikart, Larry. Allen, Michael. *A Patriot's History of the United States. From Columbus' Great Discovery To The War On Terror*. (Sentinel Penguin Group, New York 2007), p. 80.

[90] Cf. Sautter, *Lexikon der amerikanischen Geschichte* (C.H. Beck, München 1997), p. 375.

The second paragraph, probably the most well known passage from the Declaration, records the quintessence of the American "self":

> We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.[91]

Even though the North and the South of the thirteen colonies have had their difficulties in the past and will in the future, their thrive for unity and freedom has bound them together. Only in union they could free themselves from the reign of George III (1760 – 1820) of Great Britain who, among other things, increased taxes and fees in order to pay for the costs of the wars he was fighting. He saw himself as a "patriotic king" with tremendous political influence and was extremely harsh when it came to his North American colonies; Larry Schweikart saw King George III "a young, inexperienced, and not particularly bright George III[92]" and that "his domesticity earned him the nickname among the people of the Farmer, and what he lacked in intellect he made up for with hard word.[93]" After the loss of the colonies, his already bad health decreased further and he eventually he turned over the throne to his son George IV in 1811.[94]

2.3.2. The American Flag & The Star-Spangled Banner

The most prominent symbol of patriotism might be the American flag – as well as before 9/11 and after. The frequent use of the flag (either on T-Shirts, ties, coffee cups, school bags, pens or caps) displays *I am proud of where I come from – I am an American*. Nowhere around the world are national flags as prominent as in the United States. Especially on the days after the 9/11 attacks a great percentage of Americans wore the colors of the flag – red, white and blue – to symbolize their compassion for the fellow citizens.

This was not the case when the United States were merely colonies to the British Empire:

> Flags were a rare sight on land in the British North American colonies. The streets boasted in rich visual tapestry, but no flags. There were no flags on the expansive brick mansions on the hills or the ramshackle wooden homes along the coasts, no flags on the

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[91] Declaration of Independence of the United States of America July 4, 1776, http://www.ushistory.org/declaration/document/ (Aug 16. 2010).
[92] Schweikart, Larry. Allen, Michael. *A Patriot's History of the United States. From Columbu's Great Discovery To The War On Terror*. (Sentinel Penguin Group, New York 2007), p. 56.
[93] Ibid.
[94] Cf. Gudemann (ed.), *Lexikon der Geschichte* (Random House, Niedernhausen 2001), p. 277.

cobbler's shops or haberdasheries, and no flags on the few independent school buildings. Flagpoles hat yet to be imagined.[95]

From 1775 until 1777 the flag was composed of thirteen red and white stripes (already representing the thirteen colonies) and a small British flag in the upper left hand corner. On June 14, 1777, the American flag was altered and the British flag replaced by thirteen small stars on a dark blue backdrop and the first Flag Act of 1777 said that the American Flag has to be made up of thirteen red and white stripes and thirteen white stars on a blue background. It was adopted every time a new state was added to the nation and the last time this happened was when Hawaii was the last state to join the United States in 1959.[96]

As mentioned before, the flag is present everywhere in America today and there are certain days for display when they are also put op on official building, those days are also divided into full-mast or half-mast, depending on the importance of the holiday (full-mast: Independence Day, Labor Day; half-mast: Patriot Day, for 30 days when a former President of the United States dies). Flag Day in America is June 14 and can be dated back to the year 1885 when a schoolteacher named the day *Flag Birthday* because it was the "108th anniversary of the official adoption of The Stars and Stripes.[97]" Flag day was officially determined by President Woodrow Wilson during World War I in 1916 but not yet officially named. After several years of unofficial celebration President Truman made June 14 National Flag Day in an Act of Congress on August 3, 1949.[98]

The "Star Spangled Banner" is the title of America's national anthem and refers to the Stars and Stripes, the American flag. But where does this name originate? Its history goes back to the year 1814 when an American flag was put up on September 13 in Fort McHenry, Maryland when the city was under heavy gunfire. The next day, a man named Francis Scott Key (1779 – 1834) saw that the flag had not been destroyed. He wrote a poem about the flag not being demolished which was made the national anthem of the United States on March 3, 1931.[99] The first stanza of the Star Spangled Banner displays how proud Americans are of their flag and that it is the symbol for their essence:

> Oh, say, can you see, by the dawn's early light,
> What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming?
> Whose broad stripes and bright stars, thru the perilous fight,
> O'er the ramparts we watched, were so gallantly streaming?

[95] Cf. Teachout, *Capture the Flag* (Basic Books, New York 2009), p. 11f.

[96] Cf. US Flag (2010). http://www.usflag.org/history/flagevolution.html (Oct 30, 2010).

[97] US Flag. *The History Of Flag Day*. http://www.usflag.org/history/flagday.html (Oct 30. 2010).

[98] Cf. US Flag. *The History Of Flag Day*. http://www.usflag.org/history/flagday.html (Oct 30. 2010).

[99] Cf. Sautter, *Lexikon der amerikanischen Geschichte* (C.H. Beck, München 1997), p. 352.

> And the rockets' red glare, the bombs bursting in air,
> Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there.
> O say, does that star-spangled banner yet wave
> O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?[100]

The list of rules for wearing the Stars and Stripes is long. One of those etiquette rules states that "the flag of the United States of America should be at the center and at the highest points of the group when a number of states, localities, or societies are grouped for display.[101]" This rule symbolizes how proud Americans are of their nation and their flag but also carries a certain undertone of superiority because this rule implies that the flag, standing in for everything the United States have and will achieve, is the most important of all other flags, i.e. nations. Interestingly, Barack Obama, currently the 44th president of the United States of America, chose not to wear his flag pin as a symbol for Patriotism after the events of September 11, 2001 because he chose to show his love for his home country otherwise. Barack Obama was answering a reporter's questions when the reporter did not see a flag bin on the then-Senator of Illinois:

> Instead [of wearing the American flag pin], I'm going to try to tell the American people what I believe will make this country great, and hopefully that will be a testimony to my patriotism. (...) I'm less concerned with what you're wearing on your lapel than what's in your head. (...) You show your patriotism by how you treat your fellow Americans, especially those who serve. And you show your patriotism by being true to your values and ideals.[102]

Barack Obama's refusal to wear the American flag pin on his jacket was a controversial statement because since 9/11 a majority of the American politicians have been wearing them, especially when appearing on television, as a symbol of their patriotism. This lack of the American flag caused a debate among the media and among politicians as well – some welcomed his choice and others, others dismissed it as a naïve decision.

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[100] The Star Spangled Banner http://www.usa-flag-site.org/song-lyrics/star-spangled-banner.shtml (Aug 17, 2010).
[101] US Flag. Flag Etiquette. http://www.usflag.org/flagetiquette.html (Oct 30, 2010).
[102] Wright, Obama Dropped Flag in in War Statement.
http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/story?id=3690000&page=1 (Sept 1, 2010).

3. Popular Culture

3.1. What is popular culture? A little theory and a short introduction to agenda-setting.

> Here in the U.S., culture is not that delicious panacea which we Europeans consume in a sacramental mental space and which has its own special columns in the newspapers -- and in people's minds. Culture is space, speed, cinema, technology. This culture is authentic, if anything can be said to be authentic.[103]
>
> - Jean Baudrillard

At first we have to pose ourselves the question what the essence of popular culture actually is and then go on to practical examples of how it has changed over the years in the United States and due to what circumstances.

The term *popular culture* (also: *pop culture*) in general can be described as to comprise everything from movies to TV-shows, from music to literature, from fashion to essays, even comics. As Jeffrey Melnick in his 2009 book "9/11 Culture" states, the term culture itself is a very complex and difficult one[104]. He agrees with Raymond Williams in saying that "the word 'culture' was one of the two or three most complicated words in the English Language.[105]" His goal while analyzing the affects of 9/11 on culture is not to "wade into the complex debates[106]" but he wants to "encourage a reading of the 'culture' (…) as a loose application of the scientific sense of the word – has having to do with material grown in the special conditions for particular experimental or commercial purposes.[107]" This is exactly what I want to concentrate in the following analysis. Despite this, a quick look has to be taken at popular culture in general first.

There are many theories about popular culture and the most well-known intellectuals deconstructing cultural studies and popular culture were Matthew Arnold, F.R. Leavis and his wife, Richard Hoggart, the afore mentioned Raymond Williams, Karl Marx, Stuart Hall and Antonio Gramsci, alongside Judith Butler and Jean Baudrillard. Of course, the studies of cultural studies and popular culture have changed over the years but the essence remained the same. My focus here lies on popular culture in the United States during the 21st century but still the history of popular culture has contributed essentially to what popular culture is today.

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[103] Baudrillard, *America*. (New York: Verso 1988), p. 100.
[104] Melnick, Jeffrey. *9/11 Culture* (John Wiley & Sons, Chichester 2009). p. 4.
[105] Ibid.
[106] Ibid.
[107] Ibid.

As Paul Buhle in his essay entitled "Popular Culture" writes American popular culture goes way back:

> The origins of American popular culture can be traced back to a centuries 'old hybridization' with deeply racist overtones made clearest in the minstrel show, and a socially constructed 'frame' consisting of pioneers, wild Indians, bad men, and two-fisted (or two-gun) heroes. The innovative center of modern American popular culture emerged, most significantly, during the last two decades of the nineteenth century.[108]

Now a further question arises: why did popular culture emerge in the United States, as Buhle adequately puts it, just during the nineteenth century and not earlier or later? During the nineteenth century "immigration and urbanization" intensified rapidly, along with "technological and market breakthroughs[109]" which leads to the fact that this new culture was now accessible for more people at the same time than before and was not solely reserved for the elite.

The already mentioned Indians and bad men were the main characters of most of the early literary pieces of American literature, such as the "Leatherstocking" books, written by novelist James Fenimore Cooper (1789 - 1851). In the "Leatherstocking" books (there are five of them: "The Deerslayer", "The Last of the Mohicans", "The Pathfinder", "The Pioneers", "The Prairie"), where a white young boy is raised by Native Americans and is very talented with his rifle. As often in American novels, the hero is very able with weapons and commonly has to defend himself/herself against intruders and prevails. This fight might be seen as a symbol for the constant struggle that the North American nation has faced for so many years, against the British reign, the Native American themselves and each other (see Chapter 2.2.).

When it comes to music, dancing and other enjoyable pastimes, things changed slowly but steadily. Especially at the beginning of the twentieth century suddenly all was different: "Women and men meeting for the first time without chaperones and often for the first time, smoking cigarettes, hugging, 'stealing' kisses while squeezing each other on and off the dance floor (…) made a mockery of the waltz culture of the previous generation.[110]"

Along with the dancing and the singing, the fashion underwent changes as well as dresses became shorter and high heels higher. It was halted by prohibition, the great depression and the two world wars, but not discontinued. This trend arose

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[108] Buhle, *Popular Culture*, p. 392 in: Bigsby (ed.) , *The Cambridge Companion to Modern American Culture* (Cambridge Univ. Press, New York 2006).
[109] Ibid., p. 392.
[110] Ibid., p. 395.

again in the 1960ies and 1970ies and has not stopped evolving until today, shaped up until this point in time by various events and incisions such as the Vietnam war, the invention of the Internet, the first iPod or events as tragic as the 9/11 attacks.

Especially the movie industry was influenced by political (e.g. wars of all kinds), social events and incidents throughout the years. Paul Buhle emphasizes on the changes made by war:

> Wartime transformed Hollywood, if only temporarily, into a grandly patriotic town in which left-leaning writers could be paid previously un-imaginable salaries for turning out action films, achieve heights of artistry with Broadway adaptations, find or create the „conscience" audience for liberal messages, and even thread together black musicals which treated African-American performers with dignity.[111]

With the attacks of September 11, 2001 Hollywood has again become a "grandly patriotic town" with most of its films and TV-shows touching the subject of war in the Middle East. Prior to the twenty-first century, as mentioned above, many cuts have influenced the way popular culture has developed over the years and centuries. Even if not always recognized consciously, the theme of 9/11 is present in a great percentage of post 9/11 literatures. Emory Elliot describes the change in thinking when the World Trade Center was hit in his essay "Society and the novel in the twentieth-century America" as follows:

> On September 11, 2001, the attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon dramatically altered American society and culture in ways few would have predicted. After forty years of thinking that only those nations with nuclear weapons posed a serious threat, the country now had to recognize the need to remain attentive to all global partners and enemies.[112]

This notion of fear, anger and grief did not go by unnoticed by the movie industry, but motion pictures with the topic of terrorist attacks have been around long before the planes hit the World Trade Center. In his book "The Spirit of Terrorism and Other Essays" the French media theoretician Jean Baudrillard states

> (...) at a pinch we can say that they did it, but we wished for it [since] the countless disaster movies bear witness to this fantasy, which they clearly attempt to exorcize with images, drowning out the whole thing with special effects.[113]

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[111] Ibid., p 401.
[112] Elliott, *Society and the novel in the twentieth-century America*, p. 446 in: Bigsby, *The Cambridge Companion to Modern American Culture* (Cambridge Univ. Press, New York 2006).
[113] Baudrillard, *The Spirit of Terrorism and Other Essays* (Verso, London 2002), p. 5.

This explains why many movies like "Black Hawk Down" (director: Ridley Scott, released in December 2001 but filmed in 2000) deal with the topic of war/terror attacks and were filmed prior to the events. Even though there had not been an attack of this size on American soil since the year 1814 (1814 marks the burning of the city of Washington by the British Army during their occupation[114]) every American seemed deeply shocked and in disbelief when it happened again on September 11, 2001. Even though there have been movies, as mentioned before, about terrorism and the threat on the American nation prior to September 11, after the events the production of that kind of movie boomed and even became predominant.

The aforementioned *fear* is one of the key terms when it comes to analyzing movies in regard to 9/11 – the fear of "the Other", as Nick Muntean and Matthew Thomas Payne so intriguingly investigate in their essay "Attack of the Livid Dead: Recalibrating Terror in the Post-September 11 Zombie Film": "(…) the war is against some constantly shifting Other which can be anyone, at any time.[115]" The Other that the American fights to patriotically against can have many faces – these various faces can be found in all kinds of film genres and come in all kinds of shapes, sized and characters. Muntean and Payne name the British Canadian film critic Robin Wood as their reference concerning he terms "Other" and "Otherness"[116]. Robin Wood was the once connecting monsters in films (coming from all kinds of genres: horror, thriller,…) with the "Otherness", or "someone or something that should be repressed, but which has materialized nevertheless.[117]"

Fear has been a dominant topic numerous times but since World War II the "American culture has become more risk free, with lower crime rates, better health care, and longer life-spans, and yet the experience of fear has risen rather than diminished, almost as though the reduction in causes for worry has increased our awareness of what we might lose (…),[118]" referring to Peter Stearns, a scholar who has spent the last years researching the relationship between fear and the American nation. Andrew Schopp, paraphrasing Stearns, talks about 9/11 being only a new way "to channel and embody it[119]" and "it" standing for fear.

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[114] There are discussions about whether Pearl Harbor counts as an attack on the American Soil or not but since Hawaii was not an American state until 1959 the Burning of Washington can be named the last big attack on American soil.

[115] Muntean, Nick. Payne, Metthew Thomas. *Attack on the Livid Dead*. p. 255 in: Schopp (ed.), *The War und Terror and American Popular Culture* (Farleigh Dickinson, Madison 2009).

[116] Cf. Muntean, Nick. Payne, Metthew Thomas. *Attack on the Livid Dead*. p. 242 in: Schopp (ed.), *The War und Terror and American Popular Culture* (Farleigh Dickinson, Madison 2009).

[117] ibid.

[118] Schopp, Andrew. *Interrogating the Manipulation of Fear: V for Vendetta, Batman Begins, Good Night and Good Luck, and America's "War on Terror"*. p. 261 in: Schopp (ed.), *The War und Terror and American Popular Culture* (Farleigh Dickinson, Madison 2009).

[119] Ibid.

This fear – once focused on the fear from the outside – now has also become fear of what is lurking inside. And it has become the fear of the random. But: this fear of the enemy outside American borders is still present yet Americans have learned that terror can also grow on their own soil, under their own eyes. Tragedies are now thought possible to happen anytime, anyplace, anywhere and to everybody, no matter if American, non-American, guilty or innocent, child or adult. This fear furthermore helps shed light on why not only those living and/or working close to the sites were so affected by the attacks but also those living on other parts of the country: "This could explain how they could believe that their mailboxes might be the next to receive the anthrax-laden envelope.[120]"

Another question is if all those movies and TV show episodes interrogate the events consciously or unconsciously, with or without certain emotions. According to Schopp, the unconscious plays a big role:

> (...) as Joan Didion, Judith Butler, Slavoj Žižek, and others have explained, we immediately adopted the stance that to interrogate the attacks, and especially to question the terrorists' motivations or America's potential role in cultivating those motivations, was effectively to side with the enemy.[121]

This explains why many of those movies (see below in 3.3.1. with the example of the "Scrubs" episode "His Story IV") do not explicitly express political opinion on the war or at least do not do so on the first glance. The story of "good" versus "evil", as coined by President George W. Bush in his 2001 "International Campaign against Terror Grows"[122] speech, has become increasingly popular. "Evil" has become the synonym of everything bad which has to be eliminated completely. The term itself has maybe become "overused", mainly because it is a term that is easily understandable for everyone and can be associated with many different dangers. Bush named the terrorists "evildoers" in his aforementioned speech and indicates as their motivation for the attacks pure evil and nothing else. He went as far as to name those nations "friends" who supported his war on terror and name those who did not (and, far worse, supported terrorists in any way, such as being their home country) "enemies.[123]" This "good versus evil" dogma has played a tremendous role in popular culture after 9/11 because the main protagonists often displayed those characteristics. But this does not mean that this black and white point of view is to be seen in a very simple light – often

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[120] Ibid., p. 262.
[121] Schopp, *Introduction: The Curious Knot*, p.13 in: Schopp (ed.), *The War und Terror and American Popular Culture* (Farleigh Dickinson, Madison 2009).
[122] Bush, International Campaign Against Terror Grows, Sept 25, 2001
http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010925-1.html (Aug 23, 2010).
[123] Cf. ibid. p. 18.

popular culture displays many layers of depth that only on the surface seem as simple as good versus evil.

There is a contrast between what American politics and media try to convey and what the American culture tries to point out:

> Our popular culture consistently reflects on September 11 world that was painted by our government or by the American media, and it reveals an American subject torn between accepting what its public voices declare and acknowledging those ironies it cannot ignore.[124]

Dealing with what happened in history through popular culture is nothing new to us and dealing with the war that started after September 11, 2001 is no different than what the previous generation had to deal with after World War II. In the following chapters I want to dissect some of those layers in some examples of popular culture.

Jeffrey Melnick goes as far as to denote 9/11 as a real "language" in the world of culture:

> It has its own vocabulary, grammar, and tonalities. While this language has certainly been spoken across all media, that fact should not obscure a more important reality – that 9/11 has exerted a more profound influence on certain forms of American cultural expression (e.g. Hollywood film and underground hip hop) while leaving other forms (network television, for instance) relatively unchanged.[125]

I will further in this thesis try to classify post 9/11 popular culture into five categories and characterize each one by giving popular culture examples. I will then analyze certain examples of those categories in the chapters to come. At first, the categories should be explained:

(1) The category of balance: There are popular culture texts that *do* convey the theme/topic (in our case: 9/11 and its impacts on culture and society) but do not convey a certain fixed opinion. The advantages and disadvantages of an issue are juxtaposed equally but do not deliver a fixed opinion or answer. An example of this kind of popular culture text is the episode from "Scrubs" entitled "HiStory IV" with which I will be dealing in chapter 3.3.1. The characters of the show represent Republican and Democratic views to the same percentage and leave the viewers to decide and form an opinion of one's own.

