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MEMORY AND HISTORY UNCHAINED: NARRATION STRATEGIES IN *INGLOURIOUS BASTERDS* (2009) AND *DJANGO UNCHAINED* (2012)

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APPROVAL

This thesis entitled **MEMORY AND HISTORY UNCHAINED: NARRATION STRATEGIES IN *INGLOURIOUS BASTERDS* (2009) AND *DJANGO UNCHAINED* (2012)** submitted by **BARAN TEKAY,** in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of **Master of Arts in Cinema and Television** is approved by

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Baran Tekay

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To my beloved partner and family

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MEMORY AND HISTORY UNCHAINED: NARRATION STRATEGIES IN
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ABSTRACT

In this thesis study, Tarantino's two films, *Inglourious Basterds* (2009) and *Django Unchained* (2012), were analyzed in terms of narration strategies. These films, which could be described as Historiographic Metafiction shaped by postmodern perspective, stand out as examples to distinctive storytelling frequently employed by Tarantino. Narratives in these films bend the social traumas in cultural memories and the narratives found in history. In this study, these films, in which Jews capture and kill Adolf Hitler in 1940s, a black hero rides a horse and takes revenge on white slave owners in 1860s, were subject to a film analysis on the use of memory, space and characterization. The current study on these two films, which challenge audience's knowledge of history and ways of seeing it, has demonstrated that Tarantino's films are not just pastiches where the director arbitrarily collaged the concepts, events and motifs selected from written and cinematic history. On the contrary, they are metafictions which first expose the conventional ways of knowing and seeing, and then create an alternative to these forms of narrative. However, these metafictions are not merely "unreal". Instead, memory and history can function as instruments to reshape the present, freed from simply being a burden of the past on the present.

Keywords: Memory, History, Director's, History, Quentin Tarantino, Alternative History, Postmodernism, Historiographic Metafiction.

ZİNCİRSİZ BELLEK VE TARİH: SOYSUZLAR ÇETESİ (2009) VE ZİNCİRSİZ (2012)'DE ANLATIM STRATEJİLERİ

ÖZET

Bu çalışmada Tarantino'nun son 10 senede çekilen ve hem seyirciden hem de eleştirmenlerden yoğun ilgi gören iki filmi *Soysuzlar Çetesi* (2009) ve *Zincirsiz* (2012) anlatım stratejileri üzerinden analiz edilmiştir. Post-modern bir anlayışla şekillenen birer Tarihyazımsal Üstkurmaca olarak tanımlanabilecek bu filmler Tarantino'nun sıkça uyguladığı bir hikâye anlatımı ile öne çıkmaktadır. Bu filmlerdeki anlatılar, toplumsal ve kültürel hafızalarda yer eden toplumsal travmaları ve resmi tarih anlatısını bükmektedirler. Bu çalışmada 1940'larda Yahudiler'in Adolf Hitler'i ve Nazileri bir odaya kapatıp öldürdüğü, 1860'larda Siyahi bir kahramanın at üzerinde gezip köle sahibi beyazları kovaladığı ve intikam aldığı bu filmler görsel hafıza, mekân ve karakter tasviri üzerinden bir film analizine tabi tutulmuştur. Seyircinin tarih bilgisine ve görme biçimlerine aykırı olan bu filmler üzerine yapılan bu çalışma göstermiştir ki, Tarantino'nun filmleri yönetmenin yazılı ve görsel tarihten seçtiği kavram, olay ve motifleri rastgele kolajladığı basit pastişler değillerdir. Aksine, yerleşik bilme ve görme biçimlerini önce ifşa eden ve daha sonra da bu anlatı biçimlerinin alternatiflerini gösteren üstkurmacalardır. Fakat bu üstkurmacalar basitçe "gerçek dışı" değildir. Bu filmlerde görüldüğü üzere hafıza ve tarih, sadece geçmişin bugün üzerindeki yükü olmaktan çıkarak, bugünün yeniden şekillenmesinde bir araç olarak işlevlenebilir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Hafıza, Tarih, Yönetmenin Tarihi, Quentin Tarantino, Alternatif Tarih, Modernizm, Postmodernizm, Tarihyazımsal Üstkurmaca.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Films interact with cultural memory, make use of history and at the same time bring different perspectives to these concepts, thus they emerge as an important academic field of study. In the literature, many "historical" films, such as those directed by Steven Spielberg and Oliver Stone, have been subjected to analysis in various studies on the traumatic past and the issues in its representation (Barkan 1994; Burgoyne 2018; Kürten 2016; Lanzman 1994; Toplin 2003). Quentin Tarantino, on the other hand, offers a perspective that can take the discussions to the next level. The alternative storytelling that "rewrite the historical reality", which this study attempts to analyze, can enrich the literature regarding the relationship between cinema, memory and history within the framework of "authenticity" and "representation".

There are certain qualities that separate memory and history. For example, as David Blight (2002) states, memory is gained, and history is interpreted. What is meant here is that memory is a mental effort that belongs to individuals and communities. Since memory is a mental effort, it can change and transform, and it depends on the feelings and ideologies of the people and groups that embody it. History, on the other hand, aims at reaching accurate information about the past; its purpose is to be objective, to refer to the evidence and to be universal (Blight 2002).

However, differences between both memory and history are more complicated and subtle than it was described in simple terms above. Since modernist belief of reaching absolute truths and universal truths has lost its validity (Bauman 1997), the objective reality that the historians are trying to achieve is paradoxically an unattainable goal. Either through memory or history, it is never possible to experience the past fully. As Robert A. Rosenstone (1988) states, all the information and documents about the past cannot be accessed, therefore historians must construct their own narratives around the materials they have. In addition, scholars like Linda Hutcheon (1988) claimed that the modern science of history is also composed of ideological and fictional texts, and therefore they showed that a postmodern understanding is necessary to talk about the

past. According to her, although it is impossible to reach an authentic past, it is still possible to fictionalize it through parody and make it a part of the present, and therefore reinterpret it. Thomas Austin (2014, 256-266) believes that the past is a function of text that is constructed over time, so it does not have an intrinsic meaning or value. Thus, it is possible to establish alternative histories and realities.

Cinema has the power to enrich these discussions as a means of telling stories about the past, representing the past, and thus recreating the past in the present. It can be said that cinema is both history and memory. Firstly, moving images can be seen as historical documents that can record places, people, and other things, and therefore can be revisited in the future to find signs of the reality of the period in which they were recorded. Secondly, due to the psychological power of cinema, moving images become a part of the mentality and temporal reality of the audience watching it. Therefore, movies have the power to activate the memories of the audience and/or to constitute their cultural memories (Elsaesser 2014, 54-86). As Alison Landsberg (2004) proposes, cinema has the power to create a prosthetic memory that is formed not by experience but by watching films.

Tarantino, in his films between 2009-2019, such as *Inglourious Basterds* (2009), *Django Unchained* (2012), *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood* (2019) refers to historical periods in the social memory but describes these periods with alternative endings and therefore changes the history. In these films, Tarantino places historical-traumatic periods, events and concepts such as World War II, the Nazis, the Holocaust, the American Civil War, slavery, Tate–LaBianca murder at the center of his narrative. However, these films do not only re-imagine these historical issues, but also change the endings known to viewers. For example, Jews kill Adolf Hitler, Blacks kill slave-owning Whites, members of the Manson family are murdered instead of Sharon Tate and her friends. Therefore, his films cannot simply be handled as historical films. They open up a discussion regarding to what extent how films represent the past and whether their way of representation can be accurate or ethical. Moreover, it can even be stated that these films directly point to this dilemma: whether films are capable and even responsible of knowing and representing the past or instead they expose the constructed structure of history and memory. Therefore, this study shows that knowing the past is

not independent from reminiscer's (both the filmmakers and the audience) ideology and today's perspective. And in order to build a new future, the ways to remember can be changed, especially by films.

Through his films, Tarantino builds his own history about topics selected from the social and cultural memory. Although some scholars mention that most of his films are postmodern pastiches of which material the director randomly chooses from other films and genres, and nonsensically assembles them (Büyükdüvenci and Öztürk 2014), this study asserts that these films are historiographic metafictions which aims at establishing a novel way of remembering the past and redefining the cultural memory from today's perspective by bringing different narratives together. Historiographic metafiction, a term introduced by Hutcheon (1988), is essentially a postmodern concept as it is based on intertextuality, parody, reconstructing and redefining history and fiction.

David Roche (2018) used the concepts of intertextuality, reflexivity and Hutcheon's historical metafiction while analyzing some of Tarantino's films, and in this thesis same concepts are accompanied with additional themes such as memory and history to analyze *Inglourious Basterds* (2009) and *Django Unchained* (2012). To understand what the films are trying to achieve by reworking on the historical subjects that have been used many times in the history of cinema, it is important to comprehend the postmodern perspective and to reveal its both contrasts and similarities with modern understanding of history that Hutcheon referred to when she coined the term historiographic metafiction. Therefore, to analyze how *Inglourious Basterds* (2009) and *Django Unchained* (2012) refer to history, how the films play with cinematic memory, and how they can be interpreted in a postmodern perspective, firstly basic terminology such as modernism, postmodernism, memory, history, pastiche, and metafiction is presented.

Once Upon a Time in Hollywood (2019) has been excluded from the scope of this study, as the focus here is on reshaping collective social traumas such as World War 2, the Holocaust, slavery, and the American Civil War, which have been represented many times in the history of cinema. Although *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood* includes actual people such as Sharon Tate, Roman Polanski, Bruce Lee, and an actual event, the

Tate–LaBianca murders by the Manson Family, the film does not construct its entire narrative on these characters and events. In addition, although the event (Tate–LaBianca murders) is traumatic for a specific group, it cannot be considered as a collective trauma that has been represented many times and that has created its own conventions throughout the history of cinema.

After reviewing the literature about related topics such as memory, historiographic metafictions, history, conventions of Holocaust films and westerns, selected scenes from *Inglourious Basterds* and *Django Unchained* are analyzed in terms of narration strategies in the light of concepts such as "cinematic memory" and "historiographic metafictions" and are interpreted accordingly. Since Tarantino is a director who closely relates to the history of cinema through the references he uses in his films, his films can be considered as rich sources to discuss the relationship between cinema, memory, and history.

1.1   Theoretical Overview: Modernism, Postmodernism and Linda Hutcheon's Historiographic Metafictions

In modernist perspective, it is believed that time flows linearly from the past to the present and the future (Bauman 1997). In this linear time, progress is inevitable, necessary and "new is good". In fact, Bauman claimed that modernity has always been characterized by this "dual" nature. According to him, modern society needs order: the world must be disciplined and categorized to make sense of it. On the other hand, modernism also needs the destruction of tradition and the old, and it requires the creation of the new, the better. However, possibilities are limited and the constant need for "progress" causes dead ends. At this point, postmodernity emerges out of the failure to rationalize the world and the deadlocks of continuous change. In the postmodern view, time is fluid, and movements are random. Liquid modernity is the term used by Zygmunt Bauman (2007) to describe the new state of the world that is moving from "solid" modernity to post-modernity. According to him, postmodernity is not a definitive separation from the modernity, instead, it can be seen as the consequence of modernity. Bauman's vision of liquidity consists of short-term and fragmented projects

and situations. These fragmented situations require individuals to be flexible and adaptable. Therefore, people should be ready and willing to change tactics in a short time and be able to abandon their commitments at any moment. Social norms and institutions are no longer adequately solid, and thus they cannot act as reference point for human action and long-term life plans (Bauman 2007).

From a historical perspective, the destructions since the World Wars have affected the ideals of modernism. History and progress, the ideal of reaching the absolute truth, mobilization for a more developed and powerful society, the understanding of "new is good" have been questioned. This shift away from grand narratives and ultimate ideals is at the center of postmodern thought. Postmodern perspective proposes that the world is diverse, unstable and undetermined (Eagleton 1996). Therefore, the concepts and grand narratives of modernism such as enlightenment and progress have lost their validity.

Jean-François Lyotard (1984) criticizes metanarrative, a term introduced by modernism. Metanarratives are absolute, universal narratives that explain everything within a frame of a theory. In other words, metanarratives are global discourses, major philosophies of history and social theories that try to explain a society or history within the framework of reductive and generalizing theoretical principles. For example, the theory of continuous progress and development, the claim that history progresses with linear and unchanging principles from the past to the present, the claim that everything about social life and philosophical thoughts can be known and explained, and any form of expression that serves this claim could be referred as metanarrative. According to Lyotard (1984), the hopes of modernism are over, and it is no longer possible to sustain these metanarratives.

From this point of view, many of Tarantino's films can be seen as anti-metanarratives because of the unrelated historical objects and themes he brings together, the plot that seems to have no meaningful coherence at first glance, and the long and "irrelevant" dialogues that he frequently uses (Dowell and Fried 1995). It is possible to consider his films as fragmented narratives. However, do the fragmented narratives brought together have no meaning and so do they refer to no kind of reality? Or are they an inquiry for a

new language by breaking down the established narrative forms and dissolving them within themselves? In order to understand what Tarantino's films are about, it is essential to first recall the main discussions about the postmodern narrative.

