TRANSCULTURAL IMAGES IN HOLLYWOOD CINEMA

DEBATES ON MIGRATION, IDENTITY, AND FINANCE

EDITED BY
UĞUR BALOĞLU AND
YILDIZ DERYA BIRINCIOĞLU

Transcultural Images in Hollywood Cinema

Communication, Globalization, and Cultural Identity

Series Editor: Jan Servaes

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Introduction

Israel Zangwill claims that in the theater play The Melting Pot, which was first staged in 1908 and described as "an excellent play" by the president of the United States Roosevelt, a new society has been formed in the United States, a country of immigrants, where all European races merge and melt in one pot. Although the idea of melting pot indicates the uprooting (deracination) and/or assimilation of immigrants, the theme of unity in differences becomes one of the symbolic features of the society of the United States at a time when liberal democracy is on the rise. Welsch argues that the multicultural structure of the United States has been transcended from the homogeneous structure of cultures with globalization and that they are now highly interconnected and intermingled. It is possible to say that in the global capitalist period, cultures are determined by lifestyles that prioritize consumption, and these styles now go beyond national borders and transcend nations, and cultures are linked with various points of contact through these lifestyles. Of course, this new complex cultural structure is the result of the flow of forced and noncompulsory migrants, economic dependencies, and new communication technologies connecting the whole world. In this respect, understanding the cultural texture represented/constructed in today's Hollywood cinema requires addressing the globalization process at the level of economic, political, and social institutions. Because today's institutional structures force individuals and societies to be open to the outside and also force cultures to interact with each other.

Globalization is effective in transforming cultures into a heterogeneous universe and in the interaction of individuals who want to leave their established order and establish order in other geographies. With the transformative nature of phenomena such as globalization and glocalization, the fluid, changeable and open to interaction structure of ethnic/cultural areas and

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cultures begins to be discussed with concepts such as transculturalism, inter-culturalism, and multiculturalism. In order to understand today's world and to interpret the fluidity of these cultures, the conceptualizations in Appadurai's globalization debate can be used. Appadurai, while talking about intercultural flow and transition, states that cultural areas containing ethnic patterns are reproduced voluntarily or involuntarily. At this point, the structure of these patterns, which are reproduced every day, destroying rules, boundaries, and patterns, is formed by the intricate links between cultures. The culture formed by the history of humankind and this culture gaining new meaning and qual-ity in every geography enables hybrid concepts/transnational perspective to be formed and even to gain continuity.

Concepts such as multiculturalism, interculturalism, and transculturalism, which are often used interchangeably or mixed, differ from each other in some respects. The common point of the concepts intersects with people moving constantly by changing their living spaces. So what is the main motivation for people to break from their roots and go on an unknown journey? Although the answer to this question includes different causations such as economic, ethnic, and gender, the hope of a better life lies at the heart of motivation. However, the distinction between dominant culture and minority culture in terms such as multiculturalism and interculturalism may lead to the identification of the minority group as the other, although efforts are made to overcome the differences in society through negotiation and to establish mutual understanding. This highlights the importance of the process of transculturalism, which offers an alternative to the structure in which the hope for a better life is lost in an intercultural and/or multicultural environment. Because transculturalism is a "fluid and dialogical process" between people with different cultural backgrounds who are in constant interaction in daily life.

Multiculturalism, which has gained new academic meaning maps, can be interpreted as pluralism in which hegemonic powers encourage ethnic elements within the framework of commercial and ideological purposes, as well as a phantasy that aims to protect cultural identities and ensure the integration of identities by stripping them from migration, colonization, and occupation. Multiculturalism, which transcends the boundaries of the nation-state and turns into a political structure for developing dialogue between heterogeneous cultural groups, enables the questioning and transformation of national identities. At this point, while multiculturalism is often used as a roadmap for the elimination of cultural conflicts, it is often used to trigger cultural conflicts and strengthen the borders of marginalization. Particularly, the political discourses developed by the United States after the 9/11 attacks and the fluid-structure of immigration policies regaining a solid character can be evaluated within this context.

Nevertheless, the United States, which had failed in the exam it gave with racism in the historical process, continues to behave in a way that supports Freud's thesis that the evil feelings of humanity do not disappear and continue to exist in a suppressed state. The events of September 11, which had a considerable impact on security policies and immigration politics, played a major role in the cultural encounters of Asia-Pacific (East) and West and the difficulties faced by the immigrant population within the framework of the phenomenon of multiculturalism in liberal democracies. This breaking point—the 9/11 attacks—which is effective in gaining new meanings for the concepts of multiculturalism, transculturalism, and transnationalism, which form the center of this study, gains importance to make sense of the differentiation in the reproduction of hybrid concepts in the social structure.

The concepts of transnationalism, multiculturalism, or transculturalism are among the topics that gained popularity not only in the discussion of cultural policies but also in the discussion of cinema studies. This discussion, which started with Will Higbee's conceptualization of transvergence in *Beyond the (Trans)National: Towards a Cinema(s)* in 2007, has now a broader perspective within the framework of the diversity of production, distribution, and exhibition conditions in the global European and Hollywood cinema. The main purpose of this book is to discuss whether immigrant narratives have a multicultural or transcultural language in US cinema of different nationalities. In the study prepared specifically for the USA/Hollywood cinema, the concepts of transculturalism, transnationalism, and multiculturalism are interpreted within the post-2000 productions since 9/11 is considered a breaking point and it is thought to create discursive differences. This book study, in which we aim to expand these discussions and to reveal the cultural policies, which are of new interest in the field of cinema studies, but without sufficient data/(information), is composed of three parts in order to provide depth to our questions about whether there can be a multicultural or transcultural language in Hollywood cinema.

In today's world, the phenomenon of immigration, one of the most important components of transnational cinema, needs to be dealt with in different contexts in Hollywood and art-house film. Today, forced migration policies can be regarded as a step forward in the development of the transnational structure beyond the local cultures. The political events, wars, and economic crises that are happening today cause people to live in different geographies. However, this problem should not be problematized only in the context of the difficulties that people experience when they are integrated into a different country culture. The issue that has led us to do this work is the limited view of the concepts of transculturality and transnationality. To expand this limited outlook, this book will help researchers to look for new avenues of research on these questions: how does cinema project intercultural diversity

and experience rather than how it represents different cultures? Or, how does cinema construct immigrant leakages in the United States, rather than how it represents immigrants? Based on these questions, the book aims to examine the visual deformities, the ways of seeing, the processes of imposing the normative, or the practices of excluding the normative about different cultures of cinema by interpreting political economy, political, social, and cultural aspects in a total view.

In the first part of the book, *Transnational Productions and Their Reflections*, where the new products of transnational production companies in the globalizing cinema industry are discussed with a political economy approach, Steve Rawle in his chapter, "Globalizing Legendary Entertainment: Transnational Finance Meets Transculturality," focuses on the multinational structures created by the mergers and/or acquisitions of film production companies in today's global capitalist discourse. He explores Legendary Entertainment, which helped produce some of Hollywood's most successful films, including Christopher Nolan's *Dark Knight* trilogy (2005–2012), *Inception* (2010) and the *Hangover* trilogy (2009–2013) as an independent and became a subsidiary of Dalian Wanda in 2016, one of China's most prominent property and development companies, who also own major stakes in global cinema chains in Australia, Europe and the United States, following the acquisition by Wanda and the growing transculturality of their output as a production company. Rawle states that with the addition of specifically transcultural approaches to genre and stardom (including the casting of Chinese stars such as Zhang Ziyi), Legendary's production output represents a specific form of contemporary transnational Hollywood. As Appadurai's disjunctive model of a global cultural economy (1990) was constituted via a merger of flows of capital, individuals, and media, Legendary's transnationalism and transculturality speak strongly to how global Hollywood mediates such flows, both economically and textually.

In his chapter titled "New Heroes in Transnational Hollywood: An Attempt to Transculturality in Marvel Cinematic Universe," Uğur Baloğlu argues that in today's global capitalist discourse, understanding of the colonial of nation-states has been transferred to multinational corporations and invisible colonialism is experienced on slippery ground with an understanding of transcultural. He examines the Phase 4 of the Marvel Cinematic Universe in the context of the five basic frameworks of Appadurai (ethnoscapes, mediascapes, technoscapes, financescapes, and ideoscapes) based on the fact that Hollywood productions with a different representation strategy depending on the economic, political, and social conjuncture in which the mainstream cinema concept. Baloğlu discusses the efforts of MCU, which has structured its new fictional universe with the different ethnic origin and racial diversity in the globalizing film industry, to create a transcultural supra-identity with

heroes in the new universe by moving away from Hollywood's past white-race superhero-oriented productions.

In the second part entitled *Multiple Choice Identities beyond Borders*, in which the differences should be read as reflections of cultural multiplicity or marginalization arguments in the construction of American identity; Gül Yaşartürk in her chapter titled "Strangers at Our Door: A Baumanian Perspective to Children of Men, Elysium, and Snowpiercer," states that, in the science fiction genre of post-2000 Hollywood cinema, contrary to the conservative policy and human rights violations in the United States, it tends toward a narrative difference. The author claims that this genre presents ethnicity and class-based concerns within the framework of positive projections of multiculturalism, far from other representations, and that the metaphor of the creature is at the center of the narratives. Yaşartürk limits the research universe of his work to films *Children of Men (2006), District 9 (2009), Elysium (2013), Snowpiercer (2013),* and *Arrival (2016)*, which reflect concerns after 9/11 and have dystopian features. The author states that the current problems of Western societies, especially Islamophobia, are included in these narratives, on the other hand, themes such as immigration/refugee problems, ecological problems, and class differences are represented outside of stereotypes.

In her chapter titled "A Universe of Story and Medium: Transforming Narrative, Representation, and Ideology in *Star Wars* Films and Digital Games," Özge Sayılgan discusses the Star Wars universe through the pattern of the transformation of the narrative representation from the second half of the 1970s to 2000s, in the context of transculturalism. In the scope of her research, departing from J. Campbell's model "hero's journey," the representation of characters as archetypes in stories of Star Wars universe is analyzed comparatively focusing on the transformations before and after 2000s, taking into account the effect of Disneyfication as an ideological layer. She aims to clarify this transformation and the ideology behind, with an analysis of character archetypes in *Star Wars* films. Then, with an analysis of a multiplayer mode of Star Wars: Battlefront II as a transcultural digital space, she is aimed to reach the ways of identification through characters and story world as represented in game. Beyond narrative analysis, Star Wars: Battlefront II is also open to be discussed in the context of game mechanics, in game purchase dynamics and the competitive characteristics as an interactive medium to reach the decentralized and postmodern practicing of the story in which there is no difference between the hero and the villain of a receded myth across competition.

The heterogeneous and hybrid structure of Hollywood creates the new intercultural dialogue areas of the cultural journeys/immigrant directors since the silent cinema era. In the third part, *Immigrant Directors and Migration*

as a counter-geography practice, where transnational images and narratives are discussed within the framework of the cinematographic structures of the directors, Jane Hanley in her chapter "Mobile Monstrosity: Boundray-Crossing, Genre-Bending and Transnational Gothic in the Films of Guillermo del Toro," analyses interstices between monstrosity and the transnational in the work of perhaps the most renowned director working through this articulation: Guillermo del Toro. She states that del Toro's films always challenge the boundaries between times, between life and death, as well as the human boundaries—between nations, between the self, and the monstrous other—we build and defend out of fear. According to the author, del Toro's most popular work, which travels both narratively and literally through Hollywood/blockbuster global mechanisms, resists complete absorption into normative paradigms through its insistent porosity, destabilization of control, and relational monstrous cartographies of past and present which resist geographical containment. However, the insistent presence of death as a companion to life, the uncanny making of strange familiar and familiar strange, and a culturally eclectic Gothic sensibility, changes the transnational life of del Toro's films from purely market-oriented translatability into something that itself actually articulates ethics of crossing.

In her chapter titled "Medea and Lars Von Trier's Medea: "Ressentiment," Myths and Gender," Oğuzhan discusses the story of Medea, which was transported from Anatolia to ancient Greece and reproduced as a tragedy. She thinks that in ancient Greece and its tragedy, various elements of ressentiment are attributed to women and their social positions to ensure patriarchal legitimacy. Yet ressentiment, which is a state of unrealized hatred or revenge, is not about femininity but about masculinity in Medea. In other words, she reveals that in tragedy woman is not the subject but the object of ressentiment.

Yıldız Derya Birincioğlu in her chapter "In Transnational Images in Inarritu's Cinema," states that in Alejandro González Iñárritu's narratives, he mostly conveys migrant leakages and transnational images to the screen. Birincioğlu limits the center of her chapter from Iñárritu's films (*Amores Perros* [2000], *21 Grams* [2003], *Babel* [2006], *Biutiful* [2010], *Birdman* [2014] and *The Revenant* [2015) in order to interpret the North American perspective. The author examines the relationship between Mexican culture and ideology, considered as the third world, and Hollywood culture, through the symbiotic bond between the culture left behind and the host culture. Birincioğlu interprets the multiculturalism of concepts such as immigration, hybridity, and assimilation within the framework of representation and immigration policies.

PART I

TRANSNATIONAL FINANCE AND THEIR REFLECTIONS

Chapter 1

Globalizing Legendary Entertainment

Transnational Finance Meets Transculturality

Steven Rawle

Founded in 2000, Legendary Entertainment is a major player in the development of the modern transnational Hollywood. As an independent finance company, from 2005 onwards, they helped finance and then produce some of Hollywood's most successful films, including Christopher Nolan's *Dark Knight Trilogy* (2005–2012), *Inception* (2010) and *The Hangover Trilogy* (2009–2013). Their relationships with major Hollywood studios, Warner Bros. and later Universal, enabled them to build a substantial slate of blockbuster franchise movies. Through a number of Sino-American agreements, Legendary, and their Legendary East division, they embarked upon a project of creating films that had substantial appeal for Chinese audiences and secured investment from the Chinese economy and resulting access to cinemas in China. Then, in 2016, Legendary became a subsidiary of Dalian Wanda, one of China's most prominent property and development companies, which also own major stakes in global cinema chains in Australia, Europe, and the United States. Wanda's deal represented a substantial foreign cultural investment, which aligned with Chinese aspirations for global soft power, as well as the acquisition of properties that had significant appeal in Asian markets, namely the monster films *The Great Wall* (2016), *Pacific Rim* (2013) and its sequel *Pacific Rim: Uprising* (2018), and *Godzilla* (2014) and subsequent films in the "Monsterverse" series.[1]

This chapter explores Legendary Entertainment and the implications of the acquisition by Wanda and the growing transculturality of their output as a production company. While the company has acted as finance partner (through its relationship with Universal) for a number of films by African-. American directors, most notably Spike Lee's *BlacKkKlansman* (2018),

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it has developed a series of properties that exhibit significant levels of transcultural blending, multicultural casting and, in Mette Hjort's (On the Plurality of Cinematic Transnationalism 2010) terms, "globalizing and modernizing transnationalism" aligned with Wanda's corporate strategy. The approach to intellectual property through films such as *Pokémon Detective Pikachu* (Rob Letterman 2019) and *Godzilla: King of the Monsters* (Michael Dougherty 2019) emphasizes Legendary's appeal to both US and global markets, particularly in China, where both films grossed a substantial part of their international box office (in the case of the latter, 20 percent more than the domestic US gross). With the addition of specifically transcultural approaches to genre and stardom (including the casting of Chinese stars such as Zhang Ziyi), Legendary's production output represents a specific form of contemporary transnational Hollywood, as well Chinese state approaches to soft cultural power. As Arjun Appadurai's disjunctive model of a global cultural economy (Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy 1990) was constituted via a merger of flows of capital, individuals and media, Legendary's flows transnational capital and transcultural content speak strongly to how global Hollywood mediates such flows, both economically and textually.

TRANSNATIONAL CAPITAL, TRANSCULTURAL CONTENT

Over the last decade, the study of cross-border media has become an established thread of inquiry in film studies. Dina Iordanova observes the emergence of transnational film studies as one perceived with some suspicion in circles devoted to the more established methods of critiquing national cinemas. In response, Iordanova points to how lives have become marked more by transnational emphases, of "transplanted" and "hyphenated" scholars, or practices of engaging with media that transcends the limitations of national borders: "[w]atching across borders would mean, then, to opt to go beyond the confines of any fixed national identity and problematize it as a multi-faceted and ever-changing dynamic phenomenon" (Iordanova 2016). As the Transnational Cinemas journal reached its tenth anniversary and reflected on its shift from Cinemas to Screens, its editors considered the transformations that had taken in place in media distribution and exhibition, with "the significance of streamed content within the industry [that] demonstrate [. . .] the seismic shift in terms of production, circulation and spectatorship" that has occurred in the 2010s since the journal's launch (De La Garza, Doughty and Shaw 2019, ii). In a similar vein, other scholars have raised definitional questions of transnational media as the concept has developed alongside its

establishment as an academic discipline (Shaw 2013; Fisher and Smith 2016; Rawle 2018; Fisher and Smith 2019).

Mette Hjort has argued that

> [a]s transnationalism becomes part of the becoming and being of filmmakers, as a core ontological feature, new and important voices become part of the conversation of World Cinema. Far from being a symptom of monocultural convergence linked to the putative imposition of a single (western) standard of filmmaking, the ontological transnationalism of the filmmaker helps to make World Cinema a rich and diverse phenomenon. (Hjort 2019, 65)

Hjort's comment here problematizes the conception of a transnational cinema in this chapter. The "rich and diverse" voices at the core of her argument, regarding the development of transnational solidarity in talent development organization Filmlab Palestine, are located in "bi- or multi-directional flows" that secure the development and future of transnational networks that would be threatened by "uni-directional" flows of capital and individuals. While the phenomenon at the heart of this discussion is perhaps less concerned with peripheral or marginal cinemas (Iordanova, Martin-Jones, and Vidal 2010), cross-border flows are a significant element of how transnationalism is conceived in relation to our discussion of cross-border relationships and financing. Questions of monocultural convergence with Western standards of filmmaking raise different challenges in the context of the increasingly prominent relationship between Hollywood and China, as American companies scramble to secure access to the growing Chinese market and Chinese companies seek to invest in Hollywood production. This provides a point of view that enables us to see how cross-border collaboration between US and Chinese companies is visible both in terms of capital investment and co-operation between executives and filmmakers from a number of companies, but also the blending of cultural content[2] and the ways in which these transnational relationships behind the scenes translate into visible phenomena onscreen, in the presence of stories, genres, and individuals.

In her earlier, now seminal, article, "On the Plurality of Cinematic Transnationalisms" (2010), Hjort drew attention to some of the problematic dimensions of definitions of transnationalism, where the term becomes "shorthand for a series of assumptions about the networked and globalized realities that are those of a contemporary situation," so that concepts play "a strangely homogenizing role." As she articulates in her more recent article, transnationalism is a plural concept, subject to a range of different forms of flow, and belongings and "values, some of which are economic, artistic, cultural, social, or political" (2010, 30). Hjort introduces several important taxonomic categories here. The first is the distinction between marked and

unmarked transnationalisms. Films are marked as transnational when they are "properties that encourage thinking about transnationality" while "unmarked" transnational cinema projects are those that are generally produced through transnational relationships, but whose content is rooted in more conventional national cultures (14). Unmarked transnational films might be products of global capital, with multinational casts and crew, but the film's content will be more conventionally national, or in the case of Hollywood films, tend toward notions of "universality." For instance, a post-Wanda buyout Legendary film like *Mamma Mia! Here We Go Again* (Ol Parker 2018), which the company part-financed, along with Chinese company Perfect World Pictures through their co-finance deal with NBCUniversal (Block and Masters 2013) is only very weakly marked as a transnational film. Although it is a product of transnational financing, features an international crew and a cast that is a mixture of British, American, Irish, and Swedish talent, and involves literal border-crossing, across Europe to Greece, the film does not "encourage thinking about transnationality." The film's milieu is a backdrop to return to the pleasures of the ABBA jukebox musical of its prequel. Thus, despite the film's transnational finance and personnel, the flows that produce it are not significantly marked in the film, submerged beneath the text.

By contrast, Disney's remake of *Mulan* (Niki Caro 2020) is a more marked transnational property, and therefore one that is more relevant for our discussion here. A live-action version of the 1998 animated adaptation of The Ballad of Mulan, a fourth/fifth-century Chinese folksong that tells the story of Hua Mulan, who took her father's place in battle. Originally developed by Disney as a vehicle for Chinese star Zhang Ziyi,[3] the film took a decade to come to fruition. Throughout development, Disney's search for both Chinese cast and director were well-reported, with Hollywood Reporter confirming that Ang Lee had passed on the project, as had Chinese actor-director Jiang Wen,[4] when New Zealander Niki Caro, at the time, became just the second woman to direct a film budgeted at over $100million (Sun 2017). *Crouching Tiger*, *Hidden Dragon* (Ang Lee 2000) producer Bill Kong was hired to oversee and manage the Chinese production, reportedly working with "Chinese cultural consultants" to guarantee the film's authenticity (R. Zhang 2020). The film's cast assembled both established global stars and local talent, such as Liu Yifei as the eponymous hero, martial arts stars Donnie Yen and Jet Li, notable East Asian stars such as Singaporean Gong Li, 1960s Chinese star Cheng Pei-Pei, Hong Kong-born actor Tzi Ma, as well as Asian American actors including Jason Scott Lee and Rosalind Chao. Regardless of its visible Asian casting, the film was criticized for its lack of diversity behind the camera, accusations that Caro dismissed as sounding "a little bit like censorship to me," but that "[i]t can't just be white people being hired to make movies, no matter what the subject matter is"

(Wardlow 2020). Caro's film foregrounds its transnational origins, from the mixture of accents in the cast's spoken English to what the production designer, Grant Major, referred to as the film's "romanticized and family-friendly" look, based on the Tang (618–907 CE) dynasty (Reinstein 2020). While this stresses the film's targeting of Chinese audiences, with a renowned cast (many of whom contributed their own voices to the film's Mandarin dubbing), and the source story reimagined as a more conventional Chinese wuxia epic, the film became more significantly marked as transnational in its reception.

A year prior to the film's release, Liu Yifei shared a social media post from the Chinese government-run newspaper, *People's Daily*, which supported Hong Kong police in its response to pro-democracy demonstrations in the territory that had opposed a controversial extradition bill between Hong Kong and mainland China. There were calls for a boycott of the film, as #BoycottMulan trended on Twitter (BBC 2019). The film became embroiled in a second scandal after it emerged around the time of its delayed release that the production had filmed in the Xinjiang region in northwestern China. The province is home to what the Chinese authorities refer to as "re-education camps" where the Uighur population, a mostly Muslim Turkic ethnic group, is reported to being subject to internment, forced labor and sterilization, while the United States has accused China of widespread human rights abuses and genocide in the region (BBC 2021). The credits of the film openly thank the Chinese authorities, including the Turpan Public Security Bureau, the local authority responsible for running the "re-education camps." Disney refused to respond to questions from human rights groups regarding the involvement of local authorities and their complicity in working with the Chinese authorities (Bond 2020). The film's text, Jeannette Ng, writes in her review for Foreign Policy, refers to "the rotten heart of Mulan as a film, [. . . its] accidental regurgitation of China's current nationalist myths as part of a messy, confused and boring film." Criticizing the film's intention to create "a fairy-tale China," Ng slates the makers for their Sinicist vision of a united China, fighting for "an all-powerful Chinese emperor," rather than the khan of the Northern Wei dynasty of the original song. She reads the "black-clad elite guards who are heavily coded as Middle Eastern assassins, [as] bringing a splash of Islamophobia into the mix." Yet:

> None of this feels intentional. The film was put together by a team of Western scriptwriters who seem to have done very little homework, resulting in a jumbled mess whose absorption of China's nationalist myths is largely unconscious. Given the realities of filming in China, it's likely that scripts also had to pass the censors' approval, resulting in cuts that reinforced this. (Ng 2020)

The contentious film described by Ng here, emphasizes the problematic dimensions of marked transnational properties, albeit even that aspect is perceived as inadvertent on the part of its western creators. This highlights further dimensions of transnational filmmaking emphasized by Hjort. She identified nine categories of transnationalism, several of which are relevant here: epiphanic, affinitive, milieu-building, opportunistic, cosmopolitan, globalizing, auteurist, modernizing, and experimental. There is a conscious attempt to aspects of epiphanic and affinitive transnationalism in the clumsy storytelling of *Mulan*, to emphasize shared aspects of belonging and core values, mostly in terms of the film's discourses about gender, its empowered vision of the protagonist, as well as the film's core female team of director, writers, and cinematographer whose roles on the film challenged the celluloid ceiling. Perhaps more relevant for the discussion moving forward are oppor-tunistic, milieu-building, globalizing, and modernizing transnationalism. Opportunistic and milieu-building transnationalism are potentially conflicting categories—one, opportunistic, seeks to capitalize on fortuitous conditions on a production-by-production basis, whereas milieu-building involves more lasting connections for film industries. There are certainly odors of both in Hollywood's push toward Sino-US co-production, to take advantage of the favorable conditions around the growing Chinese market, but also to build a lasting imprint for production within China, and sometimes to overlook the controversies caused by those relationships. *Mulan* underperformed at the box office in China, even considering the impact of the Covid pandemic, its $23.2 million opening weekend was a disappointment, lower than Christopher Nolan's *Tenet* (2020), which had opened the week before (McClintock 2020). Fortune reported that due to the film's opening on Disney+ in the United States, pirate copies had hit the market, leading to a slew of negative reviews that accused the film of being too American. As it quoted one reviewer, the film includes "all the features of China that Americans could come up with . . . it's full of Western images of China, especially ancient China." The article also quotes Ying Zhu, author of Chinese cinema during the Era of Reform: The Ingenuity of the System (2003), who cites the film's "inbe-tweenness" that emphasizes its transnational nature, stuck between borders, between opportunism and building a lasting milieu (Elegant 2020). As we'll come to see, this isn't the only film that has faltered like this, as Legendary's *The Great Wall* (Zhang Yimou, 2016) also found itself stuck between cul-tures. The final relevant categories here are globalizing and modernizing. Perhaps this is less relevant in the case of *Mulan* than in Legendary's cir-cumstances; the Wanda takeover of the latter emphasizes a desire to look outward, both commercially and culturally, rather than Disney's attempt to target the Chinese box office with its "love letter to China," to use Caro's terms (Elegant 2020). Perhaps symptomatic of what Hjort described later

as "monocultural convergence linked to the putative imposition of a single (western) standard of filmmaking," globalizing transnationalism seeks to produce work that has global popular appeal, with Hollywood-style standards, but featuring cross-cultural appeal. Legendary Entertainment has come to reflect this form of transnational commerce and production.

LEGENDARY: FROM INVESTMENT FIRM TO CHINESE SUBSIDIARY

Legendary Entertainment is one of Hollywood's most successful production and financing companies. Founded in 2000 by Thomas Tull, a venture capitalist and comic book fan, the company made its first big splash in the Hollywood business when Warner Bros. announced a deal with Legendary to produce films in "marquee franchises" (McClintock 2005, 75), *Batman Begins* (Christopher Nolan 2005) and *Superman Returns* (Bryan Singer, 2006). Backed by a $500 million fund secured from a consortium of investors in 2004, including ABRY, Bank of America Capital Investors and AGI Direct, self-styled "movie geek" Tull (McClintock 2005, 6) embarked on a seven year, forty film co-production deal with Warners (Graser and Abrams 2011). Legendary assumed 50 percent of the cost of films it co-financed, paying an additional 10 percent distribution fee to Warner Bros. and profit sharing accordingly (Robehmed 2016). Their films tended toward the big budget tentpole blockbusters with presold appeal, such as comic books adaptations including *300* (Zack Snyder 2006) and *Watchmen* (Zack Snyder 2009), as well as the continuation of Nolan's Batman trilogy (The *Dark Knight* 2008, and *The Dark Knight Rises* 2012) and the *Superman* reboot *Man of Steel* (Zack Snyder 2013). The company's string of successes continued with major blockbusters based on Warner-owned properties, such as *Inception* (Christopher Nolan 2010), the script for which was reported to be subject to a seven-figure purchase by the studio (Fleming 2009), *Clash of the Titans* (Louis Leterrier 2010) and its sequel, *Wrath of the Titans* (Jonathan Liebesman 2012), and *The Hangover* (Todd Philips 2009), produced from a spec script by Jon Lucas and Scott Moore that Warner acquired for $2million and rushed into production before the 2007 Writers Guild of America strike (Garrett 2007).

This first period in Legendary's history established the company as a major Hollywood presence. It prospered through the exploitation of major properties. Its own slate of production initially faltered, including moderate critical and commercial success with the Jackie Robinson biopic, 42 (Brian Helgeland 2013),[5] but massive failures with the Michael Mann-directed Blackhat (2015) and troubled production *Seventh Son* (Sergei Bodrov 2014).[6]

Variety reported that Legendary had been forced to writedown the value of both films, reducing their asset value by, respectively, $90 million (against a $70 million budget) and $85million ($95million) (Graser 2015). The latter however marked the beginning of Legendary's shift from a major force in Hollywood finance and co-production. In June 2011, Tull announced the formation of Legendary East, in partnership with Chinese studio Huayi Brothers and Kelvin Wu King Shiu, CEO of Hong Kong-based Orange Sky Golden Harvest (OSGH), the company founded by Raymond Chow that brought Bruce Lee and Jackie Chan to global stardom. Founded following a meeting at a Sino-US co-production summit, the partnership was born from one of the first Chinese investments in the American film industry, after OSGH took a 3 percent stake in Legendary (for $25 million, which valued the company at around $750 million in 2010). Wang Zhongjun, then co-CEO of Huayi Brothers, commented that the project would aim to produce "wonderful movies with Asian themes and backgrounds." Tull commented that "these are global movies" (Landreth 2011). In another Sino-American first, Legendary East secured a deal with China Film Co. for investment in *Seventh Son* and their World of Warcraft adaptation *Warcraft* (Duncan Jones 2016) for around $10 million (McNary, Legendary's "Warcraft," "Seventh Son" Secure Chinese Investment 2014). China Film Co., part of China Film Group, effectively operates the state-monopoly system in Chinese cinema, which allows imports of just 34 foreign films a year, although Chinese ownership helps bypass this and grant national film status.

As Christina Klein has discussed, both China Film Group and Huayi Brothers have been instrumental in helping Chinese cinema expand to global markets. In her article on Stephen Chow's *Kung Fu Hustle* (Gongfu 2004), Klein demonstrates that the involvement of these two companies had helped to secure Hong Kong cinema's viability in the face of declining exports following the 1997 handover to China. The involvement of the two Chinese studios gave Chow's film official Chinese national status and allowed it to bypass restrictions on film imports and to navigate local censorship. Klein argues that, alongside helping to transform Hong Kong into a more transnational market in the face of globalizing pressures, Kung Fu Hustle is "a marker of the Chinese film industry's efforts to transform itself from a state-run instrument of education and propaganda into a viable commercial industry" (Klein 2007, 202–203). In terms of a developing transnational model, this marks global flows in multiple directions: "flows out of Hollywood (in the form of capital, mode of production, stylistic conventions) into Hong Kong; reverse flows out of Hong Kong [. . .] into the United States; and regional flows out of Hong Kong (in the form of its film workers and expertise) into China (204)." In the case of this deal with Legendary, these flows have become more complex, involving flows of capital into Hollywood, as

well as between China and Hong Kong, but also flows of films into China, since these deals secured Legendary's access to the Chinese market. As we'll see later, this deal, and subsequent agreements, also helped cement flows of culture between Hollywood and East Asia.

In January 2016, Legendary was taken over by Dalian Wanda Group. They paid $3.5billion for the company, although this was a surprising sum for a company that had produced a string of major hits but owned no significant commercial properties of their own. Through Warner Bros. and Universal, Legendary had co-produced or co-financed films in major franchises, including *Batman, Superman, Jurassic World*, and *Godzilla*, all of which were owned by the two major studios or under license from another (Toho owns the *Godzilla* copyright and licenses the monster on a film-by-film basis along with its adversaries). *Forbes*' coverage of the deal couldn't understand the valuation:

> Disney paid $4.1 billion for Lucasfilm and the mighty Star Wars franchise and another $4 billion for Marvel and a character universe—the Hulk, Thor and Captain America—that collectively is the highest-grossing franchise of all time. What does Wang's $3.5 billion, which includes some $900 million in debt, buy him? [. . .] Legendary boasts about the content it owns, but there's no way Pacific Rim, along with a small horror movie and three disappointments, can almost equal the value of Star Wars. Not even close. (Robehmed 2016)

After purchasing the AMC cinema chain for $2.6 billion in 2012, Wanda, whose development portfolio includes over 100 Wanda Plaza shopping and entertainment complexes in China, had taken one of the biggest stakes in an American company by a Chinese business. An investigation by The New York Times in 2015 revealed the deep connections between Wang Jianglin, Asia's richest person, and the Chinese Communist Party, largely through shares owned by relatives or business associates of high-ranking officials, including the sister of President Xi Jinping. The article stresses that the growth and global reach of Wanda might be less to do with smart investments (including the over-priced acquisition of Legendary) but with the extension of Chinese soft power. Whereas a company like Disney promotes American soft power, China's goal is more culturally specific to promote positive messages about the country (Forsythe 2015). This would include Wanda's media interests. In addition to their ownership of AMC (over which they claim to have no control in terms of which films are shown), and Legendary, Wanda broke ground in Qingdao on the largest film studio in the world, at the cost of almost $8 billion (Dalton 2018). The company's goal is suggested to be the creation of "a global vertically integrated motion picture company" according to former Legendary investor (Robehmed 2016), and the development

of facilities and the acquisition of a major global production and financing company provides the means to begin to do so. This fits the profile strongly of globalizing transnationalism, to marry Hollywood production standards with content that blends aspects of Chinese soft power. One of the first productions to shoot at the Qingdao studio complex was a Legendary production, *The Great Wall*, which emphasizes the transcultural content of transnational cinema in this mold.