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[124] Schopp, *Introduction: The Curious Knot*, p. 20 in: Schopp (ed.), *The War und Terror and American Popular Culture* (Farleigh Dickinson, Madison 2009).
[125] Melnick, Jeffery. *9/11 Culture* (John Wiley & Sonst, Chichester 2009), p. 6.

(2) The category of opinion: There are also popular culture texts that convey a certain opinion and a fixed point of view. For example, either the issue of war is displayed as entirely good or as entirely bad (like in Paul Greengrass' movie "Green Zone"). This second category might also be considered an important category of criticism.

(3) The category of suppression and ignorance: The cultural texts that are produced in this category do not touch upon the delicate subject but talk about something entirely different. There are two different purposes of this category - either to distract the viewers from reality or to make the subject a taboo. This ignorance goes back to what I referred to as the so-called "blind spot" in on page 26f. that – both intentionally and unintentionally – leaves out certain topics or issues. This happened in the movie industry when motion pictures depicting the situation of the police or firemen were not films until five years after the fact.

(4) The category of suggestion and negativity: At the end of each cultural text of this fourth category the evil at hand might appear beaten on the surface, but the audience is left with the feeling that this was not the last time. Like in the TV drama "24" (see Chapter 3.3.2.) the forces of evil cannot be eliminated for good and the viewers know that the next season their hero will have to fight again against another imminent threat.

(5) The category of confrontation: Last but not least we will touch upon the subject of direct confrontation with the issue at hand. Good examples are "World Trade Center" by Oliver Stone and "United 93" by Paul Greengrass that even carry the topic in their titles. Very important terms for this category are the terms *confrontation* and *coping* with a trauma via direct confrontation, this dealing with the situation might help many victims and relatives understand better what was going on and maybe even why it happened. In the literature department Don DeLillos "The Falling Man" and Tom Junods "The Falling Man" belongs to this category of confrontation through popular culture (see Chapters 3.4.1 and 3.4.2).

What is agenda-setting?
A short introduction.

Popular culture is part of a big media landscape that comprises much more than "just" movies, music, and literature. But does the media create issues by itself and puts emphasis on certain ones more than on others or does the media merely react upon social changes to reflect - like a mirror - a certain trend within a given society? This is based on a phenomenon called *Agenda-Setting* that was first coined in 1972 in the United States by Maxwell E. McCombs and Donald L. Shaw.[126]

This agenda-setting, so Craig E. Carroll in "Corporate Reputation and the News Media: Agenda-Setting Within Business News Coverage in Developed, Emerging, and Frontier Markets," quoting historical science professor Bernard Cohen, is based on the following hypothesis: "While the news media may not be successful in telling the public what to think, they are quite successful in telling the public what to think about.[127]"

Where do these topics the public talks about come from? Do they root in society itself, i.e. that we, as a society, create our own issues and topics that are then distributed through the media? In self-titled book "Agenda-Setting" James W. Dearing and Everett M. Rogers describe agenda-setting as follows:

> The *agenda-setting process* is an ongoing competition among issue proponents to gain the attention of media professionals, the public, and policy elites. Agenda-setting offers an explanation of why information about certain issues, and not other issues, is available to the public in a democracy; how public opinion is shaped; and why certain issues are addressed through policy actions while other issues are not. The study of agenda-setting is the study of social change and of social stability.[128]

An agenda is defined by Dearing and Rogers as "a set of issues that are communicated in a hierarchy of importance at a point in time[129]" and as "existing at a point in time [and] clearly agendas are a result of dynamic interplay.[130]" The term *issue* is defined as a "social problem, often confliction, that has received mass media coverage. Issues have value because they can be used to political

[126] Dearing, James W., Rogers, Everett M., Chaffee, Steven H. *Agenda-Setting*. (Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks 1996), p. 6 f.
[127] Carroll, Craig E. (Ed.). *Corporate Reputation and the News Media: Agenda-Setting Within Business News Coverage in Developed, Emerging, and Frontier Markets* (Routledge, New York 2010/2011), p. 3.
[128] Dearing, James W., Rogers, Everett M., Chaffee, Steven H. *Agenda-Setting*. (Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks 1996), p. 1 f.
[129] Ibid.
[130] Ibid.

advantage. Although conflict is often what makes a social problem a public issue.[131]" Agenda-setting is composed of three different areas: the media agenda, the public agenda, and the policy agenda:

> The first research tradition is called *media agenda-setting* because its main dependent variable is the importance of an issue on the mass media agenda. The second research tradition is called *public agenda-setting* because the main dependent variable is the importance of a set of issues on the public agenda. The third research tradition is called *policy agenda-setting* because the distinctive aspect of this scholarly tradition is its concern with policy actions regarding an issue, in part as a response to the media agenda and the public agenda.[132]

Another important keyword with agenda-setting is *salience*: "The heart of the agenda-setting process is when the salience of an issue changes to the media agenda, the public agenda, or the policy agenda.[133]" Concentrating - in relation to this theses - on the public-agenda setting, according to Dearing and Rogers, there are many different "research fronts[134]" of public agenda-setting:

1. Bandwagon effects (O'Gorman, 1975), through which knowledge of the public's opinion about some issue influences other individuals toward that opinion
2. The spiral of silence (Noelle-Neumann, 1984), through which the perception of majority opinion about an issue mutes the expression of alternative opinions
3. Social movements (Blumer, 1971; Gamson, 1992), through which people act collectively to see that solutions to social problems emerge and eventually are implemented
4. Propaganda analysis (e.g., Lasswell, 1927), through which persuasive messages shape public opinion
5. The diffusion of news events (DeFleur, 1987; Deutschmann & Danielson, 1960), the process through which an important news event such as the 1986 *Challenger* disaster or Magic Johnson's announcement that he had contracted HIV (the human immunodeficiency virus) is communicated to the public—usually such spectacular news events spread very rapidly to the public
6. Entertainment-education and Hollywood lobbying strategies (Montgomery, 1989, 1993; Shefner & Rogers, 1992), through which an educational issue such as drunk driving or the environment is purposively placed in entertainment messages within prime-time television shows or popular music

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[131] Ibid., p. 3.
[132] Ibid., p. 5 f.
[133] Ibid., p. 8.
[134] Ibid., p. 15.

7. Media advocacy (Wallack, 1990), through which media coverage of a prosocial issue, such as the health threat of cigarette smoking, is purposively promoted
8. Media gatekeeping (Shoemaker, 1991), the process through which an individual controls the flow of messages through a communication channel (examples of media gatekeepers are a newspaper editor and a television news director)
9. Media-system dependency (Ball-Rokeach, 1985), in which mass media organizations are influenced by the environment of other organizations and institutions, thus affecting the messages that are communicated through the media

Research fronts taken from Dearing & Rogers, *Agenda-Setting* (1996), p. 15 f.

Agenda-setting is an extremely complex discourse with many layers of methods, characteristics, functions, and models. I chose to focus here on public-agenda setting because it relates most to the topic of this thesis (see above: *6. Entertainment-education and Hollywood Lobbying* and *8. Media gatekeeping*).

To shortly summarize the function of agenda-setting in general it can be said that the media and the news stations provide a certain degree of selection to certain issues through their choice of topics. They chose which issues to push and which ones to leave out and this selection might lead to a change in opinion of the audience (short: the media provides the topics).

The counterpart to agenda-setting (media creating issues) is the theory that the topics the press addresses and that the current issues a society it talking, discussing and debating about come from within the respectable society itself and are therefore created by what this society deals with at the moment or has dealt with recently. This is - in my opinion- the case when it comes to dealing with September 11 in popular culture. This fear of terror, violence, as well as the threat to the American nation roots deeply in the "heart" of the nation and is therefore specifically addressed in the mass media, here concentrating on news coverage and popular culture because those discourses reaches so many people on so many different ways.

The point I want to make is that those two theories are closely interconnected: the media picks up the main interests/issues that are *en vogue* and then selects which strings of those topics are worth pursuing. Then - via selection - the media dominates the way in which those selected strings of a topic are dealt with in the public: either through - for example - news coverage (How much? When? How long?) or maybe through movies or TV productions dealing with this topic.

3.2. **Movies – From non-fiction to fiction and back**

> The American film industry was initially reluctant to dramatize the evens of September 11, 2001, and the subsequent ‚War on Terror'. Despite many concurring that the spectacle was one of the most cinematic events in national history, it took five years for any film to portray the events directly.[135]
>
> Terence McSweeney

Terence McSweeney, a lecturer on Film and History from Essex, UK, refers to „United 93" (Paul Greengrass, 2006) and „World Trade Center" (Oliver Stone, 2006) as the first two movies dealing with September 11, 2001 in all its depth and reality. These films fall into the category of confrontation, do not give a political statement and only focus on the victims and the survivors. Stone, for example, does not denote the ones behind the attacks as evil because at the time the film is set the sources of evil were unknown to the ones involved. McSweeney cites Slavoj Žižek, a Slovenian critic very much involved with the cultural and medial coverage of 9/11, who critiques Stone and Greengrass for having left out such a political statement in their works[136] (see Faulstich's biographical approach of Oliver Stone's works in Chapter 3.2.2.). Of course, there were movies having 9/11 as an underlying theme but up until 2006, none of the directors was brave enough to directly address the topic that had been on many American minds since it happened.

There are films that are questioning what is going on and have a more critical tone to them but also deal with the subject of terrorism and/or September 11, 2001 directly and sometimes even bluntly. A good example is "The Hurt Locker" (director: Kathryn Bigelow, released in 2008) which won six Academy Awards and will be discussed in chapter 3.2.4. I decided to take a closer look at George Romero's Zombie film "George A. Romero's Land of the Dead", Oliver Stone's "Wall Trade Center" and Kathryn Bigalow's "The Hurt Locker".

Note: All synopses of the movies derive from my own summaries/notes that I have taken while watching the movies.

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[135] Sweeney, Terence. "*The Land of the Dead* and the Home of the Brave: Romero's Vision of a Post-9/11 America" p. 107 in: Birkenstein, Jeff et al. (Ed.). *Reframing 9/11. Film, Popular Culture and the „War on Terror"* (Continuum, New York 2010).
[136] Cf. ibid.

3.2 1. Film interpretation guidelines (W. Faulstich)[137]

For analyzing the movies in this thesis I chose the film interpretation discourse by Werner Faulstich. I want to briefly outline the main features of Faulstich's film interpretation theory and then go on to use parts of it in my own film analysis of "World Trade Center", "The Hurt Locker", "Land of the Dead" and the "Scrubs" episode. Faulstich divides the main qualities of a film into four simple, yet efficient categories: what, who, how and why. There is no plot without characters, there are no characters without a plot and there are neither plot nor characters without basic building blocks that are always required (to a certain extent). After describing these main four elements of film interpretation I want to briefly summarize what Faulstich said about the category of horror movies (George A. Romero's "Land of the Dead") and comedy ("Scrubs" - "HiStory IV") - two of the categories needed in this thesis. Faulstich does neither elaborate on the war movie ("The Hurt Locker") nor on the film that documents a real event ("World Trade Center").

(1) <u>What</u>?
   The first analysis is made through a preliminary viewing of the movie and the first emotions, thoughts and reactions that come to mind when watching a movie or an episode of a TV show for the first time. Other important points are the surroundings of the first session of watching a film (Alone? With others? At day or at night?), as well as the narrative time (the time that it takes to watch the movie) and its contrast to the narrated time (the time that is being covered by the movie, including flashbacks and future outlooks). Usually there are five levels to the story line (some might be missing, some might also be repeated): the presenting of the problem itself, the augmentation of the plot, a crisis or a turning point of some kind, a delay in action and - last but not least - either a happy end or a catastrophe ending the plot.

(2) <u>Who</u>?
   Identification of the main and supporting characters is also crucial when analyzing a film because emotions and thoughts are expressed through the characters; they carry the story line of the film. The protagonist can either be a hero or an anti-hero, an anti-hero often acts as part of the audience and asks questions on behalf of the audience, sometimes those anti-hero protagonists might die during the middle of the movie and the viewer now is on its own or some of those anti-heroes become protagonists halfway

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[137] Film interpretation theories in this chapter of the thesis cf. Faulstich, Werner. *Grundkurs Filmanalyse*. (Wilhelm Film Verlag, Paderborn 2002), p. 7ff.

through the movie themselves. The roles they play and the types they might represent can have fixed images with certain specific characteristics (i.e. the Lolita, the loser, the banker, the action superhero) - characters carrying those images might be main characters or small, cultural-critical remarks on the side that can make a big impact on the meaning of the movie as well.

When it comes to the protagonist, the first entrance tells a lot about the character traits and the story to come. The protagonist can either be self-introduced through speeches, mimics, acts, speech, language, clothes), externally introduced (a character is introduced and even judged by another character), or characterized by a narrator through several building bocks like perspective, music, or lightning. A character can furthermore be either flat or round (meaning one-dimensional or multi-dimensional). One-dimensional characters ("flat") are usually supporting characters and certain types (see above), whereas multi-dimensional ("round") characters often are complex. Main characters that have different sides to them, different characteristics that might also include changing, evolving and contradictory elements. Depending on the actor that is cast for certain roles such a one- or multi-dimensional character can be subject to change, in both a positive or a negative way.

The setting is often left out in a film analysis, so Faulstich, but is crucial to the interpretation of a movie. The setting describes the situation of a character within society (race, age, occupation, social class, gender) because it makes a difference if, for example, a woman within a certain story line is young or old, rich or poor. Often those opposites are contrasted within a film or episode.

(3) How?

The "how" includes the basic building blocks of a movie, the smallest entities of a movie that can alter an entire film. Those camera angles and tricks come in all shapes and sizes, such as extreme close up (i.e. showing a detail in a man's face), close up (i.e. showing an entire face) or long shot (showing a whole room full of people). The most important features of the "how?" are scene length, camera movement, camera perspective, music, dialogues and background sounds/noise, room, lightening, and color. All those elements contribute to the whole of the movie because colors carry symbolic meaning (i.e. white stands for innocence and nature), lightning/room might create discomfort and gloominess, and certain noises might evoke associations with other events (positive or negative, such as fright, fear, comfort, discomfort).

(4) <u>Why?</u>

The "Why?" is identified by Werner Faulstich as consisting of five different interpretation methods, each with own standards and theories:

- The literary/film historic interpretation refers to a tradition of previous movies or historical works and provides a filter that lets the interpreter see the movie in a certain context with a literary or film historic tradition background. An informed viewer is expected and the knowledge about the tradition is primary.
- The biographical interpretation works with tools of reference, i.e. the biography of the director. The focus is not on the intention of the director but on the previous line of work, using indications as the basis for an analysis.
- The sociological interpretation is an interpretation that systematically analyzes the issue (i.e. an American trauma) and the ideology behind those movies can only be understood if the given context is understood and is also applicable to whole subgenres.
- The genre-specific interpretation refers to previous movies of the same genre and looks for differences as well as similarities. If there are differences this interpretation analyzes where they root from and what this change symbolizes.
- The transcultural interpretation is relatively new one and it compares ideological statements and differences in several cultural and ethnical layers of society and nations; it also often contains new methods of narration such as repetitions, or loops.

About the genre of the horror film Faulstich theorizes that those movies visualize the horror itself through meetings with the estranged, an alien. The relationship between the self and the horrifying other almost always consists of suffering and fear. Furthermore, the alien is a construct of the self, coming from the depth of out own psyche and creating a monster that represents our very own fears and our very own angst. This "alien" is not far away, so Faulstich, and does not have to be specifically looked for because it creeps into our everyday life, our traditions and what we know as normal without us noticing it at the first glance. Monster represent the archetypical evil that can live forever, break every rule and make objects of any kind come to life without needing an explanation and creating a new world that does not have and does not need neither borders nor regulations. The building blocks that are used for this genre are often the close up (showing the entire face) or the close shot (showing an subject or an object from the head to the waist) because the director wants to show us only fragments of the whole, often to distract the audience and irritate it. The camera movements typically are fast and the lightning often creates shadows and dark corners, provoking

creepiness and fear. Often what the audience does not see is what it important, the lack of something creates the mystery. The ideology behind the horror film genre is confronting the very own fears and drive through the metamorphosis of something beautiful and innocent into something dark, frightening and ugly.

The comedy, according to Faulstich, is a highly discussed topic and there are arguments that the comedy is not even a genre able to stand on its own. However, the film comedy, so Faulstich, can be located somewhere between satire, the grotesque, as well as the utopia. In the early 20th century comedies were often connected with specific comedians/actors such as Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton or Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy. Comedies are mostly set in everyday life and in the bourgeoisie neighborhoods and deals with suppressed wishes, disguises, cake fights, and critical situations. Another characteristic is the happy end, usually a wedding or a reconciliation of some kind. Faulstich divides into two categories: the satirical and the romantic comedy. In a fight the weaker one usually wins, it can be characterized as a David versus Goliath fight and the emphasis as well as the sympathy of the audience is focused on a weaker protagonist.

About other subgenres (war movie, reality movie) Faulstich says nothing further, except that they are mentioned for the sake of completeness of this film interpretation theory. Of course each of those subgenres as an own set of criteria as well, some of which I will point out later.

Not all categories and moves that are characteristic in Faulstich's analysis can be found in every motion picture of TV show episode but I will point out the main moves of the movies and TV products that I chose for my thesis.

3.2.2. **George A. Romero & the "Zombie" genre**

I start out with the genre "horror/zombie film" and one of the main directors of this genre is George A. Romeo, the US-American script and screenplay writer who helped form the genre of the horror/zombie film. The father of zombie movies planned an additional fourth film to his famous trilogy (all three movies were produced from 1968 to 1985), connected to and indirectly dealing with 9/11 because these attacks had become such a big part of everyday life. Interestingly enough, the reaction to his idea was controversial and not every film production company welcomed the screenplay (even though it was a genuine Romero screenplay which was a grant for success since the sixties) because their focus was now on movies that create distraction from the very present terror and make the audience not think about it for some ninety minutes or so. He had already written parts of the screenplay before the towers were hit and after this rejection, Romero

changed the screenplay and moved the setting from pre-9/11 to post-9/11. After some time he found a producer and the movie was eventually finished to be released in theaters in 2005.[138] As Muntean and Payne analyze in their introduction to "Attack of the Livid Dead: Recalibrating Terror in the Post-September 11 Zombie Film" "film critics have long argued that zombie films commonly advance thinly veiled, if not explicit, cinematic commentaries on a range of social crises as varied as racism, consumerism, war, and moral disintegration. For a number of reasons, zombie films produced after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, serve as compelling points of entry through which the attacks' effects on American popular culture may be analyzed.[139]" This analysis can be very much applied to "Land of the Dead" and draws a parallel between his first zombie movie "Night of the Living Dead" (1968), which is a movie commentary on the Vietnam war, the American civil rights movement, the Cold War and the racism in America during the 1960ies. In this tradition, "Land of the Dead" explores the society in today's terror-stricken America.

"George A. Romero's Land of the Dead" is set in a secure and heavily armed city where the survivors of the last zombie epidemic have found a place to live. Those survivors are divided into two groups, the rich (living in a big house called "Fiddler's Green" with their own police force) and the poor (living a ghetto, trying to get by). The main character, Riley (Simon Baker), works for those living in Fiddler's Green and organizes food and other things with his own armored car, the "Death Reckoning" in nearby villages where the zombies have taken over. Riley has always dreamed of escaping to peaceful Canada. He and one of his friends, Charlie (Robert Joy), finally decide to leave the gloomy and dark city behind. The third class - apart from the rich and the poor - displayed in Romero's "Land of the Dead" is the zombie class. Zombies are referred to as dumb and brainless - an accusation that will soon be refuted during the course of the movie. Water, rivers and fences - giving the people living within those fences a feeling of security - surround Fiddler's Green. Fiddler's Green is being announced with beautiful TV advertisements as the home of the rich and the famous, the place to be. Many of the ones living in the ghettos have only one wish: to live in one of those apartments, seemingly problem- and hassle free. The military protecting Fiddler's Green convey security that the zombies have learned that they will never be able to enter the premise of Fiddler's Green because they cannot overcome the obstacles provided by the military.