Fredric Jameson (1985) considers postmodernism and its functions in the framework of "late capitalism". He associates modernism with the conceptions of self-identity, individuality, original vision, and postmodernism with pastiche and death of the subject.

In the early years of capitalism, while some new hegemonic social strata such as the bourgeois was emerging, individualism was prevalent as Jameson (1985) states. However, in a bureaucratic business world and in a population that grows every day, an individual subject no longer exists. According to him, contemporary artists cannot create new styles and worlds because everything which is new has already been created and all possibilities have been tested. In such a world, the artist has no choice but to imitate the style and worlds of past artists. Therefore, one of the most defining features of the postmodern period is the "pastiche" (Jameson 1985, 111-125).

Pastiche is an imitation of a unique style, but it implements its imitation without an impulse to satirize the original. Jameson (1985) uses the term "nostalgia film" when referring pastiches in cinema. For him, nostalgia films are about the past and that take place in the past, yet they do not represent the past. The purpose of these films is to encompass the distant past by creating a new discourse. Thus, the past is adapted, and the referenced past is removed from memory. Firstly, there are films such as *Chinatown* (Polanski 1974) and *American Graffiti* (Lucas 1973) which are about the past and set in the past. Secondly, there are films that are re-designed from the past examples such as *Star Wars* (Lucas 1977) or *Riders of the Lost Ark* (Spielberg 1981), and finally there are films that take place at present but recall the past such as *Body Heat (*Kasdan 1981*), Batman (*Burton 1989*) or *Miami Vice (*Yerkovich 1984).

Star Wars, for instance, recreates the experience of watching *Buck Rogers* (Beebe and Goodkind 1939) style science fiction series back in the 1930s and 1950s. It recreates the adventurous stories of heroes against aliens and monsters. *Star Wars* does not make fun of *Buck Rogers* by referring directly to it, because there is no need to communicate with

a dead TV-series. Nostalgia films seek to reinvent the experience but cannot achieve it. The audience of nostalgia films, spectators in the postmodern era, cannot focus on the present and so they are incapable of grasping the aesthetics of their current experience, because in the postmodern era, the individual does not exist, therefore the identification process has become impossible (Jameson 1985, 111-125).

Tarantino is a pioneer in using the motifs, images, or forms of not only American culture but the whole world in his narratives by melting these texts into a new form. For example, in *Kill Bill* (Tarantino 2003*),* Bruce Lee's yellow-black costume is worn by a Caucasian blonde woman: The Bride. The Bride, played by Uma Thurman, is a white American mother on one hand, and a martial artist raised at the shaolin temple, one of the leading motifs in Chinese culture, on the other hand. During The Bride's revenge arc, conventional western genre elements, and songs from Italian spaghetti westerns are used. This American heroine's revenge is taken with a Japanese samurai sword. If Tarantino's filmography is analyzed with the perspective of Jameson, such films of his as *Kill Bill* can be seen as nostalgia films where he emulates old eastern samurai films and westerns with revenge stories and so, he both renders the past meaningless and cannot capture his own temporality and cannot represent the lack of meaning of his era (Çolak 2022).

However, Linda Hutcheon's theories on parody and historiographic metafictions oppose Jameson's perspective. In her works that were first published between 1985-1990, Hutcheon (1988) claims that what the postmodern thinking teaches us is that both history and fiction are discourses. Both form their own realms of meaning to make sense of the past. In other words, meaning is not in the event and the things themselves, but in the discursive systems that make sense of past. It means that the historical cannot exist as a single and constant entity, as opposed to what Jameson (1985) claimed. In addition to that, the historical in postmodern sense does not only mean being attached to the past with a nostalgic feeling, but being able to look at the values, forms and ideas of the past from today's critical perspective (Hutcheon 1988).

As opposed to Jameson's (1985) view on pastiche and nostalgia film, Hutcheon (2000) embraces the terms parody and historiographic metafiction to further discuss the

postmodern attempt to rethink of the past. Parody is not used to refer to a ridiculous imitation of past works. Parody is a stance that makes critical distance possible. Paradoxically, it brings criticism by containing what it opposes to itself and making the dilemmas visible. It is significant to point out that both Hutcheon and Jameson believe that there is a critical stance in postmodern perspective. However, Jameson thinks that the subject is dead and the search for individual voice and style of the modernist art has come to an end, and therefore, he claims that postmodern understanding cannot experience its own temporality; it is an exact copy of a past, which no longer exists. However, according to Hutcheon (2000), far from dehistoricizing the present or imitating former artworks, postmodern perspective can rethink of history, make connection between past and present, and offer novel critical capacities to the medium. In another words, Hutcheon believes the subject is not dead; it is active and strives to make connections between past, present and the future.

Hutcheon (1988) also believes that vigorous studies by Marxists, feminists, gays, Blacks and ethnic theorists have shown that historiography and the act of knowing cannot be possible without resorting to a criticism of ideologies and institutions. For instance, semiotic studies showed that all signs change their meaning in time (MacCannell & MacCannell 1982). This "intellectual reconstruction" is the focus of a postmodern rethinking of the efforts regarding how we can and will acquire knowledge of the past. White (2002), for example, considers writing history as a highly literary endeavor. Michel Foucault's (1970) works demonstrate that power and knowledge are highly interdependent, and power relations redefine meanings. In other words, "social" is the field of ever-changing practices of power and resistance, and these discourses exist thanks to the institutions that regulate them. In addition, Jacques Derrida (2016) claims that meaning cannot arise without reference to other meanings. In the historicity of language, meaning constantly changes because signs always pass-through other contexts of meaning. Therefore, the past and the meaning are not merely there spontaneously, they are semioticized, coded, that is, interpreted. Hutcheon (1988) calls postmodern works such as fictions of Salman Rushdie or Ian Watson, or the films by Peter Greenaway "historiographic metafictions". Historiographic metafiction deliberately shows us that although events occurred in the past, we choose, narrate, and

reinterpret those events. And they question and exploit the historical reality or knowledge and show the relationship between writing history and fictionalization (Hutcheon 1988).

Historical metafiction is essentially a postmodern art technique, as it is based on playing games with text, parody, and reconstructing history through literature or giving meaning in a different way. Rather than seeing history as a "fixed" concept based on cause-effect and representational relations with a determinist approach, Hutcheon (1988) sees history as something that could be handled in various ways, depending on the field and situation. Historical metafiction aims to problematize the issues of historical representation by making it difficult to distinguish between historical fact and fiction. It questions whether history can claim any truth. Thus, it shows that both history and fiction produce discourses, structures, forms of interpretation and create their own truths (Hutcheon 1988).

According to Hutcheon (1988), postmodernism is fundamentally contradictory. Postmodern art uses parody by consciously using conventional forms and reproducing it, but also destabilizing and criticizing them. Postmodern art discusses concepts such as aesthetic originality and textual closure and makes the distinction between art and the real world visible. Therefore, postmodern art does not merely emulate what came before it, but also criticizes it by imitation.

In conclusion, postmodern art does not offer what Jameson (1985) desired: true historicity. Yet its deliberate refusal to do so is not due to naivety. What postmodernism does is to fully discuss our possibility of knowing the "ultimate objects" of the past. It realizes and relies on that the social, historical, and existential "reality" of the past creates a new discursive reality when used as the reference in art.

As an art form, films are also affected by this postmodern approach. In cinema, "pure" genres have begun to be replaced by "hybrid" genres, and textual structures in films have begun to be replaced by intertextuality (Koçak 2012, 65-86). Because of being famous for collaging different genres, concepts and themes together and his love of using intertextuality and making reference to popular culture, Tarantino's films can be

used to understand how films can deal with memory and history with postmodern understanding. And since his films have intertextual elements and use parody of specific genres, (Holocaust films and westerns) it is necessary to first understand the cultural memory created by the conventions of these genres through a review of the literature to comprehend the contrasts and similarities between Tarantino's film and the genre conventions that he refers to.

In the following chapters of the study, two of Tarantino's films: *Inglourious Basterds* and *Django Unchained* are analyzed in accordance with Hutcheon's framework. It is shown that these films are not pastiches with elements arbitrarily taken from cinematic memory or simple nostalgia for old films, but revolutionary parodies that propose arguments about memory and remembrance, history, historiography and storytelling.

When referring to knowing the past, two concepts stand out: "memory" and "history". As Pierre Nora (1989) mentions, memory is open to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting, to uncertainties and sudden resurrections, and therefore it is in constant transformation. Memory feeds on emotional, intertwined, and symbolic recollections; it is sensitive to any kind of transmission, censorship, and projection. History, on the other hand, is an effort to achieve objectivity and it claims to be the common property of public. However, in this study, the power of history in knowing the past is questioned and it has been understood that memory is not only an effort to remember the past, but also an effort to make sense of the present and the future.

Inglourious Basterds is analyzed in the second chapter as it is a film that plays with cultural memory and reshapes the meanings of traumatic images of the past. The Holocaust and the World War 2 appear as narratives that have been represented many times in the history of cinema and have created their own conventions with common narration strategies they use. These films have been watched by millions of people and have created a cultural memory. The important thing is that the cultural memory created by the films does not only belong to the actual community who have experienced the events but also belongs to any audience who has watched all these films regardless of whether they have experienced the event personally or not.

Django Unchained is analyzed in the third chapter, where the relationship between cinema and history is discussed. Discussions in the literature have revealed the similarities of history to fiction from a postmodern perspective. Both history and fiction are storytelling tools used to shape and edit various bits of incomplete information and documents about the past in order to constitute a narrative according to the ideology of the narrator. Therefore, they both are discursive practices. In this respect, historical film genres such as westerns have functioned as a historiographic act. Firstly, westerns visually and auditorily document people and places belonging to the geographies and countries in which they are produced. Secondly, westerns define social relations, determine the distinctions between white Americans and "others", define the geography as the battlefield of "cowboys", and explain the cause-and-effect relationships embedded in the events. *Django Unchained,* on the other hand, is a parody that criticizes this history by using the same methods differently. By comparison, although the Holocaust is not part of American history, it has become a part of American cultural memory through cinema (Mintz 2001, 3-35), yet the stories told in westerns are not only a part of American national memory, but also a part of American history. And the issues of race, freedom, justice, and civilization narrated in *Django Unchained* do not only document the historical past but also raise the current political and sociological agendas of today's. Therefore, it works as a film in which today's history is written.

2. CINEMATIC MEMORY

Postmodern perspective demonstrates the problematic comprehension of the past for us today. As stated above, for Hutcheon (1988), thinking of the past is not just an effort to understand it retrospectively, but also thinking critically and contextually. But this confrontation does not necessarily mean the denial of the past or believing its absence. The past really existed. Yet Hutcheon (1988) asks "How can we know the past or how can we think about it?"

First of all, it should be noted that this study is about cinema, and cinema is a form of art that is produced and consumed collectively, and the study of cultural memory is a place where the relationship between cinema and memory is most evident. As Thomas Elsaesser (2014, 56) puts forward even when it works with history, cinema is always memory, because every film trigger audience's recalling certain events and emotions collectively. Therefore, in the next part, the starting point is collective memory.

Collective memory was first proposed by Maurice Halbwachs (1992). It refers to the shared memory and knowledge of a social group. He argued that individuals situate themselves within a larger group, such as family, and then those larger groups position themselves within even larger communities, such as nations. Shared values pass on through generations and within each generation they are reconstructed. This process helps the members to form an identity and secure their sense of belonging. Monuments, parades or political speeches, or stories construct social frames and strengthen the collective memory.

A. Assman and J. Assman (2004) took these notions and further developed them: cultural memory. Cultural memory is a form of collective memory and similarly, it is shared and passed on among a certain number of people (A. Assman 2006, 210-24). It is mediated in texts, icons, dances, rituals, and performances of various kinds: "classical" or formalized language(s). Therefore, cultural memory is supported by institutions of learning, transmission, and interpretation; it is cultivated by scholars and

is summoned or celebrated on special occasions; it is formalized and stabilized by any form of material symbolization (J. Assman 2011, 15-27).

The concept of cultural memory reveals that societies build metaphors while interacting with objects, artifacts, anniversaries, holidays and symbols, and the contact between the reminiscer and the reminder creates and triggers collective memory. From this point of view, cinema emerges as a space that contributes cultural memory. The audio-visual language used in films is consumed collectively and this helps the reproduction of reality in cultural memory with the symbols it contains.

Another term, prosthetic memory, is a concept which was put forward by Landsberg (2004). This concept is particularly important in examining the ways in which different types of media contribute to society. Prosthetic memories are memories that do not directly come from a person's experience. When a person watches a movie or television show, for instance, they acquire a memory of that event without experiencing it. Celia Lury (1998) examines the special role which photography plays in prosthetic memories produced by mass culture. The media radically changes our idea of what counts as experience. To exemplify, everyone remembers September 11, 2001, but most of those who remember this day did not witness or experience it first-hand. Media enables people to have memories of events that are not of their own (Landsberg 1995, 175-189).