THE GREAT WALL

The Great Wall has been described as "a new template of formulaic, stamped for approval, Sino-Hollywood co-productions" (Sullivan 2017). It concerns a pair of European mercenaries, the Irish William Garin (played by Matt Damon) and Spanish Pero Tovar (Pedro Pascal), in eleventh-century Song Dynasty China. They are attacked by a monster near the Great Wall and are subsequently taken prisoner by The Nameless Order. The Order are tasked with fighting off Tao Tie, a horde of monsters that attack every 60 years. Led by Commander Lin (Jing Tian) and Strategist Wang (Andy Lau), the Order stoically resist the attacks by the alien monsters. After initially planning to escape with Sir Ballard (Willem Dafoe), a captive European now teaching English, Garin and Tovar team up with the Order to fight off the monsters. Putting aside their greed for the "black powder" with which the Order are equipped, individual desires are put aside in favor of the collective good. The film is undoubtedly designed for the global and Chinese market, with its mixture of wuxia pian spectacle, blending Hollywood stars with both established (Lau, well known to international audiences as the star of *Infernal Affairs* [Mou gaan dou, Andrew Lau and Alan Mak 2002]) and emerging Chinese stars (Jing, who would later star in two further Legendary productions, *Kong: Skull Island* and *Pacific Rim: Uprising* [Steven S. DeKnight 2018]). The film's initial announcement was criticized for its "whitewashed" casting of Damon—Asian American actor Constance Wu criticized its "racist myth that [only a] white man can save the world" (Wong 2016). Damon responded to the criticism that he had not taken a role from an Asian actor, by responding that the role was written for a white European character: "It wasn't altered because of me in any way," he claimed (Pulver 2016). While Damon's character is undoubtedly cast as the lead, and presents ingenious solutions and displays heroism, the narrative is more symptomatic of what Jing Yang, Min Jiao, and Jin Zhang term "East-West interchange" (Yang, Jiao and Zhang 2020, 668). The film metaphorizes its own production, a collaboration between Hollywood and China Film Group that blends Hollywood tropes with those of Chinese cinema. Hence, while there are elements of

white savior to Damon's character, the film goes to lengths to display the technological superiority of The Nameless Order, its use of sophisticated (for the time) solutions, such as the black powder (gunpowder, generally held to be a Chinese invention) and hot-air balloons. When the queen monster is finally defeated, it is through the collaborative efforts of Garin, and Lin. "East-West interchange" is also evident in the stone Garin carries that pacifies and allows them to capture a monster due to the stone's magnetism. But, at the core of the film, is the East-West interchange of its production, the financing of Legendary and Atlas Entertainment, in co-operation with the state-run China Film Group and Le Vision, a major Chinese distributor. Sullivan's comment about the "stamped for approval" co-production is emphasized by its conscious blending of transcultural elements, but it is inescapable that much of the production's personnel were Hollywood insiders, including screenwriters Tony Gilroy, Max Brooks, and Edward Zwick. The film's marketing even enabled cross-border collaborations, with promotional songs by Wang Leehom and Tan Weiwei, and Jane Zhang, with production by Timbaland and members of Maroon.[5] *The Great Wall*, therefore, sees China, in Aynne Kokas's terms, "moving from the periphery to a more central role" in the global hierarchy of World Cinema, if we see Hollywood as its centre (Kokas 2019, 220).

The most significant area in which the film engages with national meaning is through its promotion of aspects of genre. Legendary's Hollywood strategy had been designed through a strategic approach to developing and financing major presold tentpole properties with mass appeal. Earlier films had relied on established franchise properties, as we've seen, but *The Great Wall* represented a risky venture, based on an original script, regardless of the talent involved. This is in some way mitigated through the hybridization of the film's two core genres, both of which are strongly associated with East Asian cinema: the *wuxia pian* and the monster film. Since the turn of the twenty-first century, the *wuxia pian* (martial hero) film has been China's most significant film export. *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* brought the genre to global prominence beyond diasporic and fan communities; Darrell William Davis and Emilie Yueh-yu Yeh refer to it as "a beacon of cultural China" (2008, 25). Following Rey Chow's call for becoming-visible in Sentimental Fabulations, Contemporary Chinese Films: Attachment in the Age of Global Visibility (2007), Kokas concludes that "[t]he use of popular genres [. . .] expands visibility" (Kokas 2019, 222). As Kokas, and a number of other commentators have mentioned (Hunt 2003; Lau 2007), this process expanded after *Crouching Tiger* with films such as *Hero* (Ying xiong, Zhang Yimou 2002), *House of Flying Daggers* (Shimian maifu and Zhang Yimou 2004), *The Emperor and the Assassin* (Jing Ke ci Qin Wang, and Chen Kaige 1998), and *Kung Fu Hustle* (Davis and Yeh, 27–28). Hjort also cites Hero as

a key film in the cycle of globalizing and modernizing transnational cinema. Yet, as Lau demonstrates, the cycle is problematic in its conflicted messaging about Chinese nationalism: "As a film which attempts to break the national barrier and represent the emerging sense of China's internationality Hero is caught in the contradictions between narrow nationalism (security and unity) and self-conscious cosmopolitanism (world peace—"Tian xia" peace)" (Lau 2007). Likewise, Kokas sees such blended processes of funding, casting and genre developing a "particular form of visibility [that] reinforces that national vision transnationally, strengthening Chinese power hierarchies while also reifying the financially driven power hierarchies that already prevail in Hollywood" (224). The gearing of production toward globalized transnational outcomes, Kokas, argues is detrimental to the diversity of production in China, where the outward-looking goals of cultural soft power is coupled with the desire for visibility, in Chow's terms, on the international stage. Films that exploit popular genres globally take precedence over the growth of a distinctively national cinema, where myths of China predominate above films that promote either "nuanced historical retelling or an incisive cultural critique" (Kokas 2019, 222). However, as we'll see, audiences have generally favored locally produced Chinese films over Hollywood blockbusters.

Another genre not necessarily noted for "incisive cultural critique" is the monster movie. Long a source of mockery, the giant kaiju film has found a new global focus following the production of Legendary's "monsterverse" series that have been enormously successful with Chinese audiences. The kaiju film is a modern invention, 1954's *Gojira* (Honda Ishirō) taking its cues from a twentieth anniversary re-release of *King Kong* (Edgar Wallace and Merian C. Cooper 1933), and has long been critiqued as a form of antinuclear and ecological protest (Anderson 2006; Barr 2016; Napier 1993; Noriega 1987; Rhoads and McCorkle 2018; Sontag 1966; Yomota 2007). *The Great Wall* adopts elements of the kaiju film but adapts these with the threat of multiple monsters with a queen as the main threat, as in Aliens (James Cameron 1986) and *Godzilla* (Roland Emmerich 1998). The Tao Tie in *The Great Wall* became a problematic inclusion. Tao Tie is a part of the centuries old myth of "the four perils," one of the great evil creatures of Chinese mythology. Its inclusion in *The Great Wall* shifted its basic meaning, of greed or gluttony, to a more standard reflection of the strength in numbers. As Chinese audience members observed, the monsters in the movie owed more to the design of lizard-like kaiju than the Tao Tie of mythology. In the Shan Hai Jing, the creature is described as a having the body of a ram, tiger fangs, eyes under its armpits and human nails. A goat-owl that makes noises like a baby and eats humans (Birrell 1999, 43). It was felt that the more conventional design of the monsters, as well as their different origins, were a result of the non-Chinese crew who worked on the film, especially the special effects designers in New

Zealand's Weta Workshop (Deng 2017). Yang, Jiao and Zhang have demonstrated that a new wave of "Chinese monster films have adapted Hollywood's generic conventions to local realities. [Yet] *The Great Wall* exemplified a new level of local-global convergence with the ambition to win a place in the international market" (Yang, Jiao and Zhang 2020, 661). The blending of Chinese mythology with Hjort's definition of "a single (western) standard of filmmaking" restates the transnational and transcultural approaches in the film, part-appropriation-part-conscious blending: "While the highlight of Tao Tie's allegorical meaning might be associated with a Chinese approach to engage with the monster genre, the adoption of the white savior narrative signifies the re-invention of the Western paradigm" (Yang, Jiao and Zhang 2020, 659). Like the later *Mulan*, *The Great Wall*'s construction of a mythic China and appeal to global genres failed to generate the profits and visibility expected. Despite the blitz on marketing and the promotion of its transnational nature, the film satisfied few. It underperformed at the box office in the United States and China, with initial losses estimated at around $75million (McClintock 2017). The Hollywood Reporter speculated that the film might jeopardize future US-China co-productions, but as Legendary entered its phase under Chinese ownership, it pushed on with the development of transculturally designed films.

PACIFIC RIM: UPRISING (2018)

2013's *Pacific Rim* (Guillermo del Toro) was a thoroughly transnational film. Its cast and crew consisted of a Mexican director, actors from Britain (Charlie Hunman, Idris Elba, Burn Gorman), Canada (Diego Klattenhoff, the Chinese-Vietnamese descended Luu brothers), the United States (Ron Perlman, Max Martini), Japan (Rinko Kikuchi), and Spain (Santiago Segura), and it was shot predominantly in Canada. It tells a story of transnational co-operation: a group of Americans, Russians, Chinese, Japanese, and British operatives from a base in Hong Kong fight off an invasion of space monsters that travel via an inter-dimensional portal at the bottom of the Pacific Ocean known as "The Breach." These monsters are called "kaiju" in the film. In promoting the film, Del Toro discussed the influence of Godzilla and how the monsters were designed to nostalgically reflect the tokusatsu (the Japanese terms for special effects) film. The story's core follows the pilots of Jaegers, giant robots with two operatives whose consciousness is fused together, as they battle off the monsters (and family issues). The film's core concept highlighted its appropriation of transnational tropes, largely from Japanese media. As we've heard, it was perhaps the most notable franchise property that Legendary owned. For a near $200million film, its $400million global

box office was disappointing. But one aspect was significant: it grossed more in China than it did domestically (Box Office Mojo 2021). Yet, it wasn't without controversy: an officer of the People's Liberation Army accused the film of importing propaganda: "The decisive battle against the monsters was deliberately set in the South China Sea adjacent to Hong Kong . . . . The intention was to demonstrate the U.S. commitment to maintaining stability in the Asia-Pacific area and saving mankind" (Coonan 2013). Nevertheless, the success of Pacific Rim with Chinese audiences helped pave the way for later collaborations like *The Great Wall*.

Even with the faltering box office of the original, Universal pressed ahead with a sequel. The first film had been developed as part of Legendary's deal with Warner, but the sequel eventually fell under the terms of their partnership with Universal. The release of the sequel was initially scheduled for April 2017 (McNary 2014), but it was soon delayed, then canceled, amid rumors of a breakdown in the relationship between Legendary and Universal, reportedly because the production of Kong: Skull Island and the planned "monsterverse" sequels was pulling Legendary back to Warner Bros. (Masters 2015). The *Pacific Rim* sequel was subsequently canceled, and Del Toro left the project. As soon as the Wanda-Legendary deal was announced, there was speculation, fueled by a social media post by Del Toro, that *Pacific Rim* was back on (Chitwood 2016). In February 2016, the project was greenlit once more, with TV showrunner Steven S. DeKnight replacing Del Toro (Fleming Jr. 2016). Once the film was released, US commentators quickly dubbed it "China-bait" (Yoshida 2018), drawing attention to its casting of Chinese actors, Mandarin language scenes, images of Chinese technology, product placement for a range of Chinese brands and some anti-Japanese sentiment.[7]

Unlike *The Great Wall*, *Pacific Rim*: *Uprising* emphasizes a different form of Chinese modernity. Whereas the early film, developed by Legendary in their pre-Wanda days, capitalized on a mythic China, this film presents an ultra-modern China (of 2035) where the Shao Corporation, owned and run by Shao Liwen (Jing Tian), has mass produced Jaeger drones that threaten the original program from the first film. When a kaiju-corrupted Jaeger kills Mako Mori (Rinko Kikuchi), the adopted sister of the film's protagonist, Jake Pentecost (John Boyega), it's discovered that kaiju have taken over the giant robot with assistance from Dr. Newton Geiszler (Charlie Day), the scientist who mind-merged with the kaiju in the first film. The film ends with a giant showdown in Tokyo between the mecha and monsters. Elements of the film are reminiscent of the Transformers series, which is hugely successful in China. The addition of a younger protagonist (Cailee Spaeny), the cutely designed homemade Jaeger Scrapper, and the more active role of the Jaeger seemingly as robots rather than giant exoskeletons feels like it shares some of the DNA of the *Transformers* films.

Pacific Rim: *Uprising* represents a more significant shift toward the global centre of filmmaking for China. A Hollywood film designed for the Chinese marketplace, albeit with conventional Hollywood stars at its core, it represents clear bi-directional flows of both capital and cultural content between China and the United States. In addition to Jing, the cast features a number of Chinese actors, including Zhang Jin (who also starred in *Crouching Tiger*, here credited as Max Zhang), Huang Kaijie (as Wesley Wong), Ji Li, Lan Yingying, Yu Xiaowei, and Chen Zitong. The film was also shot partly at the Qingdao studios, but features cameos from locations around China, from Shanghai (Oriental Pearl TV Tower) and Guangzhou (Canton Tower). There is prominent placement for Chinese brands, such as online retailer JD.com, and a holographic cameo from the penguin mascot of Tencent. As early scene features a big close-up of bottles of Tsing Tao beer in a fridge. Legendary partnered with Xiaomi to produce a *Pacific Rim* suitcase (Iafulla 2018). There were a reported 15 brand licensing deals with Chinese firms (Week in China 2018). Even with Western writers, directors, and producers, the film presents an image of a progressive and technologically advanced China, while at the same time there are shades of a "Yellow Peril" narrative that hints at the technology trade war between China and the United States under Donald Trump's presidency. Even though the China-developed technology initially emerges as a threat, it plays a positive role in the film's resolution. When Shao takes control of the mini-Jaeger Scrapper in the final scenes, her technology enables the victory over the mega-kaiju. The positive presentation of a modern China echoes the ruling Politburo's call for greater cultural exposition: Xi Jinping called for greater "socialist cultural power" during his New Year's address in 2014 that would "enhance the overall cultural strength and competitiveness" of the country (Xi 2014). As an exercise in demonstrating "cultural strength and competitiveness" the *Pacific Rim* sequel emphasizes Hjort's conception of modernizing transnationalism as a means of speaking to the global competitiveness of the country in an imagined future in which China dominates economically and technologically. It transplants themes from *The Great Wall* about Chinese progress into a science fiction setting.

Like the earlier Legendary East production, *Pacific Rim: Uprising* stumbled at the box office. Although lower budgeted than its prequel, at a reported $150million, it grossed just $60million domestically, and a little under $100 million in China, almost matching the box office of the previous film (Box Office Mojo 2021). It outperformed *Black Panther* (Ryan Coogler 2018) in its opening weekend in China, but plummeted following that, with poor word of mouth reviews cited as the reason. *Pacific Rim: Uprising* was the twenty-fifth highest-grossing film of the year in China (right behind Black Panther), but ahead of another Legendary production, *Skyscraper* (Rawson Marshall Thurber), a Hong Kong-set disaster movie starring Dwayne

Johnson. It was outgrossed by several giant monster movies, including *The Meg* (Jon Turteltaub 2018), *Rampage* (Brad Peyton 2018), and the Legendary co-financed *Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom* (J. A. Bayona 2018). The Meg also benefited from Chinese co-production, star casting and settings. Internationally, *Avengers: Infinity War* (Joe and Anthony Russo) was the highest grossing film of the year, yet it came a distant fifth behind four Chinese produced films: Dante Lam's action epic *Operation Red Sea* (Hóng Hǎi Xíng Dòng 2018), comedy *Detective Chinatown 2* (Tángrénjiē tàn àn, Chen Sicheng 2018), cancer drug smuggling comedy *Dying to Survive* (Wǒ Bú Shì Yào Shén, and Wen Muye 2018) and Brewster's Millions-style football comedy *Hello Mr. Billionaire* (Xī hóng shì shǒufù, Fei Yan, and Damo Peng 2018) (Box Office Mojo 2021). So, as the Chinese box office continues to grow in size, local hits take precedence over major Hollywood movies even if their content is glocally tailored to the local box office (Lin 2011).

CONCLUSION

Transnational concepts envision flows of culture and capital that are positioned as "below-global/above-national" (Ďurovičová 2010, x) and the ways in which "contact zones" (in Mary Louise Pratt's terms) between nations help us to move "beyond any tendency to reduce the centers and peripheries of present-day capitalism to the past familiar binary of cultural imperialism" (Newman 2010, 9). Such flows are unequal but, as the term "transnational" implies, they demonstrate "the persistent agency of the state" (Ďurovičová 2010, x). However, in the case of China, we must acknowledge the problematic dimensions of nation and the ways in which it has persistently been described as a "translocal" (Y. Zhang 2011) or "transnational reality" (Berry 2010, 119). What persists is a transnational dimension to global Chinese cinema that draws upon the ideological rhetoric of global capitalism in the way that trans- or cross-border production is organized (Berry 2010, 122). Legendary is a case study for the ways in which globalization has configured areas of transnational finance and production. The cases considered in this chapter explore how the contact zone between Hollywood's desire to embrace and capitalize upon China's growing film market and the PRC's wish to export an image of competitive soft power is providing yet problematizing visibility.

As Hjort exemplifies, modernizing transnationalism is determined at the level of state policy as a means of expanding the nation's global soft power. Traditionally, Japan have been very successful in developing an outward-looking policy of soft power (McGray 2002), built on cultural exports such as manga, anime, kaiju media, horror movies, and toys. South Korea have

also prospered in terms of global visibility, with the Hallyu wave's proliferation of K-Pop, K-Dramas and films, from the emergence of the Korean New Wave to the triumph of *Parasite* (Gisaengchung and Bong Joon-ho 2019) at the 2019 Oscars. China's desire to develop a similar policy has emphasized similar aspects, including the investment in Hollywood production (analogous to Japanese investment in Hollywood studios from the 1980s onward). However, in order to do so, Hollywood, as we see in the extreme case of *Mulan*, have had to overlook alleged human rights abuses by the very Chinese authorities they have collaborated with to produce the films. The films have also presented palatable images of a progressive and unified China that fit the rhetoric of the ruling party. And, yet, while Hollywood appears to have been willing and complicit in their dealings with China, few co-productions have been resoundingly successful at the Chinese box office, taking a lower billing to both homegrown productions and more conventional Hollywood blockbusters.

Legendary's more recent fortunes have been mixed. In 2017, Tull stepped down as CEO, to become "founding chairman" (Rainey and Lang 2017), while the company reeled from some major losses, but had expanded its portfolio to include games, TV, and comic book publishing (echoing Tull's geekiness). Their films continued to predominantly target the Chinese market, and they had two solid hits in China based on Japanese properties. *Pokémon Detective Pikachu* and *Godzilla: King of the Monsters* were both released in 2019. The former is a live-action reimagining of the card game set in Ryme City, a combination of several global cities, including New York and Tokyo. It features no significant Chinese casting, no "China-bait," but the film outperformed its tracking in China, with about 20 percent of its global box office from China. The Godzilla movie outperformed the domestic box office by around 20 percent as part of a disappointing global performance,[8] and highlighted its appeal for Chinese audiences. Unlike the *Pokémon* film, Godzilla imports some elements from *Pacific Rim: Uprising*, with some Chinese casting (Zhang Ziyi playing a double role as the Infant Island Shobijin twins who speak on behalf of their goddess Mothra) that hints at the replacement of Japanese actors (Shobijin have traditionally been played by Japanese performers since the 1960s, while Ken Watanabe is in both of these films but meets his end in *Godzilla*). This signals something of turning point for Legendary. While the Wanda investment is secure in terms of their role as a player in Hollywood financially, the controversies surrounding, as well as the box office underperformance of, blended transcultural content in *The Great Wall*, *Pacific Rim: Uprising*, and Disney's *Mulan*, may give way to less overtly marked transnational content and pave the way for films that exploit global properties financially without emphasizing their transnational roots, but through popular global genres at the Chinese box office, financial above cultural power.

NOTES

1. These are *King Kong: Skull Island* (Jordan Vogt-Roberts, 2017), *Godzilla: King of the Monsters* (Michael Dougherty, 2019) and *Godzilla vs. Kong* (Adam Wingard, 2021).

2. In this chapter, I'm making a distinction between transnational flows across borders in terms of capital and personnel but considering products and meanings of cultural as trans- or cross-cultural.

3. Zhang is probably best known for her roles in *wuxia pian* such as *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (Ang Lee, 2000), *Hero* (*Yīngxióng*, Zhang Yimou, 2002), and *House of Flying Daggers* (*Shimian maifu*, Zhang Yimou, 2004), but she also plays a prominent role in Legendary's *Godzilla* films.

4. Jiang is best known as an actor outside China, for his role in *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story* (Gareth Edwards, 2016), but is an award-winning director in China, for films including *Let the Bullets Fly* (*Ràng Zǐ Dàn Fēi*, 2010).

5. Unlike the tentpole films it was producing with Warner Bros., *42* had a relatively low budget of $40 million, grossing $95 million domestically, but, as with many sport films, it had little international appeal, grossing just under $2.5 million, but from a low number of screens – it played in 160 screens in Japan, reflecting the baseball's popularity in Japan, but its niche appeal around the world (Box Office Mojo 2021). This also reflects the declining fortunes of mid-budget films in Hollywood, as discussed by Alisa Perren *in Indie, Inc.: Miramax and the Transformation of Hollywood in the 1990s* (2012).

6. *Seventh Son* was impacted by the end of the relationship between Legendary and Warner Bros. Its production was also affected by the collapse of visual effects studio Rhythm & Hues. The film's release was delayed four times before it opened to largely poor critical reception (Graser 2015).

7. Some Western commentators read the death of Rinko Kikuchi's Mako Mori as pandering to Chinese anti-Japanese sentiment by removing a prominent Japanese actor and replacing her with a Chinese star, Jing Tian, as the focus of the film.

8. Despite a higher production budget, *Godzilla: King of the Monsters* grossed around $70 million less than *Pokémon Detective Pikachu*.

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Chapter 2

New Heroes in Transnational Hollywood

An Attempt to Transculturality in Marvel Cinematic Universe

Uğur Baloğlu

> I could point out to you a family whose grandfather was an Englishman, whose wife was Dutch, whose son married a French woman, and whose present four sons have now wives four of different nations. 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 holds. (Crevecoeur 1782)

It is significant to make sense of the eighteenth century American identity imagination from the observations of a writer who has just migrated from Europe to the United States in terms of understanding today's US immigration system, cultural and social structure, and Hollywood. As stated by Crevecoeur, the melting pot is a key point of the US immigration system. It symbolizes integrity that all differences of various cultures are melted down in a pot and those differences form a whole union. However, it is also possible to say that cultural practices such as music, eating and drinking, clothing and from different geographies have been added to American culture piece by piece over the years, immigrants living in US society have been assimilated and removed from their roots in order to create a new cultural environment, and heterogeneity in the supra-cultural context has shifted toward homogeneity. The metaphor of the "salad bowl," which claims that those who are conceptually opposed to this term are articulated to US culture while preserving the differences of different cultures it develops and is the part of the whole, is still discussed in the literature (D'innocenzo and Sirefman 1992; Anderson

2000; Bhattacharya and Groznik 2008; Berray 2019). However, in order to comprehend today within the framework of today's globalization discourses, perhaps two opposing concepts should be used on the same conceptual ground since the melting pot and salad bowl are insufficient. In other words, the US cultural setting both protects and assimilates differences. It is important to consider this claim within the framework of today's global cultural flow discourses and the dominance of transnationalism in economic, social, cultural and political environments. Since the different cultures of the United States and the melting of people's lifestyles in a pot are realized by the integration of immigrant groups into the United States in different ways. As anthropologist Cristina De Rossi points out, an individual from a different cultural environment can preserve his own language, religion, eating, and clothing practice, while it integrates with the cultural environment of the country and shapes the lifestyle in a different way (Zimmermann 2017). In this context, is it possible to say that the homogeneous structure of the present cultural environment of the United States has been exceeded? (Welsch 1999, 194) It is more accurate to respond to this in what context we look at culture. When we consider within the framework of consumption culture discussions, we can develop similar lifestyles by experiencing differences by approaching with industrialism/post-industrialism of our increasing dependencies and consumption practices with globalization. The global space we are in today "is a space of flows . . . , a decentred space, a space in which frontiers and boundaries have become permeable. Within this global arena, economies and cultures are thrown into intense and immediate contact with each other—with each Other" (Morley and Robins 2002, 115). In this network of relationships, localisms at different points and the dominant consumption culture of global capitalist discourse involving all extent interact by connecting. Emphasizing the dialectical feature of globalization at this point, Giddens (1996, 64) states that the localities that interact with each other in the global cultural environment are not merely articulated with the universal, but also expand on the horizontal plane. In line with this point of view, it is not convenient to read globalization as the victory of the universal against the particular and the vision of a homogenized world. However, the overlooked point in global capitalist discourse is the effort of some local elements infiltrated into cultural industry products to make the struggle of the dominant culture with the "other" invisible. This should not be perceived as an effort by the West to globalize its own local and destroy all other local formations. On the contrary, we should think of this as an attempt to articulate consumption culture, which is the dominant culture of capitalist discourse, to all localities, perhaps to strengthen their localities.[1] In this respect, when we reconsider the American identity and cultural texture described by Crevecoeur in the eighteenth century in the global capitalist discourse, we can say that spatial boundaries disappear (both economic and

technological) and new lifestyles, new identities, new forms of citizenship, even new nationalities have emerged. Because today's world is going through a process similar to the big changes that occurred in the early nineteenth century. With the epistemological breaks occurring on the conceptual plane, our relationships, communication processes, experiences, and practices also change, and we experience a period of breaking between the past and future.

Based on these discussions, it becomes important to examine the new cultural environment formed by the changing national/transnational identity and forms of belonging together with the representation mechanisms in the new era films produced by transnational capital, which is described as the "cultural policy citadel" (Miller 2005). In addition, examining the relationship of identity forms created in a new universe with transnational capital will help to understand what context in which Hollywood shapes the cultural environment. In this study, in today's global capitalist discourse, the upper-identity, which is intended to be created in a transcultural environment with the new representation strategies of the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU), by transferring the colonial understanding of the nation-state to supranational corporations will be examined in the context of Appadurai's global cultural flow conceptualization. I discuss the efforts of MCU, which has structured its new fictional universe with different ethnic origin and racial diversity in the globalizing film industry, to create a transcultural supra-identity with heroes in the new universe by moving away from Hollywood's past white-race superhero-oriented productions.

IS COLONIAL UNDERSTANDING OVER?
DID IT CHANGE ITS FORM?

Subcontractor Culture or Subcontracting of Culture

Today, conflicting contingency is experienced in all institutional structures of modernity: Right-wing populist governments lose power while gaining power, (old publicness) resist with protests[2] in real social fields as publicness transforms, nationality tends to be bizarrely re-nationalization while losing power in the face of global discourse. Based on Berman, who interprets modernity as a maelstrom, individuals think that concepts such as equality, freedom, democracy, right, justice, citizenship and identity have lost in globalization discourses and that they may not be regained irreversibly. For all these reasons, individuals/groups persistently try to preserve their cultural ties, socialities and identities while submitting to the (compulsory) pressure of globalization.

The urge to preserve the past, cultural identity and/or cultural ties can be read as the local's response to the global. Appadurai (2017, 2) interprets this

as a growing emphasis on the domination of the culture at a time when economic sovereignty in the national perspective is collapsing all over the world. In this process, the drastic measures and decisions observed in migration policies reveal an attitude toward the cultural dimension of globalization—different concepts such as multiculturalism, interculturalism, and transculturalism. In reality, this kind of reactiveness is expected given that globalization consists of different social and historical factors in a complex multidimensional process.[3] Especially nowadays, economic crises with populist policies that increase their influence almost all over the world cause xenophobia. Neglecting the negative impact of global capitalist discourse on the national/local economy and the cultural and social structure of that country, this point of view, which often makes immigrants scapegoat because of media tools, takes the crisis out of context. In recent years, the attitude of the United States and the world toward immigrants confirms this.[4] Because the migrants used by global capitalist discourse to overcome moments of crisis in the past are now seen as the hunchback of the world. At this point, this negative trend in the immigration policy of the United States is against the unity of the country consisting of immigrants and the coexistence of elements such as different languages, religion, race, and culture.

The journey to the new continent (North America), called the Great Migration in 1630, is based on a longing for free and prosperous land while symbolizing a struggle against the heavy taxes and discrimination of Europe—especially Britain. This struggle is not just a struggle for freedom, according to Paine (1776), but a resistance to the unequal system, which is based on the rule of the British nobles and elites. In fact, the Declaration of Independence (1776), issued after the rights gained by resistance, expresses that the new country rises on egalitarian and libertarian foundations with the following lines:

> 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. —That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, —That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government.

However, the new country, which was established with the rights[5] gained after the struggle against the colonialist understanding, turn into a system that globalizes the colonialist understanding in the coming years. Although it is based on the rejection of the Eurocentric view, the United States is built on a Euro-modern view/ideology. The positioning of liberal understanding in the center brings about the capitalist economic system to become increasingly

institutionalized and gain strength at the global level in the following years. In this context, it can be said that in the historical process, Europe first transformed the United States and then the United States transformed Europe—and even the world (Neto 2006, 52). In this dialectical process, it should be noted that the colonial understanding still continues over the Western instrumentalist-capitalist thought. As a matter of fact, Stuart Hall summarizes the globalized portrait of this idea, which is also the center of postcolonial debates today, as "West and others." In other words, while the United States and Europe (West, shortly) still play a "central role in cultural production and determining global trends," it still remains an attraction for other countries (Dirlik 2012, 16). Therefore, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the globalization reflex was carried out within the framework of nationalist and colonial ideology, while today it changes form in practice in a postcolonial and even post-national process, but in essence, it spreads through the same ideological elements. In short, the Euro-American colonial form based on Western modernity creates the illusion that it eliminates social, cultural and economic inequalities in the global world.

The fact that the United States is a country consisting of immigrants requires equal rights and freedoms for the people living in that land, firstly the struggles with racism, then the struggles with ethnic discrimination and the policies of marginalization indicate that the "land of liberties" discourse is an illusion produced only in Hollywood productions. Fanon (2013, 34), who criticizes the apparent/invisible racism against Black people especially in the United States, states that the discourses developed in the United States such as freedom, equality, brotherhood, love remain only on theoretical grounds, and that the subordination policies applied in practice never end, and that derogatory statements such as "filthy negro, filthy Jew, filthy Arab" continue on the social plane. As a matter of fact, the continuity of such otherizing policies in social life is related to where the Euro-view positions itself within the framework of "Me" and "Them" conceptualization. After "Me" is determined to be of superior-white-European origin, the positioning of the outsider as the other/inferior, causes the differences to be categorized as inferior/superior. This may result in a subcultural organization of new migrants by coming together. While Cesaire (2005, 125) interprets this situation as a positive development, he negates people who live in the same social life, their imitation and standardization of each other. At this point, it can be said that individuals/groups develop two different reflex in global migration flows: When the identity and culture internalized by individuals who migrate to different geography due to their own will or for mandatory reasons conflicts with the social or cultural structure of the country, the individual either tries to preserve his/her culture and identity by strictly abide by his/her own essence, or fuses within the cultural texture of the country (Young 2016).

One of the most important social and cultural problems in the world in the discourses of globalization today is the exclusionary actions implemented by the citizens of the host country, the political system and the rule of law during the migration process. It has always been an ongoing process in history for people to break away from their cultural roots and migrate to different places due to various obligations such as education, economy, war, climate, racism etc. However, it is not inconvenient to say that migration processes will follow a different line from the past as a result of the changes in the institutional structures of the modern world. In fact, external migration, which is shaped around the discourses of globalization today, is changing the countenance of the world (in particular, the United States) in a growing graphic. As of 2019, it is estimated that approximately 270 million people in the world are international immigrants. Although it points out to a number of around 3.5 percent of the world's population, it is possible to say that there has been an increasing trend over the years. Especially after the 2015 migrant crisis, the growing migrant population in Europe and Asia was home to 61 percent of international migrants (McAuliffe and Khadria 2019, 24). The growing immigrant population in the United States, especially after 1970, is now around 45 million.[6] As Todd Gitlin (1995) pointed out as *The twilight of common dreams*, the social and cultural texture of the United States may be shaped differently in different states with the flow of immigrants in the coming years. When examined in light of demographic data, it is said that after about 40 years, Hispanics will make up 27.5 percent of the population, Blacks 15 percent and Asians 9.1 percent (Vespa, Medina and Armstrong 2018, 7). Surprising data also emerges when the racial-ethnic transformation of the United States on a states scale is examined. In the United States where there was a white-dominant race (80%, on average) until the 1980s, this rate dropped as low as 63 percent in 2015. In fact, it is estimated to decrease to 44 percent by 2060. Settlements such as California, Nevada, Texas, Maryland, and New Jersey are predicted to be places where no ethnic group is in the majority—the majority is made up of minorities (Teixeira, Frey and Griffin 2015, 2). Especially in recent years, the increase of migration from Asia and Latin America rather than Europe indicates that different cultural textures such as Mexico, the Philippines, Korea will augment. (Pew Research Center 2012). In this context, the United States, which draws a different national framework with new immigrants, attempts to Americanize the representativeness of differences instead of old-style integration policies such as assimilation. But such Americanization is also the result of the power relations established by the view of global modernity, maintained by Euro-modernity[7] discourse. At this point, to heed the words of Gitlin (1995, 99): "Like it or not, the decisions that shape America's political, legal and economic institutions were largely made by Europeans and their descendants."