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[138] Cf. ibid., p. 108.
[139] Muntean, Nick. Payne, Metthew Thomas. *Attack on the Livid Dead.* p. 239 in: Schopp (ed.), *The War und Terror and American Popular Culture* (Farleigh Dickinson, Madison 2009).

The poor find distraction and solace in a bar where girls dance and liquor is cheap. Every night, zombies have to fight over a girl, usually a dancer or a stripper. Riley rescues one of those girls, a dancer named Slack (Asia Argento), by shooting one of the zombies. This causes an uproar at the bar and Chihuahua (Phil Fondacaro), the bar's owner, is shot by Charlie as he wants to kill Riley for ruining his night's attraction. Charlie, Riley and Slack are arrested and put into prison; their escape plans are put on hold. The bar, among other places, belongs to a coldhearted businessman named Kaufman (Dennis Hopper) who rules the poor's entertainment "parlors". Cholo (John Leguizamo) dreams of moving into an apartment at Fiddler's Green through working for Kaufman but things go wrong. Kaufman eventually wants to kill Cholo but Cholo blackmails him with the kidnapping of the Death Reckoning and threatens to use it on Fiddler's Green instead of using it to kill zombies. Kaufman does not "negotiate with terrorists" (a quote taken directly from George W. Bush and an "obvious message that taunts and mimics the state of today's society (...) indicating Romero's tongue-in-cheek willingness to get a laugh from the audience at the expense of being overly obvious[140]" and Donald Rumsfeld) and orders Riley to get the car back to him. Riley agrees, but only under the condition of another new car and that he can take Charlie and Slack with him.

On one of his trips to the zombie cities (depicted in the opening sequence of the movie) Riley and his crew were being watched by a zombie from a gas station named Big Daddy (Eugene Clark), who wants revenge for all the stolen food and the killed zombies. Big Daddy heads out to Fiddler's Green, with a bunch of fellow zombies, motivated by his anger and hunger for revenge. He is able to overcome the water obstacles and he and his crew make it onto the sacred grounds of Fiddler's Green. The zombies have slowly but steadily adapted to their environment and grown intellectually as well as physically, which enables them to reach Fiddler's Green.

Meanwhile, Riley takes control over the Death Reckoning and leaves Cholo behind to be devoured by zombies. After being bitten - knowing it is his last chance to make sense of his life - Cholo ten returns to Fiddler's Green to kill Kaufman, just as Big Daddy wants to do the same. Both Cholo and Kaufman die at the explosion of Kaufman's escape vehicle in Fiddlers Green. The survivors of the zombie attack decide to rebuild their city, this time without the division into rich and poor but Riley, Charlie and Slack still head out to Canada, on the way killing Big Daddy and some of his followers, but not – as usual – with the

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[140] Wilkins, Frank. *This Land Is Alive!*
http://www.reeltalkreviews.com/browse/viewitem.asp?type=review&id=1303 (Nov 1, 2010).

fireworks of the Death Reckoning. He even leaves the most of his fireworks behind, determined that he won't need them where he's headed.

The telling names of "Land of the Dead" carry symbolic meaning and can be found in many scenes throughout the movie. Dennis Hopper's character name "Kaufman" for example carries several layers of meaning. One the one hand, "Kaufman" comes from German and the German language in films is mostly used in reference to the Nazis and given to the villains of the film. On the other hand, "Kaufman" translates to "businessman" in English (even though an "n" is missing in the German spelling), referring to what Kaufman is: a cold and ruthless businessman, only concerned with his checking account. The name of the car, the "Death Reckoning" also carries substantial meaning - "reckoning" meaning some sort of payoff or revenge, referring to the revenge that is taken by the living on the living dead for all the lives that were lost and then the revenge taken on Kaufman for not letting Cholo move into Fiddler's Green. "Big Daddy", the name of the zombie that leads his followers into Fiddler's Green was also chosen on purpose, symbolizing that the zombies had a leader too, just as the humans do with Kaufman - a leader whom they follow and listen to, sometimes without any hesitation. Last but not least, "Fiddler's Green" is a myth that is connected to an afterlife with an ever-playing fiddle, originating from Greek mythology. It is a place full of joy and happiness where no doubts, problems or negativity have room.

George Romero showed in this movie that zombies evolved and are able to learn, continuing the tradition of the first three zombie films where the zombies evolve from movie to movie; they are now in "Land of the Dead" able to communicate and expand their knowledge beyond that they have been able to do before. Riley refers to them as becoming human, starting to think and constantly changing, growing. The poor living in the city that is portrayed in "Land of the Dead" stand for the poor in US-American ghettos and the despair, poverty and helplessness many Americans living off the grid experience. Cholo, driven by his wanting to become one of the better off people (he is only interested in money, not even women appeal to him, so he says), eventually pays the price for his greed by being bitten by zombie but realizes his mistake, wanting to make it right by returning to Fiddler's Green and killing Kaufman as one last action in his doomed life.

The characters in "Land of the Dead" are mostly round, complex characters that all have several levels of meaning; even the zombies are round characters because they are subject to change and evolvement. The setting of the movie is placing the category of the poor opposite the category of the rich in a contrast that seem even exaggerated. The poor men and women of the story are mostly middle-aged men and women as well as children, whereas those living in Fiddler's Green are

middle-aged to old men and women who have money and maintain a rich, luxurious lifestyle. Kaufman himself seems to be about fifty years old, a very clever salesman who has been in the business long enough to know many of its tricks. Romero, as Faulstich characterizes the horror movie genre, uses mostly close-ups and close shots, providing the audience with only fragments of the whole. The camera movements are fast and abrupt; creating confusion and disorientation that goes along with the dark- and gloominess of the movie.

In an interview George Romero answers questions about the changes he made to the script of "Land of the Dead" when 9/11 occurred (he had written a draft before the towers fell):

> The first drafts were more of an AIDS allegory than anything else, but it was still about ignoring a social problem. Then I made it more political, more about what was turning into America's `new normal'. You know a government that had felt it was protected by water. My script is about a city that's protected on all sides by rivers. They are able to defend it by putting a barricade along the base of the triangle and try and carry on. The folly being the 'new normal' is not really normal at all. Is the fortified city of opportunists making money out of being surrounded by zombies an allegory for America living with terrorism and trying to keep the threat at bay? That isn't exactly what my story is about because here the whole world knows the dead have come back to life. This particular group in the Fiddler's Green enclave led by Kaufman (Dennis Hopper) has tried to set up a society that ignores the fundamental problem (...) It's about the humans, their attitudes, the same theme of people not communicating, things falling apart internally, not dealing with issues. Everybody is still working to their own agendas, not willing to give up life as it was, as they wanted it to be. That's sort of the overall theme that runs all the way through it.[141]

The allegory of Fiddler's Green to the United States, a place of solace surrounded by water, is very obvious from the beginning, as is the quest for a nation without boundaries (Riley's dream of moving to Canada where fences and rivers are not necessary). This "socio-political commentary,[142]" as Frank Wilkins put it accurately, plays with a "small microcosm of America[143]" - "the film's both-9/11 significance is both entertaining and shocking.[144]" The movie's "statements of naïveté and ignorance of post 9/11 America", so Wilkins, "will make you snicker knowingly.[145]" The naïve dream of Riley and his posse of escaping to an area

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[141] George A. Romero's Land of the Dead Interview. Atlantis International 2006.
http://madeinatlantis.com/interviews/george_a_romero.htm (Nov 1, 2010).
[142] Wilkins, Frank. *This Land Is Alive!*
http://www.reeltalkreviews.com/browse/viewitem.asp?type=review&id=1303 (Nov 1, 2010).
[143] Ibid.
[144] Ibid.
[145] Ibid.

where there is nothing but peace it obvious and simple, but still effective – the ultimate desire of living without worries.

3.2.3. **Oliver Stone's "World Trade Center"**

Oliver Stone's „World Trade Center" (Oliver Stone; Paramount Pictures 2006) is not a movie about politics or terrorism in general but about life, trauma and death. Port Authority Officer Sgt. John McLoughlin (Nicolas Cage) and Port Authority Officer Will Jimeno (Michael Peña) watch the events on Tuesday morning on TV and, as police officers, have to respond to it by participating in one of the rescue troops. While working on the scene the south tower of the World Trade Center collapses upon them and three men are captured beneath big concrete blocks in a lift shaft - McLoughlin and Jimeno are unable to move at all, Dominick Pezzulo (Jay Hernandez) is the only one that is not hurt as much and can move. Pezzulo tries to retrieve help for John and Will by trying to dig a way out. When the northern tower collapses Dominick is injured and fires a last warning shot through the collapsed concrete to navigate potential rescuers to their location before he dies. Will's wife Allison (Maggie Gyllenhaal) is pregnant and her family is there to support her. John's wife Donna (Maria Bello) and his family start - after several disagreements - a query for John and head out to the World Trade Center. While John and Will are still trapped in a seemingly desperate situation, they distract themselves by talking about their families, their hopes and their dreams while John slowly becomes delusional due to his injuries and the lack of liquids. More and more debris is coming down but a water pipe is spawning from the ruins. With this pipe Jimeno is able to attract the attention of Dave Karnes, an Ex-Marine (Michael Shannon) who mobilizes his unit to rescue the two officers. This rescue also proposes to be difficult and takes hours; Jimeno asks for his leg to be amputated in order to safe McLoughlin faster but the rescuers decline and are eventually able to get both Will and Jim out of the ruins alive. After two years the two Port Authority officers meet again, McLoughlin limps and Will - at the first glance - seems to be fine.

The movie is based upon the real story of Will Jimeno and John McLoughlin. In her text „'It Was Like A Movie': The Impossibility of Representation in Oliver Stone's *World Trade Center*" Karen Randell explains why Oliver Stone chose two policemen that came out of this alive: he wanted to „give [it] a sense of 'everyman'"[146] and make the audience feel somewhat a familiarity to the main

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[146] Randell, Karen. „'It Was Like A Movie': The Impossibility of Representation in Oliver Stone's *World Trade Center*" p. 142 in: Birkenstein, Jeff et al. (Ed.). *Reframing 9/11. Film, Popular Culture and the „War on Terror"* (Continuum, New York 2010).

characters and the situation. Randell points out that another important factor when watching and analyzing the movie is the „realness" of it because the underlying events have really occurred and the two central figures portray two men that existed in reality and suffered the pain described and lived the way they do in the movie:

> In *World Trade Center* the pleasure of [this] active engagement for the audience is certainly disrupted by the historical and biographical nature of the narrative (it is clear from pre-advertising for the film that Jimeno and McLoughlin are the only two survivors from this Port Authority team); however, the ‚how' of their heroic and dangerous rescue is central to the narrative.[147]

Another very important statement Randell makes in connection to the above mentioned „everyman" narrative is how the morning routine of John McLoughlin an his teammates is shown at the beginning of the movie. His routine seems completely normal, traditionally American and contributes to this sense of togetherness that the viewer gets when watching McLoughlin starting in his day:

> (…) a silent montage of McLoughlin showering, preparing for work, driving in the darkened suburban streets of New York: a working-class man going about his daily routine. This is followed by images of what we later learn are members of his Port Authority team; arriving for work on the subway, by foot, on the Staten island ferry – the World Trade Center towers clearly visible in the early morning light – a poetic and sentimental vision to establish a comparison to the later scenes of destruction.[148]

What is remarkable about this scenery is the radical contrast between the pre- and the post-attack picture of New York City, the streets McLoughlin is driving through and the omnipresent twin towers, which seem to indicate that up until this point everybody in New York City has taken for granted. Oliver Stone is juxtaposing peace and war but in some way the silence in the morning of September 11, 2001 can also be put in relation with the silence and muteness that set in shortly after the media coverage has started to settle in and the world has started to grasp what had happened. At the beginning they were not sure if it was a terrorist attack or an accident and Oliver Stone does nothing to persuade the audience otherwise and leaves the reason for the destruction of the towers in the dark. When McLoughlin, Jimeno and their crew are buried under concrete Oliver Stone shows how they deal with the situation under pressure and how their relatives (among them the pregnant wife of Jimeno who is expecting her first child) cope with the possible death of their loved ones.

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[147] Ibid., p. 143.
[148] Ibid., p. 142.

Randell calls it „impossible" to depict the events – as her title suggests – and searches in trauma theory for an explanation why those events are so hard to deal with, especially shortly after they have happened. She draws a close connection to Michael Moore's „Fahrenheit 9/11" where she refers to „the absence of the actual sight of the 9/11 trauma in *Fahrenheit 9/11* [that] draws out attention to the ‚unrepresentable' status of the attack.[149]" The critics of „World Trade Center" were uncertain about whether to rate this movie as too early (even though it was released in 2006, five years after the event) or just on time. Karen Randell concurs with Stephen Keane who plays with the thought that a „new type of disaster movie is emerging"[150] because there is „the reliance on nostalgia for the generic form and memory of 9/11.[151]" The movie was made to help face reality as close to the notion as possible.

Tobias Jaecker, a German journalist, calls those five years that have passed a period of shame and describes "World Trade Center" as a movie that arouses terrible memory and gathers approval by the audience[152]:

> Nur die Unterhaltungsindustrie fasste das Thema bislang mit spitzen Fingern an. Zu Frisch schienen die Wunden zu sein und zu groß die Gefahr, sich die Finger zu verbrennen.[153]

The real Will Jimeno and John McLoughlin supported director Oliver Stone in the movie making process and aided him with detailed information about the topics they talked about, the setting as well as little things such as their morning routine. Tobias Jaecker casted voices after the first screening of the movie in Chicago and the first audience was astonished when watching "World Trade Center" and one woman, Kathy O'Neil, is quoted by Jaecke as describing the movie as a "good job (..) it was quite dramatic but very consistent at the same time, even a bit conservative.[154]" Tobias Jaecke also quotes one the of the most conservative film critics in America, Carl Thomas, who calls the film "one of the greatest pro-American and flag-swinging God-bless-America movies that have ever been shown.[155]" because the movie is not like many other Oliver Stone movies that focused on conspiracy theories (as in "JFK") or portray the "wartime president" George W. Bush in "W" (2008).

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[149] Ibid., p. 144.
[150] Ibid., p. 149.
[151] Ibid., p. 149.
[152] Cf. Jaecker, Tobias. *Die Darstellung des Unfassbaren.* Netzeitung vom 14.08.2006. http://www.jaecker.com/2006/08/die-darstellung-des-unfassbaren/ (Nov 17, 2010).
[153] Cf. ibid.
[154] Ibid.
[155] Ibid.

Critique also cannot be brushed aside concerning "World Trade Center". Even though Jimeno and McLoughlin participated in the making of the movie (see above) not all of the relatives agree with what Will and John have done:

> The widows of two Port Authority Police officers who were killed on 11 September have decried Jimeno and McLoughlin, who acted as close advisers to Stone's film, and earned at least $200,000 each for their services. Jeanette Pezzulo, who lives in the Bronx, told the Seattle Times that Jimeno's decision to make the film was hurtful because her husband, Port Authority police officer Dominick Pezzulo, died while trying to free Jimeno and McLoughlin. She said: "My thing is: this man died for you. How do you do this to this family?" Her sentiments were echoed by Jamie Amoroso from Staten Island, whose husband also died in the rescue operation. She said: "I do not need a movie to tell me what a hero my husband was."[156]

Both Oliver Stone as well as his fellow producers denied those accusations because the amount of $200,000 is relatively low compared to what the actors got paid and what the production company earns in revenues. The producer Moritz Borman calls the money given to McLoughlin and Jimeno a "pittance[157]" and those that were displayed in the story were contacted and "completely consulted.[158]"

Using Werner Faulstich's biographical film interpretation when talking about Oliver Stone requires a look at the director's biography and not necessarily the intention of the director when making one specific movie. Oliver Stone's previous works have often been discussed as controversial and focusing solely on political issues and conspiracy theories (see "JFK", "Platoon", "Born on the Fourth of July", "Nixon"). Always having spoken against George W. Bush, so Jaecker, Stone has never disguised this political opinion but wants to be first and foremost regarded as a dramatist, screenplay writer and director.[159] Even though "World Trade Center" is an almost therapeutic movie, showing the blank horror on the people's faces and working much with sound/noise (e.g. the coming down of the towers and the debris falling to the ground) it is also somewhat political, showing a very colorful New York City, a place were millions of people live on so little space, coming together from all kinds of milieus, experiencing the same trauma and horror as everybody else. The class boundaries are annihilated and helping

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[156] Sharp, Robert. *One film too far for Stone? Relatives of 9/11 victims say those involved in a new movie by director Oliver Stone are crashing in on the atrocity.* The Observer, July 9, 2006. http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2006/jul/09/september11.film (Nov 17, 2010).
[157] Cf. Borman, Moritz as quoted in: ibid.
[158] Ibid.
[159] Cf. Ibid.

rescue the survivors unifies Americans from all social environments, of different race, gender, age, and religion.[160]

3.2.4. **Kathryn Bigalow's "The Hurt Locker" and Paul Greengrass' "Green Zone"**

"Green Zone" (Universal Pictures, USA 2010) stars Matt Damon as Officer Roy Miller who questions the existence of weapons of mass destruction because his team's searches are always a dead end. Paul Greengrass also wrote and directed the movie "United 93" (director: Paul Greengrass, released in 2006) that focuses on the situation inside the fourth plane that went down in Pennsylvania because courageous passengers fought the terrorists and brought it down, sacrificing their own lives. Even though "United 93" had extremely positive reviews critics argued that it was too early to release such a movie because the loss of loved ones was still too hard and imminent. The happenings on the fourth plane are depicted as they happened (from what is known from the black box and telephone calls made from the plane) and do not beautify anything. But back to "Green Zone". It is based on the book "Imperial Life in the Emerald City", written by the Washington Post Journalist Rajiv Chandrasekaran about the "Green Zone" that provided Paul Greengrass' movie with the title. The term "Green Zone" refers to the place in Baghdad where the interim regime of Iraq was located. Even though many critics do not see "Green Zone" as compelling as "Of Lions and Lambs" or as "The Hurt Locker" it still sends an important message of always questioning what one is told. The plot is set in 2003 and Lt. Roy Miller heads out every day to search for weapons of mass destructions that, according to secretary of state Colin Powell, have to be there, but the information about the weapons of mass destruction Lt. Roy Miller received from his superiors turns out wrong. Miller's men are being put at risks because of this false information, and the places Miller is searching have already been raided some months before. The informant, called "Magellan" throughout the movie, is a very desired person, looked for by many people, including the journalist Lawrie Dayne (Amy Ryan). The telling name "Magellan" refers to the Portuguese Mariner Fernando Magellan who started the first circumnavigation around the globe. Interestingly, Magellan is described as a determined, persistent and - very contradictory to the "Magellan" in the movie - avoiding violence.

Of course those motion pictures are still a bit Hollywood but since movies are a great way to reach out to a big audience those motion pictures might at least

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[160] Cf. Ibid.

make some moviegoers think about what they just saw and raise further questions. Not to forget Michael Moore's "Fahrenheit 9/11" (director: Michael Moore, released in 2004) in which Moore displayed George W. Bush's economic relations with Arabic business men and the Bin Laden family. His goal was to sabotage the re-election of George W. Bush in 2004 he failed.

Henningsen (see Chapter 2.3.) states that the audience watching Hollywood movies that are critical of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq is denying reality. He mentions the movies "Charlie Wilson's War" (director: Mike Nichols, released in 2007) and "Lions for Lambs" (director: Robert Redford, released in 2008) which were not received very well by the American movie audience and did not do great at the box office. Movies dealing with post war stress syndrome and violence mentioned by Henningsen are "In The Valley of Elah" (director: Paul Haggis, released in 2007) and "Redacted" (director: Brian the Palma, released in 2007).[161] On one hand, Americans thrive for "real movies" that are as close to life as they can be but on the other hand they sometimes avoid looking reality straight in the eye. The German historian Henningsen is very critical when it comes to "real" war movies and its reception in the States: "Americans avoid Hollywood's perspective on the two wars, even though those movies are closer to the truth than he war coverage of newspapers and TV station during the same period of time."[162] Henningsen sees the reception of this kind of movie in a negative way but he does not know what is going on in the minds of those watching. They might think about the message not right after watching it but some time afterwards.