According to Elsaesser (2014, 56), cinema is always memory, because films are not only a documentation of events, but they also recall the events and resurface the discussions about those events. For example, especially when people talk about the Holocaust memory, they immediately talk about photographs, films and television programs about it. Moreover, people remember events most vividly when they are preserved in moving images and photographs. Therefore, it is hard to discuss a cultural memory which has not already been mediated by images. And those images circulate today at larger extent, in search engines and computers, and now they belong to everyone; they are easily and instantly recallable.

Thus, as studies on memory have shown, memory can be collective, and memory conveyed through visual elements such as cinema is at the center of knowing the

collective past. Memory is something that can be produced and reshaped, and so this diverse and unstable characteristic of the memory shows that modernist ideals for knowing the past is difficult to reach. When considered with the postmodern understanding, time really is not solid, but fluid. Moreover, as Hutcheon (1988) states, studies about the past are also ideological and open to critique.

Memory is an endless list of the things we may need to remember. However, only consented memories are transferred throughout generations. Memory is a different form of amnesia (Göç 2019, 135-150). And the problem of remembering and forgetting is an issue of power. Derrida (1995) compares memory to institutional archiving practices and mentions that archives determine the beginning or an ending of the selection process, and what gets stored and who gets access to it. It is the private enterprises and government administrations that decide what people remember. Therefore, archives are resources of political, social or cultural power mechanisms. If state-controlled institutions decide what to archive, these institutions also decide what to forget, because the essence of remembering is the art of controlled forgetting. According to Marita Sturken (2001) forgetting can be made possible through the absence of images which were not archived or were locked away. Many tragedies of the 20th century, one of them beingthe Holocaust, have been restaged and filmed several times. Nonetheless, not all of the disastrous events have such vast sources of archive. For example, as stated by Sturken (1997), it is very difficult to find images or artistic reproductions of the camps where Japanese-born American citizens were taken away after Pearl Harbor, which constitutes a standout exemplification of 'letting it be forgotten' through absence. In addition to that, forgetting can also be possible through the presence of images. A single powerful image can overshadow all the remaining images of a historical event. For example, the mushroom cloud formed after the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima is so iconic that the scenes after the destruction are less known or even invisible (Sturken 1997).

Cinema does not only illuminate the past with its repetitive stories and images, but it also masks the memory by not telling certain aspects of the past. The Holocaust serves as an example in that respect. Despite the fact that the majority of those who experienced it passed away, only a few of the survivors are still alive today and on-the-

site visual recording of what happened inside the camps are limited in number, there are lots of films which try to represent the Holocaust. Some of these films such as *Schindler's List* (Spielberg 1993) and *Son of Saul* (Nemes 2015) have been discussed for representing or not representing the Holocaust (Lanzmann 1994; Mintz 2001; Kürten 2016). In order to understand what kind of cultural memory Tarantino plays with in his film, *Inglourious Basterds*, it is necessary to understand how the cinematic memory of Holocaust has been shaped throughout the years.

2.1 Cinematic Memory of Holocaust

Eric Langenbacher (2003) distinguishes between several memory narratives in the history of the Holocaust: "German-centered," "pluralist" and "Holocaust-centered." In the period between 1945s and 1960s, the focus was on German suffering. This is followed by (or paralleled with) downplaying German-centered narrative and allowing plural memories of Nazi victims to appear from 1950s and 1970. And after 1970's, the Holocaust started to be addressed in the narratives. And since 1990s, the history of WWII and Germany have become almost synonymous with the Holocaust. As of 2002, however, German-centered approach has once again become prominent (Langenbacher 2003).

In addition to that, Elsaesser (2014, 54-86) marks an important milestone in terms of representing the Holocaust. From 1945 until the late 1960, two major trials were widely reported in German press: The Nuremberg Trials, 1945/46 and the Frankfurt Auschwitz Trials, 1963/65. Mass media both transmitted the trials and reshaped their meaning. There was a juridical witnessing approach: victims and perpetrators confronted each other in front of a judge. In the trials, some filmed materials (shot by American war photographers) were used and shown to judges, defendants, and lawyers. Those compilations constituted the basis of Holocaust film conventions: the piles of dead bodies, the weakened faces, their hollow eyes looking behind wired fences, and the decaying corpses. However, because those footages were from labor camps where political prisoners and forced laborers from occupied countries such as France were

kept, systematic extermination of the Jews was not the main narrative of the films or the main topic of the public debate.

Later, some feature films from Poland, partly shot in locations at Auschwitz, were made, notably *Ostatni Etap (The Last Stop* or *The Last Stage)* (Jakubowska 1947*).* However, this film was not widely screened in the West and not "rediscovered" until the early 1990s. *The Last Stop* was an influential prototype for the Holocaust film. The director worked with actors, some of which were former locals who just returned from the warzone, and he directed them to reenact the scenes. Almost all Holocaust film conventions can be seen in this film: the arrival of the train, the unloading of the wagons, glare of searchlights, mud, humiliation, and sadistic punishments. The scene of a train's arrival to the camp at night from *The Last Stop* can be seen in many feature films such as *The Pawnbroker* (Lumet 1964), *Sophie's Choice* (Pakula 1982) and *Schindler's List* (Spielberg 1994) and it is even cited in the documentary essay *Night and Fog* (Resnais 1955).

According to Elsaesser (2014, 54-86), another important trademark was the miniseries Holocaust (Chomsky 1978). It was viewed by 120 million people, and it has contributed to the American cultural memory about the Holocaust. The story has both fictional and historical figures as characters and this time the Holocaust was described as a Jewish event although before this production Jews were seen as only one of the victims of Nazis' war crimes against humanity (Elsaesser 2014). Moreover, narrating the whole story through the eyes of a family, so narrowing the scope of the Holocaust has become a convention of Holocaust narratives after this mini-series.

The bystander or (implicated) observer mode began to dominate spectatorship in the films of the 1970s and 80s. Now, scenes in the films depicted the lives of Jews among "ordinary Germans" in German cities. In fact, whether it was fiction or documentary, it was the first time the camera did not hesitate to enter the ghetto and concentration camps. Another difference in this mode was that the role of the spectator, not only as the voyeur, but as an imaginary participant. This participant was both inside and outside of the event, as if "looking at themselves as they are being looked at"". This perspective, which created the illusion of grasping what it means "to be there" yet also feeling

"safe", triggered a mix of nostalgia and sensuality, which was based on a heroic survival mode. This type of observer accounted for the third generation since 1945. They did not have a personal memory, because they were too young. However, they had been fed with the visual representations which had dominated the TV since mid-80s. *The Pianist* (Polanski 2002) can be an example for this mode because, the film does not perform the classic Hollywood voyeurism, but a somatic, traumatic, embodied feeling of "being there" (Elsaesser 2014, 84).

Before discussing how Tarantino makes references to Holocaust films with *Inglourious Basterds*, how he redefines the power relationship between perpetrators and victims in his film, and what visual references he uses to reshape the meaning of Holocaust which have been constructed throughout the history of Holocaust cinema, it is significant to understand the narration strategies used in *Schindler's List* (Spielberg 1993). Alan Mintz (2001, 125) called *Schindler's List (Spielberg 1993)* "an event". According to him, compared to other films and representations, *Schindler's List* has an enormous place in and impact on the Holocaust memory and debates. Even today, many people can recall the scenes from *The Schindler's List* when they think about the Holocaust. The strategies that director Steven Spielberg used to create a more "realistic" world while shooting and editing the film are remarkable in this respect.

According to Claude Lanzman (1994), Schindler's List is a problematic representation of the Holocaust because it tries to reconstruct the event and in order to reconstruct the reality of Holocaust, Spielberg refers to an existing footage or photography from camps. However, when it comes to photographs of the Holocaust, of the camps where millions of people died, questions arise, regarding whether these images are accurate and objective accounts of the war and can constitute evidence. In the case of *Schindler's List,* the most significant references that Spielberg used were the photographs and other visual proofs gathered in concentration camps, mostly by Nazi officers. According to Elsaesser (2014, 61), it should not be forgotten that, beyond the various ethical objections and religious prohibitions regarding the camp photos, they are also the product of a "propaganda war". These photos were probably taken by a German soldier, an SS, either as trophy or to document his success to his superior, glorifying Nazi achievements and victories (Elsaesser 2014, 62). Desperate, weak and exhausted people,

"herds", were crammed into tiny rooms or train carriages, body parts indistinguishable from a pile of meat are the most familiar images of these concentration camps. *Europa Europa* (Holland 1990), *Schindler's List* (Spielberg 1993), *Life is Beautiful* (Benigni 1997), *The Pianist* (Polanski 2002) are the most well-known examples of these. Although *Son of Saul* (Nemes 2015) is seen as an anti-*Schindler's List* by some critics (Kürten 2016), it used these images even if they are out of focus or seen in a very small part of the mise-en-scène. Or, although the director did not show the crowds waiting for death in the gas chambers, he did not hesitate to reimagine their voices.

Spielberg's choice of using black and white in *Schindler's List* was a successful strategy to match them with the camp photographs, which were rare and originally in black and white. Considering the rarity of the original images, it can be understood why the scenes from the film have been imprinted on the public memory, because *Schindler's List* looks like a restored print (Palowski 1998).

Furthermore, Spielberg shot the film at the authentic places in Poland. He built the camps exactly the "same", using the original photographs as reference. Almost all the extras who worked in the film were chosen from Polish natives. More importantly, for the main roles (such as Schindler and Goeth), he preferred European and Israeli actors who were not very famous at that time in Hollywood. These choices made by Spielberg, and letting public know about his choices led the re-enactment created by the film to be more successful (Palowski 1998).

Most importantly, the film's camera does not hesitate to enter into the places which has no witnesses. Although the point of view in the film is mostly motivated by the characters (especially Schindler), there are also some impossible points of view. For example, in the scene of Liquidation of the Ghetto, Schindler watches the scene panoramically. At the beginning, the point of view is motivated by Schindler's eye and the audience observes the crowd and chaos from top of a hill, but later the camera's eye goes down, looking at sights that neither Schindler nor anyone else can see, such as inside the buildings or even behind the walls. Later in the film, the camera does not hesitate to enter into the gas chamber or to show the attics where Jews are hiding from the Nazis. While the horror of the Holocaust has left very few living witnesses,

Spielberg takes this fear out of the realm of the imagination and turns it into a visual representation (Barkan 1994, 12-48). The director lets the audiences witness the experiences of the Holocaust victims, whose only evidence of their suffering is their disappearance. This witnessing effect created by the imagination of Spielberg, continues to be remembered by the masses today.

As mentioned in the first chapter, from a modernist perspective, the past appears as a definite, unchangeable, inflexible entity. Therefore, it is not surprising that the accuracy and consistency of its representation have constituted the Holocaust film genre. However, through a postmodern lens, it would not be surprising that the past can be reshaped as a part of our social consciousness. If time is not solid, it is inevitable that today's perspective will reshape the past. And cinema is not a tool that narrates the past as it is, but a tool that redefines it in the cultural memory.

Inglourious Basterds offers a perspective that can bring this debate to the next level. The alternative storytelling in this film can enrich the literature insisting on discussing the relationship between cinema and memory within the framework of "authenticity" and "representation". Therefore, *Inglourious Basterds* is a significant production with both its references to the Holocaust films and its propositions about the effect of this cinematic memory on the audience, cultural memory and alternative approaches to storytelling. Finally, I believe that, since Tarantino is a director who is in fond of working with the references to the history of cinema itself, his films are good examples to track the conventions of the genres.

2.2 The Bending of Holocaust Narrative: *Inglourious Basterds*

Inglourious Basterds is divided into five main chapters. Naming each part, thus every act in the film and making it visible on the screen could be read as an emphasis on the very constructedness of the film. In other words, the film reminds the audience of what they will soon experience as a set of events that have been categorized, named, and so most importantly constructed. In addition, the film will contain and highlight real people, places, and dates in each episode and intertwine them with fictional ones. In this way, the film, as a historical metafiction, will problematize the issues of representation

of the past by making it difficult to distinguish between fact and fiction. The audience will "witness the past" which they already know about from mostly other movies. In other words, the past is already a part of their cultural memory thanks to films. To understand how this contrast is established in the film, some scenes were chosen as examples and analyzed through narration strategies in the next part of the chapter.