Based on the idea of Marks's (2000, 21) "the ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships, the dominant material relationships grasped as ideas. . . . Their ideas are the ruling ideas of the epoch," when Gitlin's warning is discussed, the hegemony of Euro-modernity becomes ambiguous with the discourses of globalization. In other words, a new understanding of supranational society differentiated or even independent from the nations and ethnic structures created by globalization, appears. In fact, the creation of an environment that allows individuals/groups to express their national identities create a win-win relationship in a sense. In this new environment where fewer state apparatus is felt, a freer movement and communication environment is created, cultural boundaries are not sharpened, ethnic groups/immigrants think that they can express themselves with new representation strategies and feel that they exist by being separated from the pressure of national identity. In this context, Hollywood, which produces these new representation strategies, creates a new sociocultural reality with the identities it creates in a supra-cultural framework by making the homogenizing emphasis of global culture invisible. Thus, an attitude adopted more easily by Euro-American, African American and Asian American is developed.

GLOBAL CULTURAL FLOW AND NEW REPRESENTATION STRATEGIES

The late twentieth century was the scene of a series of political, economic, and technological events that resulted in the bipolar world evolving into a single pole. In fact, Daniel Bell's (2000) "end of ideology" and Fukuyama's (1989) "end of history" thesis signaled the entering a new era. Although the defeat of socialist thought to capitalism seems to justify Bell, it is important to mention that ideology changes shape and spreads faster rather than the end of the ideology. In fact, if necessary to use a metaphor, we can liken the ideology of global capitalist discourse to a chameleon. This spreading and consumerist ethics, hidden behind the local cover of every geography it enters, can be specifically described as American culture. However, this should not mean that there are no inverse cultural flows from the East in the globalizing world; it demonstrates that American culture, which has become transnationalized only within the framework of global capitalist discourse, is dominant (Elteren 2011). It is also significant to remember the contribution of transnational/supranational corporations in the spread of global capitalist discourse and the promotion of cultural consumption ideology. At this point, Appadurai's global cultural flow study, which explains the intersections of culture and globalization shaped in a highly complex structure, can

be guiding: ethnoscape, technoscape, finanscape, mediascape, ideoscape.[8] According to Appadurai (1990, 307), the global cultural landscape formed by "the politics of the mutual effort of sameness and difference" consists of complex products created by universality and the partiality that resists it.

The new global plane formed by liquid fields by crossing into each other ambiguates geographical boundaries and deterritorializates cultures. In fact, it is possible to say that the information and images flowing in the world connected by technoscape are becoming increasingly distinct and mixed hybrid-cosmopolitan cultures are formed. Tomlinson (2004) interprets hybridization as mixing the increase in intercultural traffic in the liquid world and the interconnecting of different cultures.[9] According to Hannerz (1996), culture is not a stable and monolithic structure, but rather a mobile and variable. Indeed, the formation of today's global cultural environment has allowed cultural flows to interact with each other. However, it is significant to remember that hybridization, which is generally interpreted as positive and provides multiculturality, has the potential to exclude/ignore. Giddens (2003) points out that the cosmopolitan structure of global culture will also result in fundamentalism. Because the pressure of the globalization trend of Western culture on Eastern culture reveals the protection motive of local cultures/identities. This is in line with the idea that the new global cultural environment on which Appadurai insisted is formed in the eyes of contrasts. Hungtington (1998) also considers that the setting of conflict will emerge, polarizations will augment, and the world will become a multipole universe by looking at the global cultural discourses formed with globalization from a negative perspective. With the concept of glocalization, Robertson (1992) explains the policies of transnational companies to act locally after infiltrating different geographies and following their global appearance as the behavior of maximizing the capital. Thus, local cultural values are demonstrated as if they are protected and evaluated within the framework of contributing to cultural diversity within the discourses of globalization. If the focus of all these discussions is paid attention, transnational cultural producers differentiate localities and/or national identities in a common point in the determining of global capitalist discourse. The goal is to reach more areas of the world in the universe of global flows and to ensure that cultural products are consumed. In this context, the fact that transnational companies start to produce products that represent concepts such as race/ethnicity that refer to the other from past to present, both augment the capital and make the colonialist view invisible by affirming the multiculturalism discourse. At this point, the fact that East and West point out different values does not jeopardize the colonial understanding of global capitalist discourse, but rather makes it invisible as it has just specified. In other words, the emergence of capitalism from the West and the creation of today's bourgeois morality and values does not exclude

Eastern capital, on the contrary, it reproduces and transnationalizes Eastern capital within the capitalist organization.

Transnationalization of capital plays an important role in the production and acception of hybrid cultural forms. In this respect, the transnationalization of consumption culture, which is also named as American culture, allows the new ideology of the globalizing capitalist discourse to spread worldwide (Sklair 2002, 108). At the same time, the pluralization of the representation strategy of the United States, which includes various ethnic groups, cultures, and identities within its national borders, is also important for Crevecoeur's affirmation of the eighteenth-century American portrait. In this context, when we read Appadurai's efforts to globalize culture on the base of the theory of scapes through the ideology of consumption culture and representation strategies, we can realize that new colonial forms are hidden behind new representation. According to Althusser (1969, 233) ideology is not understood or false consciousness through class reductionism, it is actually "a system of representations." As he mentioned in *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses* (2006), images, semantic systems and/or consumed cultural objects determine the way an individual experiences an individual's relationship with society rather than concepts such as ideology, accuracy, or fallacy. Thus, a parallel is established between cultural products and ideology. Since the world in which the individual lives have been structured by various cultural tools and ideological discourses, the relationship established with reality occurs indirectly through representations. That is, in short, ideological devices produce representation systems. At this point, "the media analyzes society, collects information and filters this information in line with its position while determining its own cultural and ideological position; therefore, it creates general acceptances in established order" (Hardt 2005, 53–54). Hall describes these general admissions as the "dominant regime of representations" (2002, 187). The transnationalization of Hollywood in the context of capital also creates sameness and homogeneity by circulating mass cultural forms around the world, while making it possible for them to localize all over the world and especially on the territory of the United States. Each local culture and identity include the self-appropriation and reprocess of symbols (Elteren 2011), thus the impression that it affirms difference, otherness and diversity is created. In this context, Hollywood, in reality, globalizes a process that deforms and rebuilds the cultural space of the local. This also includes the experience of both the process of unculturalization and acculturation at the same time.[10] In the process of a new culture, the individual becomes a consumer, through transnational corporations, the values and practices of dominant cultural forms become "new global colonialism" (Banerjee and Linstead 2001, 694).

New global colonialism conceals behind an invisible cover with Hollywood's transnational narratives. Since transnational Hollywood films

undergo content changes toward transnational films that are purified of national culture (Crane 2014). In a sense, this can be regarded as one of the necessary steps in the transnational film market. As a matter of fact, it is possible to have a say in the global film market without excluding different cultural characteristics and by preparing an environment where cultural differences are cohered together by keeping the white-dominant view of the mainstream in the background. Because for a long time, as a mainstream audience, there has been a conception that placed the white race at the center. Even in films that told the stories of minorities, white actors were taking or sharing the lead role. Indeed, other non-Euro-white races, ethnic groups, identities and cultures from past to present were subjected to stereotyping and subordinated with various stereotypes (Kim and Brunn-Bevel 2020, 41). However, the box office success of *Black Panther* in particular and the fact that it is a political film that deals with colonial problems unlike typical hero movies—there is also critical disputes that the film supports mainstream cinema and ideology (Eckhardt 2018; Hanchey 2020; Johnson and Hoerl 2020; Varda and Hahner 2020)[11]—confirms that Hollywood encourages the production of racial-ethnic films to maximize its capital on a global scale. In this context, transnational Hollywood films target the global audience with racial-ethnically diverse films, changing their representation strategies so as not to lose their dominance in the global market; with the increasing tightening of cultural contacts in the context of global cultural flow, it constantly tries to hybridization of cultural information. Thus, Hollywood increases audience potential by reducing cultural differences to a minimum and representing minorities marginalized by the Euro-view. However, Hollywood's inclusion and hybridization of cultural diversity do not demonstrate that the stories are independent of ideological elements. In other words, whether the films are produced in a narratively multiethnic/cultural framework or draw a multicultural structure as a production—actors, directors, screenwriters, producers, and others. can come together from different races, nations, identities, cultures—as criticized in *Black Panther* (as if to justify Gitlin) it is a product of the Euro-view, namely, the Western hegemonic idea.

In reality, Hollywood's success in gaining the support of other ethnic/cultural groups in the global cultural flow environment is hidden in its ability to globalize entertainment and create a new way of life in this regard. When examined, this is closely related to the gradual decline of state control after neoliberal policies and the emergence of market dominance corporate capitalism. It's a fact that Hollywood today is dominated by the big six companies—Warner Bros., Disney, Universal, Fox, Sony, and Paramount. These six major companies dominate almost 81 percent of the market share in North America in 2019.[12] These companies aim to reach not to homogeneous majority but

to a different view, notion, culture, and nation by producing movies with worldwide box office with their large studios and capitals. At this point, "the emergent postnational order proves not to be a system of homogeneous units (as with the current system of nation states) but a system based on relations between heterogeneous units" (Appadurai 2001, 23).

Today, different ethnic hero narratives are important for Hollywood, which dominates the world with cinematic narratives from past to present, to make its cultural hegemony invisible. The production of stories by transnational corporations such as Disney can still be considered a maneuver to make the dominance of economic hegemony even stronger. In this regard, Ritzer claims that Disney World represents a new means of consumption (Ritzer 2000, 23). In reality, when we expand the claim that he developed through the theme park within the framework of Hollywood hegemony, we figure out that Ritzer is right. Disney—in particular Marvel Studios—creates stories through new representation strategies, creating a global cultural environment that infiltrates to different identities or cultures and consumes everything. In cultural studies, representation strategies generally begin to change with global cultural discourses while feeding on some stereotypes and different approaches. As the invisible cover of representation strategies lurks behind ethnic diversity, entertainment becomes global and transnational corporations strive to maximize profits. Because now "entertainment for the masses . . . for consumption, not for production" (Ritzer 2000, 19). This suggests that economic and cultural hegemony now works with transnational corporations rather than national contexts. What Fuege, the producer of Marvel films, says about the globalization of entertainment, says supports this: "There will be no giant dark turns in the MCU where it then continues to head in that direction. The humor is in the DNA of the movies, there are no plans to change that" (Vejvoda 2015). As the real world moves into darkness in a whole economic and social crisis, the cinematic universe paints a portrait of a no dark world by creating a transcultural habitat in the opposite maneuver. In this context, I consider that the element of entertainment (and consumption practice) should be considered as the common ground of the culture that is meant to be created. Because despite Hungtinton's argument of a clash of cultural identity between non-Western cultures against the global culture imposed by Western civilization, transnational corporations create a new supra-identity with maneuverability and make it look like they are positive for the locality in the global cultural context, and melt the local within the global, in reality. The positive correlation between the identities represented in new cultural products in global circulation and the way minority (Latino, Black, Asian, etc.) groups are recognized/counted in real social life has the ability to make invisible the unequal relationship between domestic and foreign today.

In 2018, Disney's production of *Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings*, a hero film of Asian descent that will be released for the first time in July 2021, is the result of Hollywood's policies to have a say in the Chinese and Asian markets. This represents a similar process when the film *Black Panther*, released in February 2018, is upgraded to a "hero" position for African American or, more broadly, the way Black people represent. In this context, transnational Hollywood films have to address different national identities and cultures in the global film market without stereotyping them—or hiding them behind an invisible cover as mentioned above. Song states this is especially effective for Hollywood movies entering the Chinese market.[13] Because "China imposes strict censorship on all imported films as a means to protect its national culture while resisting conflicting Western values in the context of film globalization" (2018, 181). However, although China or any other country imposes bans and restrictions against Hollywood, generally this happens with economic concerns rather than concerns of cultural imperialism. According to Raiti (2007), this is understandable in today's global capitalist environment since the world has changed from past to present and will change in the future. Our perspective on concepts, the way we understand and experience them, is also changing. Identities formed within the framework of the concepts of nation-state and nationalism in the past are being dealt with on a more global level today. This new environment, which Appadurai describes as "imaginary worlds," advocates that people can find identity, no matter how mobile they may be. "Media, whether animation or live-action, create a sense of global identities through various representations of people, places and ideas" (Raiti 2007, 164). Indeed, it is the universalization of consumer culture that global capitalist discourse enables transnational corporations to help people find an identity in motion. No matter where the consumer culture member goes, he is no longer a stranger. Self-recognition of the individual and defining his/her identity through consumerism is perhaps the new form of citizenship.

SUPERHEROES IN THE NEW (TRANSCULTURAL) CINEMATIC UNIVERSE

Could the MCU be developing a new kind of citizenship? Is it being tried to provide the reflection of the nation consciousness in the Marvel universe with the coexistence of various racial/ethnic/cultural groups framed by the supra-identity? Such questions require an understanding of new forms of relationships between globalization, global culture, and identity. The global cultural flow discussed above and the circulation of cultural products of capitalist capital indicate that concepts such as multiculturalism and interculturalism can be overcome.

Huntington (1996, 144) emphasizes the importance of a sense of belonging when he says, "while a country could avoid Cold War alignment, it cannot lack an identity." One of the most remarkable features of globalization in late modernity is that with the quantitative increase of forced/voluntary migration, individuals are cut off from their roots, values are broken and forced to live in different geographies. Thus, the danger that the sense of belonging is lost along with the cultural roots, values, principles that characterize the life of the individual (Castro-Lucic 2004, 49). This is due to the same experience of the post-globalization local-global process discussed earlier. In fact, the balance between identity and the social community in which the person is located is marked by the values and principles that characterize life. In theory, ways to get out of this contradictory environment are sought through concepts such as multiculturalism, multiculturalism, interculturalism, hybrid cultural partnership, and transculturalism that is most recently theorized by Welsh. For example, Charles Taylor (1996, 12) argued that the recognition of the cultural identity of groups by the political authority in a pluralistic multicultural environment lead to a solution, while Habermas (quoted in Abadan Unat 2002, 297) stated that political authority, individuals, groups should approach each other within the framework of the politics of respect for each other in order to create a multicultural environment. However, the point to be noted here is that in such discussions it should be overlooked that the crises that will arise from global capitalist discourse are unpredictable. In other words, in a world where addictions are decreasing to the extent that they increase, people's reflexes to economic, political, and cultural changes are variable and incalculable. Therefore, it may not be possible to apply such discussions from theoretical grounds to practice, or even if possible, they may erosion over time.[14] So, what kind of imagination exist in the new cinematic universe created by Marvel which is parallel to real life?

Robert Bocock (1993, 28) suggests a connection between the new type of consumers and the sense of identity: "The construction of a sense of identity can be seen as a process which may make use of items of consumption such as clothing, footwear, popular music, or sporting activities, including being a supporter of particular music groups, singers, or soccer clubs." Bocock's relationship between identity and consumption characterizes the association experienced all over the world within the global capitalist discourse. Since the last quarter of the twentieth century, identity has also begun to change in this process in a space where experiences such as communication, culture, and consumption practices fluidized. The change in the forms of belonging of individuals in late modern societies indicates that individual identities have evolved into multiple identities. As mentioned in the previous section, immigrant policies and the increase in the population of different racial/ethnic groups change and diversify the ethnic environment in the United

States. In the ethnic environment, which changes from a nationalist perspective, there can be a conflict between the dominant identity of the nation-state and the diversity that occurs with migration. "Throughout America's history, religious, cultural, and racial differences have shaped the struggle for wealth, prestige, and power. . . . The spirit of exclusiveness and anti-foreign sentiments spread when a rapid influx of immigration coincided with a major domestic or international crisis" (Citrin, Reingold and Green 1990, 1124). The nationalist discourse that emerges in times of crisis claims that American identity or national unity can be preserved in a more conservative framework, not in a multicultural environment. At this point, as Li and Brewer (2004, 729–737) pointed out, having an American identity is possible by being born on that land, be patriotic and achieve national identification. So, is that possible in global economic and cultural policies? As mentioned earlier, the main problem of the global environment is that the nation-state mechanism loses power against global markets. In this regard, globalization subjects the entire conceptual system developed by the nation-state structure to epistemological fracture. In other words, the change in the meaning maps of concepts such as power, identity, citizenship, and culture characterize a new process. Therefore, establishing American identity from a conservative point of view does not seem possible in the world where transnational actors set the rules.

Since the discourses of globalization confine the area of the dominance of the nation-state, the domain of the state is limited and delegates its power to supranational/extremist corporations. This handover process forces all modern institutions to reshape. In this context, we cannot evaluate the identity, which has a dynamic/variable structure, as fixed/stable in this new environment created by the global capitalist discourse. At this point, it is significant to remember the relationship between consumption and identity. As it is known, the capitalist economic system focuses on maximizing its profits rather than meeting human needs. For this reason, transnational film companies also wish to produce new cultural products on the market every year and that their products be consumed by the maximum person. In this context, the production of understandable and simple films in terms of their topics that can be consumed rapidly in the global market is supported. Simplicity is essential at this point. Indeed, it facilitates the minimizing of cultural, ethnic, and others differences and intersecting commonality for transnational companies that are trying to reach a large number of viewers at the same time. The recent rise in the popularity of superhero movies depends on it. It is mandatory to find the "greatest common divisor" to create a field of discourse in the global cultural flow where differences between individuals/groups are minimized. In the new cinematic universe created by superhero movies, partnerships are established with small connections with other texts and myths.[15] It is also a safe port for producers, as superhero movies consist of known stories. Thus,

the reproduction of previously filmed narratives known to the audience outlines Hollywood's new narrative style. In the new narrative style of global Hollywood, superhuman beings are positioned instead of a human. This allows viewers to relate and be loved more easily in the global market without allowing the clash of ethnic, cultural, and national values. The words of Avi Arad, the former president of Marvel, stand up for this (quoted from Bowles by Hassler-Forest 2012, 8): "These fans love their movies and heroes like no other. . . . And they're very savvy with the computers. A word about your product gets out very quickly. If you can make a good impression here, your movie has hope." What Arad says with its cultural product and its speed of propagation demonstrates that mediascape and technoscape are in a position to support finanscape. Marvel superheroes, however, are not drawn as idealized characters like superheroes of the past, but however, projected as flawed, fun character with problems of harmony with society or misunderstood. The relationship he/she establishes with the real world is based on this point.

The mass Arad describes as superhero fans symbolizes heterogeneous integrity in the real world. The concept of transculturalism defines a common structure where different heterogeneous cultures are mixed and penetrated. In history, the contacts of different groups, communities, countries, even empires with each other—war, trade, migration, and so on—form the basis of cultural interaction. In fact, the people/groups who carry their cultural values to the geography they go to affect the culture of the place as they are articulated to the new culture. However, is it possible for cultural values or cultures to intertwine and create a "global common culture" in the real world? Transculturalism claims that cultures and cultural indicators are intertwined in the world, which accelerates in everything following the discourses of globalization. The concept of transculturalism, which Ortiz (1995) put forward as a result of his studies in Cuba, points out that a new locality has emerged over time by melting into each other different localities—local cultural indicators. Since this points to a dialectic process, it is based on a logical basis when taken in the context of locality. However, when we try to tackle this process from being dialectical to a global/universal context, we put it into the domination of global capitalist discourse. Thus, the new common cultural structure of existing global capitalist discourse within the framework of consumption culture- transculturalism- points to "a hegemonic form of global capitalist discourse" (Baloğlu 2020, 136). In this context, if we adapt transculturalism to the narrative universe rather than the real context, we can draw a more realistic framework. Angel Rama's *Writing across Cultures: Narrative Transculturation in Latin America* (2012), we can also consider the term "transculturalism," which it rejects the transfer of internal and external culture and uses to demonstrate the influence of different texts on Latin American narratives, for the cinematic universe.

Superhero movies associated with American national identity for many years are rapidly becoming a global value from a nationalist perspective in today's global world. This demonstrates the journey of national cinema toward global cinema. In fact, national cinema, in Higbee's words (1989, 36) is often used to simply the films produced within a particular nation-state." Based on this definition, we can say that Hollywood is also a national cinema. In the meantime, it is significant to remember that the Hollywood film industry strives to standardize and universalize the mainstream cinema narrative in order to strengthen its dominance in the market. Drawing a portrait that has lost its national characteristics today, the Hollywood industry tries to globalize its production, distribution and demonstration network by collaborating with transnational companies. According to some critics, this leads to the gradual loss of the relationship between Hollywood and American culture (Behlil 2008, 212). However, this view overlooks the relationship between Hollywood industry and capitalism. The Hollywood industry and the transnational corporations, which are the dynamo of this industry, do not produce films independent of the ideology of the capitalist organization. In fact, industry is a mechanism that places social life and cinema narrative in a certain political and ideological context and reproduces everyday life. Douglas Kellner and Michael Ryan (1988) argue that cinematic ideology causes the disappearance of the distinctions between films emerging in different historical periods and the overlook of representation strategies. This warning from Kellner and Ryan is very essential. Because we should not evaluate the superhero films, which are increasing in popularity today and are on the list of the most watched films in the world, according to the historical, political and ideological environment of before 2000. However, it should be added that today, as in the past, global mass culture is dominated by the cultural industry. Therefore, global culture is Western-centered and homogenizing for reasons such as technological superiority, the tendency of capital to monopolize. However, the homogenization process is still ongoing, and the West has no purpose in terminating it. Because the homogenization policy of global mass culture has an all-encompassing American style in which differences augment with assimilation (Hall 1997, 28). But, it does not destroy localities, it proceeds to work with them, even put it in an endless loop. In this context, it can be said that American culture is being tried to be globalized through transnationalized Hollywood. Today, when these national discourses are on the rise again, they are made with different representation and identity politics. If we recall Kellner's historical periodization, today (Hollywood) transnational capital pushes the boundaries of cultures with fluid global information mobility, by crossing them with global cultural discourse and developing new forms of belonging. It is Marvel's new maneuver to design new forms of belonging in a fiction universe rather than the real social

level. A universe designed at the supra-identity level is very profitable since it includes the majority.

It is not possible to say that individuals developed a single sense of belonging in the late modern period as in the traditional period. Comprehending that there will not be a single form of belonging indicates that we can develop multiple identities as part of a collective structure in different groups, communities and/or universes, rather than individual identities. The common junction point of global identity in the Marvel universe is revealed by the new perspective created by Appadurai's global streaming environment. People involved in this global new universe can develop a common way of life by massifying with an invisible bond, but that doesn't mean that one feels American or Americanizer, which is what the new colonial form hides behind the superhero story.[16] Thus, the individual can easily connect by joints to both global and local. Les Essif says that today individuals living in different geographies have relational identities. It likens the new form of identity, which he calls a rhizomatic identity, to a root moving on the horizontal and vertical axis (2009, 101). Addressing identity relationally means involving it in a process that has never been completed. When ethnic origins are defined as sub-identities, the identity of the imaginary community created in the MCU establishes a supra-identity formed by different sub-identities. Sub-identities defined by ethnic/racial origin do not conflict with the supra-identity, rather they are formed by their coming together.

So far, twenty-three films have been made in the MCU. The series, which has multiple films among the highest-grossing films in the world,[17] has been criticized by critics on different topics such as ideology, race, gender, and so on, although it is so popular with the global audience (Gerard and Poepsel 2019; Lout 2017; Kaunda 2019) Although each of these criticisms has a fair aspect, it is hard to say that the audience feels the same discomfort when looking at the intensity of mass consumption. What could be the reason for this?

First, let us ask this question. Should we follow the fact that the movies of the MCU are actually not movies but episodes of a series? Marvel movies are actually a series that is divided into seasons they call "phase," each of which actually makes a season finale and usually broadcasts two episodes a year. Today, within the framework of its transformation in viewing practices, MCU films are a product of the strings of events that are connected within the framework of a metanarrative and divided into sub-narratives. Disney's move in the MCU universe puts the audience in anticipation that constantly encourages them to wait for the next episode. This is also related to Raiti's individualization, which was formed in the late modern period by the dominance of global capitalist discourse and consumption culture. Likewise, what Disney does with MCU is to make individuals seek self-awareness and

personal satisfaction (2007, 165). Besides, the universe created by the MCU's superhero movies is not a completely fantastical extension. As in other superhero movies, a supra-spatial city is created where reality and fiction intersect and intertwine. In these cities, people are often reflected in a fine line between surviving or dying. The principle of simplicity mentioned in the previous chapter is based on the most basic motivation of man—the survival instinct. In this context, films that push rationality into the background unify the global audience on the same feeling. However, MCU's films are often criticized for being ideological and for spreading American propaganda. Critics may be right about this issue. However, based on Crane, MCU films can be interpreted in different ways by different audiences in different countries (2014, 374). This demonstrates Disney's ability to create narrative structures where different concept map may occur in the global market.

Looking at the overall MCU films, the dominance of heteronormative discourse can be realized. It is possible to say that the white-racial narrative is centralized in phases 1 and 2. In MCU films, which were observed to have no protagonist in different races and genders until the middle of the third phase, *Black Panther*'s release with the first Black director and lead actor was welcomed quite positively. Previously, *Guardians of the Galaxy*'s contribution to the cinema universe as the first female screenwriter is significant in terms of breaking and diversifying the patriarchal view. Toward the end of phase 3, after the *Black Panther*, it tries to maintain diversity in the universe with the first female lead in *Ant-Man and the Wasp* and the first female director in *Captain Marvel.* In the later stages of the MCU, which is remarkable that the inclusion of race/ethnicity/ gender in the narratives is few, the diversity of the narratives augments remarkably.

The diversity of superhero movies is very essential when considered within the framework of the box office success of the movies and the taste of the global audience. China, which is starting to host more moviegoer day by day, is the largest market for Hollywood after North America. Considering that more than 1.45 billion Chinese went to the movies in 2017 (Song 2018, 178), this reveals as an unmissable opportunity for Disney. In this context, when phase 4's films are examined, it can be observed that the variety is increasing. *Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings,* starring Asian actors written by Chinese-American David Callaham, will be the second ethnic and first Asian superhero film after *Black Panther.* Disney, which previously received appreciation of Chinese audiences with Mulan, gives places to a China-based narrative at the MCU, producing films that touch on their national culture and history, as well as enriching the universe.[18] The process which began with *Black Panther*'s box office success and cultural phenomenon, accelerates markedly in Phase Four. In particular, the racial

diversity of the superheroes in *Eternals* and the film's directing by China's Chloé Zhao demonstrates that the MCU is acting in a global cultural context. The diversity created by Pakistani-American, Korean-American, Mexican-African-American superheroes at the MCU point out the existence of a transcultural or a supra-cultural environment. Thus, the MCU establishes a multiethnic/racial but Western-centered neocolonial cultural domination that fixes the concepts of representation and identity within its cultural universe, normalizing its own way of seeing. At this point, the most striking aspect of the parallelism established between real life and fictional life is the relationship between superheroes and transnational companies and the functions of companies.

It's no surprising that the lead in *Iron Man*, released in 2008, has the tech giant transnational Stark company. As the film indicates, the company was founded to produce new weapons for the US military. *Iron Man*'s constant affirmation also provides the affirmation of Stark, a transnational company. The fact that the stories in the MCU are connected to each other through transnational companies already underlines that capitalist ideology/system is necessary for the world to survive. It's also important that Captain America becomes a superhero thanks to the program and technology of Stark. Because *Captain America* emerged with the technology of a transnational company. In this context, the main starting point of the story in 2008 was structured with a perspective that legitimizes transnational capitalism, and it indicates that transculturalism is also a hegemonic form of capitalist ideology in the fictional universe.

Filmic narratives are significant. Especially in this age when technoscape is expanding rapidly. As Adorno and Horkheimer point out, today "now there are audiences trained to identify reality with film; even besides identifying it, it's a perception that makes the film real and the real a film" (Acun 2015). Based on this view, the identity of the audience has fallen into crisis in late modernity. Today, in the universe of flows, the individual has difficulty holding traditional concepts such as identity, belonging. Perhaps that is why audiences from different nations, races, genders, ethnics, geographies are so pleased with the production of narratives and people from their own cultures/races, and so on. They consider that is how they can catch the values that they have lost, that they think have slipped away.

After the success of *Black Panther* as a cultural phenomenon, will the MCU universe's transcultural environment and effort to create supra-identity with superheroes come through? Will the newly represented audience, such as viewers organized in different cities to watch *Black Panther,* create a new social movement? Otherwise, we will see in the following years, whether the individual who consumes everything and every innovation will quickly get bored of such activities and enter into different seeking.

CONCLUSION

Today, the discourses of globalization, the rapid progress in communication technologies, the effort to adapt to the digital age, the increasing mobilization of transportation technologies and the increasing convergence between places seem to indicate that cultural discourses are hybridizing as if they emphasize the complexity and move toward a common cultural environment. However, in theory, these contingencies of rapprochement and intertwining occurring in the cultural environment are unrealistic in practice to proceed on the same plane. Especially in recent years, the increasing far-right discourse, the negative view of multiculturalism and immigration demonstrates that nationality is reformatting. The negative impact of economic globalization in the cultural and national context is trying to solve the economic problems experienced by countries and citizens in these areas. In addition, the relationship between the globalization of capitalism and the tendency to monopolize the property structure in communication technologies is forcing the experience of the local and global at the same time. Because the primary goal of global companies such as Disney is to dominate the market and maximize profits. For this reason, creating a transcultural environment through the representation of different ethnic groups in cinema narratives produced as a representation of real social life has the potential to facilitate the consumption of the narrative in different geographies and enable it to be experienced more. Such a move differs from the heroic narratives of the past, creating a break between the present and the past. The evolution of white skin hero representations into a supra-identity world created by various ethnic groups perhaps expresses the possibleness of transculturalism, perhaps only in the cinematic universe.

Marvel's cinematic universe creates a representational space parallel to real social life. This space tries to create a supra-identity similar to the old nation-state structure, but does so in both a global and local context, bringing together various racial/ethnic/cultural groups in a global cultural context. Although this indicates a paradoxical situation, in today's new global fluid modern world translocation and transnationalism are experienced at the same time. Thus, the national discourse is made strong and the global discourse is affirmed. It is closely related to the organization of massive transnational corporations such as Disney, which has representations or agreements in almost all countries. Because of the new heroic narratives created by supra-identities, the viewer can feel belonging as long as he finds a part of himself, his own culture, in the new universe created, if not from the same nation/race, by massifying on the global plane.

With the new heroic universe model starting with *Black Panther*, Disney looks like it will increase its diversity with phase 4 and try to maintain its hegemony on the global market. The new universe will continue to describe

the illusion that global capitalist discourse will embrace the entire universe with heroes of different origins. This indicates that Disney is seeking a non-Chinese market and trying to enter new markets with a hero who will represent the national identity of that country. Time will tell whether the representation of countries such as Pakistan, South Korea and Nigeria with heroes will make a lucrative return as in China.

NOTES

1. However, this view should be considered without ignoring the economic-political framework without being isolated from the global capitalist context, as Dirlik emphasizes. Especially nowadays, when new communication technologies are spreading to speed, the growth of capital and its transformation into a decentralization structure demonstrate that global capital is penetrating the local. This situation indicates that in the conceptual context, the local is separated from the conventional one and articulated to the global one. In fact, the "Think globally, act locally" (motto) view that emerged with the transnationalization of capital clearly explains that cultures homogenized as they disintegrated (Dirlik 1998, 90–93).

2. The protests that took place in many parts of the world after the 2008 economic crisis provide an opportunity to break the global capitalist domination, according to Dirlik (1998, 269) mass demonstrations in the People's Republic of China, where demonstrations are banned by the state; The Arab Spring, known as the people's uprising against authoritarian regimes in North Africa; Anti-austerity movement in the United Kingdom, Anti-austerity movement in Greece; In Turkey "Gezi Events"; 2020–2021 Indian farmers' protest and the latest "Black Lives Matter" motto in the United States where anti-racist protests are rising, the reaction of the people to the inequalities in the economic, political, social and cultural spheres can be in parallel with the social movements of the nineteenth century. In fact, the inequalities deepened by financialized global capitalism, the conflict between the logic of the nation-state and global capital, and the damage caused by all of these in liberal democracy caused a public reaction.

3. Many thinkers on the subject argue that globalization is a dual or multiple process. According to Robertson, globalization indicates the particularism of universalization and the universalization of particularism (1992), while at the same time it is a mixture of homogenization and heterogeneousness (2001); According to Kellner (1998), globalization takes place at a border in the transition period between the modern and the postmodern age and expresses both today and tomorrow; Bauman (1998) claims that the globalization process develops in an unbalanced way, while the top culture is experiencing the globalization process, other cultures are in the process of localization and that inequality has spread and become permanent throughout the world.

4. Especially in the Trump era, the rise of anti-immigrant policies and implemented policies: Restrict legal immigration, the border wall with Mexico, stop immigrants from receiving benefits, restrict travel and visas from certain countries, and so

on. Moreover, the increase of new racist discourse, the Black Lives Matter movement that emerged after the murder of George Floyd, and finally the use of the definition of China Virus in most of the Covid-19 discourses, were not welcomed by Chinese Americans citizens in the country. For more information: https://www.thebalance .com/donald-trump-immigration-impact-on-economy-4151107; https://www.nytimes .com/2020/03/23/us/chinese-coronavirus-racist-attacks.html.

5. Another point that should be mentioned here is that the rights gained after the struggle against the British excluded Blacks, where only whites were included.

6. https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/charts/immigrant -population-over-time.

7. I borrowed this concept from Arif Dirlik.

8. Ethnoscape emphasizes that the world has become mobilized place than in the past for many reasons. It is the cultural flow created by individuals and/or groups such as immigrants, tourists, guest workers, and so on. Technoscape is a global field formed in the world that has been connected by the rapid development of technology in recent years. Finanscape is a global money transfer that increases with the global trend of capital and its transnationalization. Mediascape is the environment that enables the global spread of cultural information flow and increases the frequency of cultural contacts, especially with digital technologies. Ideoscape is the area where societies such as the ideology of the state and the counter-ideology of sociopoliti-cal movements form their political cultures and cultural identities (Appadurai 1990, 296–301).

9. The mixing of different cultural riches of the world is parallel with the speed of migrants' displacement and the development of communication technologies. Examples include a Mexican person doing Hindu dance in the United States, Turks doing hip-hop in London, or Turkish hot-dog.