The story of Kathryn Bigalow's "The Hurt Locker" (Voltage Pictures/Grosvenor Park Media, USA 2008) is about an American bomb squad nicknamed „Bravo Company" (part of the United States Army Explosive Ordnance Disposal, short EOD) stationed in 2004 in Baghdad, which has to perform 100% under extreme conditions (heat, war, stress, strain). The protagonist (or rather: one of the three protagonists) is Sergeant First Class William James (Jeremy Renner), who is new to the squad and does not flinch at the thought that he might give his life while disarming a bomb even though his predecessor has died while dismantling a bomb on the job in Baghdad (Guy Pierce). The job is a thrill for James and he does not question the commands he is given even though he sometimes uses unconventional methods to get a bomb disarmed. James is enthusiastic, wild and eccentric about what he does. The second member of the Bravo Company is Sergeant JT Sanborn (Anthony Mackie), a dutiful soldier who does what he is told, whereas the third member, the specialist Owen Eldridge (Brian Geragthy) is

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[161] Cf. Henningsen, *Der Mythos Amerika.* (Eichborn, Frankfurt 2009), p. 304.
[162] Ibid., p. 304

insecure and fears that he might to something wrong that could lead to the deaths of many innocent civilians and colleagues. This difference in meaning and opinion of the three men so far away from home leads to various fights and discussions; Sergeant Sanborn even thinks about killing James as James goes back to a scene where he left his gloves. Each one of the characters displays a type of soldier – the brave one, the obedient one and the fearful one. One day, returning from their job, they run into a jeep with several men seemingly Arab, men who turn out to have captured some men featured on the Iraqi playing cards developed by the American military. The squad can defend themselves and kill four of the men. After various disturbing encounters (Eldridge gets kidnapped and shot in the leg) Sanborn wants to return home because the weight on his shoulders is too heady and James, who has a son and a wife at home, returns to the United States as well, only to find out that the life there is too boring for him and he again becomes part of the bomb squad.

As for the cinematography, the style of "The Hurt Locker" is very raw and war-like and the audience can view the actions of the Bravo Company from many different angles. "The Hurt Locker" was a critical success, also due to its intriguing cinematography and camera perspectives. The usages of the noises of the explosions are crucial to the effect that "The Hurt Locker" has on the audience, the constant loud detonations start to affect the audience and gives an intrinsic insight to the "business" of bomb dismantling. Peter Bradshaw of the British Guardian introduces the movie in his review by referring to the "war on terror":

> The war in Iraq, the war in Afghanistan and the 'war on terror' (to use the increasingly forgotten Rumsfeldian formulation) never really got their John Wayne/Green Berets moment in Hollywood: a big movie whose unembarrassed purpose is to endorse the military action. Most of the serious responses have been liberal-patriot fence-straddlers, multistranded stories urgently set in Washington, the Middle East, south Asia and elsewhere, tying themselves in knots in an attempt to acknowledge a dovey point of view while covertly leaning to the hawk's – pictures such as Stephen Gaghan's Syriana, which showed torture in terms of CIA man George Clooney being tortured by an Arab, [or] Robert Redford's mealy-mouthed Lions for Lambs (…).[163]

Bradshaw calls the movie providing "clarity[164]" and sees Bigalow as wanting "to find out what is going on in the US combatants' hearts and minds. Debating the

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[163] Bradshaw, Peter. *The Hurt Locker. Kathryn Bigalow trumps liberal efforts with the most insightfult Iraq film yet.* The Guardian, Augusty 28, 2009.
http://www.guardian.co.uk/film/2009/aug/28/the-hurt-locker-review (Nov 17, 2010).
[164] Ibid.

purpose and origins of the conflict is not the point[165]" - a point that substantially differentiates "The Hurt Locker" from action-laden movies like the above briefly summarized and analyzed "Green Zone". The main character of William James carries two symbolic levels: either is James being affected by the war and its horrors and traumas that have critically affected his judgment, making him reckless and inattentive or James is aroused by the predicament of war, being able to escape death on a daily basis, a risky business that has its attractive dangers.[166] The specific trauma, so Bradshaw, is the "physical trauma of being in close proximity, time after time, to the deafening blast of an explosion, controlled or otherwise. That obscene noise *and*, perhaps just as awful, the tense prelude of compressed silence, encloses you in a tight prison of pain: the 'hurt locker'.[167]"

3.2. TV Shows – from "Scrubs" to "24"

3.2.1. *Scrubs* – "HiStory IV"

Another way to communicate such issues is via TV-series. Even sitcoms such as „Scrubs" (2001) feature the topic at least once. In the episode „His Story IV" (director: Linda Mendoza, released on February 01, 2007, Season 6, Episode 7) a war veteran named Private Brian Dancer is treated at Sacred Heart Hospital and fuels a discussion about the Iraqi war. Dr. Bob Kelso, the head doctor of Sacred Heart, narrates the episode and starts off with joking about the Private's name in combination with his title, Private Dancer:

> **Dr. Kelso**: So, I see you're in the service.
> **Private B. Dancer**: Yes, Sir! Private Brian Dancer.
> **Dr. Kelso**: Private Dancer! Though name. Must have had your share of beat downs. How did you hurt your noggin'?
> **Private B. Dancer**: An IED hit our transport vehicle. I accidentally left a couple of chunks of my skull in Baghdad.
> **Dr. Kelso** (*to himself, thinking*): Iraq. You know how controversial that topic is, Bob. Quick, change the subject. *(turning to Private Dancer)* So, Pluto is not a planet anymore? What's up with that? (*to himself again, thinking*)Well played, Bobby. Lord knows you've seen these hot button topics before.
>
> **Dr. Kelso** (*to himself, thinking again*): Yep, Iraq is just the type of decisive subject that would spread through his damn hospital like wildfire.
> **Dr. Cox** (*looking at Private Brian Dancer*): Poor Kid. His head's blown off, all for nothing.

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[165] Ibid.
[166] Cf. Ibid.
[167] ibid.

> **Nurse LaVerne**: All for nothin'? My nephew Lance is over there fighting to give those people democracy.
> **Dr. Cox**: Oh, so THAT's why were over there. Here, I thought it was a rude out terrorist or was it for the oil or for Mama Hussein's secret falafel recipe? God, I don't know. Gosh darn hard to keep track.
> **Surgeon**: Dude, I hear they have laws that make women completely cover their bodies when are out in public.
> **Elliot**: Don't you get it Turk, all the terrorist want to go out and kill you. They want to KILL YOU. (...) KILL YOU!
> **Turk**: Elliot, the only good that's come from our occupation of Iraq is exposing the neo-conservative conspiracy to perpetuate American cultural and economic imperialism.

> Scrubs, His Story IV, Season 6, Episode 7
> 00:07:54 – 00:09:58

Elliot and Turk argue about the pros and the contras of the Iraqi war when J.D. disturbs the conversation and asks if anyone knows where he could find a new apartment. When asked about his opinion he quickly changes the subject to funnier things. Later, he runs into the janitor. J.D. displays the stereotype of an American who claims to know "everything" about the war but doesn't. What we don't know is where this lack of knowledge comes from: own neglect of obtaining necessary information (which he tries to do until the end of the episode, this might be seen as an invitation to do so) or if the media press releases only deal with what the media wants to release to the public.

> **Janitor**: Typical Dorian, run away from an argument you know nothing about.
> **J.D.**: I know all about the war!
> **Janitor**: Really? Point to Iraq!
> **J.D.**: Why do you keep a globe on your janitor cart?
> **Janitor**: In case I get lost. But I'll give you a hint. It's not the country that is shaped like a boot!
> **J.D.** (*points out a random country on the map*): That's Iraq!
> **Janitor**: That's China.
> **J.D.**: You're China! (*walks away*)
> **Janitor**: I'm China? What an outrageous accusation! (*frowns*)

> Scrubs, His Story IV, Season 6, Episode 7
> 00:10:32 – 00:10:55

Dr. Kelso served in the Navy during the Vietnam War and says that it is vital to remember the good men that you served with. War veterans are regarded as heroes but now the question rises to which extent they are supported by the country they were fighting for.

Dr. Cox and Dr. Turk are against the war, whereas the Nurse and Dr. Elliot are in support of the war. Elliot attacks the liberals and stands up with the words „Yes, I am a Republican" (00:13:17). A heated discussion starts in the cafeteria that

spreads over the entire hospital as predicted by Dr. Kelso. 50% of the staff supports Turk and Dr. Cox and the other 50% sides with Elliot and the nurse. This shows that the director of the episode does not want to side with either the liberals or the Republicans and leaves the audience the choice to decide.

The doctors don't even find time to treat their patients because they are so busy arguing and defending their opinion. Meanwhile, Private Brian Dancer gets sicker and sicker and it takes some time to s him because nobody works properly anymore due to their different political points of view:

> **Dr. Cox**: We are working, even though we currently all despise each other. We're professionals. For example, I can lend Barbie (*points at Elliot*) a hand, despite the fact that she is a heart-less, red-state-supportive, NRA-backing, illegal immigrant self-righteous, missing form dope essentially Karl Rove with smaller boobs.

> **Dr. Elliot**: And I can help out Dr. Cox even though I'd rather punch him in his „piss on the government" until Jabar's cropped this team a condo of anthrax, and PR listening out frankly face!

> Scrubs, His Story IV, Season 6, Episode 7
> 00:19:11 – 00:19:25

The good and bad characteristics of both Republicans and Liberals are being dissected by doctors Elliot, Cox and Turk but in the end, no matter if sided with the Liberals or the Republicans the employees are united again in the war against Dr. Kelso who – to put an end to the discussions – abolishes the employee discounts in the cafeteria. This makes them put aside their political positions and rebel as one against the „enemy" Dr. Kelso. Meanwhile, J.D. has read up on the Iraqi war and is ready to debate but the others are too busy being angry at Dr. Kelso and no one pays attention to him but the janitor. Still, J.D. realizes that the still does not know everything.

This episode fits into the first category of post 9/11 popular culture texts: no side in particular is taken but both sides are equally represented and argued for. This might be because the TV show itself is watched by all kinds of people: young and old, male and female, Republican and Democrats. The producers might not risk losing, for example, the Republican viewers because they express a certain democratic opinion in one of their episodes. Furthermore, especially young viewers might now start thinking about the issue at hand and might even explore it on their own afterwards. Especially J.D.'s quest for knowledge about the war is an interesting component because it leads to the understanding that it is impossible to acquire everything there is to know (not only about the war, but about life in general).

3.3.2. *24*

The never-ending cycle of terrorism

Some TV drama series such as "24" (2001 - 2010) are entirely devoted to the – as it seems – never ending war on terrorism. One of the most important issues certainly is patriotism and most of the TV drama's seasons are based in the „Counter Terrorist Unit" (CTU) that is located in Los Angeles, California to fight enemies of various kinds. The main character, Jack Bauer (Kiefer Sutherland) works for the CTU during the first seasons and then becomes head of security for the secretary of defense. During season seven Bauer is being trialed for the torture methods he used while interrogating suspects.

Mathis Nilges in his essay "The Aesthetics of Destruction: US Cinema and TV Culture" sees terror as a fight that cannot and should not be won on TV and in movies at this point in time, as opposed to only twenty or so years ago. In our modern times Nilges sees the American world as "post-Fordist[168]" and globalized which leads to a "fight against the chaos and the complexity of our own posts-Fordist world[169]" and goes on to say that "fights against terrorism portrayed in contemporary culture must – as a general rule – be lost, as opposed to the time when globalization was not yet dominant (or at least the time before 9/11 shocked us into the realization that we can no longer avoid the new, dominant global socioeconomic structure)[170]."

Mathis Nilges then describes Kiefer Sutherland's Jack Bauer as follows:

> Characters like TV drama *24*'s (2001 – present) Jack Bauer (Kiefer Sutherland) therefore synecdochically stand in for the general feeling of the absence of paternally protective structures and become a testament to the association of the present with the loss of traditional forms of stability and protection. Bauer fights the terrorist threat, yet at the en of each episode and each season there is no doubt that terrorism will re-appear and that Bauer will remain unable to truly protect the nation from a threat the way the Schwarzeneggers, Stallones and Willises of the 1980ies still could.[171]

"24" in general is very up to date: they have two African-American presidents, David Palmer (Dennis Haysbert) and his brother Wayne (D. B. Woodside) as well as a female president later on, Allison Taylor (Cherry Jones); they fight off

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[168] Nigles, Mathis. *The Aesthetics of Destruction* p. 28 in: Birkenstein, Jeff et al. (ed.) *Reframing 9/11. Film, Popular Culture and the "War on Terror"*. (Continuum, New York 2010)
[169] Ibid.
[170] Ibid.
[171] Ibid.

nuclear attacks on L.A. (season 2), cancel the release of a deadly virus (Season 3), fend off a series of terrorists attacks (Season 4), discover Russian-American Anti-Terrorist connections that are not quite what they seem (Season 5), yet fend off another series of terrorist attacks, this time both nuclear and viral (Season 6), intervene with military actions in Africa (Season 7) and expose and avert a possible assassination of an Islamic leader (Season 8). Season one (the main character Jack Bauer's daughter and wife were kidnapped) was released in October 2001 but was moderate on the terrorist part, the target is an African – American senator who runs for President. The main focus of the first "24" season lies on the kidnapping of Jack's daughter, Kim, and his wife, Teri. Teri dies at the end of episode 24 in his arms whereas Kim goes on to become one of the main characters as the series progresses.

"24" as a mirror narrative of 9/11?

Even though episode one of season one was shot to feature a plane crash, the crash itself was not shown on television because of the September 11 attacks. "24" still is one of the main "mirror narratives[172]" of 9/11. But what makes "24" a mirror narrative? Ina Rae Hark in "'Today Is The Longest Day Of My Life' – 24 as Mirror Narrative of 9/11" describes why she sees "24" as an almost perfect mirror narrative: even though the focus of the first season does not lie on international terrorism it still reflects how the media reacted to the attacks on American soil right after it happened. The same reflection is a huge part of every season of the very technical "24". After the first 24 episodes, every season deals with the war on terror and conveys that the main goal is to guard the American nation, no matter at what cost. Violence is unavoidable and it does not matter how many other people die as long as American lives are saved.

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[172] Cf. Hark, Ina Rae. *'Today Is The Longest Day Of My Life' – 24 as Mirror Narrative of 9/11*, p. 121 in: Dixon, Wheeler Winston (ed.). *Film and Television after 9/11* (Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale 1994).

Hark dissects the first season of "24" in her essay "'Today Is the Longest Day of My Life' – 24 as Mirror Narrative of 9/11" to the point where she sees the similarities between 9/11 and season one almost only in the media coverage after the attacks and the media coverage on the show:

> The situation that confronts Jack when he is called into his office shortly after midnight on the 'longest day' appears to differ substantially from the kind of terrorist acts committed on 9/11 and from that turn out to be the true motivations behind the plot his superiors charge him with thwarting.[173]

The enemies and villains in the first season of "24" are, according to Hark, completely different from those who are thought to be the villains in reality but she puts an emphasis (see above) on the fake media coverage that is presented to the audience on TV and the real TV coverage in September 2001: "Where *24* does scientifically intersect with 9/11 is in the way it mirrors the television coverage in the aftermath of the tragedy. [174]" During the next seven seasons, the similarities between 9/11 and the plots of the show grew more visible.

The characters of "24"

Ina Rae Hart is very critical of the show, its actors (she criticizes Dennis Haysbert for acting "lamely[175]" as President David Palmer and calls his character in combination with his acting as "underdeveloped"[176]), an opinion that I personally do not share to all its extent. Her main focus, however, lies – apart from the media coverage issue - on the female characters of the show: Sherry Palmer (the wife of Senator/President Palmer) whom she describes as a "Lady Macbeth of a wife[177]" as well as Nina Myers (Sarah Clarke), the main villain on Day 1 (as the first seasons is called), and Erin Driscoll (Alberta Green), the Assistant Regional Division Director who is acting "at Jack's expense"[178] to climb up the career ladder. Not to forget Jack's daughter, Kim Bauer, who is the victim of the kidnapping that will eventually lead to her pregnant mother's death. She refers to the TV Show "La Femme Nikita," which was made by the same two executive producers as "24", Cochran and Surnow, where also a female main character "works for a corrupt intelligence agency"[179]. This "wholesale animus directed at female characters week after week[180]" is, according to Hark, not necessarily instrumental and she suggests to "remind the two executive producers that

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[173] Cf. ibid., p. 128.
[174] Ibid., p. 123.
[175] Ibid., p. 132.
[176] Ibid.
[177] Ibid., 130.
[178] Ibid., 136.
[179] Ibid., 138.
[180] Ibid.

sadism and masochism *are* perversions, no matter how thrilling[181]." I do not agree with this statement entirely because "24" is not the only show on prime time television that has this kind of content and this kind of violence (for example "NCIS" or "CSI"). In further seasons there are strong female characters (that are not villains): Kim Bauer (Elisa Cuthbert) becomes an employee of the CTU; Chloe O'Brian (Mary Lynn Rajskub) is the main computer- and information scientist and the longest featured female character of the show; Audrey Raines (Kim Raver) is the daughter of the secretary of defense James Heller and later Jack Bauer's girlfriend, and last but not least Michelle Dessler, an important colleague of Jack's who dies in season five during a car bombing.

The main character Jack Bauer, however, is a person willing to sacrifice his own life for the sake of the mission. Randall M. Jensen in "What Would Jack Bauer Do? Moral Dilemmas and Moral Theory in *24*" asks the question

> (…) is there anything Jack Bauer won't – or shouldn't – do? We've seen him shoot and kill an unarmed man (who is admittedly not a nice guy, but he's in custody and is no threat to anyone), and then cut off his head! We've seen him interrogate people in many cruel and unusual ways. In Season Three we even watched him execute Ryan Chappelle, a loyal and blameless Division operative, because a terrorist demanded it. (…) We saw Jack get himself hooked on heroin to keep his cover, and it goes without saying that he's willing to sacrifice his own life in pursuit of a good end. Now all of these things are done for a good cause. But aren't there moral limits to what can be done for the good cause?[182]

These actions taken by Bauer are not always depicted as ruthless and cold acts, especially when the decisions he and his team have to make are decisions that involve family or friends. This raises the question of following the heart versus following the orders/needs and this inner dilemma is, for example, visible in season one when his family's lives as well as the senator's life are at stake. Not always is the answer to this question simple and not always does it have a positive outcome (as a result, his wife, Teri, dies; Bill Buchanan, his former boss at CTU, dies) but the main point is that decisions in life have to be made, even the painful and unpleasant ones. The gaunt realization that terrorism cannot be fought off forever might be the quintessence of the lesson that "24" is trying to teach. The issue of violent interrogation as often practiced by Jack Bauer is questioned in season seven, discussing those "moral limits".

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[181] Ibid.

[182] Jensen, Randall M. *What Would Jack Bauer Do? Moral Dilemmas and Moral Theory in 24.* p. 6, in: Hart Weed, Davis, Weed (Ed.). *24 and Philosophy: The World According to Jack.* (Blackwell Publishing Ltd, Malden 2008).