Table 2. 1: Chapter Structure and the Plot of *Inglourious Basterds*

Chapter Titles / Timing	Events
Intro [0:00–2:05]	
Chapter One Once Upon a Time … in Nazi-Occupied France [2:06–21:22]	One of the daughters, Shosanna, manages to save herself from Landa, a Nazi colonel, after his massacre of her family, in 1941.
Chapter Two Inglourious Basterds [21:23–37:57]	With terroristic intentions, Aldo Raine, a US lieutenant forms a guerilla team against the Nazis. Sergeant Rachtman is executed by the members of the guerilla team, leaving another Nazi soldier alive, yet having marked his forehead with a swastika symbol with a knife. Hitler is shown in rage.
Chapter Three German Night in Paris [37:58–64:05]	In June of 1944, we see Shosanna running a movie theatre in Paris, accompanied by her romantic partner and co-worker Marcel, a black French citizen. Fredrick Zoller, a German soldier is celebrated for his heroic acts in the war, and he stars in *Stolz der Nation Stolz der Nation* as himself. He approaches Shosanna against her obvious disinterest in him. He proposes her to host the premier of his propaganda film in her theatre, leading her to start making a plan.
Chapter Four Operation Kino [64:06–105:38]	Having heard of the premier which will bring some of the high-ranking Nazi officers together, British intelligence takes action. Lieutenant Archie Hicox meets Bridget von Hammersmark, a German actress and a double agent, and the Basterds, to start an operation. Yet upon their identities uncovered by a Nazi officer, Hicox is killed. Bridget is shot on her leg. Aldo saves her and they decide to carry on the plan. They will attend the premiere of *Stolz der Nation* and kill high ranked Nazi officers including Hitler.
Chapter Five Revenge of the Giant Face [105:39–145:46]	After killing Bridget, Landa shows his intent to make a deal with the Allies to Aldo. Simultaneously, Shosanna's plan to burn the cinema with Nazi officers in it works out yet she is killed by Frederik Zoller. Hitler and Goebbels are killed by Basterds.
Epilogue [145:47–149:31]	Upon their deal, Landa is released. Yet Aldo leaves a marking of a swastika on his forehead.

The first chapter of the film offers an important starting point in terms of understanding where and when the story takes place, and from which historical figures the film chooses its heroes. Moreover, the first chapter draws attention to the conventions of the genre by reminding the audience of the films they have watched before by making references to the symbols and codes in the cultural memory of the audience.

Three texts appear on a black screen in order: an underlined "Chapter 1", and then "Once upon a time", and finally "in Nazi-Occupied France". The text, Chapter 1, indicates that the film is going to be narrated in certain episodes and it emphasizes the constructed structure of the film. After the emphasis on the episodic nature of the film, the phrase "once upon a time" is used as a familiar temporal reference for the audience. It is a phrase which has been used in many film productions, referring to the past (not an exact date or period) and to a fairytale-like structure, just as it is intended to be used as in the film. In another sense, in the film, the phrase also refers to the unknown nature of the past itself. Yet immediately after that, the phrase "Nazi-Occupied France" appears. The third text indicates a very clearly defined memory and physical reality. The Nazis, France and Nazi-occupied France conflict with the fairytale ambiance established with the previous text. This sharp turn from dream to reality through subsequent textual elements is a remarkable reference to the structure of the film. *Inglourious Basterds* is a film which refers to memory, yet which prefers to present its narrative not by taking shelter under an authentic realism but in an imaginary and fairytale-like platform and it tries to reshape the cultural memory. The structure of the Chapter 1 emphasizes the filmic conventions of the Nazi and Holocaust films and draws attention to how these conventions can be built by the cinema.

In the first scene of Chapter 1, a panoramic angle and a still camera are used. Green nature and warm colors are seen in the mis-en-scene and a hardly visible actor is cutting wood. Shortly afterward, a white text of "1941" falls upon this calm and quiet atmosphere. The still camera, wide angle and "1941" are powerful tools to evoke memory. A sudden change in the mood -created through the green nature earlier- occurs by a large "1941" text and this signifies that this atmosphere is the calm before the

storm, since in 1941, the Second World War is going on, and France is under the occupation of the Nazis.

Not long after, the film meets the expectations. The quiet life of a village man cutting wood and a woman hanging clothes in the quietness of the atmosphere is sharply transformed. After showing the white snowy piece of cloth that the woman has hanged, a whistly voice of a car is heard from afar. The female character, who suddenly opens ajar the white curtain which covers more than seventy percent of the frame, sees that a vehicle is approaching. This change is emphasized through the use of music and a quite obvious focus shift in the camera. With the opening of the white curtain, the car appears carrying Nazi officers. In other words, Nazis show up with the opening of the "theatre curtain". Because the Nazis are presented for the first time through "a white, framed screen", it is a reference to the fact that these characters that the audience will soon meet is familiar, recognizable figures from cinema.

The female character, as soon as she sees the car, calls her father and he, Perrier LaPadite (Denis Ménochet), sends his daughters inside and starts to wait for the "bad guys" to approach. Characters speak in French and their dialogues are subtitled in English. Additionally, the cast features unknown actors, including the Nazi commander colonel Hans Landa, starred by Christopher Waltz, a not internationally famous actor back then. Use of a non-English language and a cast consisting of unknown, European-origin actors appear as a realism strategy. Such endeavors are used to capture the authenticity of the past deliberately not to alienate the audience with the presence of star actors and thus to establish a realistic influence, which are the prominent attributes of Chapter 1. Soon after, the car arrives, and the Nazi officer Hans Landa (Christopher Waltz) gets out to meet LaPaditte family. Then, they all go inside the house.

Frame setting changes with a shift to the interior. Here, middle and close shots are used. The camera is still. The interior is completely separated from the exterior when Julie LaPadite (Tina Rodrigues), one of the sisters, closes the last remaining open window. Light green and curvy nature, which is seen out of the frame, conflicts with the space consisting of strict lines and dark colors inside. From this moment on, frames within frames in the scene play a significant role in the mis-en-scene. During the dialogues

between LaPadite family and Hans Landa, these frames are shown in almost every angle. Rectangular shape of the door, a lot of windows and the fireplace behind Landa, indicate the outer frame, which the film itself also represents. Both the opening of white curtain at the beginning and the windows and doors inside the house frame the characters and depict them, especially Hans Landa, as portraits. For example, although Hans Landa is depicted as a respectful, polite person who prefers drinking milk over drinking wine, he is also a quite disciplined, intelligent, uncanny, and dominant character, which is in harmony with the repetitive Nazi portrayal in many well-known Holocaust films. In a way, he reminds the audience of Amon Goeth (Ralph Fiennes) from *Schindler's List*. Then Landa requests to switch to English. The audience hears and watches a very familiar character, Landa, a terrorizing Nazi officer speak a German-accented English.

Landa starts interrogating the father, upon opening a huge record book about the Jewish Dreyfus family by asking about their names and ages. After this long interrogation, the camera moves for the first time. It draws an angle of 180 degrees and circles around the characters. After this long camera movement, an extreme close-up shows Landa's list. The list, with names and the ages written on it, reminds the audience of the *Schlinder's List* one more time. This iconic "record-keeping Nazis" image, the list itself, associations of Jewish people with animals by Landa ("They are like rats"), Landa's intimidating calmness and his accented English are very well-known conventions. It is possible to claim that the director shows the conventions which have been repeated in the history of cinema to the audience within its own frame as an effort to emphasize that cultural memory of Holocaust is a collection of images established in the cinematic frame.

Later in the scene, camera, for the first time, makes a pedestal (vertical down). It moves below the eye level and even beneath the feet of the characters, below the floor. Up until now, the point of view which the camera positions the viewers into was a bystander observer, in which the audience breathes in the same place as the characters but also keeps their safe space and identifies with them, although not directly. After the pedestal, the camera shows the Dreyfus family, hiding beneath the characters' feet. The audience now has the same capacity of knowledge as the father, presumably knowing

more than Landa, interrogating him. This difference in the level of knowledge increases the tension of the scene and immerses the audience into the experience of a group of girls, afraid of being killed.

When looked at the debates about Holocaust films, one significant issue has been the representation of the Jews who are about to be murdered. To give another example from *Schindler's List,* in the scene of The Liquidation of the Kraków Ghetto, Jewish people hiding behind the walls and other secret places are captured and killed by Nazi soldiers and this is shown in the camera angles in which no other observer is possible to be present. Similarly, in the next part of the scene after LaPadite is left with no chance but to betray his Jewish neighbors, Landa pretends to leave the house, invites the soldiers in, and orders them to open fire to the spot LaPadite points out, as the volume comes to a climax. The tension created by the music playing in this execution and the Landa's conflictingly relaxed attitude peaks up with firing and opening holes on the floor. Landa has turned into a terrorizing executer, from a clever detective; the father of LaPadite family has been made a confessor and a collaborator in tears, and the Dreyfus have been slaughtered. The film has proceeded just as expected from a Holocaust film, making a smart Nazi officer violently kill a poor, innocent Jewish family. Yet it is not all over.

Shosanna (Mélanie Laurent) of the Dreyfus, gets out of the hole and survives just like a "rat", reminding of Landa's previously used simile. She first gets out of the underground pit where she has been hiding and runs out of an angle framed with the door towards the green and bright fields. She does not only escape from the Nazis, but also from the narration tools used in the film, as represented by the dark frames of the interior towards brighter areas. Only Hans Landa gets out to catch Shosanna, running from both the frames of the door and the cinema screen, and he aims his gun at her. Yet the chapter ends when Shosanna manages to escape and Landa says "Goodbye Shosanna" in French.

It is possible to interpret this final moment as an escape effort from all the frames and conventions set inside the LaPadite's house. Shosanna, in a way, does not only escape from the massacre, but also from the narration strategies around the plot. As of the change starting in Chapter 2 of *Inglourious Basterds,* this claim is strengthened.

Terrorizing Nazi image and passive and victimized Jewish figures, which have been reinforced through history of cinema thus cultural memory, will be seriously transformed as of Chapter 2.

Raine (Brad Pitt) tells his soldiers that their mission to France will be killing as many Nazis as possible, while also spreading terror among them with their horrible actions:

> *The Members of the National Socialist Party have conquered Europe through murder, torture, intimidation, and terror. And that's exactly what we're gonna do to them... Nazi ain't got no humanity. There the foot soldiers of a Jew hatin, mass murderin manic, and they need to be destroyed. That's why any and every son-of-a--bitch we find wearin a Nazi uniform, there gonna die... We will be cruel to the Germans, and through our cruelty, they will know who we are. They will find the evidence of our cruelty, in the disembowed, dismembered, and disfigured bodies of their brothers we leave behind us. And the German will not be able to help themselves from imagining the cruelty their brothers endured at our hands, and our boot heels, and the edge of our knives.*

These highly well-uttered speech contains an opposition to the cinematic memory established in the first chapter in the film and creates a feeling that the film is going to continue in a different dynamic. And so, what could be the motivation of Raine, and of the scriptwriter-director, speaking through him? As expressed by Aldo Raine, later chapters of *Inglourious Basterds* could be seen as an objection to narration strategies used in Chapter 1. Therefore, the film could be considered as a criticism of the image of the horrifying Nazi vs. the miserable Jew.

In the next scene, Adolf Hitler (Martin Wuttke) appears saying "Nein!" many times. While Hitler is depicted in sweat, as tense and as squeezed in the corner of a small cubic room, he seems to be helplessly objecting to the goals Raine has set. In a warm lighting, consisting of yellow and orange shades, Hitler is quite far away from being a scary and powerful person, despite his big gestures while posing for his huge painting to be made on the wall. Hitler in *Inglourious Basterds* is just as what Aldo sees and wants to see him. The shift from terrorizing, cold blooded Nazis in Chapter 1 to this small ridiculous Nazi leader in Chapter 2, once again reveals the intentions of the film.

Later, Hitler calls an officer and wants him to tell what he knows about the Bear Jew, a member of the "basterds". In the flashback, for the first time, how scary the Basterds are is also visually depicted. Basterds, sitting on the high ground in an open field, seem

quite powerful compared to the Nazi soldiers who are waiting for their punishment while sitting on the lower ground. With such narrative tools as slow motion, moving camera, the voice-over (Samuel L. Jackson) and western melodies, this chapter is clearly differentiated from the first one. "Rat Jews" have become "Bear Jews", Holocaust victims in humiliation with naked bodies have been replaced with Nazi officers, whose heads are beaten with a baseball bat and are skinned, The Star of David has been replaced with swastikas as a marking symbol. As opposed to the warm colors in Hitler's room, blue and gray tones are dominant in this place where Nazis are humiliated and relentlessly tortured to death. The cold colors are now used to empower the enemies of Nazis.