10. In the context of global cultural flow, it can be looked at the work titled *Globalization and hybridization in cultural products The cases of Mulan and Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, which examines that hybridization produces new forms rather than mere mixing of cultures with each other, through films adapted from Chinese works within the framework of deculturalization and acculturalization concepts (Wang and Yeh, 2005).

11. The controversy over Black Panther interprets it as a film affirming national-ism and conservatism in a neocolonial perspective, although, in reality, the film seems to symbolize a struggle against colonialism. Thus, it indirectly affirms the neocolo-nial mentality by pulling it to a point that ignores global racial inequality within a framework that legitimizes cooperation with Western countries in line with neoliberal policies.

12. https://www.statista.com/statistics/187261/combined-market-share-of-major -film-studios-in-north-america/.

13. Song notes that the Chinese cinema market has grown in recent years, and Hollywood—usually the blockbuster films of six major studios—has made deals with China to make more income. Although the agreements make globalization transna-tional capital a leader in the film market, various cultural and political challenges are encountered in the Chinese market. But still, Hollywood movies somehow protect

their success in the Chinese market. Song, quoted by Brzeski; "38.4% of China's box office in 2015 was contributed by Hollywood movies. In 2016, imported foreign films (with the vast majority being Hollywood movies) accounted for 41.7% of China's total box office" (2018, 178).

14. It is not said that there are no rights, freedoms and gains acquired here from the past to the past. Here, it is not said that there are no rights, freedoms and gains acquired from the past to the present. However, what is meant to be emphasized here is that the sovereign and dependent struggle is a dialectical process. In other words, groups that acquire gains after the struggle in real social life make themselves to power afterward. As mentioned in Horkheimer and Adorno's (1997) book, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, enlightenment betrayed its own ideals. Namely, the idea of enlightenment, which destroys myths, itself becomes a myth. In this context, the rights and freedoms gained in practical life after the struggle carried out on theoretical grounds today are recognized within the limits set by the capitalist system.

15. Edward Said (1978) states that myths contain elements that support the West-East or Us-Them dilemma and the superiority of the West over the East. Here, Said's critique is the cultural domination that the West is trying to establish with myths of exotic representation over the East. Indeed, this orientalist view proceeds in transnational Hollywood films, especially superhero movies, even films by Black, Asian leading actor. However, what is desired to be emphasized here is the narrativization of the good-bad conflict that exists in almost all cultures from the past to the past through mythical discourse with superhuman heroes. Thus, a super-cultural structure consisting of superhuman heroes is established in the new cinematic universe. In this cultural structure, all elements such as race, ethnicity and identity are separated in the context of goods and bads, creating a common area of discourse.

16. A study conducted in the United States regarding this situation found that individuals do not feel American even though they develop a common lifestyle in real life (Phinney, Cantu and Kurtz 1997, 180).

17. https://www.boxofficemojo.com/chart/top_lifetime_gross/?area=XWW.

18. I'm not saying about Disney being transformed into a modern and American form for the Disney audience by narrativizes the Chinese story in an American style. I am acting solely on box office success; as transnational companies focus on.

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PART II

THE REPRESENTATION OF OTHERS BEYOND THE BORDERS

Strangers at Our Door

A Baumanian Perspective to Children of Men, Elysium, *and* Snowpiercer

Gül Yaşartürk

INTRODUCTION

Science fiction, one of the most important genres that has risen in times of crisis, is regarded in the literature as a genre that expresses today's concerns through future societies. Ethnicity and class representations of the science fiction genre reflect the current problems of Western societies. Science fiction inherits travel writing. Travel writing was a genre of literature inspired by the existence of yet undiscovered, unknown countries in the world during the colonial empires. The desire of travelers to explore went in parallel with the state's colonization plans. In travel writing, the concept called the other referred to humans dwelling on unknown lands. Given that there is physically nothing left today that has not been known or discovered in the geographical region/world where we live, the answer to the question "Who is the other in science fiction films?" is quite simple; uninvited guests that we are unwilling to share our peace and well-being, namely refugees and migrants. Those who are not "one of us." People who we know, and yet those we do not want to live with.

As is stated by Michael Ryan and Douglas Kellner, the films set in the future could be regarded to be the least sensitive genre to contemporary social issues (Ryan and Kellner 2010, 390–91). However, it is also said frequently that science fiction is of a radical stance when considered in terms of classical Hollywood narratives. A genre which is supposed to be unrealistic, or at the furthest distance from the reality of the contemporary world, constitutes the most suitable ground to represent the functioning of this world with accuracy due to its narrative features. Forward-looking fantasies can be considered as

a way of implying the present moment. These films break the secret bans of the realist narratives that dominate Hollywood by employing temporal displacement (Ryan and Kellner 2010, 390–91). A similar financial and political crisis in the United States over the 1970s was experienced during the 2000s. The 1970s, which Ryan and Kellner scrutinized, witnessed Vietnam War, the protest movement of 1968, and the Watergate Scandal (Ryan and Kellner 2010). Ryan and Kellner argued that the given period lasted between 1967 and 1987, which had various political impacts on American culture (Ryan and Kellner 2010, 19). With the conservatism following the economic and political crises and Ronald Reagan's administration, the films mostly offered representations that tried to compensate these crises and soothe the concerns of the audience by offering solutions. The 2000s, on the other hand, saw another rise of conservatism in the United States with the George W. Bush government. The Bush government shared the same views with Christian fundamentalists on many issues. Even if there was a resistance to the United States' radical shift to the right, "the 9/11 attacks created the opportunity that conservatives had been waiting for, breaking the last resistance. Due to these attacks, the US lands' turning into a war zone became a reality, which had not gone beyond being a Hollywood fantasy for years" (Topçu 2010, 158). Following the attack, the Bush administration invaded first Afghanistan and then Iraq. An economic crisis that began in the United States in 2008 and affected the whole world occurred. The US invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq brought about human rights violations in Abu Ghraib and Guantánamo prisons, the strengthening of Islamophobia, and xenophobia. During this period, the level of the distrust in the administration was higher than in the 1970s; in the survey conducted by Gallup in 2008, only 26 percent of the US citizens believed that the country was well governed (Topçu 2010, 159). This rate had been the lowest since 1972. It is possible to summarize the period, similar to the 1970s, as the failure of liberalism, the economic and management crisis, and the rise of conservatism (Topçu 2010, 159).

This crisis led to an increase in the number of examples of disaster and science fiction films in American Cinema. American science fiction films released after September 11, 2001, have combined the themes regarding administration and political crisis as well as masculine leader figures who manage to survive, as in *I Am Legend* (Francis Lawrence 2007) and *The Road* (John Hillcoat 2009) with ecological concerns, or dealt with only ecological concerns, as in *Mad Max Fury Road* (George Miller 2015). *District 9* (Neill Blomkamp 2009) and *Arrival* (Denis Villeneuve 2016) are two major films of the sci-fi genre that use alien/creature and invasion themes after September 11, 2001. *District 9* deals with discrimination, being the other and a refugee using aliens who were locked away for three months on a spaceship deployed in Johannesburg in 1982 and then placed in a fenced camp/ghetto. The reason

why South African Blomkamp's film is set in 1982 is, undoubtedly, because he wanted to refer to the deprivation of many citizenship rights of Blacks in the Apartheid system between 1948 and 1994. By reversing the prevailing iconography of the sci-fi genre, Blomkamp does not represent aliens as dangerous invaders; on the contrary, those who are hazardous are humans. Contrary to Hollywood dominant stereotypes, the protagonist of *District 9* is also neither a warrior, nor an entrepreneurial and patriarchal character, but an anti-hero (Vitrinel 2018, 140). *Arrival* also shares both of these features of *District 9*. Aliens are peaceful, not dangerous, whereas those who are dangerous and war-prone are humans. Moreover, *Arrival*'s protagonist is a female linguist character, not a warrior, an entrepreneur or patriarchal. *Arrival* was released just before Donald Trump's presidency and deals with the polarization and otherization that Trump's discourses created in American society. However, contrary to Trump's speeches and policies, the language team striving to communicate with the aliens in *Arrival* consists of different nations and works in harmony. Alien creatures have no hostile purposes; they are completely peaceful, bringing everyone together. *Arrival* indicates that it is easy to be hostile to a stranger and that establishing a dialogue requires effort and has a unifying and healing power. According to Camilla Eyre and Joanna McIntyre, "*Arrival* is about transcending barriers and being immersed in a new culture to understand a foreign race; however, it does not offer 'blow it up' spectacle and instead presents a speculative exploration of interpersonal communication between humans and extraterrestrials" (Eyre and McIntyre 2018, 42). Similarly, according to Gemma King, *Arrival* reconfigures the monolingual dominance in classical Hollywood narratives (King 2019, 210). As well as English, Russian and Mandarin are also spoken in the film which adopts a multicultural approach. However, there are also unspoken languages which are mentioned. It is implied in the film that the protagonist, Louise, speaks other languages. The message of the film is that difference is not about body or color, but about language, culture, and ways of thinking. It is necessary to communicate through these differences rather than erase them (King 2019, 210).

As Robert Stam points out, multiculturalism is an assault not on Europe, but on Eurocentrism, that is, on Europe's being the unique source of meaning (Stam 2000, 269). The multicultural view criticizes the universalization of Eurocentric norms; "it refers to the multiple cultures of the world and the historical relationship between them, including relations of subordination and domination" (Stam 2000, 270). It argues that the world does not have a single center but multiple centers that do not have a starting point. According to the emphasis on polycentrism, "no single community or part of the world, whatever its economic or political power, is epistemologically privileged" (Stam 2000, 271). Multiculturalism is different from liberal pluralism. Above

all, it is not about "sensitivity," "but about empowering the disempowered. Polycentric multiculturalism calls for changes not just in images, but in power relations" (Stam 2000, 271). Studies of race and multiculturalism in the film theory have been conducted especially by investigating the representations of races through stereotypes. However, Stam suggests that the analysis of the character based on stereotypes is not thorough, adding that Eurocentrism in film can also be conveyed through mise-en-scène and image (Stam 2000, 277). He states that how much space the representatives of different social groups occupy in the story, in which shots they are viewed, and whether they are active in the story are also significant elements in questioning Eurocentrism (Stam 2000, 277). The films *Children of Men* (Alfonso Cuarón 2006), *Elysium* (Neill Blomkamp 2013) and *Snowpiercer* (Bong Joon-ho 2013), which were selected as examples within the scope of the study, are science fiction films set in a dystopia, which reflect the concerns after September 11, 2001 and do not use the themes of aliens/creatures and invasion. They were chosen because they break the dominant narrative patterns of Hollywood by opposing the other representations and stereotypes of the science fiction genre. Contrary to what is presented in mainstream science fiction and horror films, it is not science and technology in all the given films that give rise to jeopardous or evil results, for, as Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer put it, the reason why technology and science have gained power and efficiency over contemporary societies is the fact that those who have the greatest social and economic superiority are behind the technology and science (Oskay 1994, 185). Which class has the technological power determines for what purpose and for whom it will be used. When technology is in the hands of the wealthy minority, as we have seen especially in *Elysium* and *Snowpiercer*, it becomes a dangerous power used for security and violence, reflecting the fears and concerns of losing what is owned. In addition, multiculturalism is positively emphasized in the films studied, and refugee and migrant issues are also addressed as well as ecological problems. While *Children of Men*, *Elysium* and *Snowpiercer* present authoritarian governments, referring to Naomi Klein[1], in a world where ecological problems bring in devastating consequences, they also suggest that the most important distinction between people is class, not races, and therefore any poor individual can become a refugee one day.

REFUGEE AS "HOMO SACER" AND "HUMAN AS WASTE" IN GIORGIO AGAMBEN AND ZYGMUNT BAUMAN

Zygmunt Bauman suggested that refugees fleeing wars, despotic regimes or famine today have been knocking on the doors of other peoples since

the early modern period (Bauman 2016, 14). Long before the migrant and refugee problems experienced in the twenty-first century, there have been xenophobic and racist reactions to the mass influx of "strangers" in the United States since the end of the nineteenth century and in Western Europe since the 1950s. (Hobsbawm 2000, 157). Yet, xenophobia and racism should be regarded as a symptom rather than a solution. It is possible to talk about the existence of economic problems and crises in societies where xenophobia and racism take place. When faced with any economic or political crisis or crises in social life, the person who is responsible for them is always someone apart from "me," that is, the other. As in Eric Hobsbawm's prescient words,

> We can, and must, blame "them" for all the grievances, uncertainties, and disori-
> entations that we feel. But who are "they"? Obviously and by definition, those
> who are "not us" (. . .). It would be necessary to invent them if there were no
> foreigners with their tricks. (. . .) Foreigners in unhappier countries are, and have
> always been, our neighbors; however, the exclusive certainties of belonging to
> our people and our country is now undermined by our co-existence with "them."
> (Hobsbawm 2000, 174)

Refugees are strangers to the individuals behind the doors they knock on. The reason for being a stranger is that they are unpredictable, unlike the people we interact with daily, and we supposedly know what to expect from. As in Bauman's words, we all know that a mass influx of foreigners can destroy what we value, and this could mean crippling or destroying our way of life that we are so comfortingly familiar with. We categorize the people we are accustomed to living together in our neighborhoods, streets or workplaces as friends or enemies, welcome them, and know how to treat them (Bauman 2016, 14). On the other hand, strangers create a situation in which the sense of control is lost, causing fear of losing properties and social positions owned. And indeed, the given fear of loss reminds us how fragile our own positions and well-being that are achieved through hardship are (Bauman 2016, 20). Refugees are constantly classified and stigmatized as terrorists in relation to the security issues, which serves to place them "beyond the moral responsibil-ity" for the people with whom they live together in the same society (Bauman 2016, 33–35). In this way, they are no longer real people who need compas-sion and attention. The line drawn between us and them ceases our moral responsibility toward refugees as the other (Bauman 2016, 68). Refugees are not only products of globalization but also its symbols. They are the human waste of the global border, absolute strangers (Bauman 2010, 37–38).

Referring to Giorgio Agamben's definition of *Homines sacri*, Bauman stated that refugees are dehumanized and positioned as redundant people, just like the people in the camps (Bauman 2016, 70; Evans and Bauman 2016).

Agamben borrows the term "*homo sacer*" from Roman law. *Homo sacer*'s life is worthless as regards both humanity and divinity. Killing a *homo sacer* is not a crime, and therefore it is not punished, nor cannot a *homo sacer* be sacrificed with a divine purpose. Deprived of the human and divine values determined by law, *homo sacer*'s life is worthless. Killing a *homo sacer* is neither a crime nor a disrespect to the sacred, nor is it a sacrifice. (Bauman 2018, 46). Being *homo sacer* means being placed in the category of people both ordinary and devoid of religious significance and value (Bauman 2016, 70). Dehumanization means not having human rights. Refugee and migrant issues cease to be an ethical/moral problem and is put in the security issue category. It is associated with military attacks and hostility (Bauman 2016, 70). In Agamben terminology, camp refers to Nazi concentration camps. According to Agamben, the killing of Jews was nothing but the actualization of the capacity to be killed, one of the inherent attributes of being Jewish (Agamben 1998, 68). In Agamben terminology, the word "camp" refers to a concept that is used to describe the places where space, time, and law that are valid within a certain political order are dissolved/suspended, and thus bare life emerges (Yardımcı 2012). In the camps, a human being is defined not by being a human or citizen, but only by biological traits. Man, deprived of the protection of the law of the social-political order, is stripped of humanity and left alone with his bare existence, abandoned to the rule of the sovereign (Yardımcı 2012). Agamben suggested that the people in the camps were stripped of their political status and simply reduced to bare life (Agamben 1998, 97). According to him, the most important question about the camp should be about the legal order and power structure, rather than the question of how violence can take place. What kind of a legal order makes genocide possible and decriminalizes it? One can argue that the same legal issue persists in contemporary refugee camps. On the other side of the clean, healthy, and visible world are refugees, just like the Jews in Nazi camps. As in Bauman's words, on the one hand, there is the clean, healthy, and visible world, and, on the other, the dark, sick, and invisible world of residual "wastes" (Bauman 2016, 74). According to him, the term "human waste" refers to those who are far from our eyes, hearts, and conscience (Bauman 2016, 75). Western societies, which are in pursue of economic progress, crush cultures that do not have a consumption culture like them. As Bauman argues, "In such a world, those people who are forced to flee intolerable conditions are not considered to be 'bearers of rights,' even those supposedly considered inalienable to humanity. Forced to depend for their survival on the people on whose doors they knock, refugees are in a way thrown outside the realm of 'humanity,' as far as it is meant to confer the rights they aren't afforded" (Evans and Bauman 2016). Refugees living in refugee camps are human as waste. Their identities and abilities in their own countries are now null. As

Bauman puts it, deprived of the stories that constitute their identity and the basic comforts provided by identity, they turn into a faceless mass behind the fences of the camp (Bauman 2018, 93–94). They cannot assimilate into the new social structure. They can neither return from the place, or the dump, where they are, nor move further.

CHILDREN OF MEN: WHITE MAN SAVES HUMAN AS WASTE

Children of Men, Alfonso Cuarón's film released in 2006, is set in England in 2027. Like the other two films discussed in this study, it deals with the ecological crisis, but draws our attention to the issue more than *Elysium* and *Snowpiercer*. The film is based on a conflict in which pregnant women begin to have miscarriages after the 2008 flu pandemic, becoming completely infertile, and thus no child has been born for eighteen years. An environmental catastrophe that can be attributed to capitalism and development has caused infertility. As E. Ann Kaplan states, "*Children of Men* is a critique of the post–9/11 Western capitalist response to that tragedy. This critique is visible in the images heavily oriented to the United Kingdom, the United States, and global political crises—9/11, Iraq, Abu Ghraib, and Guantánamo" (Kaplan 2016, 68).

In the scene where Theo visits Jasper in the introduction of *Children of Men*, Theo and Julian are with their baby in a Black and white photograph. Theo and Julian separate shortly after the death of their son during the flu pandemic, and neither of them can recover from his loss. This is how the melodramatic/emotional base of the story is established. Theo's being kidnapped by the organization called "the Fishes," which is led by Julian, and his obtaining the fake transit paper at Julian's request take place right in the following part/sequence. Therefore, *Children of Men*'s protagonist Theo's savior role is motivated by the love for a woman, similar to that of *Elysium*'s protagonist, Max. The only difference is that Theo has an emotional bond not with Kee, who is saved, but with Julian, who wants him to be the savior. Another common feature in the construction of Theo and Max as savior male characters is the religious mythological connotations. As Sara Ahmed argues, the Biblical theme is explicit in the scene in which Kee calls Theo to the barn in order to reveal her pregnant body to him (Ahmed 2010, 185). In the final part of the film, Kee, who has just given birth, and Theo, who is dying, reach the sea by boat through the underground sewer and wait for the ship named *Tomorrow*. This scene refers to the myth of Moses, and the film reproduces religious mythology by secularizing it (Kutay 2011, 152–153). Therefore, as Douglas Kellner points out, although calls attention to growing fascism and the collapse of democracy and civilization, *Children of Men* has a conservative

subtext (Kellner 2010, 87). The Human Project and the ship called *Tomorrow* comes up to save only Kee and her child, though there are millions of people living in refugee camps. The film positions childbirth as a key element of humanity. While transforming Theo from a depressed cynic into a committed activist, it projects hope on the birth of a child who becomes an object of religious adoration (Kellner 2010, 87). E. Ann Kaplan also suggested that Theo's story depicts despair and cynicism, and Kee's function is to transform Theo into a positive and active hero as the genre requires (Kaplan 2016, 74). When Kee gives Theo's deceased son's name to her newborn daughter, Theo regains his status of paternity before he dies. Theo's transformation shows us how much the conventions of hope depend on white man's becoming a "father" of both a new being and a new species being (Ahmed 2010, 187).

Referring to Agamben, camps are visible in almost every scene in the film. Camps are a part of everyday life; people are confined in cages on every corner in the streets of London and sent to the refugee camps outside the city by buses. The last forty minutes of the film is set inside one of these camps, Bexhill-on-Sea. People from various cultures, who speak different languages, live together in this place. Their most important problem is the poor living conditions they have rather than their cultural differences. The camp Bexhill-on-Sea is the perfect example of the twentieth- and twenty-first century Nazi concentration camps, Warsaw Ghetto, contemporary war zones, as well as political "prisons" such as Abu Ghraib and Guantánamo. In Bexhill, the soldiers torture, abuse, and kill migrants no matter which race they are, and crush uprisings with brutality (Korte 2008, 322). While the state maintains an authoritarian order reminiscent of George Orwell's 1984 novel with the security forces outside the camp, it is not possible to talk about any rule or order inside the camp. During the riot in the camp, the military force of the British state aims to destroy everyone whether guilty or innocent, and armed or unarmed. As the images clearly show, the settling people in the camp are not human, but human as waste.

The world represented by *Children of Men* is not divided into two as merely the rich and the poor (or, in other words, "citizens" and refugees) as in *Elysium*. Theo's cousin, the secretary of state responsible for arts, leads an extremely sterile, safe, and comfortable life, contrary to the living conditions of the people. In *Children of Men*, class differences are felt strongly among British citizens in the life outside the camp.

ELYSIUM: HUMAN AS WASTE
TRANSFORMS INTO A SAVIOR

Neil Blomkamp's film *Elysium*, which was released in 2013, features scenes that remind images of the dangerous journeys of the refugees to the

European continent in boats which have left a mark in our cultural memory. The refugees trying to reach a European country by sailing on small and flimsy boats in today's world are represented in *Elysium*, which is set in Los Angeles in 2154, by the impoverished citizens of Earth who aim to go to the satellite built by people, called Elysium, on a worn-out and illegal spaceship. At the beginning of the film, while an outside voice tells the audience, "In the late 21st century, earth was diseased, polluted and vastly overpopulated. Earth's wealthiest inhabitants fled the planet to preserve their way of life," the view of Earth from space enters the frame, but the only visible part on Earth is Africa and the Middle East. Europe is completely in the dark; it is invisible. The earth scenes of the film were shot in the slums and dumps of Mexico City and the Elysium scenes in the wealthy suburbs of the same city and Vancouver, which underlines that the established world and its story are directly related to the present (Mirrlees and Pedersen 2016, 308). In this sense, Blomkamp's statement that *Elysium* is not a science fiction but about now (Mirrlees and Pedersen 2016, 305) indicates that his film is the production of an extremely conscious effort. In *Elysium*, the main indicator of the inequality between poor people of different races living on Earth and the rich living in Elysium is the access to health services. While the poor are devoid of this basic human right, each home in Elysium has a device that heals all diseases in a short time. In the last scene of the film, the people living on Earth are provided with access to technology in terms of health services.

Referring to the definition of *Homines sacri*, in *Elysium*, those who are dehumanized and positioned as redundant people are all the poor who dwell on Earth and seek to flee to Elysium, as well as protagonist Max De Costa. In the factory sequence at the beginning of the film, forced by his supervisor to open the broken door of the section where the robots are burned, Max is threatened to be sacked if he does not. It is very possible to fire and replace him with another worker because Max is deprived of the protection of the social-political order's law and has been left to the sovereign's mercy. Max does what is required to avoid being unemployed and becomes exposed to a lethal dose of radiation. The system uses, consumes, and throws Max away like a waste when it is through with him. However, the film somewhat softens its highly political discourse using Christian mythology. Max turns into a savior who sacrifices himself for the poor on Earth, accompanied by the scenes with the nun we see in Max's childhood memories, stating that Max is the chosen person. Max sacrifices himself like Jesus (Gibson 2015, 84). He saves his childhood love Frey, with whom he grew up in the orphanage, and her daughter with leukemia, whom she raised without a father, all of which function to make the film's political discourse harmless with a melodramatic love story.

In the film, people who try to flee Earth illegally to Elysium have almost no rights because they do not benefit from state protection; they do not have human rights and are regarded as a security threat rather than an ethical problem. As Bauman points out, their being real people is ignored. (2016, 71). On the one hand, there is Elysium's neat, healthy, and visible world; on the other hand, the dark, sick, and invisible world of residual "wastes" (Bauman 2016, 74). Or, referring to Agamben, they are stripped of all their political status and completely reduced to bare life; there is pure life against the Elysium rule (Agamben 2013, 204). It is precisely for this reason that Elysium's secretary of defense, Delacourt, orders the military to destroy the shuttle of the refugees, whose fearful faces are shown to the audience, as she sees them as an illegal problem violating Elysium's airspace. She speaks of forty-six people who were killed as "they are destroyed." The dead are just numbers; they are no longer human.

Elysium openly criticizes America's immigration policy. The film is set in Los Angeles. Moreover, most of the inhabitants of Earth have Latin names. *Elysium*'s Black president Patel and female secretary of Defense, Delacourt, evoke Barack Obama, the president of the United States between 2009 and 2017, and Hillary Clinton, the US secretary of state during his first term[2]; "President Patel, while being on the same side as Delacourt, prefers to maintain control with a friendly face, a la Barack Obama" (Galea 2013). While Nick Recktenwald suggests that Defense Secretary Delacourt is played by Jodie Foster as a version of Hillary Clinton from a Republican nightmare, Scott Foundas points out that Blomkamp and Jodie Foster depict the character as an evil version of Hillary Clinton (2013). In fact, as Andrew Romano argued, from *Divergent* to *Hunger Games*, it is possible to say that the tradition of making similarities between the villain politician characters and Hillary Clinton in Hollywood reflects the fear of women (2017).

In *Elysium*, the immigration policy of the United States is criticized by displaying that, while the citizens of Earth are deprived of the most basic human living conditions, particularly access to health services, all the citizens of Elysium equally have upper class living standards. Moreover, it is also a remarkable criticism of the US immigration policy that the Elysium administration sees the citizens of Earth as a security problem, and they do not see any harm in killing them in order not to share their prosperity. The film, in the final analysis, determines the problem we live in as the intersection of social class and racial issues. Both the inhabitants on Earth and those in Elysium are governed by the corporation Armadyne. In the film, the conflict is solved by the fact that technology changes hands through the sacrifice of a working-class male hero. While *Elysium* says that technology is the most significant power, it shows concretely that what is evil is not technology, but the intention of its owner.

SNOWPIERCER: HUMAN AS WASTE
UNDERSTANDS BEING DECEIVED

Bong Joon-ho's 2013 film is based on the French graphic novel *Le Transperceneige* created by Jacques Lob and Jean-Marc Rochette and published in 1982. The film begins with a news report from 2014; produced by scientists as a solution to global warming, a gas called CW-7 have been spread to the upper layer of the atmosphere by seventy-nine countries to reduce global temperature. However, after the spread of gas, the world freezes, life disappears, and the world returns to ice age. The last survivors in the world onboard a train called "the Snowpiercer," designed by Wilford as a small replica of life on Earth. While the train circumnavigates on a certain route without stopping, the life on the train is divided into classes according to the economic assets of the people and transition between classes is impossible. In this sense, *Snowpiercer* shares *Children of Men*'s theme of the extinction of humanity due to an environmental catastrophe. Besides, the train named "the Snowpiercer" has precisely the same features as the life that the wealthy set up in Elysium. The class distinction is extremely sharp in both films and in *Snowpiercer*, it is also possible to see the ruthlessness of Elysium executives and their reluctance to share the prosperity they have. Similar to *Elysium*, technology and science, in *Snowpiercer*, are each a power enabling humans to survive, but a small minority holding the economic power use technology for their own well-being and security.

Ann Kaplan argued that thanks to/due to the miraculous pregnancy of the character of Kee in *Children of Men*, the film offers the audience a messianic future, and that, as a result, *Children of Men* is a utopian film (2016, 70). Kaplan's assessment applies to *Snowpiercer* and the character of Yona. Seventeen-year-old Yona has the qualities of a clairvoyant. With her sixth sense, she can see behind the doors and under the ground. It is Yona who, aside from saving Timmy's life, senses and discovers that young children are being exploited in place of machine gears on the train which are out-of-order and missing. Similar to the survival of Kee and her daughter in *Children of Men*, Yona and Timmy survive in *Snowpiercer*. The film ends with an allegorical scene in which Yona, and Timmy come out of the wreckage of the train, walk through the snow, and catch a polar bear's eyes (Andersen and Nielsen 2018, 621).

In *Snowpiercer*, humans as waste who want to "migrate" from the back end of the train to the front end constitute the poorest segment as in *Elysium*. The common feature that unites them is that they are the poorest of the train. While the poor involve different races, the rich we see on the front car of the train are predominantly whites as in *Elysium*. The inhabitants on the last car of the train are human as waste. They lack the facilities owned by the people

who reside at the front end of the train and are called citizens. They feed on protein bars made from cockroaches. The way the rear cars are represented directly resembles the Nazi camps visually. In the first part of the film, the soldiers looking for a violin player at the request of the front car residents drag away an old man against his will (by employing violence against his wife). Similarly, in another scene, they take two little boys away by employing violence against their mothers and other people after measuring the children with tape measures under pretense of medical inspection. In the closing part of the film, we learn that the children are forced to work in the engine room of the train. Reaching the locomotive and talking to Wilford, the protagonist Curtis finds out that it is Wilford himself who has started the uprising. As Wilford, defined by Kaplan as a fascist leader, states, "The population must always be kept in balance." He notes, sardonically, that he realized they had to control the population and could not wait for natural selection; drastic measures were necessary given the limited space available for the last survivors on Earth, circling the frozen globe in their class-divided train" (Kaplan 2016, 162). In order to preserve the resources on the train, it has been necessary to reduce the population, and of course the ones who are sacrificed for this are humans as waste on the back end of the train. They are just numbers, not individuals. The design of population control over humans as waste also evokes Nazi concentration camps, referring to Agamben.

The representations of class distinction in the film contain melodramatic elements, thus having similarities to Hollywood's representations of the poor and the rich. Curtis, the leader of the multicultural lower class that is made up of various ethnicities, is played, as in *Elysium*, by another blond and blue-eyed star actor, Chris Evans. Gilliam, the wise old man who mentors Curtis, is actually a character that collaborates with Wilford, shortly, someone who betrays the class he belongs to from the very beginning, and this evokes Hollywood's dominant/established discourse that the working class is always doomed to defeat and cannot unite.

CONCLUSION

The main characters of the films *Children of Men*, *Elysium*, and *Snowpiercer* are played by American and British actors, but the groups to which the main characters are closely related are of a multicultural nature. The final part of *Children of Men* focuses on Theo's endeavor to save Kee inside the refugee camp called Bexhill-on-Sea. On the other hand, in *Elysium*, Frey and Julio, who surrounds the main character, Max De Costa, as his close friends are Black and Latin. Julio is the person guiding Max; he is his mentor. In *Snowpiercer*, however, the multicultural structure is not as evident

as in the other two films. While the Black character Tanya, whom Curtis, the protagonist, builds a close relationship with, dies at the beginning of the film, Yona and Yona's father, Namgoong, are positioned as two-dimensional characters that help Curtis. Curtis' insistence on talking to Yona's father, Nam, in English without using the translation tool and Nam's requirement for it to respond him indicate that *Snowpiercer* still blesses WASP stereotypes. *Children of Men*, *Elysium*, and *Snowpiercer* break Hollywood's WASP dominant character representation through the characters who survive and adopts a multicultural discourse. In *Elysium*, Frey and her daughter are Black/Latin; in *Children of Men*, Kee is Afro-Caribbean, and in *Snowpiercer*, Yona is North Korean, while Timmy is Black.

The films in the study reflect the concerns about post-ecological disasters, and the life they portray while reflecting these concerns offer a suitable ground that can be addressed with the descriptions of Bauman's human as waste and Agamben's camp. The Western perspective based on progress has given way to ecological catastrophes, resulting in the concentration of economic and technological power in the hands of a small minority, and therefore of authoritarian governments. However, none of the films represent technology as dangerous. Thus, they are not technophobic. *Children of Men*, *Elysium*, and *Snowpiercer* suggest that technology can save human lives when it is not only in the hands of the minority who does not want to share its power and prosperity. It is possible to see this particularly in the last scene of *Elysium*, in which massive hospital ships land on Earth, and, in *Snowpiercer*, in the depiction of the train that hosts exactly the same life on Earth despite the polar cold. *Children of Men* depicts a period in which women have become infertile after a flu pandemic. In *Elysium*, Earth becomes uninhabitable because of global waste, whereas, in *Snowpiercer*, the world experiences an ice age. In *Children of Men*, due to the environmental disaster, the economic and social order has deteriorated in all the countries apart from Great Britain, so a great many refugees come to Great Britain illegally. In *Elysium* and *Snowpiercer*, the most important determinants of being a refugee is the class distinction and poverty. The world described in these two films is separated into two as the world of the poor/humans as waste and the world of the wealthy/citizens. On the other hand, in *Children of Men*, not all the citizens of Great Britain are wealthy. As we see in our protagonist Theo and his friend Jasper, those who are defined as citizens in Great Britain also include the poor and the rich.

All the three films reinforce the Hollywood stereotypes by presenting a male figure saving a young woman and a little child. As in Ahmed's words, this shows how much the conventions of hope depend on white man's becoming a father and sustaining humanity. *Children of Men* and *Elysium* shape the savior/self-sacrificing male narrative around religious references, whereas, in

Snowpiercer, the discourse of miracle/miraculousness is based on the character of Yona, who has the qualities of a clairvoyant.

NOTES

1. Klein argued in the Shock Doctrine that governments may take advantage of the vulnerability of people during catastrophe periods, resorting to new police state regulations (Kaplan, 2016, 78).

2. For another article reading the film through Obama era, see Kendrick (2013).

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Chapter 4

A Universe of Story and Medium

Transforming Narrative, Representation, and Ideology in Star Wars *Films and Digital Games*

Özge Sayılgan

As a story universe Star Wars is expanding in various medium like television, cinema, digital games, cartoon, and comic books. As well this universe is open to be read as a body of production at the center of the mainstream Hollywood cinema industry and popular culture. In this study Star Wars universe is discussed through the pattern of the transformation of the narrative representation from the second half of the 1970s to 2000s, in the context of transculturalism.