The technical engineering of "24"

Matthew B. Hill goes as far as to describe "24" as a TV show "enacting both a verbal and a visual language of techno war[183]". "24" is the first series to be shown in real time – every episode narrates one hour exactly and the audience can keep track of what time it is and what is happening via a digital clock on the bottom of the screen. This way of making a TV drama was entirely new at the time of the first season and displays, so Slavoj Žižek in his article for the January 10, 2006 The Guardian edition "The depraved heroes of 24 are the Himmlers of Hollywood", "a strong sense of urgency, emphasized by the ticking of an on-screen clock. This dynamic is accentuated by technical tricks, from use of hand-held cameras to split screens showing the concurrent actions of characters[184]. " Another important detail the filmmakers added to the series is the way the TV advertisement sections are made part of the show:

> Say the on-screen clock reads '7:46" before the break, we return to the series with the clock saying '7:51' – indicating the real length of the break, as if a life transmission has been interrupted. It is as if the continuity of the action is so urgent that is cannot even be interrupted for advertisements.[185]

Hill describes the scenery of the show as "computerized[186]", "digitalized[187]" and "networked.[188]" When describing the relationship between Jack Bauer and the CTU hill names it a

> (...) dramatic symbiosis, each shown as a utterly dysfunctional without the other. When away from CTU, out of government service, apparently 'dead', or in a Chinese prison, Jack is literally a non-character, 'not himself' (...) no matter what his transgressions, CTU *needs* Jack Bauer to stop evil (....) Bauer is the one who can make the right connection, make the right call, and do the right thing, all in a split second (...). Patched in and ready to act without hesitation and remorse, Bauer is a networked technowarrior.[189]

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[183] Hill, Matthew B. *Tom Clancy, 24, and the language of Autocracy* p. 138 in: Schopp (ed.), *The War und Terror and American Popular Culture* (Farleigh Dickinson, Madison 2009).
[184] Žižek, Slavoj. *The depraved heroes of 24 are the Himmlers of Hollywood.* The Guardian January 10, 2006. http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2006/jan/10/usnews.comment (Oct 26, 2010).
[185] Ibid.
[186] Hill, Matthew B. *Tom Clancy, 24, and the language of Autocracy* p. 138 in: Schopp (ed.), *The War und Terror and American Popular Culture* (Farleigh Dickinson, Madison 2009).
[187] Ibid.
[188] Ibid., p. 139.
[189] Ibid., p. 140.

Slavoj Žižek, indicated in the title of his aforementioned essay, compares the tasks of the main characters of "24" to the tasks the soldiers of Heinrich Himmler during World War II who

> (…) turn around the logic of resisting temptation: the temptation to be resisted was pity and sympathy in the presence of human suffering, the temptation not to murder, torture and humiliate (…). Therein also resides the lie of 24: that it is not only possible to retain human dignity in performing acts of terror, but that if an honest person performs such an act as a grave duty, it confers on him a tragic-ethical grandeur. The parallel between the agents' and the terrorists' behavior serves this lie.[190]

These parallels between the agents' and the terrorists' actions have been created on purpose to open the eyes of the viewer to the similarities between the terrorist acts and the immediate reactions to them. Žižek refers to a new openness about torture and humiliation that has become a new trend, as it seems – he mentions Dick Cheney's declaration regarding the call for torture and goes on to wonder about why this is now being told so publicly, both via TV shows and politicians who seek credibility through honesty.[191]

Operating outside the system and in the "real world"

The reason why heroes like Jack Bauer often operate outside of the system is, according to Hill, because they were "degraded by politicized cynicism and hamstrung by 'big government' rules and regulations.[192]" One other very interesting fact is that the leaders of the American country are often portrayed as not very potent at doing their job, except maybe for Dennis Haysbert's character President David Palmer who is a upright and honest man. Many of the politicians in "24" are "corrupt figures, willing to do anything for political or economic gain.[193]" The main point Hill makes, comparing Tom Clancy's main character Jack Ryan and 24's Jack Bauer, is that those heroes, as imperfect and as law-braking they might be at some points, are designed to "protect us from the evil that lurks constantly out of sight.[194]" The important word in this previous sentence is the term "constantly", which seems to run through many essays and articles about the issue of terrorist threats – those threats seems to be never ending, with new dangers lurking all around the world, just waiting to strike. At

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[190] Žižek, Slavoj. *The depraved heroes of 24 are the Himmlers of Hollywood*. The Guardian January 10, 2006. http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2006/jan/10/usnews.comment (Oct 26, 2010).
[191] Cf. ibid.
[192] Hill, Matthew B. *Tom Clancy, 24, and the language of Autocracy* p. 141 in: Schopp (ed.), *The War und Terror and American Popular Culture* (Farleigh Dickinson, Madison 2009).
[193] Ibid., p. 142.
[194] Ibid., p. 143.

the end of each season the audience is left with the gloomy feeling that there are other horrible things to come and that terrorism is not done with America yet. These "problems depicted in *24* are our problems", so Ronald Weed in "CTU Orientation.[195]" "While they are sometimes overstated and other times understated," he goes on, "they bear enough resemblance to our world for us to take them seriously.[196]" These "real" problems are the key to series like "24", these dramas hit close to home and arouse a certain feeling of both sympathy and empathy.

TV Ratings for "24" (in the United States)

All of the eight seasons of "24" were aired on the FOX network, as was the 2008 movie, "Redemption", which was a created as a crossover from the sixth to the seventh season. "24" was eventually cancelled after eight seasons because the numbers of Day 8 fell from 11.50 million on premiere night to 8.49 million viewers by episode eight.[197] The average number of viewers of season eight did not hit the 10-million-viewer mark (9.308 million) and was only ranked # 39 among the broadcast primetime shows.[198] This marked the end of the adventures of Jack Bauer on May 24, 2010.

Day 7, the preceding season, was much more successful, averaging 12.620 million viewers[199] which made it the twentieth most successful TV show in the USA in 2009. This drop from 12.620 in 2009 to 9.308 viewers in 2010 is significant, even though in 2010 there were many other shows with less viewers than FOX' "24" that are still running now (as of October 31, 2010), such as "Private Practice" (ABC, averaging 9.154 million viewers in 2010), "How I Met Your Mother" (CBS, averaging 8.729 million viewers in 2010), "Rules of Engagement" (CBS, averaging 7.915 million viewers in 2010), or "Cougar Town" (ABC, averaging 7.011 million viewers in 2010).[200]

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[195] Weed, Ronald. *CTU Orientation.* p. 17, in: Hart Weed, Davis, Weed (Ed.). *24 and Philosophy: The World According to Jack.* (Blackwell Publishing Ltd, Malden 2008).
[196] Ibid.
[197] Cf. Owen, Dan. *TV Ratings: 24 (Fox), February 17, 2010.*
http://danowen.blogspot.com/2010/02/tv-ratings-24-fox.html (Oct 26, 2010).
[198] Cf. Final 2009-10 Broadcast Primetime Show Average Viewership. June 10, 2010.
 http://tvbythenumbers.com/2010/06/16/final-2009-10-broadcast-primetime-show-average-viewership/54336 (Oct 26, 2010).
[199] Cf. ABC Television Network Press Release Entertainment – Season Rankings (through 5/31 2009) http://abcmedianet.com/web/dnr/dispDNR.aspx?id=060209_05 (Oct 26, 2010).
[200] Cf. Final 2009-10 Broadcast Primetime Show Average Viewership. June 10, 2010.
 http://tvbythenumbers.com/2010/06/16/final-2009-10-broadcast-primetime-show-average-viewership/54336 (Oct 26, 2010).

The "Redemption" prequel also was very successful, making it # 17 in 2008 with 12.121 million viewers. It was even ranked # 14 among the 18-49 age group.[201]

Day 6 (January 14, 2007 – May 21, 2007) was among the most successful seasons of "24", averaging around 11.400 million viewers and thus ranking Day 6 # 27 among the most successful prime time shows of the TV season 2006/2007. The most successful show of 2007 turned out to be "American Idol" (FOX) with an astonishing 30.600 million people watching the results show and an average of 30.100 million viewers watching the normal shows leading up to the so successful season finale.[202]

Day 5 was the most successful of all seasons, averaging an enormous 13.780 million viewers, running from January 15, 2006 until the season finale on May 22, 2006. This places the fifth seasons of "24" a together with "Law and Order: SVU" at # 24 and leaves behind big TV shows such as "Emergency Room" (# 30, 12.060 mio. viewers average), "King of Queens" (# 52, 9.950 million viewers average), "How I Met Your Mother" (# 54, 9.470 mio. viewers average), and even "The Simpsons" (# 62, 9.070 million viewer average).[203] "Emergency room", for example, was ranked # 3 in 2001/2002 (the first year "24" was aired) with 23.694 million viewers.[204]

Day 4 had an average of 11.912 million viewers, ranking it #31 of 2004-05 broadcast primetime annual charts, just ahead of "Crossing Jordan" with 11.704 million viewers and "The Amazing Race 6" with 11.510 million viewers. Among the FOX shows of 2004-05 "24" ranks #5 and is only preceded by "American Idol" (Tuesday and Wednesday airings), "House, MD", and the "NFL Sunday Postshow."[205]

[201] Cf. Seidman, Robert. Dancing with the Stars, CSI and NCIS lead weekly broadcast viewing. November 25, 2008. http://tvbythenumbers.com/2008/11/25/dancing-with-the-stars-csi-and-ncis-lead-weekly-broadcast-viewing/8758 (Oct 26, 2010).
[202] Cf. Riedner, Fabian. Weis Manuel. US-Jahrescharts 2006/2007. 06.09.2007. http://www.quotenmeter.de/cms/?p1=n&p2=21548&p3= (Oct 26, 2010).
[203] Cf. ABC Television Network. Press Release- Entertainment – Season Programm Rankings (Part One, 1-100) from 09/19/2005 through 05/28/06). http://web.archive.org/web/20070310210300/http://www.abcmedianet.com/pressrel/dispDNR.html?id=053106_05 (Oct 26, 2010)
[204] Cf. Riedner, Fabian. US-Jahrescharts 2001/2002. 01.06.2002. http://www.quotenmeter.de/cms/?p1=n&p2=9938&p3= (Oct 26, 2010)
[205] Cf. Riedner, Fabian. US-Jahrescharts 2004/2005. 28.05.2005. http://www.quotenmeter.de/cms/?p1=n&p2=10006&p3= (Oct 26, 2010)

Day 3 had approximately 10.3 million viewers, which is 1.4 million viewers less than on Day 2 with 11.7 million viewers[206]. Suzanne C. Ryan explains this drop from Day 2 to Day 3 by referring to John Rash, the director of broadcast negotiations for Campbell Mithun Advertising in Minneapolis, who blames the "survival rate of most of '24' cast members[207]." which does not help to make the series and its plots believable. This death toll will later be considerably increased with the deaths of Bill Buchanan in season seven, the death of Edgar Stiles in season five, the deaths of David Palmer and Michelle Dessler on Day 5, unverified by the high average numbers of Days 4 through 6.

Day 1 had an average of 8.615 million viewers and was ranked # 79 in the US and already # 9 of the most watched shows on the FOX network. These numbers motivated the network to go on an produce another second season of "24."[208]

There is a chart on page 69 providing an overview over the numbers of Day 1 through Day 8 (=seasons one through eight) of "24" (the bridging movie "Redemption" is left out on purpose, the concentration is on the eight proper seasons with 24 episodes each). On the chart are also listed the four other very important TV stations and their programming and viewers in million for the night "24" was aired. The air day and time of "24" has changed once: the first three seasons were aired on Tuesday at 9 p.m. and then changed from season four onwards to Monday at 9 p.m. with "C.S.I." ("Crime Scene Investigation") being aired on CBS on Tuesday nights at 9 p.m. and dropping numbers of "24" (C.S.I. on the other hand had 25.603 million viewers in 2003-04 whereas "24" had only 10.299 during the same period of time) the FOX network had to do something about it and moved "24" to Monday nights, but the Monday night slot also had a slight problem: ABC airs the nationwide popular "NFL Monday Night Football" show on Mondays at 9 p.m. with regularly about 16.000 million viewers. Despite Monday Night Football, "24" managed to up the viewers by Day 5 where it reached its peak with an average of 13.637 million viewers.

I have to admit that I enjoyed watching "24" because the show is entertaining and keeps the audience at the edges of their seats. But when watching those kinds of

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[206] Cf. Ryan, Suzanne C. *TV Producers have to be agile to deal with ratings, say experts*. January 16, 2005. Brandeis University.
http://my.brandeis.edu/news/item?news_item_id=103458&show_release_date=1 (Oct 26, 2010)
[207] Ryan, Suzanne C. *TV Producers have to be agile to deal with ratings, say experts*. January 16, 2005. Brandeis University.
http://my.brandeis.edu/news/item?news_item_id=103458&show_release_date=1 (Oct 26, 2010)
[208] Cf. Riedner, Fabian. US-Jahrescharts 2001/2002. 01.06.2002.
http://www.quotenmeter.de/cms/?p1=n&p2=9938&p3= (Oct 26, 2010).

TV shows, one has to keep in mind that those topics are not chosen without reason and reference to the real world. Even though fictional characters will remain fictional, they can carry various attributes that are derived from actual people in an actual, real world were the problems do not disappear when the TV is turned off or when leaving the movie theater. Of course, the main purposes are to entertain the viewers and to draw money for the production companies, but TV shows and motion pictures should not be regarded as only fun past-times that are diverting and nothing more.

Tabelle 1 Overview "24" TV Ratings in comparison to other TV stations

	Day 1 2001-02[1]	Day 2 2002-03[2]	Day 3 2003-04[3]	Day 4 2004-05[4]	Day 5 2005-06[5]	Day 6 2006-07[6]	Day 7 2008-09[7]	Day 8 2009-10
	Nov 6, 2001 – May 21, 2002	Oct 29, 2002 – May 20, 2003	Oct 28, 2003 – May 25, 2004	Jan 9, 2005 – May 23, 2005	Jan 15, 2006 – May 22, 2006	Jan 14, 2007- May 21, 2007	Jan 11, 2009 – May 18, 2009	Jan 17, 2010 – May 24, 2010
mio. viewers	8.615	11.733	10.299	11.704	13.637	11.400	12.62	9.31
# overall	# 79	# 36	# 46	# 31	# 25	# 27	# 20	# 39
# FOX	# 9	# 6	# 9	# 5	# 5	# 6	?	?
air time	Tuesday, 9 p.m.	Tuesday, 9 p.m.	Tuesday, 9 p.m.	Monday, 9 p.m.	Monday, 9 p.m.	Monday, 9 p.m.	Monday, 9 p.m.	Monday, 9 p.m.
parallel shows (viewers in mio.)								
CBS	The Guardian (12.232)	The Guardian (11.823)	C.S.I. (25.603)	Everybody loves Raymond (16.901)**	Two and a Half Men (15.103)	Two and a Half Men (13.801)	Two and a Half Men (15.060)	Two and a half men (14.945)
ABC	NYPD Blue (12.311)	Life with Bonnie (8,829)*	?	Monday Night Football (16.235)	Monday Night Football (16.209)	Supernanny (8.6) & The Bachelor (9.864)	?	Romantically Challenged (9,270)
NBC	Frasier (14.977)	Frasier (12.587)	Frasier (10.920)	Las Vegas (11.423)	The Apprentice 5 (9.611)	Heroes (12.753)	?	Trauma (5.247)
The WB/CW	Smallville (5.866)	Smallville (6.692)	One Tree Hill (3.519)	Everwood (4.299)	various	Girlfriends (2.422)***	?	various

* alternating with "According to Jim" (8.695)   ** followed by 9.30 p.m. Two and a Half Men (16.224) *** followed by 9.30 p.m. The Game (2.286)

1 Riedner, Fabian. US-Jahrescharts 2001/2002. 01.06.2002. http://www.quotenmeter.de/cms/?p1=n&p2=9938&p3= (Oct 26, 2010).
2 Riedner, Fabian. US-Jahrescharts 2002/2003. 01.06.2003. http://www.quotenmeter.de/cms/?p1=n&p2=9939&p3= (Oct 26, 2010).
3 Riedner, Fabian. US-Jahrescharts 2003/2004. 01.06.2004. http://www.quotenmeter.de/cms/?p1=n&p2=9940&p3= (Oct 26, 2010).
4 Riedner, Fabian. US-Jahrescharts 2004/2005. 28.05.2005. http://www.quotenmeter.de/cms/?p1=n&p2=10006&p3= (Oct 26, 2010).
5 Riedner, Fabian. US-Jahrescharts 2005/2006. 06.06.2006. http://www.quotenmeter.de/cms/?p1=n&p2=14835&p3= (Oct 26, 2010).
6 Riedner, Fabian. Weis Manuel. US-Jahrescharts 2006/2007. 06.09.2007. http://www.quotenmeter.de/cms/?p1=n&p2=21548&p3= (Oct 26, 2010).
7 ABC Television Network Press Release Entertainment – Season Rankings (through 5/31 2009) http://abcmedianet.com/web/dnr/dispDNR.aspx?id=060209_05 (Oct 26, 2010).

3.4. **Literature & "The Falling Man"**

Many texts such as "The Falling Man" by Tom Junod, "The Falling Man" by Don DeLillo or "Windows On The World" by Frédéric Beigbeder deal with what happened on September 11, 2001. The underlying image to the first two mentioned textual productions is a photograph by Richard Drew that was labeled "The Falling Man" (Image # 3). It shows a man falling or jumping from the upper floors of the north tower of the World Trade Center with his feet in the air and his head pointing downwards. The photo was published in the New York Times on September 12, 2001. It is unknown if this man decided to jump from the building to escape a horrible death, if he was pushed or if he simply fell in the chaos of what was happening. Tom Junod's article (see Chapter 3.4.1.) explores the search for this man who is rumored to have been an employee of the restaurant "Windows on the World". This closes the circle to the third mentioned popular culture text, Frédéric Beigbeder's novel "Windows on the World".

Image # 3 "The Falling Man"

The reception of the image in 2001 was not positive at all - it was feared that displaying Americans giving up and jumping was destroying the notion of the American success story. It was seen by many as a capitulation, something that is not accepted by the deeply rooted patriotism of the United States. The controversy of "The Falling Man" was explored in a TV documentary named "9/11 The Falling Man". This documentary was not published until 2006, the very same year Oliver Stone's "World Trade Center" and Paul Greengrass "United 93" opened at the box office, maybe because it would have been too soon otherwise. It tells the story of both survivors and relatives/friends/family, showing the dramatic pictures of the towers before and after they fell, how the smoke clouds grew bigger and bigger, and how the trapped men and women of the upper floors climbed on the window seams to get some fresh air. The photographer Richard Drew explains how he got the image of the falling man that only hours later would cause such great controversy:

> I was standing between a police officer and a woman, a restaurant worker and all of a sudden the woman says, 'Oh, Look!', and she pointed up, and we both looked up, all three of us looked up, and people started coming down from the World Trade Center. Bodies were falling and then I took out my camera and started taking pictures, that's what I do.

<p align="right">9/11 The Falling Man Part 1/8
You Tube: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dc4A2tlEWeY
06:52 – 07:09</p>

He defends the accusations of being cold-hearted and unethical by saying that he, as a photographer, just did his job. He compares himself and his profession of taking pictures to a carpenter building a house. Drew describes the people falling out of the sky very bluntly:

> (…) you could always hear them hitting the ground, like a sack of cement with a big thud.

<p align="right">9/11 The Falling Man Part 2/8
You Tube: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XpYQ6ah3tXo&NR=1
00:22 - 00:25</p>

News stations did not put up their cameras to film the ones falling and jumping from the upper levels of the towers anymore but Richard Drew - as long as his view was not obstructed - kept on taking pictures of this one particular man who was supposed to have jumped out of the 106th or 107th floor of the northern tower where the restaurant "Windows on the World" was located. The documentary provides moving interviews that were taken right there in New York City of people who were watching the towers collapse and interviews with survivors and relatives who lost loved ones in the towers.