A similar role reversal can also be seen in Chapter 3, but this time, weakened and comedic Nazis are placed at the same table with scary and powerful Nazis, emphasizing the contrast between them more. Years later, Shosanna, operating a cinema under the name Emmanuelle Mimieux, meets Goebbels (Sylvester Groth) and she immediately ridicules him in her mind when she sees him. Shosanna imagines Goebbels as breathlessly trying to have sex with the unsatisfied French translator, Francesca Mondino (Julie Dreyfus). Goebbels, in this image, is far from a horrible and powerful person, which is not expected from the second most important man of the Nazis. Goebbels wants to watch a German film in a Shosanna's cinema as a trial screening and asks Shosanna which German films she has. Until that moment, invisible editing, medium shots and consistent camera angles were used without alienating the audience, dialogues were not divided and the presence of all actors in the space was shown by the camera. Yet the moment Goebbels asks Shosanna the question "Which German films do you have?", a big change happens. When Goebbels asks the question directly to Shosanna, the entire table and all the actors are shown with medium shot and there is no one around Shosanna. When it is Shosanna's turn to answer Goebbels' question, instead of showing Shosanna, a close-up to Goebbels is used and the 30-degree-rule is broken. Goebbels looks up in contrast to his previous expression, eye and body level and he says, "Ah Landa! You are here!". The dialogue scene, which progressed uninterrupted until this moment, is broken by a deliberate editing "error", and Landa suddenly appears next to Shosanna from thin air. The tense music played at the end of Chapter 1

where Shosanna's family was murdered is heard again, and the camera tilts for the first time in the scene to show Landa. This sharp and alienating cinematic effect that comes after Goebbels's question to Shosanna ("Which German films do you have?") reveals the answer Shosanna could give: Hans Landa. Indeed, Hans Landa is one of the well-known figures of Holocaust film that has taken place in the cultural memory of the audience and so Hans Landa's image is exactly a filmic image, as discussed earlier. In the next part of the film, this frightening Nazi image embodied by Hans Landa continues to be destroyed by cinematic narration strategies, and in the narrative, the Nazis will also be brutally destroyed by the Jews.

After getting informed about the German Night, Shosanna discusses with Marcel (Jacky Ido) about her plan. Shosanna's idea is, as she expresses, "We are going to make a film… just for Nazis". The plan is that: After this duo gathers the Nazi soldiers and commanders in the cinema, they will burn the movie theater down and kill everyone. This strategy is meaningful in several ways. Shosanna will edit her own image and voice in a German film, just as the director Tarantino edits his own way of seeing and narration strategy with the conventions of the Holocaust cinema. Shosanna's plan is narrated by a familiar voice, Samuel L. Jackson. Emphasis is placed on the use of nitrate film to burn the theater while the frame is being divided into two, and a footage from an old American film is used to express the dangers of nitrate film. While Shosanna is planning to burn Nazis with, literally, films, the director uses a self-reflexive filmic language to remind that the images viewed by the audience are themselves films. While Shosanna uses nitrate film to kill Nazis, Tarantino uses the characteristic voice of Samuel L Jackson, split screens, footages, exaggerated acting, sharp changes in editing, strong references to the history of cinema, and music in different styles to oppose the conventions of historical films, and particularly, classical Hollywood narrative. In other words, the director attempts to assassinate the Nazis, just like Shosanna, or to be more precise, the Nazi eye and way of seeing, narrating, and remembering.

Indeed,the grand finale, where the German night begins, appears as the episode where the statements made throughout the film will be resolved and the conflict will come to an end. During the climax, As *Stolz der Nation* reaches its climax, Shosanna's self-

created filmic image is reflected on the cinema screen, and Shosanna answers Zoller's question of "Who wants to give a message to Germany" by saying "I have a message to Germany". Although Shosanna and Zoller are already dead by then, their edited dialogue is being watched by hundreds of Nazi soldiers and commanders. Shosanna's huge scary face shot from below when she tells Nazis, "You will all die," mobilizes all Nazis in the movie theater. While the Nazis' desperate calls to stop the film remain unanswered, Shosanna's onscreen image commands Marcel to "burn it down!". The hellfire, in which all Nazis would very soon find themselves, is lit by a black character. Although Shosanna is dead, her revenge is taken by a black character, therefore it can be claimed that the destroyed film is not only "*A Nation's Pride*" but also "*A Birth of a Nation's Pride*". It is clearly a reference to *The Birth of a Nation* (Griffith 1915). While D.W Griffith is known as the founding father of American cinema by many film historians, *The Birth of a Nation* is also seen as an important milestone for the film history. In addition, the fact that *The Birth of a Nation*, which narrates the American Civil War in a very racist way, humiliates the Black community and has a white supremacist point of view, is seen as the founding film of American cinema, reveals the reason for this reference. Therefore, it can be claimed that Tarantino criticizes American cinema and American cultural memory through this film.

During the climax, while the movie screen is set on fire, "basterds" enter the movie theater and start to kill everyone with their automatic rifles. Goebbels and Hitler are brutally murdered; their faces are shattered by bullets shot from the guns of these two Jewish men. In this shot, it is not merely Hitler and Goebbels who are being destroyed but also their frightening images that have been reinforced throughout film history. Hitler and Goebbels are more than historical characters. They are also Nazi figures with frightening images that have taken place in cultural memory with the help of cinema. In a World War II or Holocaust film, perhaps for the first time, Jews, Women and Blacks were the masters of great cruelty and deadly power, while the Nazis were the owners of great fear and despair and being destroyed by "others".

At the end of the film, Raine disobeys the previous agreement with Landa and expresses that he will not allow Landa to change his name and identity after he surrenders. That's why he draws a swastika on Landa's forehead with a huge knife. Although it is Raine

who says "I think this just might be my masterpiece" while carving Landa's forehead, it can be claimed that it is Tarantino that speaks through his character's words. In this angle shot from below, a well-known shot that Tarantino uses in his films, the camera is motivated by Landa's point of view. In a way, the audience looks through Landa's eyes. This way the audience is informed that their cultural memory is based on the cinematic conventions of Nazi's, which is strongly connected to American cinema. In other words, not only Landa's forehead but also the cultural memory that is shaped by cinema is signed by a svastika. Perhaps, the idea of killing Hitler by the hands of Jews is not about forgetting the historical reality, but about remembering the constructedness of cinematic memory.

Tarantino uses a deliberate intertextuality, by making subtle references to previous representations of the Holocaust and the Nazi, which are the conventions of the genre. It can be argued that this film is a parody in a Hutcheonian sense. Tarantino *did* make a parody of WWII and Nazi films, but this parody did not aim to mock the genre or ridicule the past. With this parody, Tarantino distanced himself from the classical productions coming before him. *Inglourious Basterds* discloses the ways of seeing and remembering in classical holocaust films, borrowed from the Nazi cinema. In addition to that, the film criticizes the same methods by showing their opposite. In this way, as a historiographic metafiction, this film challenges the ways audiences remember and make sense of the past and shows them alternative ways to look at the past. From this perspective, this film, as a postmodern narrative, should not be seen as a simple nostalgia that does not capture its own temporality, but as a historiographic metafiction that criticizes the relationship between cultural memory and cinema.

3. CINEMATIC HISTORY

As mentioned in the previous chapter, two concepts stand out within the scope of knowing the past: memory and history. As Robert Burgoyne (2018, 220-236) mentions, memory is a form of language and thus an almost conscious action that can also be manipulated or re-produced. Moreover, it is a cultural artifact produced within a network of hegemonic power struggles. Personal memories often intertwine with collective narratives and while collective narratives are being transformed into spectacles, they reshape personal memories of the individuals. History, on the other hand, is a scientific, classifying, and regulative study, so it requires analysis, discourse and criticism (Nora 1989). However due to the fact that historiography is the re-creation of things that no longer exist, the claimed hierarchy between memory and history in terms of their credibility in reaching the truth has been always problematic and incomplete.

Cinema usually deals with historical material, and it leads to historical debates as a popular storytelling tool. Especially historical, biographical, or documentary films appear as visual tools that can shed light on what happened in the past. Because filmmakers use the methods of historians who discuss and write about the past "as it was lived," they can be considered as agents who write about history. However, before diving into the discuss the relationship between filmmakers and historians, it is important to recall the discussions about the relationship between cinema, memory and history. In order to understand the seemingly "subjective" structure of memory, and "objective" structure of history, and their relation to cinema, first one should grasp the concept of truth, because the mentioned "subjectivity" and "objectivity" concepts are related to "truth".

Truth is related to the rhetoric of power, according to Bauman (1997). It is about the systematic establishment of the supremacy of certain beliefs, because accordingly, these beliefs are attained through a reliable procedure, or these beliefs are confirmed by

trusted people who could be followed. However, in postmodern understanding, it can be stated that philosophers do not fight for a single and correct theory of truth, but for a theory of truth. The task of this philosophical approach is not to distinguish what is right from what is wrong. Instead, it seems that it tries to form correct ways of translating between different languages, each producing their own truths and keeping them alive (Bauman 1997).

Lyotard (1984) shares a similar sense that grand narratives which he calls metanarratives, are no longer valid. According to him, comprehensive, universal ideological projects where all types of knowledge eventually cohere are not sustainable, and with postmodern understanding, societies are left with local narratives that can conflict with each other. Because of the loss of modernity's metanarratives, it no longer seems possible to represent the complete "truth" as there is no more a referent to it. Therefore, if visual or verbal representations cannot refer to a truth "out there" then as a grand narrative, historical representations, no matter whether as a documentary practice or a fiction, are in the state of self-reflexive crisis of representation as Linda Williams (1993) claims. Hutcheon's (1988) views on the issue emphasize the difficulty of distinguishing between what is factual and what is fictional. She claims that historical metanarrative is not free from the burden of creating its own discourse, structures, and interpretational forms and finally its own truth. In addition to that, Williams (1993) asks how to reach a postmodern truth. According to her, films cannot reveal the truth of events. Instead, they can only reveal ideologies and mindsets that reveal conflicting or congruent truths. She argues that reality of the past almost by definition is inaccessible. And she considers it is still possible to deal with historical subject by finding its repetitions and resistances, in the present.

In terms of seeing the repetitions in this dramatization and re-enactments, cinema emerges as a rich field of study. Films, as the history does, repetitively define people, events and places belonging to the past and try to create a story by connecting them in a cause-effect relationship. Especially westerns as spectacles in which American history is rewritten and re-staged, appear as a rich field where these discussions can be made. Westerns have re-defined the heroes and the enemies of the nation, borders of the country, historical events and periods. In this chapter, firstly, the discussions in the

literature about the relationship between cinema and history are presented. Then, depiction of spaces and heroes in westerns; and how they are affected by the current political and economic agenda are touched upon. Finally, how the elements of space and the hero and the relationship between them is used in *Django Unchained* (Tarantino 2012) are explored. As a revisionist western, *Django Unchained* is an appropriate example to discuss how space depiction and character creation are the key methods of western genre to write history.

3.1 Historical Film

The Hollywood historical films have played an extremely influential role in shaping US's culture and perspective towards the past. This is made possible by not only cinema's ability to re-create the past in a visual form and its emotional effect on the audience but also by cinema's power to lead to public discussions and recalling of events because of its popularity (Burgoyne 2008). These historical films inform or challenge the audience's national self-identity.

But first of all, what is 'historical film'? Historical films are not just costume dramas or romance setting where the past serves a scenic stage. According to Natalie Zemon Davis (2000), historical films are the ones which their plots are based on historical events or in which an imagined plot unfolds itself in a historical set-up. This plot-based characterization of the genre which focuses on "real historical events" can be expanded to the extent that it includes various examples that mix fictional events and actual events such as *Saving Private Ryan* (Spielberg 1999) and *Spartacus* (Kubrick 1960) or films that have both fictional and actual characters such as *Braveheart* (Gibson 1995) and *Glory* (Zwick 1989).

Burgoyne (2008) divides the most popular historical films of 90's and 2000's into these five categories: war films, biographical films, epic films, topical films, metahistorical films. Many war films such as *Saving Private Ryan* (Spielberg 1995), *Black Hawk Down* (Scott 2002), and *Letters from Iwo Jima* (Eastwood 2006) have been acclaimed for their realistic approach to the cruelties of war and discussed for their portraits of heroism. Realism of war films is usually appreciated and often considered as the most

exciting feature. Technological developments in film industry are often made visible in war films, because advanced visual and acoustic techniques help these films achieve authenticity. Royalty, important historical figures and mythical events are the most common subjects of epic films such as *Gladiator* (Scott 2000)*, Troy* (Petersen 2004), *and Kingdom of Heaven* (Scott 2005). These films are often the most expensive productions with an exaggerated ambiance, flamboyant costumes, a strong musical composition, and a famous cast. Biographical films such as *Nixon* (Stone 1995), *The Aviator* (Scorsese 2005), and *Capote (*Miller 2005*)* dramatize the life of a non-fictional person and they try to broadly narrate a non-fictional person's life story. Topical films such as *United 93* (Greengrass 2006), *World Trade Center* (Stone 2006)*,* and *Titanic* (Cameron 1997) are centered on a particular incident rather than narrating grand narratives of historical events, people, and nations. Finally, some films such as *JFK* (Stone 1990), *Courage Under Fire* (Zwick 1996), *The New World (*Malick 2005*),* and *Flags of our Fathers (*Eastwood 2006*)* can be referred as metahistorical because they critique the conventional representation of history. They question the historical representation and storytelling and play with the form (Burgoyne 2008).

Among these five categories, there is a shared discursive framework: reenactment. It is the concept of imaginative re-creation that allows audiences to "witness" the events of the past one more time. Roland Barthes (1954) stated that watching wide-screen films made him feel as if he was standing on "the balcony of history". Widescreen, wide angles, crowded stages, and omniscient point of view make the audience feel the same atmosphere as if the history is repeated. In addition to "witnessing again", the reenactment also makes the audience rethink about the past. Rather than simply re-experiencing the past, the spectator projects their mind to the past world and re-imagine it (Burgoyne 2008).