Star Wars is a multicultural universe at the same time: On one side the resistance of a heterogenic Republic representing the defense of the togetherness of various races of the galaxy and on the other side a homogenic Empire order as a representation of autocracy. The differentiating discourse from the first release in 1977 to post-2000 is also open to be analyzed in the context of the identity and representation politics in Disney, due to the purchase of Lucas Film to Disney in 2012 and is not independent from the transforming economic, political, and cultural background of globalization. The Disneyfication of the universe related to Disney's self-regeneration in 2000s appears in Star Wars, as a central woman hero character and the representation of races with important supporting actors and actresses installed in other basic character archetypes. But still, the lack of representation of other genders and disabled people accompany the "whiteness" of the main protagonist and antagonist. Additionally, their human race origin still occupies the central archetypes in the story of a universe of racial diversity. Like Yoda is the mentor, Asian—Black human representations are allies, but the main hero and shadow (villain archetype) stay white humans in general.

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The Star Wars narrative broadens on the flow of archetypal journey of dramatic characters and scenes which form the whole body. A story universe based on classical dramatic conflict of Hollywood mainstream narrative cinema with the eternal struggle between the "good" and "evil" which continues being the reproductive organ of the search for the balance is in question. So, this expansion functions as a puzzle to be completed but each piece of this big picture as a dramatic story comes together to form an epic tale beyond completion. The central dramatic narrative becomes a capital, gains an exchange value in the market and reproduces new, subordinating conjunctions to enlarge the story far from the dramatic closure. This endless openness provides a postmodern narrative style for the sake of capitalist production. The closing circle of J. Campbell's "hero's journey" model, in another word the circular flow of chaos to be transformed into an order, opens up by spiraling.

The expansion is not limited to the story content but it also comprises several medium from print to audio-visual and interactive. Especially digital games as interactive drama calls players to take "role" in the main story and be a part of the universe. The case of Star Wars digital games, especially the multiplayer platforms are open to be read also as virtual transcultural spaces reproducing Star Wars scenes and battles with the participation of subjects from various nationalities, cultures, ages, and genders.

In contrast with cinema screen, the perspective in digital game space, is open and depend on multiple choice and the identification with villains and/or heroes is optional in multiplayer gaming experience, providing a decentralization and ambiguity in identification with characters and the side they belong. Apparently the "dark side" is more attractive and also the desired position for the players who are already familiar with the main story and universe. But the chosen side doesn't change the process and flow of the battle, instead the practice of in game consumption has an effect on the consequences of the competitive gameplay experience. The appearance of a multicultural participatory culture has the risk to be trapped by consumer culture and the clash between the sides from different social and economic classes replaces the original struggle between the "dark side" and "Jedis."

Another issue to be evaluated is that the toxicity and the racist, sexist, or homophobic hate speech and discourse in multiplayer games which is moved to virtual from physical space with all *habitus*. In spite of the multicultural-race-gender representation reproduced on film screen, it's seen that the patriarchal and toxic behavior is adapted with the rest of the content and EA, as a developer of Star Wars games declares preventions from toxicity and reveals "Positive Play Charter,"[1] in 2020.

In the scope of this research, departing from J. Campbell's model "hero's journey," the representation of characters as archetypes in stories of Star Wars universe is analyzed comparatively focusing on the transformations

before and after 2000s, taking into account the effect of Disneyfication as an ideological layer.

Besides, character as a dramatic agent becomes *avatar* in the interactive narrative environment of digital games. Star Wars games as a crucial dimension of the universe provide a medium where the central story is reproduced with the activity of players, but this time the meanings are also open to be reproduced in a variety of perception of the players within a reinterpretative process which is called gaming. The players are coming together from the different countries to form a transcultural interactive experience. The story in the background functions as the myth for their gaming activity and enables the re-identification and sense of belonging by playing a ritualistic role related to the myth (story), inside game.

With "hero's journey," Campbell has modeled the circular and closing flow of dramatic structure and has inspired G. Lucas in dramatic construction of the Star Wars narrative. However, the story transforms into a capital to put itself on the market again with new generation stories. The circle is re-opening, the same dramatic conflict is re-constructed for a new generation and the galaxy is far from to be saved today. But in this process the styles of representation are transformed considering gender roles, race, ethnicities, diversity but with an ideological filtering. Firstly, this research aims to clarify this transformation and the ideology behind, with an analysis of character archetypes in *Star Wars* films. In a second level, with an analysis of a multiplayer mode of Star Wars: Battlefront II (Dierner 2017) as a transcultural digital space, it is aimed to reach the ways of identification through characters and story world as represented in game. Beyond narrative analysis, Star Wars: Battlefront II is also open to be discussed in the context of game mechanics, in game purchase dynamics and the competitive characteristics as an interactive medium to reach the decentralized and postmodern practicing of the story in which there is no difference between the hero and the villain of a receded myth across competition. Star Wars: Battlefront II is analyzed as a postmodern storytelling medium with concepts like metanarrative, intertextuality, pastiche and nostalgy, as the films in comparison with each other, especially before and after the Disneyfication of the saga.

STAR WARS TRANSMEDIA STORYTELLING: A POSTMODERN UNIVERSE

Digital media and the postmodern appearances of cultural production redefine today the known and existing cultural space and the communicative practices. Through new communication technologies spreading interaction and agency, the viewers of modern mass society have been transformed

gradually in users or interactors of digital culture. In his part titled *Clone Story* from the book *Simulacres et Simulation*, Baudrillard mentions the necessity to revisit Walter Benjamin's approach to the work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction. Benjamin (1969) indicates that which withers in the age of mechanical reproduction is the *aura* of the work of art. According to Baudrillard, cloning, from a historical approach, is the last stage of the transformation of a living body into a model and the condemnation of individual reduced to an abstract and genetic formula to the serial reproduction. The *original* is lost and only a nostalgic and retrospective history can reconstitute it as *authentic* (Baudrillard 1981, 149). In the age of *digital* reproduction, the most convenient method is the unlimited re-copiation of things represented algorithmically in digital space and, they even don't have/need any original version. As states Baudrillard, from the age of mechanical industrial production, Benjamin couldn't foresee contemporary deepening of these technologies which allow the generation of identical beings who never return to the original. The loss of aura is accompanied by the disappearance of storyteller and the reduction of experience. Storyteller's resource is the experience, as states Benjamin in 1936, and this art raised to a level of excellence in Middle Ages with the fusion of two types of knowledge transfer, one of the traveler's and the other of the artisan's (Benjamin 1995, 78). Toward the end of the century, like storyteller, story and its components dispersed with the impact of postmodern interventions. Intertextual construction, ambiguity in archetypes, decentralization, nonclosure in dramatic structure, nostalgy, and the use of pastiche, denial of causality are also accompanied by and altered with the impact of the rise of new communication technologies providing new possibilities like transmedia storytelling, interactive storytelling, or digital storytelling. This process of technological development brought up the concept of interactivity and the construction of co-authorship on text by calling viewer to be a part of the *telling* of the story. So audio-visual storytelling medium also expanded with a new tool of language, *interactivity*. "Departing from the modernist cultural tradition grounded in the Enlightenment, norms of industrial society, and faith in historical progress, postmodern cinema is characterized by disjointed narratives, a dark view of the human condition, images of chaos and random violence, death of the hero, emphasis on technique over content, and dystopic views of the future" (Boggs and Pollard 2001). Jameson who describes postmodernism as *the cultural logic of late capitalism* offers the concept *multinational capital* period instead of post-industrialism, as the third stage of capitalist economy following respectively the market capitalism and the monopoly stage or the stage of imperialism (Jameson 1997) and obviously, multinational practices of story and experience were not independent from this process. A part of the contemporary experience mediated

in digital space today meets cultural reproduction of digital travelers and artisans of information society.

THE HERO'S JOURNEY, THE MONOMYTH AND THE REPRESENTATION OF MAIN ARCHETYPES IN *STAR WARS*

Mythologist Joseph Campbell's six episodes interview with Bill Moyers, have been broadcasted on PBS Channel in 1988, a year later Campbell's death. The series were recorded in George Lucas' Skywalker Ranch, in California. The creator of *Star Wars* was also a fan of Campbell's works and his approach to the *hero's journey*. Campbell's research includes storytelling medium like myths, rites, stories, and fairytales with a relation to narrative, psychoanalytic, cultural, and anthropological levels. From this perspective Campbell relates myths and dreams: "The myth is the public dream and the dream is the private myth. If your private myth, your dream, happens to coincide with that of the society, you are in good accord with your group. If it isn't, you've got an adventure in the dark forest ahead of you" (Campbell and Moyers 1991, 40) and he follows Jung's archetype theory and the idea that myths are cultural productions of collective unconscious which is influenced but not exactly dependent to the local culture or to the national identity because it's possible to find more similarities than differences in myths, fairytales and rituals of various cultures and from different historical stages. Thus, myths can also be considered as transcultural products based on the common life cycle of human beings consisting of birth, marriage, and death which are the thresholds of natural human life, supported by the society with rites and symbolized in every culture.

"You've got the same body, with the same organs and energies, that Cro-Magnon man had thirty thousand years ago. Living a human life in New York City or living a human life in the caves, you go through the same stages of childhood, coming to sexual maturity, transformation of the dependency of childhood into the responsibility of manhood or womanhood, marriage, then failure of the body, gradual loss of its powers, and death. You have the same body, the same bodily experiences, and so you respond to the same images" (Campbell and Moyers 1991, 36).

According to Jung, "there exists a second psychic system of a collective, universal, and impersonal nature which is identical in all individuals. This collective unconscious does not develop individually but is inherited. It consists of preexistent forms, the archetypes, which can only become conscious secondarily and which give definite form to certain psychic contents" (Jung 1969, 43).

Borrowing Jung's character archetypes like persona, shadow, anima, animus, mentor or trickster, Campbell constructs a model for the flow of the *hero's journey* containing archetypes of plot as main components of myths and fairytales which are attached each other with thresholds. "The standard path of the mythological adventure of the hero is a magnification of the formula represented in the rites of passage: *separation—initiation—return*: which might be named the nuclear unit of the monomyth" (Campbell 2004, 28). Each of these units are constituted from subsections and the sequential development is circular. The hero returning to the starting point and his or her journey from ordinary world to the special world come to an end with the matured, transformed and initiated hero who has turned the chaos into the order.

The monomyth model's also convenient to analyze conventional plots of modern mythology created by Hollywood throughout the twentieth century.

Table 4.1   Main Stages and Subsections of Monomyth Model (Campbell 2004)

Separation/Departure	*Initiation/Road of trials and victories*	*Return*
(1) "The Call to Adventure," or the signs of the vocation of the hero;	(1) "The Road of Trials," or the dangerous aspect of the gods;	(1) "Refusal of the Return," or the world denied;
(2) "Refusal of the Call," or the folly of the flight from the god;	(2) "The Meeting with the Goddess" (Magna Mater), or the bliss of infancy regained;	(2) "The Magic Flight," or the escape of Prometheus;
(3) "Supernatural Aid," the unsuspected assistance that comes to one who has undertaken his proper adventure;	(3) "Woman as the Temptress," the realization and agony of Oedipus;	(3) "Rescue from Without";
(4) "The Crossing of the first Threshold";	(4) "Atonement with the Father";	(4) "The Crossing of the Return Threshold," or the return to the world of common day;
(5) "The Belly of the Whale," or the passage into the realm of night.	(5) "Apotheosis";	(5) "Master of the Two Worlds";
	(6) "The Ultimate Boon."	(6) "Freedom to Live," the nature and function of the ultimate boon

The *Star Wars* saga became one of the most important practiced models of monomyth following the circular journey of the hero who is always accompanied by other archetypes to be initiated. Jung describes as main archetypes of psyche, persona (mask), anima/animus (feminine aspect in man; masculine aspect in female hero), mentor (guide, wise old man), and shadow (villain). These are the basic archetypes to form a dramatic flow of a hero's journey but are also accompanied by various archetypes like maiden, trickster, shapeshifter, threshold guardian, allies (sidekick), mother, and eternal child. From an epic perspective, in the *Star Wars* saga, shadow is the Empire and the totalitarian authority against the Resistance defending the Republic which also representing the multinational democratic system to govern the galaxy in its multitude of race and culture. But in dramatic level, the *Star Wars* saga hero is Luke Skywalker and the story is his journey of adventures. Like many other heroes, Skywalker is not alone, to be initiated into the world of adventure from the ordinary world, he needs a call which will first be refused and with the help and the orientation of his mentor, he will be on the road of trials.

"The two important heroes of *Star Wars* saga, Anakin Skywalker and his son Luke Skywalker, have to face the Shadow both as an external force of evil and as a part of their characters. In Star Wars universe, evil is represented by the Dark Side of the Force" (Botha 2006, 25). The external shadow as represented by Darth Vader is an extension of the hero's inner shadow, the dark side of his soul.

"In *Star Wars* films, the Guide is represented in its positive aspect most clearly by Jedi Masters Obi-Wan Kenobi and Yoda, and in its negative manifestation by Chancellor/Emperor 2:6" (Botha 2006, 46). The mentor (the guide) is always ready to show the right way and to guide the hero, but he/she never takes the hero's place to face the villain. He/she knows the road of trials, is aware of the dangers inside, but it's the hero who has to fight against his/her outer or inner enemies. "According to Jung, the archetype of the Guide can only intervene when "all props and crutches are broken, and no cover from the rear offers even the slightest hope of security" (Botha 2006, 48). Guide's mission in the *Star Wars* saga is to make hero to learn how to use his force and to train him as Jedi to get him ready against the shadow.

After the purchase of Lucas Film to Disney, in 2012, in *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* (2015), the hero is now a woman Jedi, Rey and her guide is Han Solo who is not actually a Jedi or Jedi master. Differentiated from the original trilogy, Disney's contribution is revealed by placing a woman character, a *heroine*, into the hero archetype and make a person of color, Finn, her ally/sidekick. Finn is also a former clone from the Stormtroopers who left to serve the Dark side and toward the end of the film Star Wars: Force Awakens, he uses a Jedi sword while fighting against the shadow. "As a character

played by a person of color, Finn is Disney's way of adding diversity, or 'spice,' to the film without really acknowledging his background as a person of color in the context of the film" (Dochnahl 2008, 11).

And the villain/shadow, Kylo Ren, shows his face and he is not completely "dark" anymore. He is represented as human, a white man (not as another race of the human world or the galaxy). In original trilogy of the series, main woman character, Princess Leia, was in the maiden archetype and even if she was a warrior and the commander of the Resistance, she needed to be saved by men. But with the Disneyfied *Star Wars*, he is the antagonist of a *heroine* as the protagonist. According to Bostan and Kırel (2018, 8); Disney's princess narratives representations can be analyzed in three periods: The classical period (1937–1959) of beautiful and domestic princess conflicts with ugly witch women; the transition period (1989–1998) of princess who tries to push the limits in various ways ant the postmodern period (2009–) which has started with the animation film *The Princess and The Frog* (Clements and Musker 2009) and represents main women characters as free subjects.

> The period between 1967 and 1989 was a virtual wasteland in the production of children's animated film, but that long dry spell came to an abrupt halt in 1989 with the release of The Little Mermaid, which announced the beginning of a new string of successful films that ran through the 1990s, resurrecting numerous motifs (including sexist and racist ones) from the 1950s in a clear nostalgia play. (. . .) Further, given the tendency in the Disney universe to make nostalgia a quest for authenticity, this phenomenon implies that the earlier films are symbolically regarded as authentic classics, while the later films are postmodern pastiches of the earlier classic films. In this way, the new wave of Disney films that began with The Little Mermaid can be regarded as a key instance of postmodern culture as described by the important theorist Fredric Jameson, who sees nostalgia as a key mode of such culture and regards pastiche as its principal technique. (Booker 2009, 37)

> Star Wars is another cultural product of Disney's postmodern period and as Vommaro states: "The Star Wars saga has already been associated to the practices of nostalgic pastiche and postmodern parody, by authors such as Fredric Jameson and Linda Hutcheon. Jameson affirms that Star Wars are a pastiche of the Saturday afternoon serials that became famous between the 1930s and 1950s not as a metaphor of the past, but as a metonymy, focusing on an aspect, a fragment of that past." (Vommaro 2015, 64)

The Disneyfication process of classical fairytales, especially on the *gender roles* of main woman characters as heroines in Disney films has been discussed as an ideological layer before the purchase of Lucas Film to Disney.

Another aspect of this ideology is on the layer of *class* which contains another naturalization of distinction existing in society through classical fairytales. The term Disneyfication is defined as "the transformation (as of something real or unsettling) into carefully controlled and safe entertainment or an environment with similar qualities the Disneyfication of a downtown" (Merriam-Webster Dictionary). But Booker (2009) uses the term to express Disney's ideological layer applied to classical fairytale adaptations. From the princess who has transformed in to a frog (2009) to independent princess sisters of *Frozen* (Buck and Lee, 2013) and *Frozen II* (Buck and Lee 2019), Disney's approach to adapt fairytales and classical circular heroic journey has shadowed its effect on the classical structure and gender representations of Star Wars saga.

The social and political transformation process, especially of woman rights and gender roles from 1970s to 2000s has also a natural effect but this period is also determined by many philosophers and cultural theoreticians as the postmodern age. Disney's adaptations which are not independent from the sociopolitical and ideological background of the time when they have been shot, aim to appeal to the target audience and the renovation in gender roles of heroines is related to the new woman generation's expectations. "Indeed, Amy M. Davis, in her recent book *Good Girls and Wicked Witches* (2007), has argued that Disney's films have been perhaps the single most powerful force in determining expectations about feminine behavior in American society as a whole since the 1930s" (Booker 2009, 3).

> In other words, Disney films carry on the tradition of telling these stories in ways which are relevant to their audiences: the stories went from being constructed for oral presentation, to being altered to make them suitable for print, then transformed to make them suitable for filming. Concurrently to changing them so as to fit the constraints of each new medium, each new teller has also re-formed and re-shaped elements of the stories to fit both the medium they were using and the audience they were targeting. (Davis 2011, 13)

But for Bostan and Kırel (2018, 13); Disney's postmodern princess narratives are the multilayered texts aiming to catch a large audience instead of being *rebellious* texts in spite of the created new narratives going over the weak sides of the classical stories. For example, Moana (Clements and Musker 2016) as a representation of a powerful, independent and the warrior heroine, reproduces also the inequality and the hegemony of *chosen elite* ideology. And Moana still needs a guidance of a male character in her journey and even if she is the chosen one, she has constructed with the ideology of Disney rewarding depending woman. For the case of *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* (Abrams 2015), unlike Luke Skywalker, in the

original trilogy, Rey is accompanied by Finn, a male character represented as a person of color.

But the ally of a woman and a man of color as protagonists in *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* encountered a fan backlash against diversity in gender and race of the main archetype representations, as Harrison highlights (2015, 1–2). As the first attempt to Disneyfication of the Star Wars universe, *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* begins with the two distinct characters, Rey and Finn, two protagonists who have their own personal heroic journey to intersect and finally arrive to the final battle against the antagonist, Kylo Ren. Disney's contribution provides a scene of a former clone slave (represented as a man of color) fighting against his former lord, a Jedi and a chosen one of a privileged class and race (as represented by a white man) and the creation of a powerful and young woman as the new generation heroine who will be able to defeat the antagonist.

"The first major character of colour in the franchise was Lando Calrissian, played by a black actor Billy Dee Williams in *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Return of the Jedi.* (. . .) As a flirtatious gambler and swindler who double-crosses his white friends, and with dandified and ostentatious costuming (. . .)." Lando was reduced to a racial stereotype (Harrison 2019, 4). The first person of color representation from human species in the *Star Wars* saga, has placed in shapeshifter archetype symbolizing indecisive characters about whom we can not be sure if he/she is reliable or not. In the *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*, the man of color is described as a trustworthy ally of the heroine and acts as a second protagonist/hero who has own journey to be completed. Toward the end of the film, he fights against Kylo Ren. The former slave clone and the powerful and well-trained main antagonist's battle ends up with Finn's defeat just before Rey's arrival.

The Star Wars story universe has always been a multicultural and multi-species space to represent various archetypes. The galaxy is home for over 20 million sentient species (Star Wars Fandom) and a few of them are represented in main archetypes of film series. Yoda, as an important mentor figure and a Jedi master and Chewbacca, as a powerful and loyal ally are represented as alien figures, but most of the important archetypes in stories are occupied by the human race. Dramatic structure is actually based on the defense of political representation of this multitude to reconstruct the Republic defeated by the First Order to build a military dictatorship. Siths and Dark Jedis are the central villain and some of them are represented as other species like Supreme Leader Snoke who is *strand-cast humanoid male*, an artificial genetic construct. His master Darth Sidious, the Emperor and the Dark Lord of the Sith is a male human and his apprentice Kylo Ren is also a white male human antagonist. Darth Sidious apprentices are various in the sense of race but all of them male and powerful characters, like Anakin Skywalker who

transforms in Darth Vader or Darth Maul who is from Dathomirian Zabraks with red skin. But the shadow archetypes of human race are represented by white male characters throughout saga.

The Star Wars universe is known with the multitude of races, specifies, and the dramatic structure is based on the endless struggle between the good and evil represented by different political and ideological sides in contrast with each other. The "good" side is represented by the multitude and the solidarity of multicultural specifies of the galaxy and defends democracy in the face of totalitarian authority of the Galactic Empire. Siths/Dark Jedis and Jedis, as two faces of the Force and in Star Wars films they are represented in main archetypes of the story and as various types of specifies. But while the evil is represented as humanoid creatures and as humans; good side is represented mostly as human beings. The human representation of main archetypes of the stories are transforming in the sense of variation of gender and race with Disneyfication effect applied on the original story, like the previous fairytale adaptations of Disney in 2000s. But the ideology of the hegemony of a ruling class is open to be read in the *chosen/elite class* of Jedi's and their replacement in the hero/heroine and mentor archetypes, especially with white man and woman representations in films, in spite of the content of the story which has a focus on the glorification of the Resistance as rebels against a fascist power of a dictatorship.

Thus, the levels of representation of the transcultural space created in the Star Wars universe seems to be changed as adapted to the political background and the target audience's expectations of the age they have been shot, but multicultural space narrated in story is open to be criticized in the layer of representation of main characters who carry the story. The saga, in 2000s compromising with the audience in some perspective, continues to reproduce the existing inequalities ideologically in class, gender, and race.

DIGITAL TRANSCULTURALISM, WITHERING NARRATIVES, NOSTALGY, AND THE STORY AS CAPITAL IN STAR WARS: BATTLEFRONT II

Such machines are indeed machines of reproduction rather than of production, and they make very different demands on our capacity for aesthetic representation (. . .)." (Jameson 1997, 35)

The Star Wars universe is not limited to films and Star Wars games provide a transmedia storytelling medium to expand the story universe. Jenkins stated that "Transmedia storytelling represents a process where integral elements of a fiction get dispersed systematically across multiple delivery channels for

the purpose of creating a unified and coordinated entertainment experience. Ideally, each medium makes its own unique contribution to the unfolding of the story" (Jenkins 2007). Series like *The Mandalorian* (Favreau 2019) and animated series *Star Wars: The Bad Batch* (Filoni 2021), digital games like Star Wars: Battlefront (Gewirtz 2004), and LEGO Star Wars: The Skywalker Saga (McLoughlin 2021), immersive virtual entertainment experiences, books and comics are the units of the story universe targeting a large audience and interactors. Unlike films and books, games provide an interactive experience and agency, ability to take action in story world. As an example, to be discussed in the scope of this research, the digital game Star Wars: Battlefront II (Dierner 2017), a singular unit of aforementioned transmedia storytelling medium consists of various subsections from singular to multiplayer gameplay modes which make possible the transcultural practice of the story.

> Transculturality is, in the first place, a consequence of the inner differentiation and complexity of modern cultures. These encompass—as I explained before—a number of ways of life and cultures, which also interpenetrate or emerge from one another. (b). The old homogenizing and separatist idea of cultures has furthermore been surpassed through cultures' external networking. Cultures today are extremely interconnected and entangled with each other. Lifestyles no longer end at the borders of national cultures, but go beyond these, are found in the same way in other cultures. (Welsch 1999, 197)

Star Wars: Battlefront II's total number of accounts is 17.700.000 as of November 19, 2019, 13.500.000 players (76%) have earned at least one trophy and the players from all around the world participate in multiplayer modes to fight together (Gamstat 2020). This experience reminds the rites related to myth contents as described by Campbell (1991). Star Wars games can be described as the ritualistic reproduction of the mythical story of the saga by the agency of players already familiar with Star Wars story universe and culture. The game experience in multiplayer modes cross all existing national borders. According to Welsch; "Cultures today are in general characterized by hybridization. For every culture, all other cultures have tendentially come to be inner-content or satellites. This applies on the levels of population, merchandise and information. (. . .) finally, the global networking of communications technology makes all kinds of information identically available from every point in space" (Welsch 1999, 198).

> Culture begins with an imagining of the world about us; these imaginings are represented in some way. That is, they are formed in discourse, language, symbols, signs, and texts— all concepts applied to meaning systems. These imaginings and meanings, however, can never be fixed or solidified, but remain

assemblages that can be dismantled through time, space, and human action. (Lewis 2002, 22)

Lewis constructs a definition for the term *culture*, with an aim to reach to the definition of transculturalism:

> Culture is an assemblage of imaginings and meanings that may be consonant, disjunctive, overlapping, contentious, continuous, or discontinuous. These assemblages may operate through a wide variety of human social groupings and social practices. In contemporary culture these experiences of imagining and meaning-making are intensified through the proliferation of mass media images and information. (2002, 23–24)

Culture without being a stable and separatable phenomenon from the surrounding effects of *other's* culture, is more open and fluid in contemporary society of information. Transcultural experience expanding on social media and through Internet has only another aspect in online gaming practice of everyday culture throughout the world and is more fluid than ever with the help of the technology that makes this possible. Beyond games and films, Star Wars as a universe of transmedia storytelling produces a transcultural space of common meaning production through interactivity. Star Wars transmedia storytelling medium, calls readers/viewers/interactors to making of meanings and positions them in a more active and indecisive place to give them a limited role to make meaningful connection between distinct media and to participate in its construction via gaming experience as a ritualistic act around the myths of the universe. Jenkins explains the effect of the expansion of the universe as: "This logic of world-building, of extension, expansion, extraction, shapes all the other elements that would emerge around the Star Wars constellation. Each new extension of the Star Wars text adds potentially more depth or appreciation of the world depicted on screen" (Jenkins 2018,19). Connecting different stories and characters' journey's between various media provides a common culture based on meaning production as highlighted by Hall:

> It is the shared cultural "space" in which the production of meaning through language— that is, representation—takes place. The receiver of messages and meanings is not a passive screen on which the original meaning is accurately and transparently projected. (. . .) Speaker and hearer or writer and reader are active participants in a process which—since they often exchange roles—is always double-sided, always interactive. (Hall 1997, 10)

Through language, not limited to oral language but expanded with the language of audio, visual representation and of interactivity, players from

various national, ethnic, or sexual identities can come together under the same roof of the story and dance around the same fire, the game. This is how we can describe the medium, especially the multiplayer modes of the game, as a form reproducing transcultural environment altered by transmedia story-telling and with a postmodern cultural background.

The game player's existence renders the story medium to an open world of decisions to be taken when confronted with film medium. Star Wars: Battlefront II is an important example of the ambiguity in identification because the *villains* and the *heroes* are equal beings in game space and they are open to the players as avatars. Decentralization of the dramatic struggle and the freedom to identification with the dark side differs the medium from films and series based on the dualist dramatic struggle between good and evil. The denial and/or the suspension of the Star Wars story universe which has a function of a *metanarrative* in gameplay process demonstrates the post-modern aspect of this medium. Especially the multimedia mode of the game is an open battleground for thousands of players from all around the world who share the same will to experience Star Wars universe and to be a part of the story expanding and/or filling the blanks between previous stories. Each medium reproduces the relation between various texts of the main structure, so the *intertextuality* is another aspect of the postmodern narrative of the saga.

This makes possible the common experience of players from different backgrounds, nationalities and speaking different languages, who are coming together around the same fire every night to practice the same myth's rituals. According to Tecimer who describes cinema as modern mythology, "ritus is the first form of drama" (2006, 44). And (2016, 308) explains that ritual is a whole stereotypical manners and customs and mythos is the transformation of ritual into words. Drama is the coalescence of both and includes both of them. Mythos is a method of verbal symbols; ritual is a method of objects and acts as symbols. As an initial form of drama, tragedy has rooted in Ancient Greek Dionysus rituals and is described by Aristotle in his *Poetics*: "A tragedy is [by definition] a mimesis not of people but of their actions and life" (1972, 98).

Aristotle defines the rules and the qualities of tragedy with an aesthetical approach, as he underlines the importance of the sense of completeness:

Now, we have settled that a tragedy is a mimesis of a complete, that is, of a whole action, "whole" here implying some amplitude (there can be a whole without amplitude). By "whole" I mean "with a beginning, a middle, and an end." By "beginning" [in this context] I mean "that which is not necessarily the consequent of something else, but has some state or happening naturally consequent on it," by "end" "a state that is the necessary or usual consequent of something else, but has itself no such consequent," by "middle" "that which is

consequent and has consequents." Well-ordered plots, then, will exhibit these characteristics, and will not begin or end just anywhere. (Aristotle 1972, 100)

He accepts the plot as a dialectic process of development constructed by pieces adjoined with causality relation. This brings to mind the flow of hero's journey as described and modeled by Campbell. The journey is a whole circle with a beginning, middle, and end. Each of the pieces are archetypes of plot causing the next one.

In the Star Wars story universe, the circle has no end, not because it doesn't have a closure for each hero, but each time the journey begins again with another hero or heroine, the circle opens up by spiraling. The original story is now a capital giving birth to new baby stories to be connected somehow. For example, the Campaign mode of Star Wars: Battlefront II, is told the story of a new protagonist, Iden Versio, a female human commander of Inferno Squad serving for the Empire. Created for the game, her story connects to and expands the *whole*. The universe's endless expansion has also a nostalgic relation of its each part with the original trilogy.

> Nostalgia films restructure the whole issue of pastiche and project it onto a collective and social level, where the desperate attempt to appropriate a missing past is now refracted through the iron law of fashion change and the emergent ideology of the generation (. . .) it being understood that the nostalgia film was never a matter of some old-fashioned "representation" of historical content, but instead approached the "past" through stylistic connotation, conveying "pastness" by the glossy qualities of the image. (Jameson 1997, 24)

"(…) other characteristic postmodern product I have called nostalgia film, in which the tone and style of a whole epoch becomes, in effect, the central character, the actant and the "world historical individual" in its own right" (Jameson 1997, 248). Jameson's nostalgy concept is the driving force for the collaborative battle occurring in digital space of the multiplayer game, and provides a ritualistic transcultural practice of gaming around the core story. Each additive story is a pastiche of the original one and reproduces and furbishes the closed circle of the first hero: the journey of Luke Skywalker. It's a *remake* of the original hero's journey with new heroes and heroines who have their own circular journey. But these productions have another function to expand the story universe.

> The word *remake* is, however, anachronistic to the degree to which our awareness of the preexistence of other versions (previous films of the novel as well as the novel itself) is now a constitutive and essential part of the film's structure: we are now, in other words, in "intertextuality" as a deliberate, built-in feature

of the aesthetic effect and as the operator of a new connotation of "pastness" and pseudohistorical depth, in which the history of aesthetic styles displaces "real" history. (Jameson 1997, 25)

Harvey brings on agenda Benjamin's approach to the work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction which *represents always something new*. "The consequences that Benjamin foresaw have been emphasized many times over by the advances in electronic reproduction and the capacity to store images, torn out of their actual contexts in space and time, for instantaneous use and retrieval on a mass basis" (Harvey 1992, 347).

As Harvey (1992, 348–349), remembers in his chapter "The work of art in an age of electronic reproduction and image banks," for Benjamin cinema has opened a new window in the middle of the coldness of modern everyday life:

> Our taverns and our metropolitan streets, our offices and furnished rooms, our railroad stations and our factories appeared to have us locked up hopelessly. Then came the film and burst this prison-world asunder by the dynamite of the tenth of a second, so that now, in the midst of its far-flung ruins and debris, we calmly and adventurously go traveling. (Benjamin 2007, 236)

But late-capitalist culture of the age of electronic reproduction and image banks, installed the workplace and the streets in the same electronic box with cinema. Now the computerized medium comprises the offices and the taverns; follows and collects the digital traces we left behind. Interactive storytelling is not independent from this transformation, reproduces the story as the capital and constructs subjects as digital workers providing information and participating in game economy.

> Digital labour covers a broad range of labour working under different conditions, including slave miners working in African conflict mines, smelters, hardware assemblers, software engineers, digital media content producers, eWaste workers, or users of commercial digital media Given the complex, networked and transnational reality of labour required for the existence and usage of digital media, a concept of digital labour is needed that can reflect these realities. (Fuchs 2015, 47)

Like many massive multiplayer online games, Star Wars: Battlefront II has its own inner economy beyond being a cultural product in the market. A game critic Faulkner, in 2017, the year when the game has been released for the first time, wrote that the multiplayer mode of the game is broken at fundamental level, even it provides an attraction with a great gameplay:

> The entire progression of multiplayer is tied to these loot boxes, and the Star
> Cards held within. You use Star Cards to give your heroes, soldiers, and ships
> stat boosts or different abilities. (. . .) Some of the franchise's favorite characters
> are locked behind a paywall as well. To unlock Luke Skywalker, Darth Vader
> and a few other of the franchise's best characters you have to cough up credits.
> This means you get to choose to either unlock heroes or buy loot boxes with
> your credits. (Faulkner 2017)

According to Reiner, another digital game critic, who describes Star Wars:
Battlefront II as surrounded by dark side just because the game is playing
mind tricks on gamers to spend more money to become stronger, points out
humorously the pay-to-win system:

> Sirens roar ominously within the mangled remains of a Rebel frigate, warning
> all to escape. The clanking of hurried footsteps echoes through the halls before
> being replaced by a series of ghastly screams, loud enough to drown out the
> alarm. A door slides open to reveal the glow of a red lightsaber backed by the
> silhouette of Darth Vader. I fire my blaster, and he nonchalantly takes a shot to
> the chest. He raises his hand and I levitate with it, my throat closing as I inch
> upward. This spectacle of power is impressive, but as my life fades away, the
> only thing I can think is "How much did that player spend to unlock the third
> level of Punishing Grip?" (Reiner 2017)

The multiplayer game mode in Star Wars: Battlefront II, has been criticized
for its *pay-to-win* method, evoking a struggle between the ones who pay and
who pay not, to increase in-game purchase throughout the gameplay. The
inequal situation between the players transforms the dramatic struggle exist-
ing between the heroes and the villains into the struggle between the clients
who pay more and less. Indeed, to choose a hero or a villain from the original
story universe have equal effects in gameplay, in the sense of narrative devel-
opment. This is another aspect of the suspension the original and nostalgic
metanarrative and replace it with a decentralized, endless and transcultural
ritualistic activity.