Richard Drew and many of the newspapers in which it had appeared were accused of exploiting a man's death, stripping him of his dignity, invading his privacy and turning tragedy into pornography.[209]

New York businessman Jack Gentul lost his wife Elaine Gentul on September 11, 2001. She worked on the 97th floor of south tower and called her husband when she was trapped in her office space that was slowly filling with smoke from plane crashed:

> She said to me that she loved me and she said to tell the boys that I loved them and I was, I was shocked that she was saying this to me. I said, 'Of course I will, of course I will but it's going to be all right.' And she said, 'I love you' and she said 'I love you', and she said 'I love you' and she said 'I love you', and then said 'call me when you get down' and when I hung up the phone I was horrified.

<div align="right">
9/11 The Falling Man Part 2/8
You Tube: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XpYQ6ah3tXo&NR=1
04:00 − 44:35
</div>

Jack Gentul describes what he sees as the motives for jumping voluntarily from the World Trade Center because it does not seem that there is the slightest chance of surviving - an action many people all around the world do not understand:

> I know that Elaine was found on the street in front of the building across from hers. So, whether she jumped or fell, I don t know. I believe she was alive when it happened because of that phone call. I hoped that she had succumbed to the smoke but it does not seem likely. It is something that I can't know. In some ways it might be the last element of control that you have. Everything around you is happening and you can't stop it. But this is something that you can do and to be out of the smoke and the heat, and to be out in the air, it must have felt like flying.

<div align="right">
9/11 The Falling Man Part 2/8
You Tube: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XpYQ6ah3tXo&NR=1
04:41 - 5:45
</div>

Richard Drew explains - when he takes pictures - a separation from him and the real world takes place. This gap (both mental and material) makes it easier for him to do his job, he describes it as a "filter" between him and his object (9/11 The Falling Man Part 2/8 - 06:31) . In the documentary, the decision to jump is called "impossible" (9/11 The Falling Man Part 2/8- 07:41). The publishing of Richard Drew's photograph was "igniting controversy and anger across the world (9/11 The Falling Man 2/8 - 06:53 – 06:57). This very controversy was not and will not be forgotten. The reception was and will be moving, shocking, and even angry.

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[209] Junod, Tom. *The Falling Man.* http://www.esquire.com/features/ESQ0903-SEP_FALLINGMAN (Aug 31, 2010).

The film, for the first time, shows snapshots and movies made by both TV stations and private cameras of those jumping in desperation – images that were not shown many times before.

3.4.1. Tom Junod – "The Falling Man"

This one man, falling, even flying, from one of the upper stories of the WTC, stands for hundreds of others who died that day and whose bones were recovered from Ground Zero just because they were there that very day at that very hour. The quest for the identity of the falling man began and was received controversial as well because the image seemed so say so much in the way it was and did not need and did not want to known the identity of the "faller". American author Tom Junod wrote an article named „The Falling Man" that was published in „Esquire" magazine in 2003 where he wanted to explore the true identity of this falling man. Initially, Norberto Hernandez, one of the chefs of "Windows on the World", was named as the "The Falling Man" but after a long search, the name Jonathan Eric Briley came up. Jonathan Briley was a sound engineer working in "Windows on the World". Tom Junod said about the initial motivation behind his "Esquire" Article "The Falling Man" that the image of the "improper" death of the jumper needs to be corrected.

> I felt that the idea of people jumping, I felt that the jumpers, I felt that the falling man had been pushed to the side. There was an element of exclusion that he died improperly. That we want to remember this day for its terrorism and whether we think of the jumpers as heroic or not they should not be excluded from the consecrated of the American soil. Because they died in a way that makes us uncomfortable.
>
> 9/11 The Falling Man Part 6/8
> http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=01FJB5AYo0k
> 00:45 – 01:17

The confrontation with the image of "The Falling Man" was crucial for Tom Junod because he did want neither the Americans nor the world to preserve the negative connotation of the jumper forever. When he retrieves the other pictures of the sequence of photos that Drew took he makes the discovery that the man on the pictures might not be the one that was named "The Falling Man", Norberto Hernandez, after all.

> When I looked at that series, the outtakes, the story became a different story for me. He is clearly falling, it is not this almost Zen-like acceptance of his fate, he is panicking, he is rolling through the air. As he does that the turbulence tolls his shirt off and the white shirt that he is wearing comes off enough to reveal that he is wearing underneath this white shirt and orange t-Shirt. That was new information.

9/11 The Falling Man Part 6/8
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=01FJB5AYook
05:20 – 05:54

He meets with the family of Norberto Hernandez and talks to his daughter and wife. Tom Junod discovered that her husband did not wear an orange T-Shirt and therefore, he was ruled out from being the jumper. Now the identity of "The Falling Man" was unsolved – again. He made a list of twenty-two suspects for being the man jumping from "Windows on the World". After an endless search, Jonathan Briley was the last one on the list and many of this relatives and co-workers are almost certain that he is "The Falling Man". His sister was interviewed in the TV documentary and described her opinion on "The Falling Man" as follows:

> I never though of the falling man as Jonathan, I thought of him as a man that just took his life in his hands for just that second. Did that person have so much faith that he knew that God would catch him, or was he so afraid to experience the end up there? That's something I'll never know because that happened to him.

9/11 The Falling Man Part 8/8
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jlFnhRq_waY&NR=1
04:07 – 05:01

Like Jonathan Briley's sister, Tom Junod discovered that it is much more important to focus on the notion of one man falling or jumping in desperation than to focus on the man's identity. The image that was received with such shock in the beginning should rather be memory and remembrance than pure judgment and disgust. The following statement concludes the 2003 "Esquire "article" The Falling Man:

> At fifteen seconds after 9:41 a.m., on September 11, 2001, a photographer named Richard Drew took a picture of a man falling through the sky -- falling through time as well as through space. The picture went all around the world, and then disappeared, as if we willed it away. One of the most famous photographs in human history became an unmarked grave, and the man buried inside its frame -- the Falling Man -- became the Unknown Soldier in a war whose end we have not yet seen. Richard Drew's photograph is all we know of him, and yet all we know of him becomes a measure of what we know of ourselves. The picture is his cenotaph, and like the monuments dedicated to the memory of unknown soldiers

everywhere, it asks that we look at it, and make one simple acknowledgment. That we have known who the Falling Man is all along.[210]

3.4.2. **The clairvoyant Don DeLillo and *"The Falling Man"***

Donald DeLillo is an American post-modern author who was born in 1936 in New York and grew up in the Bronx. He wrote on how American history, terrorism and literature are, according to DeLillo, interconnected. Ironically, his first book – published in 1971 – was called "Americana."[211] About this title for his first book Don DeLillo said in 1993 in an interview that

> (...) it's no accident that my first novel was called 'Americana'. This was a private declaration of independence, a statement of my intention to use the whole picture, the whole culture. America was and is the immigrant's dream, and as the son of two immigrants I was attracted by the sense of possibility that had drawn my grandparents and parents.[212]

When looking at this statement it seems as if DeLillo is a stereotypical American: son of immigrants, clearly knowing and respecting history since he refers to the declaration of independence and seeing it as a "dream." All this *being American* yet does not mean that he is not critical of the system or what is happening.

On the sixth "anniversary" of the attacks in September of 2007 he was interviewed by the German Newspaper "Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung" ("FAZ") about the release of "Falling Man[213]" (his book about 9/11) and his thoughts on terror, fear, writing and America. He is being asked what the feels when thinking about the falling of the towers. DeLillo answers that he still becomes somewhat emotional dealing with the subject and that he has never written anything like "Falling Man" because the topic is so close to home, in every sense of the word. When visiting Ground Zero the "scar" as he calls it is both visible and invisible at the same time. Interestingly, one of his characters in his previous books says that the two towers of the World Trade Center are ugly and the only relief is that there are two of them to make a balance. Only after they are gone he starts to miss them. There are many ties between him, September 11 and the World Trade Center – the cover of his 1997 novel "Underworld" depicts the two towers, still

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[210] Ibid.

[211] Salzmann (ed.), *The Cambridge Handbook of American Literature*. (Cambridge Univ. Press, New York 1986), p. 136.

[212] Deneen, Patrick J., Romance, Joseph. *Democracy's Literature: Politics and Fiction in America*. (Rowman & Littlefield, Lanham 2005), p. 208.

[213] DeLillo, Don. *The Falling Man*. (Scribner, New York 2007).

intact, behind a thick layer of fog, as if he was somewhat clairvoyant. Sometimes he is even called a "prophet" but he rejects this label because in his mind there are no prophets but in times of troubles and catastrophes people want and need to believe in higher powers to stay sane. In reference to an essay that he wrote right after 9/11 ("In the Ruins of the Future") he states that Americans have created the future, it is nothing but their wished for what is to come. Currently, he describes the American people as "confused" and therefore relying on, apart from higher powers, on things and people that are known to them. This is his explanation for George W. Bush's re-election. For the 2008 presidential election DeLillo predicts someone that is also conveying the feeling of trust. It lies in the eye of the beholder to find the own opinion.[214]

 "Falling Man" was written in 2004 and just as Tom Junod's essay title (Chapter 3.4.1.), DeLillo refers to the photograph of the man falling from the top floors of the World Trade Center. Keith and Lianne, the couple depicted in "Falling Man" have one son, Justin, but their marriage has not been going well for some time. After the twin towers fell they have to take up their everyday life again but Keith starts an affair with a woman whose briefcase he had unintentionally taken with him during the chaos of 9/11. Some of Keith's co-workers whom he used to play poker with died in the terrorist attacks and Keith now rekindles his love for poker and starts playing on a regular basis, up until the point where is addicted to the game and quits his job as well as his life. Meanwhile, Lianne focuses on her mother Nina and her boyfriend Martin. The artist "The Falling Man" who re-enacts the Falling Man from Richard Drew's photograph performs all around the city of New York literally hanging around citywide in remembrance of those who fell from the towers. Whether Keith separates from his family because of the trauma he experienced by escaping September 11, 2001 or because the family has not been intact before the falling of the towers the readers do not know but it is implied that the combination of both led to the separation, both physically and mentally. Hammad, the hijacker that flew the plane into Keith's tower, is portrayed as a very determined and focused man.

In his book 1991 book "Mao II[215]" Don DeLillo drew a close connection and relation between literature and terrorism. In March 2003 another German newspaper, "Der Spiegel", published a eleven-part-story about Don DeLillo using memorable quotes from eleven of DeLillo's works. The eleventh part was entitled „Blaster of Disaster" and refers to "Falling Man" as "probably the strongest elegy

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[214] Cf. Körte, Peter. *Was erzählt uns der Terror, Don DeLillo?*
http://www.spiegel.de/kultur/literatur/0,1518,504687,00.html (Sept 1, 2010)
[215] DeLillo, Don. *Mao II*. (Penguin Books, London 1992).

about September 11.[216]" The way Don DeLillo creates and recreates September 11 is "an enormous exertion of memory[217]". As in many of his older books (i.e. "Players", "Underworld") the twin towers are mentioned or depicted at least once. In DeLIllo's "Mao II" explosions are denoted to be used as a means of expressing cultural processes. The main character, Bill Gray - a successful author and philosopher who lives in solitary - wants to talk to Abu Rashid, the leader of a terrorist group, who holds a writer from Switzerland hostage in Beirut, Lebanon. At the end of the novel, Bill Gray dies after being hit by a car before he can reach Abu Rashid. Even though "Mao II" was published ten years before 9/11, it has a very foreshadowing feel to it, as if Don DeLillo was clairvoyant. Connecting culture (in this case: literature/writing) to terrorism as the last resort of being heard is the central theme of "Mao II", explosions being the means of making oneself heard in a world of violence.[218]

As the title suggests, it refers to Mao Zedong, the Chinese Leader from 1943 until 1976 whose Maoism has shaped the People's Republic of China. The world that Don DeLillo introduces the centuries to come is grim, gloomy and full of terror and violence, destroyed buildings and lives, bringing about a significant change in personality and culture (i.e. culture of any kind: literature, the way of living, media, music). In "Mao II" Don DeLillo shows the readers a world that is becoming distant and cold, the people in this world disappearing in one big hole; he talks about anonymity and loneliness as well as violence and terrorism. Something that used to belong to the literary world has now gone over to the dark side: transforming, changing and shaping culture.[219]

In his New York Times Review from May 19, 1991 journalist Vince Passaro compares Don DeLillo to his main character Bill Gray as – at the beginning of the 1990es – not much was known about DeLillo, only that he was from New York City or at least living there, referring to a 1979 interview where DeLillo describes himself as a man who does not like to talk about neither his achievements or his private life[220]. This private life, so Passaro, has connections to his fellow author Salman Rushdi who was persecuted and sentenced to death by his government in India, especially after he published "The Satanic Verses" in 1988 but the death

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[216] Buß, Christian. Haas, Daniel. *Sprengmeister der Paranoia. 11. Teil: „Falling Man" – Sterben als Stilleben*. 29.03.2010. http://www.spiegel.de/kultur/literatur/0,1518,683637-11,00.html (Nov 8, 2010).
[217] Ibid.
[218] Cf. Haas, Daniel. *Sprengmeister der Paranoia. 7. Teil. "Mao II" – Sprengkraft der Literatur*. 29.03.2010. http://www.spiegel.de/kultur/literatur/0,1518,683637-7,00.html (Nov 8, 2010).
[219] Rich, Frank. *The Clear Blue Sky*. New York Times Review, May 27, 2007. http://www.nytimes.com/2007/05/27/books/review/Rich-t.html (Nov 8, 2010).
[220] Cf. Passaro, Vince. Dangerous Don De Lillo. New York Times Review. May 19, 1991. http://www.nytimes.com/books/97/03/16/lifetimes/del-v-dangerous.html?_r=1&oref=login (Nov 8, 2010).

sentence was never carried out. When asked about how much of the book refers to Salman Rushdi DeLillo answered: "I don't know how deep it is, but it's there. It's the connection between the writer as the champion of the self, and those forces that are threatened b this. Such totalitarian movements can be seen in miniature in the very kind of situation Rushdi is in. He's a hostage.[221]"

3.4.3. Frédéric Beigbeder, "*Windows on the World*"

I now want to take a short look at Frédéric Beigbeder's "Windows on the World", published in the United States in 2004 (in France it was first released in 2003). The title "Windows on the World" derives from the restaurant located in the top flights of the World Trade Centers North Tower. The author Frédéric Beigbeder was born and raised in Paris, France and he is named an *enfant terrible* by the French literary critics and the media. This also explains why he deals so bluntly with September 11, 2001.

The main character, Chartew Yorston, is a divorced Texan realtor who has a guilty conscience about not being with the mother of his two kids, Jerry and David, anymore. The book is divided into chapters about the family having breakfast at the restaurant and into chapters where Beigbeder tells what he himself is experiencing at the same time in Paris, in a restaurant named "Le Ciel de Paris", the heaven of Paris. He describes the scenes going on at Windows on the World very colloquial and features everyday small talk from the table next to the boys and their father. When Beigbeder is talking about himself, he names his favorite writers, philosophers, musicians, and film directors. About American culture he states - in his direct and clear style of writing - that

> American culture dominates the planet not for economic reasons, but because of its quality. It's too easy to ascribe its influence to political machination, to compare Disney to Hitler or Spielberg to Satan. American art is constantly rewriting itself, because it is profoundly rooted in real life. American artists are constantly searching for something new, but something new that speaks to us of ourselves.[222]

Beigbeder has a very unique style of writing and the reader never knows whether he is being sarcastic, realistic or honest. The book is written in a diary-like style, breaking down every minute, starting at 08.30 in the morning of September 11 and ending at 10:29 with the breaking down of the towers.

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[221] Ibid.
[222] Beigbeder, Frédéric. *Windows on the World*. Harper Collins, New York 2005, p. 17 f.

The critics of "Windows on the World" are diverse, ranging from *cheap*, *questionable*, and *uninspired*, with close relations to Michel Houellebecq and his pessimist worldview[223] (Stuttgarter Zeitung) to a "remarkable achievement[224]", "elegiac, glancing, and suitably embarrassed[225]" and a novel that "is steeped in both humility and deep affection of America[226]" (The Economist). The way the novel is written needs some time to get used to especially because he includes many features such as lyrics, lists, addresses, phone numbers and names; sometimes a chapter is only five or six words long, sometimes it covers five or six pages.

The main point that "Windows on the World" makes - no matter if received positively (dealing with the experienced trauma) or negatively (as an self-orchestration of Frédéric Beigbeder as an author, journalist and essayist) - is that it was one of the first works of literature that was published after 9/11, directly addressing the falling of the towers and the victims. Maybe because Beigbeder is French and not American he has a different angle from which he assesses the events and this makes it possible to write about it with a certain distance, but without being neither too blunt nor too bland.

3.5. **Sound/Music**

When it comes to music, many American artists dedicated songs, entire albums or charity concerts to the events of 9/11. This expression of feelings through sound is, along with the expression through images, just as important and should not be left out of the discussion. Even though the first thing that comes to mind when thinking about 9/11 might be the actual image/picture of the planes crashing into the World Trade Center – but the *sound* of the trauma cannot be omitted in this context. Imagine what it is like for a blind man or woman that can only feel the world through sound - this sense, apart from the ability to see, is for a blind person quintessential for going through life. In general, sound plays a crucial role in overcoming trauma. The part of sound I want to focus on is music as we know it - pop and rock songs with lyrics that deal with trauma (in our case 9/11) and the feelings that result from it, no matter if directly or indirectly connected to the trauma.

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[223] Cf. Graubner, Hans-Joachim. *Windows on the world. Selbstinszenierung am 11. September.* Stuttgarter Zeitung vom 16.04.2004, veröffentlicht am 22.11.2004. http://www.stuttgarter-zeitung.de/stz/page/834680_0_9223_-fr-d-ric-beigbeder-windows-on-the-world.html (Nov 4, 2010).
[224] Windows on the World. *The unbearable brightness of seeing.* The Economist, May 19, 2005. http://www.economist.com/node/3984006 (Nov 4, 2010).
[225] Ibid.
[226] Ibid.

Jeffrey Melnick lists roughly 100 songs by various (mostly American) singer/songwriters (there surely are thousands more) in his book "9/11 Culture" that talk about the events, the aftermath and/or give advice on how to deal with them. Among those song titles are provocative ones with not much content, such as "Bin Laden" by Three 6 Mafia (a rap band originating in Memphis, Tennessee) where they mainly talk about hemp with an "explosive" effect that is named after Bin Laden.

Internationally recognized artists such as the Black Eyed Peas ("Where is the Love?"), the American country singer Toby Keith ("American Soldier", "Beer for my Heroes", "The Taliban Son" and "Courtesy of the Red, White and Blue"), the British singer George Michael ("Shoot the Dog"), the bands Fleetwood Mac ("Illume (9/11)") or Pearl Jam ("World Wide Suicide") do not leave the topic untouched.