3.2 History vs. Film

Movies imagine and construct new realities. Rosenstone (1988) agrees with this statement but adds that history itself does the same. For him, written history itself is already a constructed fiction. For example, the notion that individuals, societies, nations,

political movements, inventions, wars have arisen or occured in a linear story which has a beginning, middle and an end, and narrating the past according to these, is fiction. According to him, history is an intangible field. Therefore, it is a mental activity, just like cinema. In cinema, through editing, important or trivial details of the daily flow are selected and brought together. Using fragmented documents, the historian also constructs a history within a certain context to fit their point of view (Rosenstone 1988).

In addition to categorization of the historical films, it is essential to recall the discussions about the filmmakers who make historical films, their place among historians, and how their films have contributed to the historical narrative or how much they have exploited it. Oliver Stone seems to be an exemplary figure as a director whose films are based on important events in American history and whose point of view have caused some issues to be discussed particularly in the public sphere in the US. In *Olive Stone's USA* (2003), Brent Toplin tries to find answers to these questions, which are examined below: "Can movies really do history? Is Stone a historian? Can we approach movies as if they tell historical events like a historian?". Toplin brings an insight into these questions using *JFK* (1991 Stone) as an example.

The plot of the film is about the events that led to the assassination of John F. Kennedy and New Orleans district attorney Jim Garrison's discovery of a cover-up and his investigations and findings that counter the official story. In the film, Stone uses both authentic filmic materials which were shot during the period of Kennedy assassination and his own staged materials which have black and white color and grainy aesthetics. In addition, fictional scenes played by professional actors are edited together with historical footages. After a while, it becomes very difficult for the audience to tell apart which image is fictional and which image is authentic. The movie features both real characters and fictional characters. Some of the events took place before and after the assassination of President Kennedy in the film are based on real life and some of them are based on Stone's imagination. This production, in which Stone uses both fiction and documentary aesthetics together, have been therefore subject to controversy. While it can be argued that Stone distorted historical facts by creating an imaginary story to produce a conspiracy theory, it is also possible to claim that it was pointless to expect a film to do history as historians do (Toplin 2003).

Stone himself says that he is not a historian, so his films should be considered as fictions, because he is not trying to fabricate a complete history (Stone 2003). According to Rosenstone (2003, 39), it is better to look at what the director is trying to do with his film rather than examine these films scene by scene and try to test their relevance to historical documents. For him, Stone is a director who refers to history (not fabricate it) and tries to provoke memory. Therefore, it seems more rational to focus on the perspective of Stone (2003) as if he talks with the audience through his films: Rethink the history, question the state institutions, evaluate the possibility that governments may be corrupt, and be critical of the mainstream historical narrative. But more importantly, Rosenstone (2003, 39) compares the way history is already written with the way history is rewritten in cinema. This comparison reveals features that distinguish history from fiction or bring history closer to fiction.

Films have a vision that written history lacks. Unlike the narrative of conventional history that is complete, simplified, and closed to alternative possibilities, films do not ignore and *do* even promote different possibilities. Films can propose new imaginative ways of dealing with historical material. Resisting traditional genres, these films create new forms to explore serious issues on film - including the mixture of fact and fiction.

Some of Tarantino's films have a narration structure that both uses the main conventions of one or multiple genres and bravely goes beyond the rules. Moreover, these films transform or shock the spectator's historical knowledge with their unexpected endings. For example, *Django Unchained* plays with the form and the meaning of the hero and the frontier, two important narration elements of western genre in which American history is rewritten and staged. By doing so, this powerful film shows how an alternative reality can be created through cinema. For this reason, it is necessary to review the literature to present the conventions of western genre before moving on to the analysis of this film.

3.3 Westerns

Western is a historical genre of its constituent films which take place in Wild West, that is, the large area west of the Mississippi River, very generally between the early 1800s

and early 1900s, when the establishment of states in the west was completed (Walker 2001). Wild West image evokes certain historical characters, events and concepts: Native Americans, Mexicans, white settlers, slavery, train and telegraph lines, carriages, banks, robberies, the American Civil War, racism, guns, cowboys, cattle herds, farms, horses, towns, duels and more (Wright 2001). In a way, the history of the 19th century of US is retold in these films.

The fact that some of the people and events in westerns are historically real, makes it possible to discuss the relationship of history and cinema. For example, popular western characters such as Jesse James, Billy the Kid, George Armstrong Custer, Geronimo, Wyatt Earp, Isaac "The Hanging Judge" Parker, Wild Bill Hickok, Butch Cassidy and Sundance Kid are the people who actually lived; or Gunfight at the O.K. Corral, Little Bighorn, California Gold Rush, Whites slaughtered by Natives, Natives slaughtered by Whites, rewards on bandit's head, Comanches kidnapping children, train and bank robberies are events that historically happened. But it is one thing to claim that these people and events are historical, it is another thing to claim that what is told or depicted in the films is historical. Because with every film, these people and events are re-imagined and rewritten. Therefore, a reading of the history of western genre can help us to understand how these films rewrote American history, which period, which story, character and place were ignored and at which period these became the subject of history.

Janet Walker (2001) mentions that the historicity of westerns can be approached in two ways. Firstly, the production of early westerns historically dates back to the same period as the last days of frontier settlement in US, and for this reason, especially early westerns have documentary characteristics. In other words, the geography and locations of the period described in early western films were actual and moreover writers, directors, consultants and actors who worked in films were the actual people who experienced that period. For this reason, it is possible to see the early westerns as cultural and historical documents thanks to their ability of recording this period, people and places. The second aspect that Walker (2001) draws attention to is this: westerns are not only historical because they document the period they narrate, but also because they contain the historical ideology and identity of the period in which they were filmed.

Therefore, although later westerns were not shot in the same period they narrated, they contributed to history as they reflected the cultural, political and philosophical agendas of the period in which they were shot. In order to understand this aspect, first of all, the common ideology that has become a part of westerns must be analyzed.

If Robin Wood's (1976) approach to the concept of genre is applied, the ideology in westerns can be made visible by analyzing conventions. Wood argued that the development of genres is ideological, through the repetition of similar conventions, the elimination of oppositions, or the simplification of concepts and situations. From this perspective, when western genre is analyzed, two important concepts stand out: the frontier and the frontier hero.

The frontier myth of the West is one of the most important themes in American history. It is the concept of space that exists to divide civilization and wilderness. The American frontier emerged during colonization of North America by Europeans after 17th century. Frontier has always fascinated American society and been considered as a source for American mythology while constantly immigrating from Atlantic to Pacific (Loy 2004, 578-582). Though 19th century novels, theatre plays, Wild West shows were among the earliest examples of the genre, cinema has become a medium where the frontier myth is most frequently stereotyped and transferred.

According to Henry Nash Smith (1996), three images of frontier were dominant in western fiction in the first half of 20th century: First, the West was the place where individuals discovered and asserted themselves and thus sought for an opportunity to redeem and regenerate. Second, the West was the "barren" place which is waiting to be conquered by a brave man in order to flourish. And finally, the third image of the West was being the clashing point for the civilized and the "savage" (1996).

Westerns have also created heroes, and as Richard Maltby (1996, 34-49) stated, the existence of history depends on the existence of the "legend". Certain archetypes started to emerge in the representation of the protagonists in cinema: Courageous man fighting the dangers to reside in the West, the lone who herds Texas's cattle into the railroads of Kansas, the decisive cowboy or the peace officer fighting against the lawless. According

to Frederick Jackson Turner (1921), the most distinguishing feature of the frontier hero character lied in his will to capture the unpossessed or untamed land to expand home towards west.

During the early days of western films (1900s-1930s) the typical western hero was a law enforcer and he, despite unwillingly, was capable of being violent if necessary, as it was expected from him to do so, for the sake of moral truth and victory of the good (Loy 2004, 578-582). It might be Bronco Billy, George M. Anderson's character, who first utilized western genre myth for personal redemption, yet such films by William S. Hart, as *The Narrow Trail* (Hart and Hillyer 1917) were among those films which enabled the change of the evil man to become the main western motif. Hart was one of the first directors who made the legend of Hickok come true in *Wild Bill Hickok* (Smith, 1923). Besides, *The Virginian* (DeMille 1914) emphasized the hardships of the act of civilizing the lawless Wyoming frontier. In *The Covered Wagon* (Cruze 1923), after elimination of the West's savagery and lawlessness, it was possible for symbols of civilization such as farms and towns to bloom. Philip Loy (2004) claims that the silent era western was an ode to the West, since it was the space where nationalist, Anglo-Saxonist, democratic and individualistic views could be experienced fully.

Westerns produced in 1930s and 1940s were still benefiting from the narratives of the frontier experience since these narratives were in alignment with the domestic struggles going on for the last twenty years. Yet, it was considered that the unfortunate event, the Great Depression was caused by the deeds of the wealthy, greedy capitalists, which formed the basis of the villain's representation (Loy 2004, 578-582). Between 1945 and 1965, following the World War II, while the westerns still held the positive representation of the West myths and legends, it gradually started to challenge them. Even the very symbol of the western myth, John Wayne, started to adapt different characters. In *The Searchers* (Ford 1956), he appears as an out-of-the-line hero, with his will to kill a white girl after her abduction by Native Americans, since according to him, she will never be able to conform to the "white" world after that point (Loy 2004, 578-582).

With the increasing complexity of the protagonists which led to an opportunity of in-depth exploration of the ethical dilemmas of theirs, the line between the lawful and the lawless started to disappear. Westerns matured with the effort of revisionist filmmakers, which eventually caused them to experience a gradual loss of popularity in the second half of 1960s. Now that the space became a target for exploration, the audience developed a taste for a new genre: "the space western". *Star Wars* (Lucas 1977) series could be considered as one of the pioneers of this sensation, which was built upon very similar themes found in traditional westerns, yet in different settings. Such films helped with the revival of the westerns in which social concerns of the time could be explored. Yet gradually, they started to question and challenge nearly all the formulaic expressions found in the conventional westerns (Hanlan 2004, 430-436).

Social issues of the time were reflected in "the new western", just as they were in the earlier products of the genre. Through challenging the governmental authority, a civil rights movement emerged in US in 1970s and the role assigned to minorities started to be questioned. *Cheyenne Autumn* (Ford 1964) represented the Native American from a more inclusive and praising perspective. It can be stated that the attitude towards Native Americans in westerns started to change. *Little Big Man* (Penn 1970) used a different type of narrative of captivity. Jack Crabbed (Dustin Hoffman) perceived the Native Americans as "human beings", and in the film, the white settlers were depicted as the savage, murdering Native American women and children.

When American history and its traditional interpretations began to be criticized by the "new west writers", western genre nearly ceased to exist. Nonetheless, after 1985, a slight revival came into place. It was when the westerns were sensitive about the new realities of the time and "the new west" (Hanlan 2004, 430-436). For instance, in *Dance with Wolves* (Costner 1990), the white people were represented as the destructive power, as violent against both the Native American culture as well as nature. In this Kevin Costner film, the Natives and their environment were in harmony with each other, until the arrival of the white men. *Unforgiven* (Eastwood 1992) depicts violence as something pointless, and as used by lower humans.

As a revisionist-western, *Django Unchained* appears as a production that has changed the frontier hero, the enemy, the boundaries of the frontier, and the meaning of what is inside and outside the frontier. However, Lee Clark Mitchell (2018) suggests that using terms such as post-western, anti-western, revisionist-western should be avoided, because genres are mostly hybrid, they consist of a varying set of thematic and formal structures. Conventions that critics select to define genres retrospectively are never fixed. For example, acid westerns, electric westerns, epic westerns, fantasy westerns, horror westerns, martial arts westerns, space westerns, spaghetti westerns and other different classifications reflect the versatility of westerns. Since westerns have always been in a transformation since the earlier examples, it is not possible to determine a fixed point and state that others are alternatives to it (Mitchell 2018). From this point of view, it loses its importance to define *Django Unchained* as an anti-western, revisionist western, and even as a "southern" just because its story takes place in the South, not the West. The next analysis is not aimed at proving what kind of anti-western *Django Unchained* is, but to understand how it deals with the recurring frontier myth. As it was mentioned before, through historiography, documents related to different people, events and places are brought together with the ideological approach of the historian and fictionalized in a storyline. Similarly, in films, different shots that are edited together, in a way, create an alternative meaning according to the ideology of the filmmaker. For this reason, understanding how frontier myth is depicted with visual and auditory elements in *Django Unchained*, and how the frontier hero is defined by character selection, acting, costume, and mise-en-scene can help to understand what kind of history is written by these films. If American history have been written by westerns, then understanding what kind of American history is re-written with *Django Unchained* is important. Understanding which methods are used in this film is the purpose of the next film analysis.