The story, hang on the wall, framed and admired with the sense of nostalgy,
reproduces a cultural activity space and uses the content as capital. "Over
the past two decades, however, audiences have found themselves viewing
films that increasingly portray quite different sorts of characters that fit the
syndrome of the "postmodern hero" (…) where a new kind of hero is show-
cased—one who never quite achieves victory but ends up mired somewhere
along Campbell's "road of trials"" (Pollard 2000). In the example of Star
Wars, the nonclosure is not limited to the films, the circular journey of film
heroes and heroines opens up spiralizing in games. Further, the archetypes

are reduced to their abilities in game, their narrative function suspended is a nostalgic background picture.

In 2020, EA takes into account gamers' critics and demands by adding some additional free content to compromise with them. One of the most attractive sides of Star Wars: Battlefront II game was playing the villains for some fans and the company has increased this possibility in updates. A critic from 2020 underlines the situation:

> The game had a pay-to-play formula that hindered progression. Thankfully, the developers of Star Wars: Battlefront II turned the game around with additional free content, more heroes and villains, and plenty of dark side characters to make you feel like you were at home on Korriban. The starfighter battles are some of the best we've ever seen, and they allow you to pilot spaceships as dark side villains. (Robbins 2020)

Thus, the cultural logic of the late-capitalist age, in order not to contradict the gamers installing the Star Wars universe in a nostalgic layer, still protects the economic-political relations by hiding them behind representation styles of narrative through interactivity. Because the interactivity is the basic unit of digital language, like an actor or actress who has a dialogue inside film, to be interacted in an immersive medium for a character makes him/her an *avatar* who is able to take action and open to direct identification.

In neo-Aristotelian approach to game analysis from the perspective of narratology in game studies, Mateas' (2001) descriptive model underlines an effective concept, *user action*, added to dramatic character, the last step of dramatic latter to reach the plot (story). In a film, character is the agent who carries the audience in the story via identification, but in a game, he or she needs user's actions to move forward, to make choice and take action; namely the *agency* of the gamer. Agency is underlined by Mateas as one of the three aesthetical categories of interactive drama described by Murray (1997) with *immersion* and *transformation*. "The more realized the immersive environment, the more active we want to be within it. When the thing we do tangible results, we experience the second characteristic delight of electronic environments- the sense of agency. Agency is the satisfying power to make meaningful action and see the results of our decisions and choices" (Murray 1997, 126).

Departing from this point, in digital games as interactive dramatic environments, representation is not limited to audio-visual appearances but it comprises also interaction of characters. If a character is interactive, that means he/she is highlighted and has the ability to move and change the story universe. Agency through interaction connects subjects to the character, provides identification and turn the audience into the interactors (users, gamers,

game players). In a traditional interactive storytelling medium, identification in game is provided to determine a hero or a heroine open to interaction and install the villain(s) in general, in noninteractive representations controlled by the game software. This kind of role distribution evokes a struggle between the gamer and the machine, represented by digital representations as characters. In multiplayer modes of various games where gamers play against other gamers, computer provides a space for struggle and controls the flow. To construct "hero" and "villain" as interacted beings, weakens semantically the challenge between antagonist and protagonist. For each player, protagonist is a momentary process of a digital body called avatar. Additionally, in the Campaign mode of Star Wars: Battlefront II, the identification process begins with a *villain*, Iden Versio who serves the dark side.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has focused on the transforming narratives, representation, and ideology in late-capitalist cultural space through the *Star Wars* saga, especially including the comparison of before and after Disneyfied productions to found the transforming ideological layer through representation of main archetypes: hero/heroine, mentor, and villain. As a multicultural space, the Star Wars universe transforms gender roles and the cultural multitude of representations following the age's and the contemporary audience's demands, but reproducing *the chosen elite* strategy, it protects ideologically the ruling class hegemony in spite of the content constructed around the defense of democracy and pluralism against totalitarianism. Indeed, the representation of the main archetypes excludes various specifies, constructs villains as more white, powerful, human men and as male humanoid creatures of the galaxy. With the effect of Disneyfication, the gender and race multitude in human representations comes to the fore, but the heroine is accompanied by a man of color as a second protagonist, unlike the first white male hero of the trilogy who goes on journey alone.

This chapter includes the interactive medium of Star Wars transmedia storytelling universe by focusing on the digital game Star Wars: Battlefront II released in 2017 by EA DICE. The game offers various modes of gameplay. The Campaign mode focused on the adventure of a protagonist from the dark side articulated to the main story expands the transmedia experience and the multiplayer mode, as the most attractive part of the text, evokes a digital transcultural experience environment for thousands of gamers who share the same nostalgic sense for the saga. So, each text produced for the Star Wars story universe, can be considered as pastiches of the originals, as described by Jameson (1997) as a postmodern technique for nostalgy. The

texts have also intertextual relationship between each other. The Star Wars universe expands the transcultural experience with the help of transmedia storytelling. As described by Welsch (1999), *transculturality* already existing in societies has found new channels to exchange cultural experiences, language and myths in the digital age. The Star Wars story universe is one of the most comprehensive examples of this kind of storytelling due to the iconic reproduction for over forty years witnessing social, economic, technological, and ideological transformations. Interactive narrative as a postmodern experience in digital space altered by transcultural practice in massive multiplayer gaming activity is open to be described as a story capital giving birth to the new storytelling texts varying in medium and style. Particularly, the multiplayer mode of Star Wars: Battlefront II, adapted to late-capitalist economy and culture, rewards in game consumption instead of "user's action" and agency. Thus, Campbell's closing circle of hero's journey never ends because it's not profitable enough. While each newborn text reproduces the nostalgy of Skywalker's heroic journey, in multiplayer mode of the game, story with dramatic conflict and powerful protagonist and antagonists is reduced to be replaced by a never-ending spiral of the repeated storylines.

NOTE

1. "Positive Play Charter," Electronic Arts, https://www.ea.com/commitments /positive-play/charter, February 28, 2021.

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IMMIGRANT DIRECTORS AND MIGRATION AS A COUNTER-GEOGRAPHY PRACTICE

Chapter 5

Boundary-Crossing and Genre-Bending in the Films of Guillermo del Toro

Jane Hanley

This chapter analyses interstices between monstrosity and transnational culture in the work of perhaps the most renowned director working through this articulation: Guillermo del Toro. His films always challenge the boundaries between times, between life and death, as well as the human boundaries—between groups, between the self, and the monstrous other—we build and defend out of fear. His most popular work, which travels both narratively and literally through Hollywood/blockbuster global mechanisms, resists complete absorption into normative paradigms through its insistent porosity, destabilization of control and relational monstrous cartographies which resist geographical containment. Uncontainability defines both aesthetic and subject matter. Domination is undone in reversals between bravado and humility, and above all, by acceptance of, love toward, and becoming our monstrous others. The mechanisms of popular cultural production for global audiences may privilege recycling of the familiar, flattening of idiosyncrasy in favor of translatability, and dehistoricized visual spectacle. However, the insistent presence of death as companion to life, the uncanny making of strange familiar and familiar strange, and a culturally eclectic fantastical sensibility, changes the transnational life of del Toro's films from purely market-oriented translatability into something that itself actually articulates an ethics of crossing.

INTRODUCTION

When we think about migration and cinema, we often assume the nation as a category, both geospatial and as a meaningful mode of ordering people. The migrant, therefore, becomes a figure interpreted in relation to that geospatial

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and social ordering. This chapter argues for Guillermo del Toro as a migrant director for a sense of migration that does not depend on either nations or other bounded categories to take on meaning. The kinds of projects he takes on and the direction that he lends to them contribute to the erosion of normative paradigms. This chapter examines continuities in Hollywood film projects directed by Guillermo del Toro from *Mimic* (1997) through to the multi Academy Award-winning *The Shape of Water* (2017).[1] This sequence of films marks del Toro's effective straddling of popular genre films, industry favor, and sufficient cultural authority to provoke high-brow critical attention—though this last was initially largely on the strength of his Spanish-language films, most notably *Pan's Labyrinth* (2006).[2] This chapter does not attempt to analyze in depth this category-spanning cinematic trajectory. Rather, continuities in the representation of the transgression of diverse boundaries are identified to support the argument that the Hollywood films directed by Guillermo del Toro articulate an ethics of crossing that posits a contemporary global experience and transcultural framework defined by porosity, monstrosity, and uncontainability. It becomes, therefore, a cinema that constructs fantastical worlds. In the established tradition of the fantastic, the operation of these worlds undermines the illusions of control and the constructedness of the categories by which we shore up political and identitarian projects around, for example, nation and ethnicity, but even human exceptionalism itself and dangerous persistence of orientations that divorce the social from the material (mind from body, human community from environment, political cartography from material place).

TRANSNATIONAL SCREENS AND HOLLYWOOD CINEMA

The commercial context of Guillermo del Toro's Hollywood projects—which I am restricting for the purposes of this volume to predominantly English-language films made through US production companies—drives a degree of conceptual condensation in the premise and, particularly, the marketing campaign surrounding the films themselves. This is mainly a question of audience. In terms of creation, I agree with Daniel Chávez that the Hollywood-other distinction is artificial and del Toro's artistic project (not only Spanish-language films but also television, books, and even art collection) can be productively considered as a whole (Chávez 2011, 372). As Barry Keith Grant succinctly states, genre as a concept is premised on familiarity (Grant 2007, 1). While I align with most film scholars in resisting strict definitions of genre, it does provide one site for interpreting the industrial pressures on getting commercial films made, as well as the subsequent

framing for their circulation and reception. Genre also provides an angle for investigating changes to cultural expectations and filmmaking practices, as well as a critical vocabulary for interpreting the ways in which individual cinematic artefacts intervene to further revise them. Throughout Hollywood history, genres have allowed the possibility of authorial sensibility, or in Grant's words, provided "a frame within which auteurs can animate the elements of genre to their own purpose" (Grant 2007, 58). By starting from a discussion of genre, we can immediately perceive some of the narrative and aesthetic properties which inform Guillermo del Toro's cinematic project, since all his films are some configurations of horror-fantasy-science fiction, with additional strong components of intertextuality, adaptation, and pastiche drawing heavily on a range of cinematic, literary, and other cultural references. *Blade II* (2002), *Hellboy* (2004), and *Hellboy II: The Golden Army* (2008) are also adaptations of comic book properties, and in the case of *Blade II* and *Hellboy II*, sequels. Visual and narrative referentiality and adaptation of established cultural "properties" are hallmarks of twenty-first century Hollywood. It has become the norm for mainstream commercial cinema, especially in horror, fantasy and action/science fiction genres, which have displaced other genres as the primary output of large-scale Hollywood production.

Directors and their collaborators on film projects do not determine the cultural impact or audience interpretation of films. However, filmmakers do have a major role in imaginatively shaping and reshaping the cinematic narratives that emerge out of particular contexts of cultural production (Hollywood, for the purposes of this volume). This is significant, because Hollywood is the source of the content shared by the most diverse communities of viewers across the world, since it still dominates screens in most countries (Grant 2007, 102). Global Hollywood has resulted in a degree of convergence between content and production; transnational corporations and media conglomerates, long the money behind the industry, now preferentially target a market understood to be substantially non-anglophone and outside the United States.[3] Commercial genre cinema viably—even necessarily—incorporates components that may even actively resist comprehension by traditional anglophone US audiences. Nor is the creation of global communities of viewers unidirectional. As stated above, audiences make meaning, and reconfiguring for local sensibilities as well as localized modes of reception can create a flow back into Hollywood production. The mobility of filmmakers themselves reflects this transnational cultural economy. As Grant writes, "Often directors who exhibit a flair for genre filmmaking [. . .] are lured to Hollywood and absorbed into the American film industry" (Grant 2007, 105). Absorbed, however, does not mean assimilated. They change it by being there. This aligns with Luisela Alvaray's interpretation of the transnational through contact zones and reciprocities, however, inevitably uneven—a more useful critical framework than

conceiving the global as totalizing, or the absorption of diverse film crew as thoroughly conforming (Alvaray 2013, 67).

What kind of migrant figure is Guillermo del Toro, then, once "absorbed" into Hollywood? Peter Hutchings suggests he remains a "perpetual outsider who imitates more or less successfully but who is also an awkward, troubling presence" (Hutchings 2014, 96). *Pacific Rim* (2013) is the most obvious example of the ways in which transnational Hollywood is always already creating in relation to transnational audiences, which impacts on-screen representation. Hutchings describes "the giant robots dependent on the support of a racially and ethnically mixed group of human beings who can interact very effectively across national differences" (Hutchings 2014, 95–96). It is not just multiethnic cast, but every aspect of *Pacific Rim* that is already transnational—indeed, more global than American, with an aesthetic primarily drawn from Japanese visual codes (though the actual Tokyo sequences, like the rest, were filmed in Toronto), and a narrative that explicitly emphasizes the futility and undesirability of territorial boundaries. Porosity, while it supplies the threat in *Pacific Rim*, also supplies the only possible resolution, both personal and in terms of the planetary stakes the film posits.

While Hollywood has always been a transnational enterprise, according to Charles Acland recent decades have seen acceleration in this respect, with "the movement of sites of production and the seeking out of markets further afield. So highly developed are the changes that they challenge the very 'Americanness' of Hollywood," creating a degree of deracination from its symbolic origin as a cultural industry (Acland 2003, 10). The logics of commercial filmmaking respond to similar pressures of other transnational industries, toward cheaper labor and cheaper locations far from California. Acland argues that analysis of Hollywood allows the exposure of "some recent historical traces that have formed an *episteme* of popular entertainment and the global audience" (Acland 2003, 13). Images from and of elsewhere become fleetingly present in highly diverse locations and moments. The episteme is an entry point for interrogating the circulation of different kinds of ideas, some of which shift shared understandings about foundations of our conceptualization of the world through nations, mobility, borders, and difference. The interplay between global Hollywood and local sites of production and reception is a dynamic cinematic exchange, not a relationship of simple derivation. It creates what Alvaray calls "in-between effects" (Alvaray 2013, 68). Del Toro projects, I argue, are consistently oriented toward in-betweenness. They dwell in the contradictions between boundedness—like the imaginative borders we invent for in-group identities—and the necessity to tolerate and embrace boundary-crossing, and even to become the monstrous figure of the boundary crosser. If there is a thread through his work, it is porosity and the illusory nature of territorial control. The territory is rarely national—though

works like *Hellboy* and *The Shape of Water* do play with the symbolism and cultural narratives of nationalist ideologies through their antagonists—but rather unpick the assumptions that shore up the very concepts of categorization and division as organizing principles.

In terms of Hollywood as context of production and articulating transnational cinema in relation to a directorial figure as somehow "migrant," in the complex interplay of the national and the transnational it is reductive and even nonsensical to argue that the transnational is, in and of itself, anti-nationalist. The political dimensions of art depend on the specific interplays of creators, texts and audiences, and these are, in the case of Hollywood film, simultaneously globalized and localized. In the case of the reception of Guillermo del Toro, for example, there is a thread of perceiving emigration as betrayal to the reception of his work in Mexico itself, exemplified in the ambivalent memification in reaction to his public assertion of his own Mexicanness.[4] Migration to Hollywood is sometimes represented as a dilution of the strength of a domestic film industry—though as already argued above, the relationship between global Hollywood and the reception and adaptation of Hollywood genres is more complex than that. In terms of Hollywood as a production context, and despite some ambivalence in his reception in Mexico described by Chávez, del Toro's success matters on a practical level (Chávez 2011, 375). Maryann Erigha's analysis of Hollywood directors quantifies inequality behind the camera, with Latinx directors entrusted with fewer than 2 percent of Hollywood films in the first decade of the twenty-first century—with such directors more likely to be born outside the United States than US born Latinx filmmakers, suggesting that del Toro (and Cuarón and González Iñárritu), prolific in this period, are statistically as well as culturally significant (Erigha 2016, 61). Indeed, Jonathan Risner has traced the way Guillermo del Toro— and Hollywood horror networks—have facilitated transnational acceleration in careers of other Latin American directors, for Guillermo del Toro through the case study of Andrés Muschietti in particular (Risner 2015, 7). Diverse crew are vital in an industry heavily based on relationships and connections. The successful navigation of Hollywood contexts creates a precedent and a network that can gradually shift Hollywood as a generative culture.

The preceding brief exploration of Hollywood transnational production posits this context as a structural condition that shapes aspects of form, distribution and reception, while also enabling—though not guaranteeing—potential mechanisms to introduce destabilization and subversion of normative spatial and ontological boundaries. The following sections of this chapter articulate some of destabilizations and subversions most perceptible as through lines in the aesthetic trajectory of Guillermo del Toro. This is not an auteurist interpretation as such. In line with the above discussion of global Hollywood as a condition of production, taking part of a director's *oeuvre*

as an object of study should not elide the fundamentally multiple nature of authorship of cinematic works. A director becomes another condition of production, with their track record, name recognition, relationships, and habitual collaborators, as well as their professional as well as artistic choices major factors in how films get made, and what kinds of films result. Along the lines Stephen Neale's commentary on genre studies, it offers an avenue of convergence between critical interpretation and cinematic production, a way of qualifying auteur studies to bring director-based criticism into dialogue with film industry practices and the economics of culture. The director, like the genre, is part of the context of creation and reception of films and therefore of the kinds of meanings we heterogenous transnational audience members can make out of a global shared culture. This chapter, therefore, does not necessarily argue for Guillermo del Toro as an audiovisual philosopher presenting a coherent thesis on contemporary life, but rather takes his Hollywood films as representing certain mobilities and intercultural leakages within mass transnational popular culture, in a context of production in which his own positioning and aesthetic and narrative preoccupations allow him to operate.

LIVING/DEAD

The first way in which Guillermo de Toro projects articulate crossing is through the insistent presence of death as a companion to life. Fantasy horror is the foremost genre convergence in this sequence of films. As Barry Langford describes, "the experience of limits, and the transgression of limits, is central to the horror film [. . .] pre-eminently the boundaries of life and death" (Langford 2005, 158). The fear of death is the most primal of fears. However, as Langford also articulates, the transgression of the border of life and death in horror films, while usually attached to fear, is not always presented as fearful but can gain its resonance through other reactive responses—horror depends on emotional engagement, but readily blends different kinds of affective charge linked to embodied feelings.

The exploration of both mortality and the perils of extraordinary interventions in its denial are very evident already from *Mimic* (and earlier in del Toro's career, but for the purposes of this chapter we are looking at how these themes emerge in English-language Hollywood genre films). While *Mimic* is a more conventional creature feature than other films discussed here, and one which was famously plagued by conflict resulting in an end product satisfactory to no one, it does presage the kinds of slippages in the positioning of death (and, as we shall see, the positioning of monstrosity) that characterize more successful works that followed. The monstrous threat is created by the marginally sympathetic human characters themselves, as a product of a

genetic manipulation to create an insect predator that would eliminate another disease-carrying insect. In addition to being a classic parable of colonialism, this premise marks human fear as the source of death, something which is reinforced in multiple ways. It assumes a semi-humanoid form (hence the film's title) as a defense because humans are its most threatening potential predators. The monster attacks primarily those who are most afraid of it, and leaves others who are unafraid. *Mimic* does not go as far as other del Toro films in making the monster the hero—or at least making it victorious over humankind, as was originally intended and as we see play out in the parallel narrative of del Toro and Chuck Hogan's *The Strain* book and television series, hewing more closely to a conventionally palatable horror final survivor(s) narrative instead. This survival partly reassures audiences in their denial of death and their allegiance to (human) life, though there remains an ambiguity to the final confrontations that distances viewers from the human lives in which we are supposed to be invested.

Blade II and *Hellboy* both explicitly deal with the impulse to immortality, a classic science fiction theme prevalent in the genre at least since Frankenstein, as a form of ontological violence which suppresses and harms more functional negotiations of the presence of death. The denial of death is a source of corruption. *Pacific Rim* toys with some of the same ambivalence about the desirability of the survival of humanity that was incipient in *Mimic*, while similarly retaining some of the palatable predictability probably essential for the size of its budget. It is also bookended by major character deaths in the opening and closing scenes, and, because of the focus on the subjective but shared nature of experience in the film's telepathy-memory-bodily transcendence concept of the *drift*, is full of the kinds of ghosts who dwell in our memories and suggest the way emotion and our self-constructions mean death is far from final (Hanley 2016, 34–50). These memory-ghosts blur temporalities and mean death continues to be embodied in the living, and in their capacity to act in relation to their material environment. In *The Shape of Water* death is a blurred border, with a similar ambiguity and inconclusiveness to that shown in *El laberinto del fauno* [*Pan's Labyrinth*]. Death is not finitude, but only another invented border. The humans who presume to take control of death just as they attempt to take control of life—through anthropocentric domination and systematic gendered, racial and ideologically-inflected violence—erode their own ability to adapt and transform, qualities essential in the hybridizing ethos of these films.

Crimson Peak, an explicit ghost story which plays with generic templates from Gothic horror, features the most explicit transgression of life and death, since the dead have agency and the worlds of the living and the dead are one. From *Crimson Peak* we can extrapolate that the attempt to obliterate death is also an act of obliteration of the past, and the repressed past always returns

(Hanley 2018, 101–113). Elsewhere I have argued that *Crimson Peak*'s most marked genre-bending is that its ghosts are forces for vitality and open a communion with past violence; death is part of life, whereas denial of death becomes death (Hanley 2018). It is not unique in its transformation of ghosts from source of terror to source of understanding and reconciliation (the dynamic even has parallels with del Toro's own 2001 *El espinazo del diablo* [*The Devil's Backbone*]). However, what is less common is the way that it does not conflate ghosts with the past, but also connects them to the future. Life depends on death, and the dead remain present with the living through how we orient ourselves to the world and the kinds of futures we try to shape.

FAMILIAR/STRANGE

The love/death/liberation connection in *The Shape of Water* and making the dead a source of reinvigoration in *Crimson Peak* provide a useful transition to discussing how del Toro's films often play with making monstrous others familiar, while defamiliarizing more normative figures. There are several dimensions of otherness that are mobilized and undermined throughout. The most obvious of these is monstrosity, as increasing intimacy with the strangeness of the monster is reinforced by destabilizations of presumed sexual and racial norms. Just as the representation of death and haunting is interlinked with the rearticulation and subversion of narrative and aesthetic conventions of horror, the treatment of monstrosity also brings together genre-blurring aspects of the conventional narrative and aesthetic domains of the speculative and fantastic. Drawing on Vivian Sobchack, Langford suggests that traditional genre boundaries support greater intimacy and individuality in horror, whereas science fiction addresses the public sphere and collective anxieties, but that this division like other genre markers is "increasingly unreliable" (Langford 2005, 164). Laurence Davies has termed del Toro's output in particular "gleefully impure" (Davies 2011, 88). Though closely aligned with genre films, which as described above are in some ways the predominant output of global Hollywood production, and thus positioning their director very effectively to sustain influence in the current cultural economy, the films consistently mingle very broad and eclectic influences and refuse straightforward genre classification. They take dramatic techniques from a range of genres—sports films in *Pacific Rim* with its teams of jaeger operators and the central relationship between the ambitious rookie and the burned-out veteran, hints of social melodrama and bildungsroman layered over the explicit literary intertexts of the suffocating Gothic romance of *Crimson Peak*, Cold War thrillers in *The Shape of Water*, to name just a few elements of fusion. Persistent throughout, however, is the use of genre-bending aesthetics and

narrative to bend boundaries between how we understand what is familiar and what we perceive to be strange or other. In the conservative tradition of genre films, the positioning of the monster emphasized "re-suppression, containment and restoration of the *status quo ante* through the violent elimination of deviance and disturbance" (Langford 2005, 159). However, more ambivalent and progressive examples and monster films begin to rearticulate the status quo itself as the site of monstrosity, a transition which is certainly very clear in *The Shape of Water*.

The Shape of Water, as signaled above, brings audiences into the most direct intimacy with the monstrous other of all del Toro's Hollywood films. *Hellboy* and *Hellboy II: The Golden Army* are also predicated on sympathizing with a monster and showing the broad rejection of the monster as itself the site of monstrosity, however, the more intensively human behavioral qualities underpinning and making digestible for broad audiences the protagonism of Hellboy himself has a different valence to the protagonism of Sally Hawkins' Eliza, and her identification with and desire for the amphibian. Eliza is plainly human, but a humanity that is predicated on total openness to experience and to going beyond recognition of difference to active desire. Thus, the monster is not brought closer to us, more human than the human characters, as is the case of Hellboy, but we, via Eliza, must bring ourselves closer to the monster. The Amphibian does not, in this instance, become less strange; those who are open to the other must embrace their active acceptance of and even preference for strangeness, and familiarize themselves with monsters by leaving their own supposedly unmonstrous selves behind. When the reflexive abjuration of the monstrous is replaced by monstrous desire, according to Langford, fantastical genres are most in touch with our own repressed desire to smash norms and break moral conditioning (Langford 2005, 167).

As a creature film with a singular creature, *The Shape of Water* is easy to read in these terms, and the ethical orientation is very clear. In several other films, monstrous positioning is more mobile, and species boundaries and allegiances more contested. Tony Vinci has argued comprehensively and, in more detail, than I can cover here that *Hellboy II* destabilizes Hellboy's outsider position established in the first *Hellboy* film as itself corrupt, because it remains ethically aligned with "anthropocentric models of the human" (Vinci 2012, 1042). Where *Hellboy* posits denial of death as antithetical to ethical humanity (as well as critiquing fascist impulses to purity), *Hellboy II* suggests that human-centered dwelling in the world is near-hopelessly entangled with the domination of nature and oppression of the more-than-human world, a domination and oppression with which Hellboy himself is complicit. *Hellboy II* presents us with other monsters, particularly through the figure of the fairy prince Nuada, the encounter with whom provokes Hellboy to enter "realm of the trans-anthropocentrically human: an undefined and open territory that

includes space for harsh cultural critique as well as critical idealism" (Vinci 2012, 1056). Here we see that empathy with the excluded other, the audience position in *Hellboy*, is revealed as politically insufficient. Tolerance or even active promotion of diversity is an inadequate response to the legacies of colonial violence (territorial treaties with the fairies have been systematically violated, an obvious parable for colonialism) and the depredations of global capitalism. Something much more radical is required, to upend comfortable assumptions that ethics can be enacted within the existing parameters of individual encounter without sacrifices to the beneficiaries of those long histories of violence.

From these brief examples, it is clear that del Toro's films challenge limits put around what it means to be human and alive and question our assumptions about the nature of reality, and the ways we artificially shore up our (supposedly) collective humanity by defining the nonhuman and the nonliving as others. By implication, the same flawed and corrupting othering strategies function to relegate transgressive or disruptive human others to a lesser or subhuman status. In this kind of framework, any biological meaning attributed to race beyond its mobilization as another invented otherness is spurious. However, that does not mean the works are as clearly progressive on specific questions of race as they are in undermining the boundaries of othering as a broad practice. Racial and ethnic diversity are rarely an explicit focus, but various films deal with questions of race both by implication and through on-screen representation.

Pacific Rim is a nearly archetypal example of a global Hollywood pan-ethnic cast with cartoonish markers of ethnic identity and relatively little individual specificity. As Hudson writes of on-screen representation, "Hollywood films do not represent the world; Hollywood films represent power structures of globalization. Hollywood diversity, then, is not real equality any more than vampires, races, and nations are real (biological) entities" (Hudson 2008, 149). What is more interesting about *Pacific Rim* is the way it moves beyond a celebratory narrative positing shared humanity through a necessity for one world united against the invasive *kaiju* (the monsters invading through the oceans). The most significant two relationships in the film are interracial, between Rinko Kikuchi's Mako and Charlie Hunnam's Raleigh and between Mako and Idris Elba's Stacker Pentecost. More than that simple evaluation of straightforward on-screen representation, however, the film posits that no individual human—or category of human—is a complete entity. Experience is always relational, and humans only become closer to whole and achieve transformative change by merging not only with each other but with the world that surrounds us (the ocean is a significant character), with technology (the pilots become cyborgs with their jaegers), and with the external nonhuman other as well—the *kaiju* themselves. Del Toro's films are not consistently

notably progressive with regards to either explicit critiques of racial inequality or centering specific experiences of people of color, though some have elements of both. However, the constant deconstruction of categories of identity and challenging of the boundaries of both territories and perceived reality work to destabilize the possibility of self-other distinctions of all kinds.

Hollywood genre films historically centered heteronormative white male protagonists and featured sexual and racial others in subordinate roles. The shift in Hollywood production to assume global audiences from the beginning has created an economic incentive that, alongside cultural changes in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, slightly shifts default assumptions for on-screen representation (though white male representation remains disproportionately high), though how this cultural and racial diversity functions is highly variable and variegated by audience. *Pacific Rim* is a significant example in this respect, since it was substantially more successful with international markets, particularly in East Asia and notably China, than with US domestic audiences (Mendelson 2013). Dale Hudson argues that a lack of specificity and an assumption of a white norm are two maneuvers that allow on-screen multiculturalism to ultimately serve to reinforce a US nationalist agenda, including the myth of "openness to anyone" (Hudson 2008, 132). *Pacific Rim*, as a mecha and *kaiju* film, is also a love letter to Japanese audiovisual cultures with specific cultural resonances and roots, though it may not always escape orientalist notes of Asian chic which Jane Chi Hyun Park has critiqued in dehistoricized cinematic representations of Asianness, particularly in the scenes of futuristic urban environments (Park 2010, ix–x). *Pacific Rim* also mobilizes the queer transgressions of white masculine loci of control that Park (drawing on Chun and Nakamura) has identified as a modality of technofuturist immersion, without as much relegation of "Asia" to facilitator or secondary nexus of this queering as might normally be present in Hollywood pseudo-Asian future dystopias.

Hudson has critiqued *Blade II*, del Toro's only other film to feature a person of color in the lead role (I argue that it is Kikuchi's Mako who has the hero's journey in *Pacific Rim* despite Raleigh being the focus of the opening sequence). Hudson suggests that while del Toro's films may be overtly anti-racist, Blade "becomes a 'positive image' of a negative stereotype through a complex process of emptying race of its historical meaning: his black skin matches his black leather costume, a significant change from the Afrocentric attire of the character in the comics upon which the films are based" (Hudson 2008, 148). Laura Podalsky, on the other hand, has argued that the explicit anti-fascist and anti-racist arcs in *Blade II*, along with its powerful positioning of a fundamentally hybrid figure at its center still "encourage spectators to assume the perspective of the 'other'" (Podalsky 2014, 100). Furthermore, like *Hellboy II* and even *Mimic*, while the threat of the invasive horde (with

its obvious parallels with the metaphors of anti-migrant discourse) underpins the horror aesthetic of the films, our allegiances are unstable and the desirability of survival—or at least, survival of anything stable and pure, symbolic of white supremacy—is not sustained. Porosity, hybridity, and the deconstruction of perceived certainties are the only viable options.

CONCLUSION: AN ETHICS OF CROSSING

Though it is perceived as a global juggernaut and one of the most widely shared cultural referents for diverse and dispersed audiences, Hollywood is not a totalizing entity but rather a mutable culture, and one with a highly variable material geography and contingent groups of transnational teams producing, marketing, and distributing films. In that context, this chapter has explored through lines in the Hollywood films of Guillermo del Toro, analyzing intersections between directorial sensibility and the slippery nature of genre to suggest that the transnational dimensions of such works are not only oriented toward translatability for global markets but actually articulate an ethics of crossing, an ethics that is transcultural by implication in the case that it makes for porosity and hybridity as not only inevitable but desirable. Genre is a useful angle for framing this persistent hybridity, since the study of genre has shifted to emphasize "textual diversity and contradiction," with horror in particular as "polymorphic, elusive" and "carnivalesque" as its monsters (Langford 2005, 159–160). Phenomena, tendencies, and individual texts that emerge out of Hollywood do provide an avenue for understanding part of the visual and narrative cultures that circulate transnationally and provide some of the shared referents for contemporary globalization. Acland queries "the interpretive and critical limits to charting the effectivity of popular and institutional knowledge given the blurred boundaries between national and international life" (Acland 2003, 15). The iterative but creative dimensions of popular genres articulate aspects of a popular culture for a global audience. The persistent call to favor crossing and blending over order and purity that we can identify as a recurrent theme in the Hollywood filmography of Guillermo del Toro does not, ultimately, resolve into a reappropriative mechanism that can disrupt the capitalist structures of commercial transnational film circulation. However, part of the argument presented in this chapter is that the product of the pressures of commercial viability—genre, familiarity, transnational translatability—also makes possible genre slippage, defamiliarization, and intimate strangeness. To collapse limits between categories emphasizes the limits of comprehension of what we understand to be reality, and therefore whether domination is ever sustainable or is always self-destructive.

NOTES

1. The chapter touches on brief examples from *Mimic* (1997), *Blade II* (2002), *Hellboy* (2004), *Hellboy II: The Golden Army* (2008), *Pacific Rim* (2013), *Crimson Peak* (2015), and *The Shape of Water* (2017).