3.5.1. Bruce Springsteen & 9/11

I want to concentrate on Bruce Springsteen, nicknamed "the Boss", who dedicated not less than four LPs to September 11, 2001 and his home nation America. John Mead in "9/11, Manhood, Mourning, and the American Romance" says Springsteen released "The Rising" (the album my emphasis is on and his first out of those four dedicated LPs) as a "Rock & Roll Legend and American Hero[227]" because since the "Reagan era, Springsteen had become the sort of icon of American manliness (…) and as an icon he responded to 9/11 by producing an iconic album with his similarly iconic E Street Band.[228]" Mead characterizes Springsteen's work in general as telling the (hi)story of the vaporizing of the lower and middle classes in the American society with a very gloomy outlook on the future and a very dysfunctional love/hate relationship with the American society, culture, and politics.[229] Mead calls the Boss "consciously or unconsciously (…) the voice of a Lost Generation that doesn't quite realize it's lost.[230]" The historian goes back into Springsteen's earlier times and briefly analyzes his first albums, already quite sinister and sometimes also very gloomy, that tell the tales of everyday Americans coping with all kinds of traumas: death, losing a loved one, sickness,

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[227] Mead, John. *9/11, Manhood, Mourning, and the American Romance.* p. 64 in: Birkenstein, Jeff et al. (Ed.). *Reframing 9/11. Film, Popular Culture and the „War on Terror"* (Continuum, New York 2010).
[228] Ibid.
[229] Cf. Mead, John. *9/11, Manhood, Mourning, and the American Romance.* p. 65 in: Birkenstein, Jeff et al. (Ed.). *Reframing 9/11. Film, Popular Culture and the „War on Terror"* (Continuum, New York 2010).
[230] Ibid.

poverty, or an accident[231]. The four albums Springsteen released since 9/11 that have the theme of dealing with traumas (9/11 as well as the 2005 hurricane Katrina destroying the city of New Orleans, Louisiana) are

(1) *The Rising* (July 30, 2002),
(2) *Devils and Dust* (April 26, 2005),
(3) *We Shall Overcome: The Seeger Sessions* (April 25, 2006; "American Land Edition": Oct 3, 2006), and
(4) *Magic* (Oct 2, 2007).[232]

The first LP was the before briefly introduced "The Rising". It was released less than one year after the attacks on the World Trade Center, on July 30, 2002, and is probably the most well known of the four CDs to be about 9/11. John Mead tells a story about Springsteen he got from journalist William Langewiesche about a fan coming up to Bruce Springsteen's car and telling him that he was very much needed by his fans in this strenuous times and this encounter then inspired Springsteen to compose and release "The Rising"[233]. It was the moment when Springsteen decided to live up to this demand and right away started working (even though not all of the songs were written after 9/11 - he had written some of the songs before but never released, for example the last song on the LP "My City Of Ruins"). If one takes a look at the names of the songs, they mirror everything the LP is about: the attacks, the heroes, the lost ones (especially the lost ones), the ones left behind and at the end – a "city of ruins" as he calls it in his last song on the album:

1. Lonesome Day
2. Into The Fire
3. Waitin' On A Sunny Day
4. Nothing Man
5. Empty Sky
6. Countin' On A Miracle
7. Worlds Apart
8. Let's Be Friends (Skin To Skin)
9. Further On (Up The Road)
10. The Fuse
11. Mary's Place
12. You're Missing
13. The Rising
14. Paradise
15. My City Of Ruins

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[231] Cf. ibid.
[232] Melnick, Jeffrey. *9/11 Culture*. John Wiley & Sons, Chichester 2009. p. 175.
[233] Mead, John. *9/11, Manhood, Mourning, and the American Romance*. p. 64 in: Birkenstein, Jeff et al. (Ed.). *Reframing 9/11. Film, Popular Culture and the „War on Terror"* (Continuum, New York 2010).

The sound of "The Rising" is often to be describes as "arena-scale rock and roll sound[234]" with lots of "bromides[235]" and might therefore not be considered one of the best Bruce Springsteen albums sound-wise but certainly one of the most close-to-heart ones since it was released not even one year after September 11. The German newspaper "Der Spiegel" wrote in its review from August 5, 2002:

> Auf seinem neuen Album 'The Rising' verarbeitet Bruce Springsteen pflichtschuldig die traumatischen Ereignisse vom 11. September und ruft zur allgemeinen Erlösung und Erbauung auf. Ironie des Schicksals: Wenn America in einen neuen Krieg zieht, könnte ausgerechnet Bruce Springsteen der erste Gewinner sein.[236]

> (On his new album "The Rising" Bruce Springsteen processes - in duty bound – the traumatic events of September 11 and calls for general redemption and edification. Irony of faith: when America engages in warfare, Bruce Springsteen could be the first winner.)

Furthermore, "Der Spiegel" calls "The Rising" a "spiritual, moving and almost religious work on the soul of the Nation after September 11 of last year, the only meaningful musical utterance.[237]" Even the renowned "Rolling Stone Magazine" gave "The Rising" five out of five possible stars and even rates it his second best album yet.

> With his new album, *The Rising*, Springsteen wades into the wreckage and pain of that horrendous event and emerges bearing fifteen songs that genuflect with enormous grace before the sorrows that drift in its wake. The small miracle of his accomplishment is that at no point does he give vent to the anger felt by so many Americans: the hunger for revenge. The music is often fierce in its execution, but in essence it is a requiem for those who perished in that sudden inferno, and those who died trying to save them. Springsteen grandly salutes their innocence and their courage, and holds out a hand to those who mourn them, who seek the comfort of an explanation for the inexplicable.[238]

Especially songs like "You're Missing" go straight to the heart of the listener with its simple, but moving lyrics:

> Your house is waiting, your house is waiting, for you to walk in, for you to walk in, but you're missing, you're missing, you're missing

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[234] Melnick, Jeffrey. *9/11 Culture*. John Wiley & Sons, Chichester 2009. p. 158.
[235] Ibid.
[236] Willander, Arne. *„The Rising". Springsteens Suche nach den letzten Dingen.* Der Spielel vom 05. August 2002. http://www.spiegel.de/kultur/musik/0,1518,208265,00.html (Oct 16, 2010).
[237] Cf. ibid.
[238] Loder, Kurt. „Bruce Springsteen – The Rising. Review."
http://www.rollingstone.com/music/reviews/album/7733/37915 (Oct 16, 2010).

> when I shut the light, you're missing when I close my eyes, you're missing when I see the sun rise, you're missing.[239]

The concluding statement of "The Rising", the song "My City Of Ruins" (it is one of the songs written and performed in 2000, originally about the "decaying Jersey shore[240]") can even be interpreted as a prayer, the words "Come on, rise up!", "With these hands, I pray Lord", or "We pray for the lost, Lord" are constantly repeated. It seems to depict faith as a last resort to turn to when everything else has failed, when the lost ones could not be saved from the top floors of the towers, when the firemen who tried to save them gave their lives in the effort. Being the last track on the record gives this song certain strength and power, like a final saying with a powerful endnote.

Another quick look will be taken at the third album, "The Seeger Sessions". It was released twice in 2006 and is fully named "We Shall Overcome: The Seeger Sessions". Bruce Springsteen reinterprets mostly reinterprets songs by the 1919 born American folk singer Pete Seeger. The first release was on April 25, 2006 and some five months later it was re-issued as a special "American Land Edition" that includes three more bonus tracks, called "Bring 'Em Home", "How Can A Poor Man Stand Such Times And Live" and - last but not least - the self-titled "American Land.[241]" It has to be said that the songs recorded for this session are not directly in memory of September 11, 2001 but mainly about the destruction of New Orleans by Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and some of them have been around for more than fifty years. But this does not derogate the album from being very much about tragedy in general, including 9/11 as well as Hurricane Katrina. On the official Bruce Springsteen homepage the liner notes to each one of the songs on this album is available for download that explain the origin of the lyrics. The lyrics for the last bonus track on the CD, "American Land", are a call for patriotism and for Americans to remember what their country actually stands for and what history it has. It can be described as a truly patriotic piece of writing and goes back to the "American Dream" and the connotation of America being the land of the free and the home of the brave as the national anthem "The Star Spangled Banner" suggests. "American Land" was – according to the afore mentioned liner notes from Bruce Springsteen's homepage – written by Springsteen himself but was "inspired by 'He Lies in the American Land', a poem

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[239] Springsteen, Bruce. "You're Missing" Lyrics.
http://www.brucespringsteen.net/songs/YoureMissing.html (Oct 19, 2010)
[240] Mead, John. *9/11, Manhood, Mourning, and the American Romance.* p. 66 in: Birkenstein, Jeff et al. (Ed.). *Reframing 9/11. Film, Popular Culture and the „War on Terror"* (Continuum, New York 2010).
[241] Cf. http://brucespringsteen.net/albums/weshallovercome.html (Oct 26, 2010)

by a Slovakian immigrant steelworker that Pete Seeger later translated and set to music.[242]”

4. Today – Ground Zero and Western-Eastern-Relations

4.1. The Mosque at Ground Zero

Voices
A traveling dialogue across the USA

■ **New York, N.Y.**

What is your view on N.Y. mosque?

“I'm fine with it. I also find it a little silly that people are so up in arms about this particular development when there are already multiple mosques in the neighborhood.”

— David Chernikoff
Berkeley, Calif.

Photos by Thad Allender, USA TODAY

“I have mixed feelings about it. Building a mosque near Ground Zero is a tremendous emotional risk.”

— Beth Kates, Boston
(former N.Y. resident)

“It's a slap in the face to all the victims of 9/11 and the city of New York and the country.”

— Daryl Guest
Starkville, Miss.

“I think it's a great thing.”

— Marshall Sealy
New York City

“If it's something that upsets people, then perhaps they should voluntarily do it somewhere else. But they do have the right to be there.”

— Kenny Fink
Long Island, N.Y.

VOICES How do you feel about an Islamic center near Ground Zero?

Let your voice be heard at voices.usatoday.com
► Comment via Twitter
► Post your own video response
► View our archive of other questions

Image # 4 USA Today (September 11, 2010)

On September 11, 2010 another controversial idea arose and started numerous heated discussions: the plans to build a mosque only two blocks away from

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[242] http://brucespringsteen.net/Seeger_Marsh_Notes.html (Oct 16, 2010).

Ground Zero, the place where the twin towers once stood. One of the most widespread newspapers in America, *USA Today*, asked five random people on the street for their September 11, 2010 issue what they think about the plans to erect a mosque and a Muslim community center where so many US-Americans had died only nine years before (see Image #4). Beth Kates, a Bostonian woman who used to live in New York, calls this "a tremendous emotional risk[243]" and Kenny Fink from Long Island, NY, concedes the right to build the mosque at Ground Zero but considers it as something that "upsets people" - this shows that Americans clearly have not forgotten what has happened on this sunny Tuesday in September in 2001 in NYC. The emotional attachment is still very strong and very much influences the thoughts of US-natives and residents.

The project is called "Park51" but is mostly referred to as "Ground Zero Mosque". The plans are to build it close to Ground Zero (which has meanwhile become a sacred place in America and is now a landmark like the twin towers were before), in a building that has been damaged by the collapse of the World Trade Center. The delicacy lies in the fact that a mosque is a sacred place of the Muslim religion and the terrorists that hijacked the planes were instantly depicted as being of Muslim faith. George W. Bush in his September 20, 2001 "Address to the Joint Session of Congress and the American People" makes some careful accusations and distinctions, blaming the attacks on the jealousy of the democratic (American) way of life of some radical Muslims:

> I also want to speak tonight directly to Muslims throughout the world. We respect your faith. It's practiced freely by many millions of Americans, and by millions more in countries that America counts as friends. Its teachings are good and peaceful, and those who commit evil in the name of Allah blaspheme the name of Allah. The terrorists are traitors to their own faith, trying, in effect, to hijack Islam itself. The enemy of America is not our many Muslim friends; it is not our many Arab friends. Our enemy is a radical network of terrorists, and every government that supports them. Our war on terror begins with al Qaeda, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped, and defeated.
> Americans are asking, why do they hate us? They hate what they see right here in this chamber -- a democratically elected government. Their leaders are self-appointed. They hate our freedoms -- our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote and assemble and disagree with each other. They want to overthrow existing governments in many Muslim countries, such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan. They want to drive Israel out of the Middle East. They want to drive Christians and Jews out

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[243] USA Today, September 22, 2010. *Voices. A traveling dialogue across the USA. What is your view on N.Y. mosque?*.

of vast regions of Asia and Africa. These terrorists kill not merely to end lives, but to disrupt and end a way of life. With every atrocity, they hope that America grows fearful, retreating from the world and forsaking our friends. They stand against us, because we stand in their way. (...) No one should be singled out for unfair treatment or unkind words because of their ethnic background or religious faith. [244]

In order to understand the discourse surrounding the plans of a Mosque one has to understand the relationship between the United States and Arab Americans. Nadine Naber, one of the editors of "Race and Arab Americans Before and After 9/11" uses the term "invisibility" as one of the key terms in American-Arabic discourse, often closely combined with inferiority. This invisibility of Arab Americans has changed quickly as well as suddenly with the impacts of 9/11 and then often grew into anger, mistrust and even hatred against "persons perceived to be Arab, Middle Eastern, South Asian, and/or Muslim.[245]" From that point onwards, those people were perceived as a threat to the nation of the United States as having providing the origin of terrorism, violence and fear. Naber provides a definition of the term "Arab":

> The meaning of the term 'Arab' is contested. Commonly used among scholars is the definition 'Arab' as a cultural and linguistic term that includes persons from countries where the primary language is Arabic. Another definition, influenced by the Arab nationalist movements (...) assumes that Arab is also a national identity and that Arabs share a language and a common cultural and imagined national community.[246]

Louise Cainkar in her essay "Thinking Outside the Box. Arabs and Race in the United States" differentiates between the history of Arabs in the Unites States and the history of other immigrant races in the United States because "the radicalization process experienced by Arab Americans differ in both historical timing and pretext from that of other groups in the United States[247]." At the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, Arab Americas had roughly the same rights as the whites, especially when it comes to "land ownership, employment, voting, and naturalization (...), and social patterns, such

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[244] Bush, George W. *Addrees to Joint Session of Congress and the American People. September 20, 2001. http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/gwbush911jointsessionspeech.htm (Nov 12, 2010).*
[245] Paragraph & Quote cf. Naber, Nadine. *Introduction. Arab Americans and U.S. Racial Formations,* p. 1f. in: Amaney, Jamal. Naber, Nadine (Ed.). *Race and Arab Americans Before and After 9/11. From invisible citizens to visible subjects.* (Syracuse University Press, New York 2008).
[246] Ibid., p. 5.
[247] Cainkar, Louise. *Thinking Outside the Box. Arabs and Race in the United States,* p. 47, in: Amaney, Jamal. Naber, Nadine (Ed.). *Race and Arab Americans Before and After 9/11. From invisible citizens to visible subjects.* (Syracuse University Press, New York 2008).

as freedom of movement and residential and marital commingling.[248]" Arabs function, so Cainkar, as "open targets" because "perpetuation and reinforcement of stigmatized views and political isolation of Arab Americans left them open targets for collective punishment after the 9/11 attacks on the United States[249]." The important term here is "collective punishment" because after the ones supposedly pulling the strings were immediately identified as Arabic/of Muslim faith people that appeared to be Muslim often suffered ignorance and/or violence. Cainkar sees the beginning of Arab racism in the 1960ies and the 1990ies when "both Arabs and Muslims were represented as persons of inherently different values and dispositions from 'Americans[250]'" making them an easy target for racism. She sees race as having "tremendous significance in American society (...) despite the efforts of the civil rights movement and affirmative action.[251]"

Representation of Arabs in U.S. media and society is mostly visible in popular cultural text production of movies and TV series – before 9/11, Arabs were usually portrayed as "villains, oppressed women, exotic belly dancers, rich sheiks with harems, and most remarkable as terrorists[252]" and this trend, so Evelyn Alsultany, "continued and increased[253]" after 9/11. As the counterpart to this representation there is also a new trend visible, according to Alsultany, who is an American culture professor at the University of Michigan. There are now "sympathetic portrayals that humanize Arab and Muslim Americans[254]" that can be seen as "counter representations of Arabs and Muslims as terrorists and fundamentalists, backward and uncivilized[255]." These counter representations are very important because usually a TV audience is only provided with one popular opinion:

> Characters that humanize Arab Americans were introduced along with story lines reflecting Arab and Muslim Americans in a post 9/11 predicament, caught between being associated with the terrorist attack by virtue of ethnicity or religion and being American.[256]

To go deeper into the discourse of race or ethnicity would be too big of a topic to discuss and elaborate on at this point. To learn more about the issue of race and ethnicity read Jorge J. E. Gracia's "Surviving Race, Ethnicity, and Nationality. A

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[248] Ibid., p. 46.
[249] Ibid., p. 50.
[250] Ibid., p. 79.
[251] Ibid.
[252] Alsultany, Evelyn. *The Prime-Time Plight of the Arab Muslim American after 9/11,* p. 205f in: Amaney, Jamal. Naber, Nadine (Ed.). *Race and Arab Americans Before and After 9/11. From invisible citizens to visible subjects.* (Syracuse University Press, New York 2008).
[253] Ibid.
[254] ibid.
[255] Ibid.
[256] Ibid., p. 206.

Challenge for the Twenty-First Century" (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., Oxford 2005).

4.2. **The Shanksville memorial & 9/11 merchandise**

> But without stuff, how would we deal[257]?
>
> Heather Havrilesky

Apart from the mosque at Ground Zero, there are plans to erect a second memorial: the *9/11 memorial* in Shanksville, Pennsylvania, with the aim to "tell the story of the terror attack nine years ago.[258]" It is estimated to cost roughly sixty million Dollars and is being built on what James R. Hagerty of "The Wall Street Journal" calls "plenty of open space for quiet reflection[259]" which will be - after it is finished - under the control of the American National Part Service (see Image # 5 below, Wall Street Journal article). Hagerty also casted several voices that are not quite satisfied with the erection of such a memorial, demanding, for example, more jobs for the families of victims instead. The article features a picture of a $ 2.99 "Remember the Heroes" - shot glass that is sold in a store near the location, alongside many other merchandise articles. Joanne Hanley, who works for the National Park Service, is defending the monstrosity of the building. She is supported by some of the relatives of the victims because they fear that the victims of flight 93 will be forgotten soon, also due to the overwhelming presence of Ground Zero and the Pentagon. They want the memorial for their lost ones who did certainly not get as much attention as the victims in New York City did. One can now argue that this lack of attention might not be the worst thing because it provides silence and space for mourning and overcoming what has happened. On the other hand the memorial might be as well be the place where remembrance should happen because sets an appropriate frame for mourning.

The memorial in Shanksville furthermore leads to the not to be neglected issue of commercialism. 9/11 has been highly merchandised over the past few years, the shot glasses from Shanksville only highlight the fact that merchandise does not stop with terrorist attacks. Does popular culture also fall into this category of

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[257] Havrilesky, Heather. *The selling of 9/11*. September 7, 2002.
http://dir.salon.com/mwt/feature/2002/09/07/purchase_power/index.html (Nov 17, 2010), p. 1.
[258] Hagerty, James R. *A 9/11 Shrine of Their Own*. In: The Wall Street Journal. September 10, 2010.
[259] Ibid.

commercialization? If yes, to what extent and why? I propose the theory that 9/11 has been commercialized in two ways:

(1) <u>Commercialization as processing/as a voice of trauma</u>: Commercialization as processing is the category that many of the pieces of popular culture of this theses fall into. Obviously, movies are made to draw in revenue, otherwise the producers, actors and everybody else involved would have worked for a very small amount of money - but those items of commerciality also carry a second important function, aside from box office success, namely the function to confronting the trauma.

(2) <u>Commercialization as profiting</u>: Commercialization as profiting is mostly associated with actual merchandise such as pins, pens, tags and t-shirts for example.

Some of the items might be put into both categories but the line where good taste and/or respect ends and commercialization starts is thin one and very hard not to cross, especially with movies, film productions, literature, as well as merchandise. The shot glasses sold in Pennsylvania are obviously beyond the line of taste but as Heather Havrilesky bluntly states: "In America, we grieve by buying stuff. Shopping soothes us, reassures us that we're coping, that we're moving on.[260]" She goes on to describe the commercial items available for sale as a

> dizzying rage of merchandise (...) from full-color photography books to NYPD policeman dolls to crystal replicas of the twin towers (...), by trivializing the tragic, we reduce its proportions enough to put it behind us.[261]

But has America put 9/11 behind yet? Havrilesky proposes also the two opinions of why this merchandise has been promoted so soon after 9/11 whereas movies and documentaries had to wait at least five long years for a first publication: either "giving voice to the pain we share[262]" or "exploiting that pain by shamelessly cashing in on tragic circumstances.[263]" The enormous production of 9/11 pens, T-Shirts, flag pins, or small World Trade Center necklaces seem somewhat blunt and cheap after a tragic event that has nauseated and frozen an entire nation beyond belief. Havrilesky describes the different groups that are aimed for with different kinds of merchandise and there are items for everybody: kids, art lovers, and many others more, for example anti-terrorism/anti-Osama

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[260] Havrilesky, Heather. *The selling of 9/11*. September 7, 2002.
http://dir.salon.com/mwt/feature/2002/09/07/purchase_power/index.html (Nov 17, 2010), p. 1.
[261] Ibid.
[262] Ibid.
[263] Ibid.