3.4 The Bending of Frontier Myths: *Django Unchained*

As it can be seen in the description of the history of westerns above, these films define both the geography and social life in the US and rewrite American history. These cinematic productions, in which both real and fictional characters, actual and imaginary spaces and events intertwine, function as historiography. This history was divided into

periods, especially influenced by the current political and economic agendas of 20th century and although some meanings have been redefined, dual conflicts have continued to exist: Inside and outside of the frontier, garden versus desert, social order versus anarchy, individual versus community, town versus wilderness, cowboy versus natives, and the list goes on. Westerns' narrative centralizes a conflict, or numerous conflicts, between the civil and the savage, which eventually will lead to a confrontation at the climax point (Gehring 1988)

The majority of the population settling in US during 19th century were European-origin white people in terms of ancestry, language, and religious heritage. The major non-European indigenous cultures were those of the Natives (Slotkin 2000). In most of the westerns, the settlements were places of order, law, and civilization for white Americans, while the natural space outside these settlements was perceived as a scary, lawless, chaotic pieces of land inhabited by others (outlaws or natives). As mentioned before, the frontier splits these two territories. Most of the time, the cowboy heroes have been functioned as the protectors of civilization and order, and they repulsed the outside attacks and/or expanded the frontier by conquering chaotic "wild land" (Slotkin 2000). In this respect, *Django Unchained* (Tarantino 2012) is significant in terms of both re-defining the frontier and reconstructing the frontier hero in an alternative way. In this the rest of the chapter, the space and character design of the film is analyzed to understand how *Django Unchained* rewrote the American history through playing with frontier myths.

Table 3. 1: Chapter Structure and the Plot of *Django Unchained*

	Title	Substructure / Timing	Events
		[0:23–3:13]	Django, with other slaves and slavers, walks in a desert.
Act 1	1858, two years before the Civil War	Scene 1 [3:14–12:46]	Django is purchased/freed by Dr. Schultz.
	Daughtrey, Texas	Scene 2 [12:47–23:36]	It turns out Schultz is a bounty hunter. He shoots the town sheriff for a bounty.

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		Scene 3 [23:37–26:40]	Schultz asks for Django's help with catching the Brittle brothers. Django talks about Broomhilda von Shaft, his wife.
Act 2	Tennessee	Scene 1 [26:41–27:59]	Schultz briefs Django about the details of the hunt, and lets Django choose his own clothes.
		Scene 2 [28:00–40:26]	Schultz and Django visit Big Daddy's plantation. They find and kill the Brittle brothers there.
		Scene 3 [40:27–46:04]	Certain KKK people, including Big Daddy, attach Schultz and Django. Django proves himself to be talented with gun use.
Act 3		Scene 1 [46:05–50:35]	Schultz and Django teams up after a storytelling session about the German legend of Broomhilda and Siegfried. Schultz says he will help Django to save his wife.
		Scene 2 [50:36–58:02]	Django gains experience in bounty hunting for the whole winter. They kill Smitty Bacall.
Act 4	And after a very cold and very profitable winter, Django and Dr. Schultz came down from the mountains and headed for … Mississippi	Scene 1 [58:03–72:12]	Schultz and Django come up with a plan to rescue Broomhilda, owned by a Mandingo master, Calvin Candie. They use a fake interest in Mandingo fights as an excuse to approach him.
		Scene 2 [72:13–85:56]	They arrive Candieland, where they witness D'artagnan's murder, a Mandingo fighter.
		Scene 3 [85:57–115:03]	Until house slave Stephen realizes their actual motives, their plan runs smoothly.
		Scene 4 [115:04–131:38]	Upon figuring their actual plan out, Candie mentions they can buy Broomhilda only if they are willing to pay $10,000. Schultz kills Candie out of anger and dies afterwards.
Act 5	En route to The LeQuint Dickey Mining Co.	Scene 1 [131:39–142:41]	Candie's men capture Django and sell him off.
		Scene 2 [142:32–151:15]	Django saves himself from the slavers.
		Scene 3 [151:16–164:58]	Django goes back to Candieland, murders all the family and Stephen. He rescues Broomhilda.

Two elements stand out in the "history" of *Django Unchained*. One of them is locations (i.e., wilderness and settled spaces), and the other is the hero (i.e., Django). The emphasis on these two elements draws attention from the beginning.

In the first scene, a barren, stony land appears without any living thing on it, not a plant, animal or human. This space, which is shot with a wide angle and fixed camera for a long time, is a place full of heavy rocks and crimps. The camera makes its first movement after showing this terrain for 30 seconds. After a slight panning movement to

right, some black bodies are seen. These bodies are moving with difficulty, as the camera sees their whipped backs in blood. As the scene continues, the faces of these slaves, including Django (Jamie Foxx), appear. In this close-up scene, the camera does a focusing game. First, the cliffs behind Django are in focus and Django's face is out of focus, two seconds later, the focus shifts to Django's face, and two seconds later, the rock behind Django's face is once again focused on. Two sharp camera movements are used in the later part of the scene. In a semi-medium shot, black slaves walking with chains on their feet and white slave traders on horses are shown first, and then the camera zooms out fast and visibly, and this group is shown in long shot with the stony landscape where they walked. And in another shot, the stony land is shown as a spectacular area with a pan camera movement, then the group of slaves and slave traders walking through the land are shown with a fast and visible zoom in.

With firstly the whipped bodies shown with the rocky terrain, secondly the focusing game between Django's face and the rock behind him, and thirdly the fast and visible zoom in and zoom outs between the whole group and the landscape, the two narration elements in the film are emphasized. One of these elements is Django himself and his body, and the other is landscape or location where the story will take place. The camera, focus and mis-en-scene game between these two elements emphasize the two main narrative elements of the film, and also it expresses that they will be linked together. It is shown that this whipped, bloody, black body is a part of this rocky geography, and this geography is filled with stories of slavery. The vast American lands are now not only a battlefield between natives and cowboys, criminals and sheriffs, as customary in westerns, but also the arena of a struggle between Blacks and Whites, slaves and slave owners.

The journey continues, but now it is nighttime. But the time is not the only change, the depth of the displayed space has also changed. The camera moves to the right on dolly with the group, silhouettes of trees pass in front of the camera, the group walks in a straight line on an artificially illuminated road, and the forest behind them remains in darkness or even becomes completely invisible. Space has now become two-dimensional. This place is the reminiscent of a pictured fairy tale book or a theater scene. After reminding the audience of the rocky terrain, slaves with chains on their

feet, and of what kind of past and geography the African Americans have faced with the whip marks on their backs, now Django, as a black man, escapes and embarks on a new path in this imaginary space and time. An alternative historical narrative will begin in this time and space, but then the film will continue to use real spaces with natural light and depth. In this way, the narrative first reveals its imaginary dimension to the audience, and also tries to make the audience forget about its fictional characteristics by establishing a realistic atmosphere. In this way, the film does not reveal only the fictional nature of itself, but also the method of storytelling done in the disguise of historical narrative.

Django, who will be the protagonist of this story, throws his blanket away with slow motion and walks away as the traces of the whip on his back is shown once again. In this way, Django does not only take the blanket off, but also wears his body, split with those whip marks as costume. In other words, he "owns" or "puts on" the scars on his body. This body, which Schultz is watching in slow motion with his bewildered gaze, is not miserable, on the contrary, astonishing, in a way. This visualization can be seen as a hint to film's perspective towards Django, the main character of the film, and the historicization embodied by his body. It is possible to claim that the film expects the audience not to pity Django when looking at the wounds on his body, but to respect him because of his strong and upright stance despite these wounds.

The contrasts highlighted in *Django Unchained* after this scene are similar to those in the typical western: garden versus desert, social order versus anarchy, individual versus community, town versus wilderness, cowboy versus the other. However, the usual uncanny nature of the wild and the peace of the green gardens will have different meanings in the upcoming scenes of *Django Unchained.*

Daughtrey, Texas becomes the first town shown in the film. Actually, there is no town, city, or region in Texas called Daughtry, although there are a number of towns and counties called Dougherty or Daugherty. This place, which reminds the audience of the real places but is named differently with small letter differences, appears as both a historical and an imaginary place. This town covered with mud, whose sheriff, the

lawman, is actually an outlaw, is an impossible place for Django to live, as hinted with the scene in which his head is shown aligned with a hanging rope in a shot (00:13:11).

Noticing the "innocent" town folks gazing them from the windows and balconies, Dr. Schultz asks Django why, and Django replies: "They have never seen a nigger on a horse." It can be said that these local people, who watch a black man on a horse from their frames, that is, their windows and balconies, can remind the audience of their own position. Stam (2017) states that the use of frames in moving images reminds the apparatus of cinema, its own rectangular form. For example, the name of *Rear Window* (Hitchcock 1954), the shots that show the lens of the camera, or the window in the characters' room, evoke the film medium itself, cinema, as a "window to the world". Such self-reflexive tools in films remind the audience of the filmic medium itself and the position of the audience. In a similar way, the people watching Django through their windows in the town with bewildered eyes, remind the westerns' viewers of their own position. In other words, in *Django Unchained*, through this narration tool, the audience is informed about what kind of film they are watching, the conventions of genre (westerns) and how this film's "history" differs from others. The westerns' audience is not used to seeing a black man riding a horse, just as the townspeople are not. The whiteness of the conventional frontier hero in westerns is highlighted, and it is shown that it would be absurd to have Django as a frontier hero in the history that is written by white people. However, despite this contrast, Django will be able to fulfil his arc as a frontier hero. As a historiographic metafiction, *Django Unchained* parodies westerns and criticizes its conventions.

"Wild" nature where the two set out into after leaving the town is a much safer place. These lands, far from civilization, seem quite peaceful, with sunset light penetrating through short grasses and are dominated by yellow and orange tones, and no enemies are visible there. Later, Bennett's plantation in Tennessee is where Django and his partner meet with "civilized people" and the "cultivated land" Again. This tamed, arranged, greenery place and the community living on it contains a contrast in the image. This small paradise is a prison where dozens of black slaves are forced to pick cotton and whipped by white slavers. The hell that this green and bright paradise contains is highlighted by the flashback scene in which Django remembers his past. In a

similar place where Django and his wife Broomhilda (Kerry Washington) were caught and tortured, the brightness and the contrast are increased and the color cyan is dominant. The disturbing lighting and color remind the audience of how this plantation is a dangerous and scary place. It seems that wild nature is much safer and more peaceful than this civilized place, despite all its seemingly heavenly image.

While Django is whipping and killing a white slaver after saying "Do you all wanna see something" to other slaves and also to the audience, and the blood of another slaver that Dr. Schultz has killed is splattering onto the white cotton field, both the look of the place and the actors' position change. This "heavenly" place is no longer peaceful for white slavers with their own blood splattered on the cotton fields. In this way, it is emphasized to the audience of westerns (especially American society) that the imagined paradise has never existed, and the true face of the tamed garden will be revealed with Django's company. When Django and Schultz take a trip back to wild nature, the blue skies, the mountains covered with white snow, the sunrises, hot red colors, the hot water springs seem quite peaceful. Once again, wilderness is safer and more welcoming than settled, plowed lands.

For Django, wilderness and lawlessness have become the safe space, and the dangerous space that the hero must cross in order to fight enemy is coded as towns, gardens and "civilization". The frontier still splits the two spaces, the wild and the civilization, but frontier hero does not try to conquer or tame the wild to establish order, instead, he will conquer symbols of civilization and destroy order. In the next parts of the films, it is shown that a man who appears to live peacefully in his tiny hut with his family is actually a famous murderer and thief. Mississippi is a state where black people walk with chains on their feet. Calvin Candie's (Leonardo Di Caprio) gentlemen's club is a house where slave owners bet on fights in a brutal show where two black slaves fight to death. "Green paradises" where dogs feed on runaway slaves are no longer places where people live in peace. But instead of escaping these terrible places, Django conquers cities, towns, plantations, and eventually the Candyland, and sets his own law by killing the monsters within.

In the final scene, while Stephen (Samuel L. Jackson) screams "You can't destroy candyland!", Django detonates the whole place and seems to have conquered the symbols of civilization. In this respect, while Django figuratively attacks civilization, the film attacks frontier myths of westerns. The person who wrote this alternative history is not Dr. Schultz or Tarantino who exploded with some dynamite in another scene. This new history was written by Django, who ignited the dynamite. So who is this historian? In order to understand that, his looks and way of speaking can be analyzed.

First of all, as mentioned in the previous paragraphs, Django wears the whip scars on his body like a costume, as seen in the scene where he is freed from his chain with the help of Dr. Schultz. And this costume is the one that he never takes off even if he wears other costumes on later on. Django later starts to wear the outfit of one of the dead slavers. But this change of clothes does not make any difference in his life. In the first town he entered, even though Django tries to disguise in his new hat and clothes, all eyes are on him. It is the first hint that Django's wardrobe will not change the fact that he is "Black". Django's identity and him being a slave do not stem from his feet in chains, or the whip scars on his back, but directly from his skin color.