2. Distinctions between transnational arthouse and transnational commercial film-making are largely artificial, at least as a marker of value or innovation, since both operate in relation to concrete markets, distribution networks and genre demands.

3. A foundational discussion of this topic can be found in Miller et al. *Global Hollywood* (London: British Film Institute, 2001); updated and expanded with a more specific exploration of key non-US markets and production sites, in Miller et al. *Global Hollywood 2* (London: British Film Institute, 2004), On the increasing impact of foreign markets in driving production of polymorphic and polysemic Hollywood texts see Mingant, Nolwenn, "A New Hollywood Genre: The Global-Local Film," in *Global Media, Culture and Identity: Theory, Cases, and Approaches.* Ed. R. Chopra and R. Gajjala (London/New York: Routledge, 2011), 148. On the topic of distribution and export markets in particular, Scott, Allen J. 2004 "Hollywood and the World: The Geography of Motion-Picture Distribution and Marketing," *Review of International Political Economy* 11(1): 33–61.

4. Social media users picked up his phrasing, some unironically in relation to various cultural phenomena associated with Mexicanness, while others created absurd juxtapositions to signal the reductiveness of attributing qualities to national origins.

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Medea and Lars von Trier's Medea

"Ressentıment," Myths, and Gender

Özlem Oğuzhan

Medea, as a mythological demigod, a psychiatric syndrome, and a narrative from tragedy to the cinema, is still audible in different contexts, in a very wide geography of our day. After its setting on the stage by Euripides and Seneca, this mythological story not only symbolized the antihero but has also become an indispensable theme for the visual arts. Hence, there are many works of art with its subject or a character developed in the line of Medea. Since Euripides, the most significant quality describing Medea is being the murderer of her own children in reaction to her husband Jason's infidelity. But, what was it before Euripides?

Medea, rooted in the Anatolian cult of the curing and healing goddesses, has been transformed through her transcultural immigration in favor of the patriarchal structure to be recognized with the concept of resentment. The identity and roles have been borne by her as a result of not only open space to discuss the narrated changes but also the place and the value of the woman in cultural history. This study will firstly discuss the transformation of Medea in terms of the concept of "ressentiment," as the Anatolian healing goddess cult turned to the cult of the witch in approaching Athens over time. Subsequently, in the light of this conceptual opening, the films *Medea* (1988) and *Antichrist* (2009) by Lars von Trier will be compared and analyzed. In this book which focuses on Hollywood cinema, discussing Trier might seem to be pointless at a glance but on the contrary, this attitude assumes something significant. Today, neither tragedy nor an alternative cinema could be discussed out of the line that is drawn by Hollywood cinema. It is the dominant, so it determines the alternative. Consequently, this chapter can be grasped as a trial of thinking on Hollywood cinema through its roots and opponent.[1]

Multiple adaptations of both the character and the story of Medea have been the subject of cinema films. Other noteworthy productions making

impressions on the cinema history, such as Passolini's *Medea* (1969) or David Fincher's *Gone Girl* (2014) will make up the topic of another study. The two films on Medea, shot by the same director in different settings in his different periods, were the most important reason for selecting Lars von Trier. Also, being one of the directors narrating Medea with an original style and, similarly to Euripides and Seneca, giving the opportunity to analyze a woman's story as seen through the eyes of a man, are the two factors for choosing these two films.

BEFORE MEDEA

Although the common mood of resentment is seen as a personal negative reaction, it has collective significance especially with respect to its consequences. Therefore, those reading on resentment should take it into consideration under the umbrella of broader concepts of class, culture or gender. The concept gained importance with Nietzsche, who chose to use it in French: "Ressentiment" in reference to the internal world of the Christians flaring up in response to the measures, imposed by religious institutions, that suppress natural tendencies. The problem has its source in value judgments. Nietzsche sees ressentiment as the response to the wound created by the spiritual void between the desired object and the inability to reach it. Thus, it is a process determined by the exchanges between the internal and the external world of the individual, with "that which is personal" evoking the "collective" and vice versa. Nietzsche differentiates the "noble human" and the "weak human" on the basis of the severity of ressentiment. Ressentiment flares up and is spent in noble individuals who also handle their interaction with their misfortunes or enemies with internal healing methods, which points to their strong and flexible structure. Whereas resentment is not self-poisoning in noble humans, the reverse is true with weak humans. Individuals harboring resentment are distant from righteousness and candidness. They do not forget, but remain silent and wait. Therefore, they are identified with craftiness (Nietzsche 2011, 31–32).

Max Scheler, having borrowed the resentment concept from Nietzsche, recommends ignoring Christian values to penetrate more deeply the experience of resentment. In his work "Ressentiment," he defines it as the "self-poisoning of the mind," where "getting poisoned" is doubtless also inherited from Nietzsche. In his own words: "Ressentiment is a self-poisoning of the mind which has quite definite causes and consequences. It is a lasting mental attitude, caused by the systematic repression of certain emotions and affects which, as such, are normal components of human nature" (2004, 7). The desire for revenge prepares the basis of ressentiment. It is preceded by an

attack or injury followed by the impulse of revenge, which can reveal itself as a rage or anger reaction or it may be restricted and delayed for a later time, the reason being inadequacy (2004, 7–8). If the act of revenge is completed and the aim of harming the enemy is realized the individual would be freed of ressentiment, which otherwise would persist due to inadequacy, weakness, and fear (2004, 9). Scheler also talks about ressentiment in segregationist populations societies with inequality. He describes the Caste system. Wherever the fate of injury is experienced, revenge turns to ressentiment (2004, 11). He claims this to be rather feeble in societies having equality on a political, social, and class basis. According to Scheler females are more resentful in being relatively weaker in the role of the genders in society and having to compete with other females for the male gender. The relationships and the cultural accumulation describing the female are very similar. The furies or the Erinys, as the underworld deities, are capable of revenge in the matriarchal system. Scheler gives Eumenides[2] in the tragedy by Aiskhylos as an example and draws attention to Apollo and Athena as the deities of the masculine civilization. He also refers to witchcraft in relation to the female gender, which does not have a male counterpart (2004, 21). In summary, the concept of resentment, in relation to poison and the female gender, shows itself in Medea as the most powerful character of the transformation in the healing goddess cult. However, the inheritance of Anatolia prior to Medea should be glanced at. From Göbeklitepe to Çatalhöyük and the Hittites, there are examples of "Mother Goddess" and "Father God." Mother Goddess figures, used directly or by abstraction in different periods, point to the power of the female. According to the letters that entered Anatolia through trading with the Assyrians, the position of the woman in governing and worship weakened as the Hittites gradually replaced the local communities in the 2000s BC (Aydıngün 2020, 63).

Looking through a wider perspective, the woman's position and the power of her word in the society were gradually reduced with the first agricultural revolution in the Neolithic period. Male-dominated societal structure was strengthened with the increasing frequency of conflicts and war. However, the status of motherhood, which was refused by Medea and is much criticized today when used to define the female, was preserved in that period (Konyar 2020, 243). The female identity and the status of Medea is not associated with her being a mother. However, in ancient Greece, as the continuation of Anatolia and especially Ionia, males and females had been more strictly differentiated with respect to nearly all aspects of living, such that, women were concerned with domestic affairs while men were outside and active in public life. Marriages were arranged within families by seeking economical equivalence. In the open public sphere of the agora, there were the marketing women, as was the mother of Euripides, and there were "heteria" as

female prostitutes trained in music, dancing, and poetry to accompany men
in feasts and celebrations. Some heterias also worked in the temples dedi-
cated to Aphrodite, the goddess of love, the most famous being the temple in
Corinthos (Darga 2020, 275–281).

The setting is not any different especially in Greek mythology, which when
read in relation to male-female differentiation, can be rewritten on "harass-
ment," "compromise," and "violation." When the problems related to mythol-
ogy, resentment, and women are put together, the first name to be recalled
would doubtlessly be that of Medusa, the mortal female Gorgon with a head
of hair consisting of serpents, whose beauty, when noticed by Poseidon, trig-
gered a chain of calamities. After violation by Poseidon in the very temple
of Athena, his wife, Athena deprived Medusa of her beauty and changed her
hair to serpents, cursed her glance and banished her. Finally, she appointed
Perseus to kill Medusa, who avoided her eyes by means of seeing her on a
mirror and severed her head and used it against his enemies. Some sources
claim that even Athena took advantage of this severed head.[3] The serpent, on
the other hand, maintained its existence as the symbol of the devil, starting
with the scene of banishment from the Garden of Eden. However, in mythol-
ogy, the serpent is seen as the symbol of sorcery, endless life, and cures, or
in other words, as a deity. In the epic of Gilgamesh, the oldest known myth,
the plant of eternal life is snatched by the serpent. In Greek mythology, the
serpent is wound on the staffs of two prominent deities, one being the cadu-
ceus, the staff of the messenger deity Hermes, which creates a fire or achieves
arbitration, and the other belonging to Asklepios, the deity of health and
medicine. Conversion of the serpent on the staff of Hermes to Medusa's curse
is attributable to the difference observed between man and woman by the
Greeks. The serpent lives under the ground, and is renewed by shedding its
skin. Swallowing its food as a whole is symbolic of returning to uterus. The
serpent's most important characteristic in relation to Medea is rebirth with
the poison it produces. Medea takes her revenge with poison, gets into the
vehicle driven by the snakes, and flies. Here the deadliness is also immortal in
its relation to the underground. Hence, the serpent associated with power and
everlasting life, and with the devil after banishment from the Garden of Eden,
is defined in terms of poison and evil: One of the Lilith's daughters, Medusa.

Another myth or legend to be considered in relation to Medea is that of
Shahmaran (the shah of serpents), the mature and exemplary queen of ser-
pents believed to have lived under the ground with serpents in southeastern
Anatolia and still maintaining her image with a serpent's body below the
waistline and her identity as a healer and protector of the entire of Anatolia.
Shahmaran is also the name of the spirit that passes from mother to daughter,
thus carrying the character to the cultural arena. The legend is about Jamsab's
acquaintance with Shahmaran who loves and trains him when abandoned

by his friends in a well, and being allowed to leave the cave only to see his mother. The legend goes that the sultan of Tarsus becomes ill and can only be cured by eating the flesh of Shahmaran. The sultan's wazir recognizes the relationship of Jamsab with Shahmaran from the scales stuck on his back, when he is made to betray Shahmaran. When caught, she advises, before being killed, her head to be given to the sultan, her body to the wazir and her tail to be consumed by Jamsab. The sultan recovers, the wazir dies and Jamsab gains eternal life as a healer despite facing the fate of accounting to his conscience. Shahmaran, knowing of the outcome of releasing him from her cave, is attributed the statement: "Had you not come here after a betrayal? Then your path is determined by evil, since once initiated, betrayal persists in human life by changing its garbs" (Uyar 2020, 109). This legend symbolizes the character of the goddess queen who is elevated on the strength of healing powers and the feelings of fidelity. The word *sacrifice* is a role cut in language and action by the man mostly for the woman.

In the many versions of Medea, next to the displays of being the victim and the perpetrator, the latest added unforgivable quality, which surpasses all others, is being "the murderer of her children." Other mythological female characters associated with this quality are Lillith and Lamia. Lillith in Hebrew mythology denied the supremacy imposed by Adam in the Garden of Eden and allied with the devil. She is remembered for having sacrificed her own

Figure 6.1   *Source*: Şahmeran "Henüz Bitmedi," (Özçiçek Tatar, 2021).

offspring as well as molesting the newborn babies. Another character turning to a child murderer is Lamia, the daughter of Poseidon and lover of Zeus, whose children were abducted and killed by Hera. She went mad tearing off her eyes and was transformed by Zeus to a monster who hunted children and devoured them in her cave (Ercan 2013).

MEDEA

Medea, instead of being a minor character in her husband Jason's race for the Golden Fleece and his attempts to gain the Corinthian throne, turned out to be the main character as a victim and murderer. As in the case of Lilith, she turned the events to her bad fate. Being a sorceress, a demigoddess and princess of the Colchis kingdom, she could contact superhuman powers and use her sorcery. The deity writers such as Euripides and Seneca must have been so incensed by her that they have cursed her by testing her with her children as her last defense. Despite weaving the story against Medea, they are widely recognized with the use of the story in stage arts, which never-theless, is not a reason to overlook their approach to morality. For example, Euripides has created the word "αἰσχροποιός," meaning "doer of disgraceful deeds" to be able to describe Medea, which caused the audience of the very first staging to heckle Euripides without effect on the progress of the play (Euripides 2020, 63).

   In order to strengthen the plot, he intervened with the legend and despite the different causes of death of Jason's children cited in various sources, he had the children murdered by their mother and to emphasize the leading lady's mercilessness he also blamed her for Jason's murder of her sibling (Euripides 2002, vii). Jason's journey from the kingdom of Colchis on the northeastern coast of the Blacksea to his own birthplace of Corinth in the west, represents in a way, the passage from the matriarchal to the patriar-chal social structure, from barbarian populations to a town predominated by trade. Thus, Medea is culturally at the threshold by time and location and not as a Greek but as a barbarian and not as a human but as a demigoddess. At the start of the story, Jason's father the king is killed by his stepbrother Pelias. Jason is taken away by his mother to save his life and returns for his right to the throne when he comes of age. His uncle the king puts the condition of bringing the Golden Fleece.[4] When reaching Colchis, Jason, and the Argonauts realize that they could not obtain the Golden Fleece by themselves. When about to give up, they are helped by Aphrodite and Eros by causing Medea to fall in love with Jason. She is so blinded by love that she takes her brother and cuts him to pieces and throws them on the way to the ship so as to delay her father's pursuit. When leaving Colchis behind

the two are bonded with a mutual oath of loyalty. As with every myth, there are many versions of the whole story and the patterns of opening between the substories. The short summary presented here is based on multiple versions. During the return to Corinth, there are dragons, threatening waves, and similar hazards which are avoided through the presence of Medea. Jason cannot gain his right to the throne after arriving home, and gets banished from the city. Having become sufficiently powerless Jason has reached the right basis for *ressentiment*. After approximately ten years of happy married life with two growing sons, Jason gains the favours of King Creon who wishes him to marry his daughter. With the start of the marriage preparations, the king goes to Medea and asks her to leave the country. Seeing that begging does not achieve much, she asks for one day before leaving. Suffering deeply by the experience of betrayal she makes plans. During their meeting for the last time, Jason, using the craftiness fed by his feelings of resentment, is unable to convince Medea that he acted for the benefit of their family. She sends her sons to give a wedding gift to the new bride who with her father the king gets burned alive and dies. When reaching home, Jason sees that Medea, having killed their two sons, is ascending into the sky in the carriage pulled by serpents, sent by the gods. Medea has thus severed her husband's links with sovereignty, leaving him under the gigantic trauma of castration.

The popularity of this mythological story is due to have been interpreted and written as a tragedy. Considering the life of Euripides and the development of the story, Jason's story is in fact an example to the resentment of unobtainable power. Medea, on the other hand, has attained the goal of her resentment and has risen to the sky as a demigoddess in her chariot pulled by serpents. In other versions, she boards a ship bound for another land. This is a type of reversed "theos apo mēkhanēs"[5] with Euripides having reflected the imbalance in his liaison with women to the play, presenting them in the context of a story shaped with his own prejudices. He has taken away the last holiness of the woman with his fear of getting castrated. This is probably the type of conversion approved by the moral standards of the society he lived in. Medea, on the other hand, destroys motherhood, the only quality left from the matriarchal system and approved by the masculine world, despite being an action with a self destructive outcome, in order to avenge her husbands disloyalty. Whatever the ending turned out to be, the survival of her sons as mortals would not have been possible in the new place. When interpreting the story, the murder of her sons has been added to give her a different end and significance. This may not be the negative notions of Euripides about women after the ending of his own two marriages on grounds of disloyalty. The real basis ensuring the validity of this outcome is the role and the status of womanhood in the Greek city societies. Her obedience to the rules of a

Greek city-state, where she had arrived as an alien and was living as an out-
cast demigoddess, could not be expected.

> The time has come and passing friends, for what I have planned to do. I am part-
> ing from these lands immediately after killing my children, because if I am late,
> their deaths will be in harder hands. They have to die and it will be the mother
> who, having given given birth to them, will end their lives. Come my heart take
> your weapon. Why are you doubting the performance of this unavoidable mur-
> der? Come my poor hand, seize the sword and pass through this bitter turning
> point of your life. (Euripides 2020, 46)

In Seneca's Medea, the serpent, poison, woman, and power are juxtaposed.
The golden fleece is guarded by the serpent. "Pelias orders Jason to bring the
golden fleece without wasting any time. This godly fleece is the magic fleece
of Chrysomallus, the ram with golden wings from the lineage of Poseidon. It
is in Colchis in the grove of Ares, hung from the branch of an oak tree and
under the observation of a serpent who does not blink an eye night or day."
In Seneca's version, too, Medea will ascend into the sky in a chariot pulled
by serpents. "So, you are begging for mercy. Here is the mercy for you. Oh, it
is a pity I have nothing else to sacrifice for you. Lift your tearful eyes up you
Jason the infidel. Don't you recognize your wife? I always escape like this.
A path has already opened in the sky. Two serpents are extending their scaly
necks to the yoke. Take your sons now as their father. I will ride my carriage
and get into the winds" (Seneca 2007, 153).

Wolf, writing about Medea and changing her story in a manner of question-
ing her accountability with his own different interpretations shows the stance
of his book against gender discrimination with the words:

> Here it is! This is point wanted to be arrived at. They want those who come later
> to recall me as a child murderer. But, what is that on the face of the savagery
> they will turn and look at? Because we do not improve. What is left to me but
> to curse them? Curses be on all of us. Especially on you Athamas! Creon!
> Agameda! Presbon! May an insufferable life and a miserable death find you. I,
> Medea, curse you.! What will happen to me? Is there a world or a century that
> will let me sleep? There is no one to ask. This is the reply. (Wolf 2000, 206)

AFTER MEDEA

The Medea of Euripides, with the novel narrative techniques it has brought
to the history of theatre, has created an interesting play, subject or visual
world for all periods. The art of picturing based on the antique Greek theatre

has also maintained an interest in this play. The Medeas interpreted and pictured by great artists of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are seen to follow the lines of Euripides. Some of the noteworthy paintings on the themes of Medea are by J. M. William Turner's "Vision of Medea" (1828), Eugene Delacroix's "Medea about to Kill Her Children" (1838), Gustave Moreau's "Jason and Medea" (1865), the portraits by Frederick Sansdys (1868), Evelyn De Morgan (1889), Alphonse Mucha (1898) and J. W. Waterhouse (1907).

Medea, having been pursued in visual arts apart from picture and stage arts, will be discussed in this section of the study in terms of the two films, *Medea* and *The Antichrist*, directed by Lars von Trier. Whereas Medea is the direct adaptation of the myth to the televison, Antichrist is the adaptation of Medea to the current in a film. These films are evaluated here on the "original screen play" basis. Considering the director's filmography, it can be said that not going back to a subject already processed and "wanting to put a stone in the shoe" of the audience with every film are his characteristics. This is how he defines his cinema when it is compared with the traditional structure. He has the theme but not the structure of tragedy in his cinema. However, an impossible was realized by producing *The Antichrist* after *Medea*, when womanhood and the topic of resentment were reinterpreted, which can be attributed to cyclic thinking by von Trier. Both films begin with the ending.

The Antichrist is an adaptation of *Medea* to the current century and takes place in our day. It is about the transformation of a woman writing a thesis about witchcraft and the dark powers of women in the Middle Ages while going through the bitter experience of recently losing a child. The film had surprised and disturbed or entertained the followers of Lars von Trier. First, one should consider the 1969 film on Medea directed by Pasolini in central Anatolia when Maria Callas as Medea did not even hum a song and local tunes were used instead. Given the simpleness of the film combined with the time-place harmony achieved by Pasolini, a masterpiece was produced. On the other hand, Lars von Trier's is a low budget film and has the effects of Pasolini's *Medea* as all films made after it.

The film starts with Medea lying down eyes closed at the seashore. The warblings of a nightingale are heard when Medea sighs as if recalling a pain and grasps the wet sands trying to suppress it. The sea has called her in. Suddenly she rises up in the sea and takes a deep breath. A boat is approaching. When she asks what they are doing, the man in the boat says that they have come for a prophecy and asks her if she wants to tell them anything about Jason and herself. Medea asks for a promise to be accepted as an immigrant on their land. The face of the man appears saying that it could be done. Slowly the ship exits from the scene and the camera enters the sea. This is somewhat the prophecy in the film. Medea has foreseen the events, the time

of the nightingale is done and the director has disclosed to the audience the ending of the film.

A text appears on the screen, more or less saying: Jason builds a ship named Argo, and goes to Colchis for the golden fleece. The beautiful and knowledgeable Medea gives him her love. But later this love turns to hate because Jason betrays Medea and his two sons. They go to Corinth as two "others." Medea leaves her homeland and Jason leaves Medea. The film opens again. Princess Glauce, Jason's bride-to-be, is giggling with her attendants. While one laughs, the other cries. The king declares that he will give his daughter to Jason for the management of the successes and the new wealth, which is applauded by those around him. Jason faces the bride-to-be and touches the face of the princess leaving a black smear although having just washed his hands and face. There is no doubt that he will also drag her to disaster. Neither the king nor his daughter wishes to see Medea in their city during the wedding as she is dangerous. Jason is repeatedly seen with dogs. When the voice of Medea is heard saying "I want revenge" a dog's shadow is present. It can be said that the dogs represent the Erinys and that justice is coming.

While Medea is collecting seeds in the marshes, the king and his men approach and ask her to leave the land. When she asks "Do you fear me King Creon?" The king affirms and blames her of having knowledge of the devil. He tries to follow Medea in the misty surrounds of the marshes with manifest unease. His worries are for his daughter as Medea says "Your daughter's fate is your choice." Walking with difficulty the king says that her stay is not possible and that his daughter's safety has priority. The background is enriched with withered trees and branches after Medea has picked the seeds. The tree symbolizes the connection between now and the future and between the sky, the earth, and the underground as the "axis mundi." This important symbol of paganism is shown to have dried of and shriveled in the film. Two children hung by a rope from a dried up tree, shown on the billboards of the film, is a scene from the film. While Jason pursues the throne to be the father of the community, the tree has dried up in his garden. Medea is ready as Jason arrives with his dogs, with the scene implying that justice is working. Jason says. "I married her to help you" and adds "Your pride is your shame." Medea replies "And your pride is your victory Jason," knowing he will be defeated. First Jason and then Medea meet the king, or the man in the boat at the beginning of the film. Their sons are present. The king says that the sage he consulted for not begetting sons advised him to see Medea, who is to leave the land in the kings' boat the next day. Here the director shows how loving the relationship of Medea and her children is.

The film, adapted from the stage play approach, appears to run in front of background decorations prepared for each scene, but with the camera

techniques of von Trier, a film with very powerful visual language results. Especially the two scenes with the deep sea extending in the background, where Medea and her sons are met by Jason coming out of the palace, are visual feasts. As seen from the palace, these scenes, also imply how minor the scale of their life problems is. Medea mentions her anxiety about the future of her sons and asks them to be presented to the princess together with her gift which is poisoned. The princess who puts on the poisoned crown dies. Her death agony is represented by a white horse dying on the shore sands. Medea, goes through a memory tunnel as she hauls her two sons on a make-shift structure, just like Jesus carrying his own cross, to the moors where she intends to kill them.

Apart from showing Medea in a bad light, similarly to Euripides or the others, Jason is put in a more dangerous mood. Not being able to obtain the power he has desired, his feelings of ressentiment have been augmented and blinded his eyes, Medea's revenge has taken effect at the cost of exhausting herself and she has departed from the town, where Jason has become "the other" searched for by everyone after the death of the king and his daughter. He is seen in the moors where his sons are hung from the dried up tree. While crops are swaying and caressing Jason, Medea releases, as never seen before in the film, her hair in the wind like the swaying crops. She is on the boat that is seen at the beginning of the film. Male resentment and poison have once again come together in the woman's justice.

The *Antichrist*, the other film of von Trier is dedicated to Andrei Tarkovsky. It is about the difficulty of being a woman or related to the nature of the woman in the masculine world. The film consists of five chapters, with titles appearing as they start, like showing the scenario to the audience. In the prologue chapter, two heavy scenes are shown to occur at the same time in the same house. The background music is the aria "Lascia ch'io pianga mia dura sorte," from the opera Rinaldo composed by George Frederic Handel. While the parents are making love in the bathroom, a little child trying to catch a snow flake falls from the window and dies. Here the theme of "cleansing" is visually dominant, everything is black and white. While the machine washes the snow white laundry, the litle innocent child seeking the white snow is lying dead in it. Before falling down, he throws on the floor the statuettes of three beggars with "grief, pain, and despair" written at their bases. These three feelings are also the titles of the chapters that make up the main body of the film; and are symbolized, respectively, by the deer, the fox and the raven, reminiscent of the Erinys and Eumenides, and the dogs in the earlier film Medea.

Apart from the little child named Nick, who leaves the film in "nick" of time, the adult parent characters of the film are nameless such that they are referred to as "She" and "He." When lovemaking ends, the machine stops

and the child dies. The first chapter, "Grief" starts with the funeral walk in the graveyard. He is crying, and She passes out and falls down when following him with a frozen facial expression. Entering the hospital room with blue flowers in his hand, He asks his wife how she is. The blue colour, representing holiness and physical space, gives clues about the couple's relationship. He is more concerned about the treatment given in the psychiatry clinic rather than the state of his wife. As a psychologist, He compares himself with the doctor. She remarks "you are not the doctor." While He promises to undertake her treatment, saying that he loves her and knows her better than anyone else, the camera zooms on the withered discolored blue flowers and actually gets in the vase.

Treatment of She starts at home and without drugs. When He is present as the therapist, the attacks of crying are accompanied with questioning the past and reckoning. She says that He was always distant from her and their son. He responds with questions as if he were the third person representing the cool and clever one. She asserts that she had not drawn his attention previously, but that he is paying attention now that she is his patient. While He is concerned with what is clever, She is equally concerned with emotions and states that he had become different after the demise of the child and that there could be a clever therapist's reply to that as well. As the therapist He thinks that facing her would explain her fears and probably make her better. When asked what she fears, She, after hesitating for a while, responds as "the forest." He is surprised. She wants to go to Eden, to the beginning of everything which may bring about relief from the feelings of guilt. They board the train and therapy starts before arriving at Eden. She imagines herself in Eden and passes over a bridge, which is a classical scene for von Triers, and talks about the deer and the fox. There is a withered and broken tree at their destination, very similar to the tree Medea had hanged her children and castrated Jason when he was talking about the benefit of his act. He advises her to lie down on the green before going to the hut and She does this with Hamlet's Ophelia in her imagination. She is lost in the green. While He says that she can overcome what her mind makes up, She is obviously feeling very differently. They take a taxi and then walk up the steep hill with their back packs to arrive at the hut.

In the second chapter, "Pain," She has difficulty when meeting the bridge she had imagined. The threshold has been passed. As they approach the hut, She sees the deer, the nest of the fox and the dried up tree she had imagined. Although seeing these, her mind refuses to believe in their reality. In his sleep, He almost suffers anxiety when clearing the snails stuck on his hand hanging from the window. This makes the audience query who actually fears nature, the forest and Eden. He is to draw a fear pyramid for her the third corner being Eden. The problem here could be reasoned through a cycle. Half

of this turn is the contradiction between phusis and logos, at the foundation of human history as the separation of nature and culture. The other half is the consecutiveness of which, "mythos" and "logos," depending on reasoning. So, it could be assumed that in this movie phusis/nature is the land of mythos. The male, in trying to legitimize the patriarchal structure defines the female as the "one behind him," or the "one who lacks." Therefore the male concerns are the mind and the sun, while the female concerns are emotions and the moon, in other words, concerns with the external versus the internal, respectively. When distanced from the town, science and making statements with certainty by arriving in nature, the circumstances start to change. He is now in the area of the female. She, fearing that nature will seize her, had given up to complete her thesis.

The problem is that He cannot "hear" her. Typical of modern medicine, he is concerned not with the patient but the illness. While trying to explain the emotional episodes and the possibilities he discovers by fear and the mind, He is never aware of hurting her or even of her existence. When He starts by saying "Nature is Satan's church," She initially opposes but when repeated, the story begins to change. The second spot in the fear pyramid is the devil's. After waking up in the morning, appearing to have improved with her grief subdued, She starts walking around the hut in a manic pace. The chapter ends with the words "Chaos reigns" uttered by the self devouring fox.

In the third chapter, "Despair," He finds steps and goes up to the attic to look for the unfinished thesis. The place is full of pictures of massacred women. Also, there is a book depicting the three beggars as a constellation. While looking at them, two trees close to the house fall down. She is almost exhausted while He is still after details of therapeutics. They start conversing. He asks whether She believed in the books that she used for her thesis. Later He also notices in photographs that, on grounds of an insignificant detail also appearing in the Autopsy report of their child, She always made the child wear his shoes the wrong way round. He rises and goes to the store room and writes "Me" at the tip of the fear pyramid. She tries to castrate him with fear of being abandoned, then ties an iron rod to his knee and makes it impossible for him to walk. He tries to escape despite the iron rod by groveling when She chases him. He attempts to hide in the fox's nest and tries to kill the occupying raven lest he gives him away; but, She has already found him.

The three beggars are the theme of the fourth chapter. He and She appear to have made up, and She says, while helping him crawl home, "When the three beggars arrive, one must die." Thus, She has castrated herself as well. When lying on the floor, He says "There isn't such a constellation." At that very time, the director reminds the audience with the next view of the snow, resting by the window that their child fell from, to resemble the stars in heaven. This is immediately followed by the reminders of the statuettes of the three

beggars. Hence the deer, the fox and the raven have arrived now in the house. Some one has to die. Of course She dies. By not defending but letting herself to be killed. He burns her dead body at dawn break, just like a painting by Hieronymus Bosch, He is shown walking in the forest with a staff in his hand and the surrounds full of dead women.

The fifth chapter is the epilogue. Looking for something to eat in the forest, He with his staff in his hand sees the three beggars again when he looks back. He realizes that he would not be able to confront what was coming. The women/sisters/furies were fast approaching him from the bottom of the hill.

At this instant Handel is heard again, "Lascia ch'io pianga":[6]

Let me weep over
My cruel fate,
And that I long for freedom!
And that I long,
And that I long for freedom!
Let me weep over
My cruel fate,
And that I long for freedom!"
"The duel in fringes
These images
Of my sufferings
I pray for mercy.
For my sufferances.
I pray for mercy."

CONCLUSION

In this study, the story of Medea (and other female characters with similar stories), which was transported from Anatolia to ancient Greece and reproduced as a tragedy, was discussed. In ancient Greece and its tragedy, various elements of ressentiment are attributed to women and their social positions to ensure patriarchal legitimacy. Yet ressentiment, which is a state of unrealized hatred or revenge, is not about femininity but about masculinity in Medea. In other words, in tragedy woman is not the subject but the object of ressentiment.

There is no cinema that is not associated with Hollywood cinema on this planet. Can we mention a director in the history of cinema who has not dealt with Hollywood? No, because the dominant determines the identity of the alternative, like men did to Medea. Whether it's the side or the opposite,

mainstream or alternative, the boundaries of cinema is set only by the frame-work that Hollywood draws. Of course its opponents too.

In a book on Hollywood cinema, choosing to compare two films of a director who is against Hollywood might actually seem pointless. However, Lars von Trier, who stands out with his opposing attitude, was chosen for a specific purpose. Trier has adapted this tragedy twice. In both of these adaptations, he used the tragedy elements mentioned in Aristotle's *Poetics*. Differently, in *Antichrist* he adapted the story to the present day. So, in order to read Trier, one must travel from tragedy to Hollywood, from Aristotle to Christan Metz. Trier's beginning to these films from the end, differentiating the editing, shooting scales, etc. connect the films to the mainstream with all their contrasts. Thus, beginning to think about cinema is firstly comprehend-ing the basic concepts and theories of mainstream cinema.

In conclusion, there is nothing to be afraid of in Trier's movies because he takes off his ressentiment through his movies, just like Medea did in her story. The main ones to be afraid of are those who understand these narra-tives but have neither a method nor even an effort to talk about their own stories.

To my sisters . . .

NOTES

1. Lars von Trier is one of the creators of "Dogme 95 Manifesto." http://www.dogme95.dk/the-vow-of-chastity/.

2. The Erinys also known as the Furies, were three female underworld deities of vengeance in ancient Greek religion. They are described in different sources with different appearances and functions, as having a dog's head, snakes for hair and the wings of a bat. They are concerned with Alekto or unceasing anger, Megaera or jeal-ousy, Tisiphone or murder. Singly or together, they represent justice. They manage the organized run of the universe and provide justice.

3. On October 2020, a statue of Medusa with her severed head in her hand was started to be exhibited in front of the New York County Courthouse. Reversing the representation of Medusa in art history and presenting her as the perpetrator created much debate not only in the arts but also the fields of law, history and other social sciences. The head in this statue made by Luciano Garbati should be seen as not only Perseus but essentially as Poseidon and Athena. For relevant illustrations: https://onedio.com/haber/poseidon-tarafindan-tecavuze-ugradigi-yetmezmis-gibi-canavara-donusturulup-oldurulen-medusa-nin-hikayesi-933683. Accessed February 10, 2022.

4. In this myth, the golden fleece symbolizes the tool of supernatural power. The counterpower for the golden fleece in real life is linked with material power or wealth. The Aegian peasants were known to have laid their fleece in certain areas of riverbeds to collect the gold particles entangled in the fleece after a period of time.

5. Deus ex machina is when a god is brought down to the stage by a crane in the theater. Medea, on the other hands, ascends into the sky in a chariot pulled by serpents. Therefore, this has been described as a "reverse(d) theos apo mēkhanēs."