Bin Land toilet paper with the message "Help wipe out terrorism!"[264] She connects the exploitation to the giving-voice-theory:

> But as easy as it may be to write off all 9/11-related merchandise as the work of opportunistic trinket peddlers, it's realistic to assume that many of these efforts began, at least, in an attempt to translate some difficult feelings into action. Given the vast numbers of us who felt moved to do something, anything, in the wake of 9/11, whether to honor its victims, reconcile our guilt at surviving, guard against further attacks, or simply peel ourselves from the TV and the papers and escape an overwhelming feeling of frustration, anger and helplessness, the current glut of commemorative commodities makes perfect sense.[265]

Important also is the guilt of not buying an item that will help 9/11 remember forever, so Havrileksi. The fear of forgetting what as happened over the years is the exact same motivations that make most Americans purchase such merchandise, at least one or two pieces, to force themselves remember[266]. At the Shanksville memorial, even though not having such a prominent location as Ground Zero at the heart of New York City - one of the world's most colorful and prominent urban centers - the shot glasses and its likes are probably bought out of the sheer fear of forgetting Flight 93 as well as the fear of being *the odd one out* by not owning a piece of remembrance. To conclude this chapter I want to quote Heather Havrileski once again, making a very true statement about the American tradition of remembering and forgetting:

> But in some ways, buying stuff means we'll forget even faster. In America, pledging to remember is just another step on the road to forgetting. We buy new games and plan trips and put together photo albums and take vacations and shoot video and save ticket stubs, just to file it all away and move on to the next style, the next technology, the next car, couch, dress, job, the next distraction. Our screens are updated and refreshed constantly, we don't have to move a muscle to move forward, we don't have to think at all to change our minds, to put the last choice behind us.
> Five basketball seasons, 53 movies, seven hair colors, two gym memberships, four long distance carriers, three girlfriends and two e-mail addresses from now, we'll be scrapping those commemorative plates at a yard sale. In America today, those who can't remember the past for more than two seconds without getting interrupted by their cell phones may be condemned to repeat it.[267]

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[264] Cf. Ibid. p. 2.
[265] Cf. Ibid.
[266] Cf. Ibid., p. 3.
[267] Cf. Ibid.

A 9/11 Shrine of Their Own

Rural Pennsylvania Community Seeks to Preserve Memory of the Heroes of Flight 93

BY JAMES R. HAGERTY

SHANKSVILLE, Pa.— Community leaders here are preparing to display their progress toward creating a 9/11 memorial that, along with projects in New York City and at the Pentagon, will tell the story of the terror attack nine years ago.

They are scheduled to be joined Saturday by first lady Michelle Obama and her predecessor, Laura Bush, for a ceremony at the rural site of the Sept. 11, 2001, crash of United Airlines Flight 93, where a $60 million memorial complex is being built to honor the 40 passengers and crew members who died after fighting hijackers.

Compared with Manhattan and the Pentagon, where three other hijacked flights crashed that day, the Pennsylvania countryside has plenty of open space for quiet reflection and is easy to reach by car.

"Accessibility-wise, it's perfect," Ron Aldom, executive director of the Somerset County Chamber of Commerce, said of the 1,600-acre memorial site at a former coal mine near Shanksville, in the Laurel Highlands 80 miles east of Pittsburgh.

"It is our job to make sure that future generations know what happened here that day," said Joanne Hanley, superintendent for Western Pennsylvania of the National Park Service, which is responsible for building and maintaining the memorial.

But some people here see the planned memorial—featuring a wall engraved with names of the passengers and crew members, 40 groves of trees and a tower with wind chimes—as excessive. Julie Riggs, who works for a local construction firm and was having a drink Wednesday evening at Castagna's lounge, a few miles from the memorial site, was surprised to hear of the projected $60 million cost.

"Is it made out of gold?" Ms. Riggs asked. She said it would be better "to do something that brings more jobs."

There is also a risk that the

A store is selling Flight 93 shot glasses close to the memorial site.

James R. Hagerty/The Wall Street Journal

tone of dignified reflection sought by the memorial's architects won't be completely adopted by souvenir merchants. Just down the road from the site, a Duppstadt's Country Store

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> 'It is our job to make sure that future generations know what happened here that day.'

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is selling Flight 93 shot glasses for $2.99 apiece, along with T-shirts, ball caps, stuffed bears and refrigerator magnets extolling the struggle of the passengers to seize control of the plane from terrorists.

Local municipalities rejected an effort by the county to adopt stricter zoning rules to control development around the site. As a result, "anybody could do pretty much anything they choose to," said Jim Marker, a Somerset county commissioner.

Ms. Hanley said she has seen no sign of crass commercialization on the periphery of the park. She also defends the cost, saying the crash site is large and requires improved roads and utilities as well as the memorial. A small memorial in such a big site might look like a mere "hood ornament," she added.

A federal commission determined that the terrorists planned to crash Flight 93 into the Capitol in Washington but were prevented when some of

the passengers stormed the cockpit. To put the cost in perspective, Ms. Hanley said, "we would either be building the memorial or we would be rebuilding the Capitol."

About $30 million of the cost is to be covered by private donations, and the rest has been allocated by the state and federal governments. So far, 65,000 donors have contributed a total of $18 million, according to the National Park Foundation, which is coordinating the efforts. A new public-service ad campaign calls for people to send in $10 donations by text message. For the second year in a row, the Pittsburgh Steelers football team is arranging a fund-raising dinner for the memorial, with sponsorships starting at $4,000.

Some family members are counting on the memorial, which as yet has no target date for completion, to ensure Flight 93 doesn't become a mere footnote when future generations learn about the terrorist attacks, said Gordon Felt, whose brother Edward was killed in the crash.

Manny Patel, who owns a Quality Inn motel in the town of Somerset, about 15 miles from the memorial, plans to open a new Holiday Inn Express next door by mid-2011. Some visitors will want newer, more upscale rooms than are now available, Mr. Patel said.

There are only about 2,000 motel rooms within 20 miles, said Mr. Aldom, the chamber-of-commerce director. More may be needed if the completed memorial draws, as expected, 250,000 or so visitors a year.

In 2009, about 150,000 people visited the temporary memorial, where visitors can hang flowers and other tributes on a chain-link fence and read about the 9/11 events inside a rusty corrugated-steel building once used by a mining company.

Some find the site moving even in its unfinished state. "I do not like the bad guys in this world," a child identified only as Morgan wrote in the visitor center. "Thank you for saving us."

Image # 5 The Wall Street Journal (September 10, 2010)

5. **Conclusion**

Replying to all the unanswered questions about 9/11 and its impact will not be possible for a long time to come because only a short period of time has passed since the planes were hijacked and brought down on September 11, 2001 - it has only been less than ten years, too short to really grasp the aftermath in all its complexity, how much damage it has caused on which levels, and how many things would have been different in all aspects of life, but it still demonstrates how – especially considering this short amount of time – this incident was able to alter people's lives forever.

Personally, I propose the theory that the terrorist attacks on American soil (which has always been sacred and untouchable to Americans) have started changing everything from the very first second onwards and that this change was visible on every level of popular culture right away because the conscious *lack* of talking about 9/11 made it even more a central topic, the production of popular culture *not* touching the subject is very much producing a different, new kind of popular culture than what would not have been fabricated if 9/11 had not happened. The way the United States dealt with 9/11 surely is exceptional and this notable response is resulting from the unique history of the United States, how the development of a very powerful self-perception has shaped them the way they are, and furthermore from tremendous self-respect and self-esteem.

The crucial issue of agenda-setting (see Chapter 3.1.) leads to the discourse whether issues are created by the media and then distributed in a selected way or whether those issues are first created within a society, afterwards taken up by the media and then re-distributed to the public (i.e. as a reaction to current trends within the society but still prone to selection). As mentioned in Chapter 3.1., my theory is that the trends do come from within society, but are/can be altered - certain strings are very much selected by the media; those selected strings then are represented in, for example, news coverage, TV productions, movies, or other cultural texts.

As Todd Leopold in "Entertainment, a year later" quotes Brice Zabel (head of the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, responsible for the Emmys) who once said: "I honestly think we err too much in [trying to determine] trends. We might not know the real impact [of September 11] for a decade[268]." This decade is now almost over and still, this "real impact" is not visible in its greater extent and will not be for many years to come.

This assessment of the current situation divides the cultural text production into five categories of cultural texts into which most of the produced cultural items can be placed and especially the drawing of Muslim characters in film and TV productions is an interesting aspect: Muslim/Arab (often there is no distinction) characters as villains vs. Muslim/Arab characters as wrongfully accused/heroic characters. Here, the TV show "24" is a good example because (especially after Day 1) most of the main villains are of Arab origin: in Day 2 the terrorist Sayed Ali smuggled a nuclear bomb in the United States and wants to carry out his actions with the help of three other countries from the Middle East. The main focus lies on Sayed Ali (as Sayed Ali was the mastermind behind the plan to assassinate the United States) even though the connections to other Middle Eastern states turn out to have been staged by a oil industrialist named Peter Kingsley.

The aim of my thesis was neither to glorify the United States nor to exaggeratedly praise them because of their strong sense of unity and togetherness but to point out how this interaction and interconnectedness has made them the nation the United States of America are today: no doubt extremely powerful, high in self-esteem and very focused and concentrated on issues at hand. This determination and patriotism might also lead to a dangerous and harmful stubbornness that provides a basis for narrow-minded as well as limited worldview but has also been the reason why the United States have always been a close-knit nation, providing the feeling that they - together, as a single state - can overcome the most strenuous phases, radical terrorist attacks and economic depression in their own way of dealing with those historical catastrophes. This is also mirrored in the cultural text production as well as in politics - two fields that are as well closely connected.

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268 Leopold, Todd. *Entertainment, a year later.*
http://edition.cnn.com/2002/SHOWBIZ/News/09/06/ar911.entertainment/ (Oct 21, 2010)

I want to conclude this thesis with words of George W. Bush's speech on September 11, 2001 that perfectly characterize the soul of the American nation in the light of the terrorist attacks:

> These acts of mass murder were intended to frighten our nation into chaos and retreat. But they have failed. Our country is strong. A great people has been moved to defend a great nation.
> Terrorist attacks can shake the foundations of our biggest buildings, but they cannot touch the foundation of America. These acts shatter steel, but they cannot dent the steel of American resolve.
> America was targeted for attack because we're the brightest beacon for freedom and opportunity in the world. And no one will keep that light from shining.
> (...)This is a day when all Americans from every walk of life unite in our resolve for justice and peace. America has stood down enemies before, and we will do so this time.[269]

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[269] Bush, George W.: Speech on 9/11 on CNN.
http://edition.cnn.com/2001/US/09/11/bush.speech.text/index.html (Nov 12, 2010).

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Curriculum Vitae

Allgemeines

Name:	Lena Katharina Netrval
Adresse:	Isbarygasse 8A/13, A-1140 Wien
Email:	lena.netrval@chello.at
Staatsangehörigkeit:	Österreich
Geburtsdatum:	06.11.1985
Geburtsort:	Wien

Ausbildung

seit 2007	Studium Geschichte an der Universität Wien (Absolvierung 1. Abschnitt am 30. Juli 2010)
seit 2005	Studium Anglistik & Amerikanistik an der Universität Wien (laufend, 1. Abschnitt absovliert im SS 2011)
2004 – 2005	Studium Jus an der Universität Wien (abgebrochen)
2001 – 2002	Auslandsjahr während der 6. Klasse an der Tift County High School in Tifton, GA (USA) mit ausgezeichnetem Erfolg als 3. meines Jahrganges
1996 – 2004	Besuch des GRG/ORG Maroltingergasse (neusprachlicher Zweig) in 1160 Wien, Abschluss mit ausgezeichnetem Erfolg
1992 – 1996	Besuch der VS Karl-Toldt-Weg in 1140 Wien

Berufserfahrung

Jun 2008 – heute	Aerobic Instruktorin Holmes Place (ehem. Elixia) in 1140Wien + in div. anderen Fitnesstudios in Wien
Jun 2008 – April 2010	Sales Consultant Fitnessstudio Holmes Place (ehem. Elixia) in 1140 Wien (15h/Woche)
Sept – Dez 2007	Rezeptionistin & Aerobic Instruktorin Fitnessstudio Beer'sin 1010 Wien (10h/Woche)
Jan – Jul 2007	Assistenz eines Seniorpartners bei CMS Reich Rohrwig Hainz in 1010 Wien (40h/Woche)

Sonstige Tätigkeiten

2008 – heute	Mitglied des „ARBÖ Ricoh Ladies Cycling Teams" mit dem ich Strassenradrennen (Kat. Frauen Elite) in ganz Österreich und Europa bestreite (u.a. 12. Platz Österreichische Meisterschaften Kriterium 2010, 20. Platz Österreichische Staatsmeisterschaften Straße 2010, 2. Platz Team Gesamtwertung Österreichischer Frauencup 2010, 19. Platz Gesamteinzelwertung Österreichischer Frauencup 2010)
2005 – 2008	Mitglied des Vereins „Sport Nora", für welches Team ich Hobby Radrennen in ganz Österreich gefahren bin

Fremdsprachen, Auslandsaufenthalte und Zertifikate

Deutsch	Muttersprache
Englisch	Fließend in Wort und Schrift

- 2001 – 2002 Auslandsjahr in Tifton, GA (erfolgreiche Absolvierung als 3. meines Jahrganges)
- 2 x 4 Wochen Englisch Kurs auf der „Home End Farm" in Malvern, England (Sommer 1999, 2000)

Französisch	Maturaniveau (6 Jahre Schulfranzösisch)

- 3 x 1 Woche Französisch Kurs bei „Pierre Overall" in Cannes, Südfrankreich (Frühjahr 1991, 2001, 2002)
- Absolvierung „DELF" 1er Degré (2004; Unités A1 – A4)

Spanisch	Grundkenntnisse (3 Jahre Schulspanisch)

Weitere Fähigkeiten

MS Office	solide Kenntnisse
Mac OSX	solide Kenntnisse

Abstract (English)

In my thesis I explore the ways in which American culture has been affected by the terror attacks of September 11, 2001 and how this change in patriotism, American self-esteem and self-perception has changed over the time period from September 2001 until November 2010 by bringing examples of American popular culture as the means of representing change.

This change has come about in many different ways, shapes and sizes. I want to concentrate on the three most common areas of American popular culture: movies & TV, music, and literature. With examples of each category I want to show what various means were used to do so. I propose the theory that these changes happened immediately after 9/11, right on the spot, even though they might not be visible all the time at first sight. The way journalists wrote articles and essays changed, the way movies were produced was altered and they way musicians composed their lyrics was taken to another level.

I do not want to glamorize American self-esteem – which might seem quite exaggerated at times – but this exceptional self-confidence (which also serves a big economical as well as commercial factor) is one of the key factors in the trauma of 9/11 in reference to social adaption and awareness. Americans have learned to be a union since the 18th century when they fought – as an entity - against British rule and issued the Declaration of Independence in 1776. This union has strong bonds and roots which are not easily ruptured and which they protect avidly.

I propose five categories in which post-9/11 cultural texts can be divided into: the category of suppression/ignorance, the category of balance, the category of confrontation, the category of opinion and, last but not least, the category of pessimism/negativity. Especially the category of suppression/ignorance is the one that is present right after 9/11. The infamous photo of the "falling man" (it shows a man falling from the top floors of the World Trade Center before it collapsed, we do not know his motivation, we do not know if he fell or if he voluntarily jumped) falls into this category: it was published in a number of newspapers but soon afterwards banned from being published again because it was rejected due to its iconography. It was too soon for many Americans to face the tragedy in all its depth. This unwillingness or inability to face trauma and this imperturbable belief in the American success story from rags to riches and the classical American hero who does not give up, no matter what the obstacle, has led to and unwillingness and inability to *want* to face what has happened.

I close my thesis with an analysis of the current discussion about plans to erect a Mosque near Ground Zero (which has become quite a sacred place in New York City) and the issue of 9/11 merchandise.

Abstract (Deutsch)

In meiner Diplomarbeit beschäftige ich mich dem Einflüssen der Terroranschläge des 11. September 2001 auf das Amerikanische Selbstbewusstsein an Beispielen der sogenannten "American Popular Culture". Das Amerikanische Selbstbewusstsein und Einheitsgefühl geht zurück auf die Zeiten der Entdecker und Christopher Columbus, wird aber immer wieder durch Einflüsse wie eben 9/11 verändert und geprägt. Der von mir behandelte Zeitraum erstreckt sich vom 11. September 2001 bis November 2010. Diese Veränderungen der Popkultur kann man in vielen verschiedenen Bereichen sehen, ich möchte ich mich in meiner Arbeit auf die drei wahrscheinlich bekanntesten Gebiete konzentrieren: Film & Fernsehen, Musik, sowie Literatur. Ich werde Beispiele jeder Kategorie bringen und sie hinsichtlich ihrer Beeinflussung durch den 11. September analysieren. Ich bin der Meinung dass – nicht wie in einigen in Diskursen behauptet - die Produktion dieser *popular culture texts* am Tag des 11. September 2001 beginnt, und nicht erst später. Gerade auch diese Lücke des *Nicht-Gesagten* hat einen wichtigen Subtext und ist somit auch ein Bestandteil der *cultural text production*, der vom 9/11 beeinflusst wurde.

Die Absicht dieser Arbeit ist nicht das Amerikanische Selbstbewusstsein zu preisen – wenn es auch manchmal etwas übertrieben scheint – jedoch zu zeigen, dass diese Selbsteinschätzung ein wichtiger Faktor bezüglich der Reaktion auf das Trauma des 11. September ist. Seit dem 18. Jahrhundert haben die Amerikaner gelernt eine Einheit zu sein, vor allem im Kampf gegen Großbritannien und veröffentlichten schließlich 1776 die Unabhängigkeitserklärung, die ein großer Schritt in Richtung nationale Selbstbestimmung und Selbstbewusstsein war.

Ich stelle fünf Kategorien auf, in die *post-9/11 cultural texts* eingeordnet werden können: die der Unterdrückung, der Balance, der Konfrontation, der Meinungsäußerung und des Pessimismus. Besonders die der Unterdrückung und des Ignorierens gegenüber dem, was passiert ist, ist die Kategorie die unmittelbar nach den Terroranschlägen am meisten „benützt" wird. Auch das Foto des „Falling Man" (man sieht einen Mann vom World Trade Center fliegen/fallen, man weiß nicht ob er freiwillig gesprungen ist oder aber gestoßen wurde) spielt hier eine wichtige Rolle da es sofort nach der ersten Publikation wieder eingezogen wurde, da die Reaktionen zu massiv waren. Man wollte nicht glauben dass jemand so „un-amerikanisch" Handeln könne und sich entschlossen hat, aufzugeben.

Ich beschließe meine Arbeit mit einer Analyse des momentanen Diskurses bezüglich der Pläne, eine Moschee in der Nähe des Ground Zero zu errichten, der schon in so kurzer Zeit zu einem heiligen Ort in Amerika geworden ist und bezüglich der Vermarktung der Terroranschläge.

Thank You

Eidesstattliche Erklärung

Ich erkläre hiermit an Eides Statt, dass ich die vorliegende Arbeit selbständig und ohne Benutzung anderer als der angegebenen Hilfsmittel angefertigt habe. Die aus fremden Quellen direkt oder indirekt übernommenen Gedanken sind als solche kenntlich gemacht.

Die Arbeit wurde bisher in gleicher oder ähnlicher Form keiner anderen Prüfungsbehörde vorgelegt und auch noch nicht veröffentlicht.

Wien, 20. Dezember 2010.

Lena Katharina Netrval