When Schultz says to Django, "You can choose your character's costume," he says that not only because Django needs a disguise for the operation, but also because he can wear whatever he wants as the main protagonist in the film. Django's first costume, which is his own choice, is more remarkable in that sense. The costume designed for Django was inspired by one of Thomas Gainsborough's paintings, *Blue Boy* (Hanel 2013). His blue suit reflects a historically accurate clothing for a valet and his lace tie, despite making him look aesthetically indulgent, supports his strange choice for disguise. His choice of costume yields to absurdity since it would be impossible for him to be successful at disguising due to his skin color in this very costume.

In the first place where Django appears absurd in this costume, slave owner "Big Daddy" Bennett (Don Johnson) warns his slave, Betina (Miriam F. Glover) by speaking clearly: "Django is not a slave. Django is a free man. You understand? You can't treat him like any of these other niggers around here, cause he ain't like any of these other

niggers around here. Ya got it?". Betina asks: "You wan' I should treat him like white folks?" Big Daddy answers: "No. That's not what I said." Betina is confused and says: "Then I don't know what'cha want, Big Daddy.".

This dialogue can be seen as a joke about whether Django can transform into a familiar white cowboy with the costume he is wearing or not. Could a frontier hero archetype be created by dressing a black hero in white people's clothes? The absurdity of Django's first choice is not only simply a lack of manners of the character, but also an exaggerated expression of the narrative's inability to whitewash Django. The narrative thus points out to the dead-ends of creating a cowboy from Django. More precisely, it is underlined that Django is an anti-cowboy who wears cowboy clothes.

Later in the film, we see Django wearing a cowboy hat and a green jacket, looking quite similar to famous cowboy 'Little Joe' from *Bonanza* (Hamilton and Dortort 1959-73). And finally, before the massacre in Candyland, Django chooses an outfit from the closet of his nemesis, Calvin Candie. No matter whether Django is dressed as a slave trader, as Blue Boy, as a cowboy or as Candie throughout the movie, he is not simply one of the "white cowboys" written before him. The film, besides showing the audience how unconventional a black cowboy is or how surreal the Django's revenge arc is in history of westerns, it still allows Django to perform a heroic arc. The film transforms the famous cowboy archetype of westerns into "a costume" and places a black actor in it. But Django will not be wearing this cowboy suit as a rare "black cowboy" example among thousands of white cowboys. Throughout the film, the costumes that Django wears are emphasized, and it is underlined how unconventional it is to dress a black actor in these clothes, especially in Django's first choice. Django did not make this costume choice because he was ignorant or naive. As a matter of fact, it will be seen throughout the entire arc of the film that Django is talented, intelligent and has managed to become the "fastest gun" as Dr. Schultz says. In Hutcheon's words, the film uses the cowboy costume as a parody object, but while parodying it, it does not just emulate it, but also criticizes it, Django does not wear that costume to be whitewashed. By showing how his identity does not fit into that costume, the film parodies westerns and the frontier hero archetype and emphasizes the absurdity of the situation, drawing attention to the absence of Blacks in American history.

Another clue about Django's non-white characteristics is his language. As Clouse (2019) mentions, when black actors play major roles in Hollywood films, they usually speak "standard" English. This is called English of the dominant culture, or EDC. However, "non-standard" versions of English, such as African American vernacular English (AAVE), is rarely used (Clouse 2019, 207-214). For example, charismatic characters like Morpheus (Laurence Fishburn) from the The *Matrix* (Wachowski siblings 1999), or Solomon Northup (Chiwetel Ejiofor) from *12 Years a Slave* (McQueen 2013) speak an "accurate" EDC. The dialect spoken by Solomon serves to distinguish him from the uneducated Blacks who are enslaved. In mainstream movies, black characters often speak AAVE to create a comic effect or to highlight the character's lack of intelligence or education. For example, in *Rush Hour* (Ratner 1998), Carter (Chris Tucker) uses AAVE when he acts like a buffoon, or in *The Green Mile* (Darabont 1999) John Coffey (Michael Clark Duncan) speaks AAVE as an illiterate, "not so bright" character (Clouse 2019, 207-214). However, contrary to popular belief or what prescriptive approaches to language dictate, just like any other dialect, AAVE is not "bad English" and AAVE's unique grammar, pronunciation, and semantics are not the result of random "error" (Rickford 2012).

Django, on the other hand, is one of the black heroes who speaks AAVE without being portrayed as silly or funny. Django himself is clever and fast learner, and the important thing is that Django's dialect does not change as he learns to read, when his confidence grows, or when he finally becomes heroic. What is wanted to be emphasized with Django's costumes and language is not how a history is written in this movie, but what kind of history is not written. The costume that a black hero does not suit to or the language he does not use belong to westerns dominated by Whites. Django as a black hero does not belong to the conventional world of westerns. Although westerns are perceived as scenes where American history is written, Django emphasizes that he is not a part of American history that was written before him. But it should be noted that what is claimed in this study is not that the experiences and realities of Blacks and slaves are underrepresented in American history. In other words, if we talk about cinema, the problem is not that there are not enough black cowboys in westerns. The problem is that this history, or westerns in the scope of this thesis, represents the ideology of white

slaveowners, and this should be exposed and its institutions should be destroyed for a black hero to complete his arc. In short, *Django Unchained*, as a postmodern metafiction, shows that the reality and representations created on the stage of history and cinema are ideological.

To sum up, history is written from today's perspective. Today's political, economic and ideological structure also shapes history. Similarly, historical films find themselves in the middle of an already existing knowledge and debates before and after meeting with the audience (Rosenstone 1988). Moreover, hi(story) is not a reliable and objective form of writing as claimed to be able to understand and remember the past, and it always includes the story. Cinema can also be seen as a part of history as a storytelling tool, and even as a channel for history to escape from the linearity, standardization, and limitations of texts and documents. Just as westerns rewrote American history with the guidance of the agenda of the period in which they were filmed as Loy (2004) mentions, *Django Unchained* can be seen as part of the understanding of today's world. The film's location and character design show that the white man's conquest of virgin lands may no longer be a viable narrative. In Django, nature itself is a home and haven, civilization is wild and scary. In order to demolish a socialization built on slavery, it is necessary to find alternative ways of writing history, without relying on the ways the slave owners wrote history. The new frontier hero Django has also shown that perhaps it is possible to see the history of black people not as a history of enslavement but also as a history of liberation from slavery, a fight, a disobedience. Finally, in order to do this, the hero does not have to be whitewashed.

As a result, these films, which can be seen as historiographic metafictions with reference to Hutcheon, reveal the narrative forms established by modernism and parody them by including these narratives, and aim at establishing a new narrative, rather than being merely a copy or pastiche of the old. Therefore, intertextual elements and allusions do not only act as a pointless game or easter eggs which Tarantino uses in his films for sharp-eyed fans, but they also work as narrative strategies that reveal the premise of the film. In this film, power can pass to "others" (Jews and/or Blacks) suppressed by modernity. Frightening images of the past, such as Nazis or slave owners, are ridiculed, and the power they signified is overthrown.

4. CONCLUSION

In this thesis study, how the story and narrative strategies used in *Inglourious Basterds* (2009) and *Django Unchained* (2012) work with cinematic memory and historical narrative was examined from a postmodern perspective. Hutcheon's (1988; 2000) approach toward historiographic metafictions and parodies shaped the main theoretical framework that the film analyses were based on.

First, the differences between the modern and postmodern understanding are presented in the literature review. It was argued that the efforts of modernist understanding to define the world in a meaningful integrity with precise truths and to explain it in grand narratives have not been sustainable. Therefore, in a world where there is no universal solid truth, artists are freed from the burden of an impossible task such as reaching the absolute truths. Cinema, where alternative realities are created and performed, has emerged as a medium where this postmodern understanding can be followed. Some directors, such as Tarantino, used intertextual elements in their films to refer to previous artworks and genres in order to build their own realities. However, in Tarantino's films, these collages do not only function as an imitation of previous films, but also as a parody of those films through postmodern criticism. The two main concepts examined in these parodies are classified as cinematic memory and cinematic history.

Literature review on memory and cinema has shown that memory is not only a personally but also a collectively owned and culturally produced concept. It was deduced that information about the past that is remembered through memory can be either kept alive by archiving or can be destroyed by exclusion. Cinema has emerged as a powerful tool that shapes individual, collective and cultural memory through its psychological effects on the audience. Images, concepts, point of views and stories that are frequently repeated in moving images have been transmitted through generations and have become a part of the cultural memories of societies. For instance, although there are very few people who have experienced the Holocaust who are still alive, it has become a part of cultural memory of millions of people with the help of cinema. Films

such as *Schindler's List*, which contribute to formation of the cultural memory of the Holocaust, used the places where the event took place and the images gathered from those places as references in order to capture an authentic reality with the claim of directly representing the Holocaust. These efforts to reach authenticity actually have repeated the images produced by the Nazis and restaged the social traumas through cinema. In these films where weak, sick and poor Jews are oppressed and destroyed by strong, disciplined, healthy and scary Nazi officers, a social trauma has turned into a spectacle for the next generations, especially for American audiences. *Inglourious Basterds*, on the other hand, has turned these repetitive images into a self-reflexive show for the audience. Although the fact that it was the Nazis who committed terrible crimes against humanity, the power is taken from the Nazis with the help of the narration strategies in the film. Throughout the narrative, dozens of Nazi officers, an even Adolf Hitler, are killed by the Jews. Yet more importantly, the powerful image of Nazis is taken away from them and given to the Jews with the help of an alternative characterization and point of view. Although the methods used in this film will not bring back or bring justice to a generation that was the victim of great massacres, it has made it possible to reject the ways of seeing and understanding circumstances that led the event to occur. It is shown that as spectacles, motion pictures do not only represent the past and act as carriers of memory, but also can help to build a reality free from the burdens of the past.

Besides, history is not more objective, more consistent, and more comprehensive than memory in terms of its relationship with the past. The historian builds metanarratives by collating fragments of the past and completing the gaps according to their own agenda. The historians' effort to create a narrative by bringing together interrelated but disjointed fragments is similar to the effort of the filmmakers who construct their narrative by editing different images. In this sense, studies on the relationship between cinema and history highlight two important aspects. First of all, movies can be seen as historical documents that record the people, places and costumes of the period in which they were shot. Secondly, they are also related to history because they reflect the ideology, political and sociological agendas of their era. Especially, westerns have historicized the story of European immigrants' settling on American lands as a story of a

white man in the search for justice, order and civilization, by conquering and taming the chaotic wild geography and the people living in it. *Django Unchained*, criticizes this history by redefining the two key concepts in the narrative: the frontier and the frontier hero. Django does not act as merely an alternative black cowboy in westerns. There are certain civilization symbols which are affirmed in the history written in Westerns and in this film, how problematic the civilization symbols affirmed in the history written in Westerns are shown. In addition, the frontier hero's white male archetype is emphasized, and a black cowboy is shown to be incompatible with this archetype. This point of view reveals that history is an ideological act and thus it puts forwards that trying to reach a historical reality and authenticity through historical representation is a problematic endeavor.

Theodor Adorno, in his one of his most famous statements states, "To write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric." (Adorno 1983, 34). The Holocaust or slavery cannot be reversed. Every word in poetry, every shot in films after such brutal acts is a confirmation that "life goes on". In fact, Adorno does not only emphasize the act of writing poetry, but also the tension between the cultural values of the society that resulted in the Holocaust and cultural representations of it that produce art. From this perspective, it can be stated that making a movie about the Holocaust or slavery is barbaric. Continuing to nourish the cultural codes that made the Holocaust or slavery possible, that is, trying to represent "the historical truth" by representing the perpetrators as strong, scary and "others" as weak, serves to keep the same cultural values of the society that generated the Holocaust alive. Therefore, instead of trying to represent the past with a modern understanding, creating an "alternative" reality and attempting to speak out in this new discourse are the strongest elements that keep postmodern art away from being timeless and meaningless. These two films of Tarantino, which can be seen as historiographic metafictions, expose and parody the narrative forms established by modernism, and try to build a new narrative, instead of being just a copy or pastiche of the old. In these films, power has passed to "others" (Women, Blacks and/or Jews), who were suppressed by modernity.

To conclude, this study has shown that debates on films about the most devastating social traumas in history can and should go beyond the issues of authentic

representation. With the help of the analyzed films, attention was drawn to the power of cinema in creating an alternative reality. It is underlined that postmodern narratives, pastiches and nostalgic films do not have to be pure imitations that cannot establish their own temporality and originality, but that they can be powerful productions that contain the ideological standpoint of their era and a criticism of the conventions they use by establishing their own language. However, since this study is about films, a detailed reading of the aforementioned political and social agenda is beyond the scope of this thesis study. Therefore, the real-life reflection of this alternative reality established in films can be the subject of another study. In addition, these discussions made using *Inglourious Basterds* and *Django Unchained* can be expanded with analyses of other films by different directors. Finally, more comprehensive studies that will be applied to new mediums such as video games which while partially using cinema's narration tools, also transforming the position of the consumer from the audience to the player, can make a rich contribution to the literature.

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