6. Handel, Frederic G. "Lascia Ch'io Pianga from Rinaldo."

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Chapter 7

Transnational Images in Iñárritu Cinema

Yıldız Derya Birincioğlu

INTRODUCTION

As national borders became transitive and transboundary mobility becomes apparent, geographically fixed culture was replaced by a collective and global culture. The national emphasis turned into transnational as hybrid identities find their correspondence in global culture. The American-centered view, which differs from the Western-centered view that sees cultural diversity and local cultures as a threat with a one-sided cultural flow, was eliminated by making the differences pronounced. While national difference increased within the logic of international politics, thinking within and beyond the nation was left behind and cosmopolitanism was used as a smooth transition. After this point, a symbiotic relationship was established between the culture left behind and the host culture. Boundaries lost their constancy with this symbiotic relationship. Flexible geographies allowed the spread of a multicenter and rhizomatic culture. Cinema, which built local, national, and universal relations, allowed cultural practices to acquire a collective quality through heterogeneous and hybrid image production. The US-Mexico border, one of the most frequently used references of cinema, especially in the contexts of immigration, working conditions, and cultural mobility, and stories carried beyond this border are important in reproducing national cinema with a global film aesthetic.

Alejandro González Iñárritu, who reconstructed the cross border and transnational imagery in the Hollywood industry, is one of the directors who brought migrant flows to the big screen. One of the reasons for this study is the effort to reveal these migrant flows. For this reason, the study focuses on the ways in which other cultures are seen in the North American perspective and establish a relationship between local and global. In order to interpret

transnational images in Hollywood cinema, this study places the following films of Iñárritu at its focus: *Amores Perros* (2000), *21 Grams* (2003), *Babel* (2006), *Biutiful* (2010), *Birdman* (2014), and *The Revenant* (2015). The director's movie *Flesh and Sand* (*Carne y arena*, 2017) was not included in the research, both because it is a short film produced as a virtual realism project featuring digital techniques and because the film does not have distribution in the country in which we live in Turkey. The hermeneutic method was used in the study to interpret the codes of Iñárritu's films/narratives produced beyond the border-related to Mexican culture and ideology, which are considered the Third World (Worsley 1964) and to discuss whether a transnational narrative structure is possible.

THE CULTURE INDUSTRY RECONSTRUCTED BY NEOLIBERALISM

One of the most important issues in the globalization debate is neoliberalism. As part of this concept, which allows the movement of capital, Western and industrialized countries remove national economic borders and impose economic integration reforms on underdeveloped or developing countries. With the global economic crisis in the 1970s, production was shifted from the center to the environment, ensuring the growth of competitiveness in national, regional, and global dimensions. Some economic, social, and political structural reforms were introduced with neoliberal policies in which the flexibility formula was highlighted. Latin America has been the geography most affected by neoliberal policies, where the rhetoric of "rational individuals" and "free markets" were active. Many countries in this region experienced financial, political, and social crises (Harvey 2003, 62). Individuals who wanted to move away from political and economic instability mobilized the migration process with the effect of their use as cheap labor. Production and employment regimes shaped by neoliberal policies in geography where both internal and external migration were concentrated led to the establishment of new multinational factories in border regions and the increase of informal employment. In this geography, where land reform was not yet fully implemented and industrial production was preferred over agricultural production, the gap between classes increased. Neoliberal policies, inequality in income distribution and rapidly increasing poverty have sharpened the classification in Mexico every day. This informality, which began in the industrial area of Tijuana, expanded to smuggling, money laundering, sex trafficking, gang wars, and organ trafficking (Longmire and Longmire 2008, 37). This change in social structure reflected on the streets of Mexico has become the themes most often used by Hollywood films.

For individuals who wanted to become consumers of the global market, the "uniform human" model was presented through newspapers and television, especially Hollywood-based films. The production of Hollywood cinema as a dream factory was about promoting its own cultural values and creating a monoculture. In creating this culture, it positioned those who did not have the characteristics it has determined as "the other." The sector also placed immigrants at the bottom of the representation hierarchy at this point. The fact that this geography, which existed with the transformation of a heterogeneous mass of immigrants into a nation, created an anti-immigrant political and social climate in the film industry, also created a handicap for those who came from different continents, especially Latin Americans.

The national values of Latin American society differed with the influence of neoliberalism and globalization. Local forms of expression have acquired a neo-popular character with globalized cultural values. This differentiation and change worked on the cultural industry. The expression of cinema was also shaped by a combination of local and global values. It can be said that factors such as North American Free Trade Agreement's (NAFTA) binding conditions, the inadequate New Wave flow initiatives created in Mexico, and the relocation of Mexican directors to America or the UK as of the 2000s were effective in combining these values.

The Mexican government began to revise its policies toward the Arts in the 1990s as democracy strengthened and political power changed. For the creation of the national heritage, resources were transferred from different funds to film production. But the fact that a fairly small proportion of the funds were provided by the government, and the rest had a hybrid feature, made the Hollywood aesthetic stand out in film productions (Maclaird 2016, 35). On the other hand, Mexico signed the NAFTA to step into the First World economy. With the entry into force of the NAFTA in 1994, a competitive environment was created.[1] After NAFTA, employment models, wages, labor law, and environmental standards gained a flexible feature, especially between North America and Mexico. There were negative reviews as well as positive reviews about NAFTA. It has been claimed to be a poorly conceived free trade agreement, affecting the US auto and textile industries, Canada's manufacturing sector, and Mexico's agriculture-based areas and small businesses. The negative criticism was exacerbated by the Zapatista uprising, political and economic crises in Mexico (Ramirez 2003, 864). In fact, thanks to NAFTA, Mexico has become the focus of international investors. In NAFTA, the evaluation of cultural products as commodities led to the transformation of audiovisual products into a quality that will also be bought and sold within the framework of this agreement. Audiovisual policies determined by the current political options have further deepened the areas of liberalization, cooperation, and demarcation between the three countries.

As part of the model of film production and distribution in Mexico, there was an increase in film production with the adoption of several protection-ist measures. Together with the joint productions, national cinemas gained a transnational quality and were brought together with international audi-ences. Using the standard Hollywood aesthetic, the representation policies and discourses contained in these co-produced narratives were melted and masked in mass culture formed according to the values of globalization. The style and ideology of Hollywood films, which had hegemony in the world market, provided institutional standardization. Codes that controlled, directed and mono-typed the audience's perspective formed dominant representation and narrative forms (Hansen 2009, 79). The messages presented under the name universal values were based on the character or hero saving America First and then the world. Stuart Hall describes the structure of Hollywood ideology that dominates other cultures as follows. "Global mass culture is West-centric and always speaks English. Popular music, popular movies, in short, almost everything popular is in English. The second feature of this culture is its 'unique homogenization' style, that is, it wants to absorb the differences and place them within a larger, all-encompassing frame which is actually an American-style understanding" (Hall 2008, 49). With this state-ment, Hall focuses on how Hollywood ideology masks cultures and identities that are outside of their values within the framework of monoculture. When Hollywood cinema is considered, it is seen that the stance and ideology of the US government are also effective in shaping the monoculture. Especially after September 11, propaganda and representation policies made over certain identities reveal this relationship. Most of the messages given determine how and what the audience/mass/society/individual will think and also ensure their control. In doing so, the messages are presented in a simple language that everyone understands in order to mobilize and stereotype the audience.

According to Bauman ideological messages about the hierarchy of mobil-ity in a world where everyone is a traveler was also stuck in the monocultural rules of Hollywood cinema (Bauman 2006, 100). US-based cinema is trans-formed into a psychological warfare institution by producing clichés about the "tourist" and "terrorist" paradox after 9/11. It can be said that this ideol-ogy is trying to be legitimized by forming representation structures in which everyone who is not white or western is positioned as a "terrorist" by using the cinema industry. The positioning of "terrorist" and "the other" built on the basis of a Muslim identity both changed shape and moved one step fur-ther politically with Donald Trump's proposal to build a wall on the Mexican border during the period when he won the elections. Not only Muslim iden-tity, but Latin American identity was now seen as a threat. Trump declared a "national emergency" on February 15, 2019, and sent more than 10,000 troops to San Diego, turning this positioning into concrete steps. At the same

time, he did not neglect to make moves toward the construction of a steel wall from the funds he created with the national emergency declaration. The transformation of the iron bars separating the two countries into iron walls brought to mind the walls of the Cold War era. It is seen that Trump tries to transform America into geography where social acceptance of Mexican immigrants is limited with the discriminatory policy he has produced and to give a symbolic meaning to the border. The opinion of Iñárritu, a director who produces multicultural and hybrid narratives about the Mexican diaspora in the Hollywood industry, regarding the propaganda to build a Mexican wall is as follows:

> I think it's part of the rhetoric that is part of this time we're living in. The mass media, politicians, every tweet . . . they write things that are fiction as if it was the fact. What filmmakers do is fiction, and we say it is, but there is enough truthfulness that you feel the truth. The truth you are seeing in the news is misleading and manipulating and inventing so many things about people whose greatest need is just to survive. The people who are coming, they are the neediest and most vulnerable. To say these people are a threat and they are dangerous, it's just very unfortunate. That's what I was saying about the end of the world and the end of the species. While the ice caps are melting, and everything is going down, to be hating people at this moment . . . how can you have that amount of rage toward the poor? Maybe there's a way to get back *to our country, with ideas and stories, and with creativity*. (Fleming 2019)

Trump's national emergency plan and the wall project planned to be built on the Mexican border were canceled after he lost his seat to Biden with the elections in 2020. With the changing president, it can be said that the perspective toward immigration policies and transnational discourses has lost its nationalist militarist character.

Another structure that overcomes the time-space constraint and changes the economic and cultural functioning, as well as politics, is Hollywood. With the restructuring of studios and the taking over of transnational companies, it is seen that Hollywood has become globalized and absorbs the differences by integrating the images that it has positioned as "the other" in history into its own representation system. Monolithic discourses, in which Hollywood ideology is produced with a center-periphery hierarchy, allows this ideology to be decentralized by opening up space for diversity and resistance. Although this process is evaluated within the context of economy and politics, it should not be forgotten that hybrid identities gained meaning in global culture and thus transnational flexible identity structure increased.

MEXICAN REPRESENTATION IN HOLLYWOD
CINEMA FROM YESTERDAY TO TODAY:
OR ARE MEXICANS DISCOVERING
HOLLYWOOD AESTHETICS?

In Hollywood narratives, Mexico is shown as an escape from the US judicial system, the geography that criminals will first choose when they want to leave the state, or as the focus of social inequality, political, and social conflicts. In other words, the classic Hollywood aesthetic deals with Mexico and Mexican representation in the context of issues of informal immigration and exclusion from the global economy.

When looking at the US exploitation of Mexican cinema, we can have a look at the assessments of the Mexican cinema historian Aurelio de Los Reyes. De Los Reyes points out that Mexican documentary filmmaking between 1910 and 1913 was more advanced than North America. Films inspired by the Mexican events include stories that glorify the supremacy of the white hero caught among the bandit, gun smuggler, revolutionary, violent, irresponsible, and treacherous Latins. These films, which reveal the populist effect of the American dream and its distorted Latin perspective, have increased with the greater participation of the United States in the Mexican market (quoted in Chanan 2008, 488). Mexicans protested the realities distorted by Hollywood with the following statement they sent to the newspaper in 1917: "We do not accept this brutality and reactionism that has made it a habit to promote Mexicans with fake films." Mexican cinema tried to resist American ideology by establishing a Hollywood-like studio system (Armes 1987, 44). However, Hollywood cinema, which dominated the entire market after World War I, imported films to Third World countries and created a new communication style with them. Classical narrative cinema represented by Hollywood began to spread all over the world, excluding alternative film practices and forms of expression. In this context, Latin America became the region with the highest market share in Hollywood (Armes 1987, 47).

The point of view used by Hollywood since the silent cinema era has focused on "stereotyping" and "the other." Hollywood has produced representation policies aimed at ruling and exploiting people rather than embracing different cultures amicably. By including thematic issues such as human rights violations, colonial fantasy, economic colonization, and injustice conditions, a relationship was established between political and visual regimes, and national identity was built. In this regard; the movies *The Greaser's Gauntlet* (1908), *The Girl and Greaser* (1913), *Broncho Billy and the Grease* (1914), *Guns and Greaser* (1918) tell the stories of discriminated Mexicans. In these films, Mexican characters are men with mustaches wearing wide fedora hats, short jackets, and embroidered pants. These men create

themselves through acts of violence, namely robbery, assault, kidnapping, and killing (Pettit 1980, 130). America's exploitation of the Mexicans continues until the production of *ranchoras, revenchas,* and comedies in the sound film era (Higginbotham 2005, 279).

Mexican cinema, which uses classic genre features and a Hollywood aesthetic with a star system, produced stories aimed at national culture. With economic resources, technical facilities, and a network of film production and distribution, it has become a very important industry for Latin American society. On the other hand, in the narratives of the movies of Luis Valdez such as *I am Joaquín* (1969), *Alambrista* (1977), *La Bamba* (1987), *Born in East L.A* (1987), *El Norte*, (1984), *The Ballad of Gregorio Cortez* (1983), *Mi Familia/My Family* (1994), *Lone Star* (1996), and *La Misma Luna* (2007) problems related to intercourse, cultural hybridity, and cultural identity, together with racist and ethnocentric exclusion effects, have been symbolically produced without slowing down (Heide 2013, 95). Andrew Wood states that although these productions have decreased, similar effects can be seen in recent films. Wood also states that in the films the *Mexican (Gore Verbinski, 2001)* and *Traffic (Steven Soderbergh, 2000)*, the representation continued in a structure that produces old clichés in the form of North American tourists and Mexican parody. According to Wood, an exotic connection is created between this country, which has been represented as the source of corruption from the past, and the audience. Wood states that with this Mexican portrayal, the views of the American audience are reinforced and the Mexican reality is recreated on the movie plane (Wood 2001, 756–760). At this point, one of the most distinctive features of American cultural imperialism can be sought in the relationship between Hollywood cinema and the "other" phenomenon created by it. Since the World War I, American-based cinema, which has imposed its superiority in the film industry on other countries with its film genre, style, and representation policies, had to look warmly at the transformation of genres and the intersection of global and local. Walter Mignolo sees this intersection area as a political message created within the parameters and logic of the global economy and the free global capital (Mignolo 2001, 157). However, in addition to the free global capital parameters, the effects of digitalization, the fluid nature of identities, the symbolic meaning of borders, and the disappearance of the time-space perception and postmodernism have been quite evident in the realization of this change.

David Harvey defines postmodernism in terms of time and space compression. Geographical mobility that develops with digital networks destroys the phenomenon of cultural identity. Global consumption culture eliminates borders and enables a cosmopolitan or hybrid political structure to become functional. Today cinema positions cultural identities that will be approved or contested by different representation policies within or outside the nation.

Cinema associates the relationship between controlled and protected boundaries in its narratives with the contexts in which the protagonist is excluded or accepted by society. In this way, films that focus on conditions of difference, otherness, and injustice using local and regional images offer a perspective on cultural contrasts or mergers. Especially in Hollywood cinema, transnational production networks diversify within the framework of the production, distribution, and display conditions for these images. In addition to the increase in Mexican films, the increase in the number of Mexican directors—del Toro, Cuarón, and Iñárritu—working in the United States, dominated by global culture, is also noteworthy. The success of Latin American and Mexican films in the United States is associated with their use of a transnational movie language that reflects regional and national experiences of postmodernity and neoliberal globalization (Smith 2003, 269). Hollywood's transnational language of cinema is undoubtedly directly linked to the process of using global resources in filmmaking as expressed by David Denby and not being able to afford to offend other groups of the worldwide audience. Denby states that Hollywood's desire to be profit-oriented creates a holding aesthetic, forming narratives that stand out from the strong character and narrative structure every day (Denby 2012). Hollywood cinema, which Denby associates with the desire to be profit-oriented, on the one hand, creates repetitive narratives, and on the other hand, replaces the exotic bond it has established with the audience through the representation of the "other" or "stranger" so far with cultural mosaic. Solid and rigid stereotyping gave way to hybrid characters. On the other hand, criticizing this hybridization structure, John Waldron attributed the loss of the cultural texture that directors should have in their films to the pressure caused by the impact of globalization and NAFTA.

Waldron says: "[. . .] recent directors like del Toro, Cuarón, and Iñárritu, seem to lose more of their own unique voice as they make the move from Mexico to Hollywood, from the periphery to the center" (Waldron 2004, 13).

Considering the evaluations of both Smith and Waldron, it can be said that Iñárritu presented transnational cinema examples and used them by combining national cinema and global cinema aesthetics. The director created the mosaic structure expressed by Yun-Hua Chen, especially with the techniques such as close up, extreme long angle, continuous narration, and long-shot/plan sequence that make up his cinematography. Chen defined Iñárritu as a mosaic auteur in his work titled "*Mosaic Space and Mosaic Auteurs: On the Cinema of Alejandro González Iñárritu, Atom Egoyan, Hou Hsiao-Hsien and Michael Haneke*" Chen restricted the definition of auteur to mosaic territory and mosaic space. According to him, various geographical and cultural configurations of the mosaic are used. These configurations become mosaic with the collision of local and global. In this case, Iñárritu has enabled the Mexican market to be redefined with the identity structures that it has formed

by feeding on a multicultural source, and by using the international film production network, he had the opportunity to move across the continents in the global market (Chen 2016, 51).

Chen states that Iñárritu's broad socioeconomic, geopolitical, and contemporary space use, especially in *Amores Perros*, *21 Grams* and *Babel*, provided a very broad argument for determining this mosaic structure (Chen 2016, 51).

Yun-Hua Chen discusses Iñárritu's *21 Grams* (the USA, 2003), *Amores Perros* (Mexico, 2000) and *Babel* (France/USA/Mexico, 2006), in which she demonstrates the idea of "horizontal mosaic . . . which compiles contemporary spaces from a wide socioeconomic and geopolitical range" (Chen 2016, 51). In other words, the horizontal mosaic is focused on juxtaposing narrative spaces, allowing closer examination of relations between the local and the global. Particular attention is given to the way in which various, initially unrelated narrative threads come together, smoothing the striated spheres and transforming them, thus allowing the characters to "transcend the boundaries of mosaic pieces" (Chen 2016, 84). In this way, Chen validates Iñárritu as a mosaic auteur and his works as mosaic filmmaking, exposing connections between the transnational contents of the narratives and the transnational context of the films' production.

Looking at the venues used in Iñárritu's films within the framework of Chen's statements, it is seen that Mexico (Mexico City, Tijuana), United States (New York, Manhattan, Broadway, North Dakota), Spain, Japan, and Morocco have been used. Considering the linguistic diversity, it can be said that French, Japanese, Russian, Arabic, Berber, and Pavni, and especially Spanish and English were used.[2] The use of different settings, myths, stories of multiple characters, and language in films can be considered as a metaphorical expression of the multicultural global world. Referring to different components in his narratives, the director presents to the audience the practices of people who have different characteristics but are surrounded by noncommunication in the same culture. The director conveys the miscommunication phenomenon in the subtext of each film by using these multicultural codes as a reference.

CINEMATOGRAPHIC TRACES OF TRANSNATIONAL CODES: EL HOLLYWOOD CINEMA

When we look at the studies on Iñárritu, del Toro, and Cuarón (Three Amigos) so far, it is seen that different evaluations have been made regarding the Mexican New Wave, which is used to express the rebirth of Mexican cinema, such as transnational cinema or Mexican cinema in its golden age. Most of these reviews focus on a new cinematographic language

departing from Hollywood cinema, or the notion that Mexico has taken over Hollywood. However, when interpreting Iñárritu's cinematography, the main idea to focus on is whether he created a cinematic language that combines his own local cultural values using Hollywood aesthetics. Because Iñárritu's transnational cinema language created a structure that can be named as "El Hollywood." In this section where Iñárritu's intersecting and differentiating aspects with Hollywood aesthetics will be discussed, it may be meaningful to start with expressing what is meant by transnational cinema.

Transnationalism, which consists of the intersection of global and local, refers to the global forces that connect international institutions and people, according to Ezra and Rowden (Ezra and Rowden 2006, 1). The ideas or products produced, introduced, and circulated by geographical, cultural, and economic boundaries are permeable. Transnational cinema, where this permeability becomes visible, affects global economies, audience mindfulness, and cinema literacy. Instead of using homogenizing myths of national identity, transnational cinema enables them to dissolve in cultural diversity and acquire a mosaic appearance. Transnational cinema, which can be considered as an alternative to the duality of national cinema and Hollywood hegemony, can be said to heterogenize the representation policies in cinema by making the identity phenomenon stateless.

Deborah Shaw and Amy Sara Carroll on the other hand emphasize the difficulty of defining transnational and transnational cinema. Shaw and Carroll point out that an economic-political relationship exists between the growth of international co-productions and transnational aesthetics (Shaw 2003; Carroll 2012). The authors state that there is an inseparable link between the aesthetics formed after NAFTA and profit-oriented cinema just like Denby's point of view in order to define transnationalism regardless of geography. Mexico's indigenous film industry has entered a new era, especially in the late 2000s, with government incentives, educational centers, and private investments becoming easily accessible. However, it is not enough to explain this new period only within the framework of fast and convenient access to economic resources. The artistic background and different thematic elements of the films, which are formed independent of the classical narrative structure, are also effective in gaining a transnational identity. Unlike Carroll; Shaw focuses on Iñárritu's cinematography as well as production contexts and market access. According to Shaw, Iñárritu was separated from other Mexican directors by using "an international film language," and he created a universal form with local content using national allegories (Shaw 2003, 180). Juan Poblete names Iñárritu cinema as the MTV style in which a complex narrative style is adopted. Stating that Hollywood cinema, a global ally of Latin American cinema, uses postmodern ways of seeing and visual construction techniques, Poblete says that the Mexican narrative, which is fed by national

sensitivity and local cultural values, is the new populist language of the film industry and provides a path to reach international audiences (Poblete 2004, 221–223).

If we continue from the framework that Poblete and Shaw define as an international film language; What are the intersections and divergences between Iñárritu cinema and Hollywood cinema? What is the main feature that makes this cinema transnational? It may make sense to find answers to these questions.

Classic Hollywood cinema has a character-centered structure. In this structure, which is based on the identification of the audience, the character has a journey to complete. Looking at the general of Iñárritu cinema, it is seen that two different character structures were used in two different periods. The director preferred narrative heterogeneity in which several stories are combined in the same narrative series and the use of multiple characters close to the collective protagonist or anti-protagonist in the films *Amores Perros, 21 Grams, Babel (The Trilogy of Life)*, which can be called the first period. Here, the audience identifies with everyone because there are no heroes or enemies. When looking at the cinematographic structure of *Amores Perros*, it is seen that the nonlinear postmodern narrative techniques used in *Pulp Fiction (Quentin Tarantino, 1994)* and *Short Cuts (Robert Altman, 1993)* were used. In this narrative structure, different perspectives are combined with music and dialogue, enabling all three heroes to come into contact with each other during repeated collision moments in the car accident (Heide 2013, 98). In the film, which tells the stories of Octavio, Valeria, Daniel El Chivo, and focuses on different social classes and their living spaces, the United States is not geography to choose for living. The car accident metaphor is used to dramatize the birth of class conflict in cities where global relations are woven.

The director took one step closer to Hollywood aesthetics in the language of transnational cinema by focusing on the single hero and his inner turmoil in the films Biutiful, Birdman, and Revenant, which can be called the second period. In Iñárritu movies, class and cultural differences for the characters are most visible in the context of the economic, physical, psychological, and sexual violence themes. In films, violence is used on two levels, basic events involving the character's actions or side events. The element of violence that is committed at these two levels can be interpreted as the traces of the director's "cultural pessimism" point of view. In line with these traces, although Iñárritu creates his film style over a "social-realistic" structure, the characters in his films cannot be connected to each other except for their actions due to the class and cultural differences they have (Borden et al. 2011, 430). In other words, the actions of the characters do not produce the expected results, but they are chaotically linked in unpredictable ways. This causes a chain of events to occur and the characters to be positioned within this chain. Different

stories that seem independent from each other in the films are tightly handled at the action level. On the other hand, to put it apart from an orientalist point of view, Iñárritu's relationship with "violence" also expresses the bond he has established with his own cultural dynamics, although he benefits from Hollywood aesthetics. The link mentioned here is completely different from the conceptualization of accented cinema concerning Hamid Naficy. Naficy states that return to home/homeland or cultural return and travel or relocation always go hand in hand. According to him, the relationship established with home and motherland is an imaginary relationship that is always romanticized. There is a great connection with nostalgia or loss beyond national ties on this journey where the destination is unknown (Naficy 2001, 229). However, Iñárritu did not establish the concept of transnational cinema through the phenomenon of violence. But he provided a quality that would reverse the phenomenon of violence produced by Hollywood domination until now. In the cultural structure of Latin America, where political transformations are experienced, violence is an ideological phenomenon that is at least as intensely observed as social instability, guilt, and identity crisis. These phenomena, which form the cultural map of Mexico at a national and transnational scale, are used as new ways of establishing relations with global markets. Unlike Hollywood cinema using Mexico or Latin America as a commodity, new stories have been constructed outside of the reductionist narrative of the United Status with the allegories used for local culture. At this point, the director, who bent the Hollywood dream with the phenomenon of violence, created a perspective that he associates with the phenomenon of violence and death in his movies composed of transnational image repertoires. It can even be said that this point of view was reproduced with the killers, murdered, wounded, funerals, and types of violence in his movies, which he associated with the festival alternative to Halloween[3] named as the Day of the Dead (*Dia de Los Muertos*).[4]

When we look at the relationship of films with Mexican culture, it can be said that it is not a coincidence that they refer to Mexican religious icons (*The Virgin of Guadalupe*) and use symbolic expressions for the Mexican diaspora (Tijuana). This structure, which constitutes the intertextual feature of the film, makes the narrative multilayered and at the same time allows the use of transnational image structure. It can be stated that a similar structure in Iñárritu movies was realized concerning myths. With this intertextual feature, movies differ from the classic narrative structure of Hollywood cinema but at the same time approach this cinema by including the surreal image repertoire of Hollywood cinema in their narratives. In movies like *Amores Perros (Abel and Cain, Achilles, Icarus), 21 Grams (Abel and Cain, Achilles), Babel (Abel and Cain), Biutiful (Abel and Cain), Birdman (Icarus), and The Revenant (Achilles)*, Iñárritu stratifies the narrative structure by associating with the

mythical structure. However, in Hollywood cinema, the classical narrative structure is formed by Vogler's *Hero's Journey* stages, and these stages do not include intertextual references. In the classic narrative structure where the hero's journey does not have mythological traces, the characters have a certain motivation, and the journey/story/narrative consisting of introduction, development, and conclusion parts finish with a closed-end. However, it can be said that an open-ended structure is used in Iñárritu's films, especially in *Amores Perros*, *21 Grams*, and *Babel*, while on the other hand, in his other films, a double meaning is created in the mind of the audience with metaphorical images. Again, in the context of *Hero's Journey*, the loss of limbs of the characters in Iñárritu movies—*Amores Perros* (the amputation of Valeria's foot), *Babel* (the gangrene of Susan Jones' arm), *Biutiful* (Uxbal's being prostate cancer), *Birdman* (Riggan Thomson's being shot in the nose), *The Revenant* (Hugh Glass's broken foot and injured body); it can be expressed the power structure was destroyed and psychoanalytic references were made with the metaphor of castration, thus breaking Hollywood's masculine, white, heterosexual perspective. A similar breakdown is achieved with the strong female character in the narratives, although Iñárritu's movies are male-hero-oriented. Unlike the classic Hollywood narrative, the female characters in these films are not dependent and powerless. According to the developmental nature of the stories, even if women portray the bottom-hitting character—*Amores Perros* (Valeria and Sasana), *21 Grams* (Cristina William), *Babel* (Susan Jones), *Birdman* (Sylvia and Samantha), *The Revenant* (Hugh Glass's wife)—they never cease to fight and resist. Even in secondary roles, this structure shows that the director is separated from the conservative Hollywood narrative in a gender context.

Schneider also focuses on the narrative structure while evaluating Iñárritu's relationship with Hollywood cinema. According to him, the similarities between *Batman* and *Birdman* are inevitable. Schneider primarily emphasizes that Michael Keaton's character in the movie *Birdman*, who played in the movies *Batman* (1989) and *Batman Returns* (1992), is parallel to the character structure in other films. Schneider attributes this to Hollywood's love of comebacks (Schneider 2015, 950). Based on Schneider's descriptions, it can be said that Iñárritu refers to both the Batman movie and the Marvel Universe by associating the characters in a way.

Evaluating the reflections of the transnational language in the films, Claudia Schaefer evaluates the structures that will reveal the emotions. Schaefer talks about the traces of the sensory extremism principle of Hollywood aesthetics in Iñárritu's film language. It emphasizes that pathos, which will especially reveal the melodramatic effect, is presented to the audience with the actions of the character. According to Schaefer, Hollywood uses the principles of emotion-based extremes such as nausea,

sweating, tremors, and flying in horror, porn, and action genres, allowing the audience to undergo an emotional influence (Schaefer 2003, 85). Thus, the audience gets caught up in the chain of events surrounded by emotional strategies rather than textual strategies. A similar practice is applied in the scenes of a car chase and drug use in *Amores Perros*, *21 Gram*, and *Babel*, which Iñárritu created with fragmented and parallel narration. With the technique applied in these scenes, an intensity of passion, loss, and compassion is provided to the audience.

Iñárritu, who produced two different transnational cinematographic languages in two different periods, does not place identity and cultural representations in a hegemonic center. He enables the visibility of transnational images that are suppressed with a polyphonic and multi-centered narrative language. He reconstructs the experiences of individuals who have been categorized as Third World citizens to date using Hollywood aesthetics.

CONCLUSION

Cinema has created a universe where globalization and common meanings and the imaginary world intersect. Transnational economic connections and colonial fantasies have been replaced by the construction of hybrid cultural structures. National identities have gained a flexible quality and turned into a hybrid form. Even though extreme racist and conservative political discourses (Trump's Mexican wall discourse) from time to time have a concreting effect, this concreting effect has been replaced by evaporation and a fluid-structure within the conjectural structure. Cinema has been influenced by the intersection of legal and cultural boundaries covered by all these political paradigms. The story, content, and representation structure have gained a cosmopolitan character. The slippery capital structure, cultural globalization, the increase of Mexican films in the US and European markets, and the inclusion of Mexican directors in the Hollywood industry have been very effective in redefining the rules of the dominant Hollywood cinema. With the cyclical effect created by these different phenomena, Hollywood cinema has accelerated the production of transnational images. Identities in films were not formed by ethnic hierarchy. In other words, the ethnic background of identities has not been brought to the attention of the audience anymore. Now we can talk about a double-sided interaction and transformation. Hollywood has increased the number of hybrid narratives with the variety of images of directors from different cultures. Thus, Hollywood's national identity has been moved to a transnational dimension. The approach of the Academy Awards, which many authors considered as national cinema awards, to the transnational cinema language has also been effective in this change.

Alejandro González Iñárritu, one of the Mexican directors who quickly climbed his name in American popular culture, won the Academy Award for Best Director, Academy Award for Best Film, Academy Award for Best Original Screenplay (popularly known as the Oscar award), Critics Week Grand Prize, Best Director Award and Ecumenical Jury Prize at the Cannes Film Festival and reached audiences (arthouse and national box office) that could be positioned differently from each other and conveyed the message of local and global cultural mediation. However, the point that should not be ignored is that the director has received academy awards with his films *Birdman* and *The Revenant*, which belong to his second period in which he created a transnational cinema language using Hollywood aesthetics, on the other hand, he received the Cannes awards with his first-period movies *Amores Perros* and *Babel*. Hollywood has once again revealed its dominant ideology by giving the Oscar it organized to reward its national cinema to a transnational cinema (El Hollywood) movie (s).

On the other hand, the traces of the transnational language that Iñárritu emphasizes in his cinematography can be sought in his communication with different cultural identities and geographies and transferring his own experiences for a long time. The director presents the different types of migration such as refugee and asylum movements, the economic, political, sociocultural, and demographic structure of migration with a perspective in which people are at the center. At the same time, while colonial cultures and hybrid or immigrant identities gain visibility in the director's films, it is seen that the standardized representation and meaning forms of the classical narrative structure have gained a new quality. Mediating between the culture left behind and the host culture, these stories create the dream that there can be an identity structure independent of contradictions. The director, who reveals the circulation of universal cultural identities in the world through cinematographic representation mechanisms, depicts how different identities are subjected to injustice and illegal events by colonialist countries. In other words, the director does not position the polyphonic identities he incorporates into the film narrative in a hierarchical structure, allowing boundaries to disappear before the eyes of the audience. At this point, known and visible facts in social life are reinterpreted with a transnational perspective in Iñárritu's films. The director, by associating the elements of his own culture with Hollywood aesthetics, informed the audience about the representation models of the masses that have been positioned as "the other" until today and encouraged them to think, evaluate and analyze these representation models. On the other hand, contrary to Hollywood ideology, the director criticizes the globalized capitalist culture in his films, as stated by Smith (Smith 2003, 279). He questions cooperation with unfair and repressive national and global structures in the capitalist economy and discusses

whether cultures/identities can resist the capitalist economy. As a result, it can be expressed that, as much as Iñárritu has transformed Hollywood cinema, the Hollywood industry was also changed by being fed by many different phenomena.

NOTES

1. In 2017, at the request of Donald Trump, the North American Free Trade Agreement began to be renegotiated, and a new agreement called the USA-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) was signed between the three countries after hard negotiations that lasted about 1.5 years. This new agreement is defined as NAFTA 2.0.

2. Information about movie venues and language was obtained using IMDB data.

3. Halloween is a celebration of Pagan and Christian origin. The night of October 31 is a holiday that expresses the practice of collecting candy and money by children wearing scary clothes.

4. Mexican Day of the Dead is based on Mayan culture 3,000 years ago. It is believed that the spirits of the adults come to visit during this holiday, which covers the dates between October 31 and November 2. Traditional costumes, music, dance, parades, and remembrance of the dead are held at the altars.

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