POST-CINEMATIC (MIS-)REPRESENTATION OF ISLAM

Taida Kusturica (Academy of Fine Arts Vienna)

Who controls the past, […], controls the future: who controls the present controls the past.
— GEORGE ORWELL, *1984*

The technological empowerment of the camera and the invention of motion pictures — the cinema, is in Western culture an important extension for understanding the physical, political and sensible world — what we today recognize in all cultural segments as *representations*. In particular, this essay scrutinizes the post-cinema production of political and cultural antagonism towards Islamic culture, and thus approaches cinema as generated cinema, as a hegemony of politics, religion and digital media representations by images. What I am also proposing is that the post-cinematic production of imagery has a structural function in the broader context of neo-imperial desire, as a function that affects the target group — race, identity, gender, religion, and in this context, it enables the complete disappearance of the realistic narrative through new media ecologies. The "new media," which post-cinema as a phenomenon is a part of, will not be considered from the technical point of view, but as the medium of present epistemological and social relationship forming politics with image(s) — information, which becomes the structure of the capitalistic consciousness of a viewer or the central power of global capitalism/neo-imperialism. Such an analysis raises a number of empirical and philosophical questions that I would like to examine briefly.

Camera as the mechanistic term of matter and motion bespeaks reified a Cartesian sense in physics and the philosophy of modernism, which was consequently applied through early cinematic apparatus. Being both an object of desire and gaze, the image was in dire need of the Western consciousness-rationalism represented in dominant colonial-western cinema (French, British, American, and German)[1] and these issues are often portrayed as being unique to the "West." Neither the West nor the East are necessarily geographic notions, but rather imaginary, even ideological fictions, mostly — and I would like to argue here — employed in history via visual mediation ("old and new media"), especially within cinematic apparatus, in relation to political selection, exclusion, limitati-

on, and appropriation. Cinema's innovators, the Lumière brothers, were first agents of colonial narrative in their short films.[2] The creation of *Orient* serves as an example of the outer world manipulated by the virtual perception of apparatuses. Kamran Rastegar in *Surviving Images: Cinema, War, and Cultural Memory in the Middle East* notes: "The major genres of colonial imagination, such as adventure and exploration stories, military narratives, and historical dramas, become fundamental to the success of the cinema industry."[3] I would rather consider only the correlation of cinematic and post-cinematic (*new media*) perspectives of such a complex ideologic/political-aesthetic strategy, by examining how a certain "*image of fate*" and a certain mediological and epistemological background in its representational mode are tied up in the political and religious discourse of today's cinematic mediation. Steven Shaviro argues: "Capital continues to function through the dissimulation of the imperial archive, as it has done throughout the last century."[4] Accordingly, the cinematic medium (from Greek *bios*- bioscop, that means form of life) is used as common sense for the gaze and representation of others, as a way to transcend political power. Cinema that becomes a shorthand for the political by its newly discovered instrumentalized telos, paved the way to the misuse of the contemporary representation of religion — as well as the artistic re-inscription of cultural narratives and religion into political power. Until the present this context of visibility has been a particular mode of aesthetic cognition of human/visual culture. Modern cinema embodied in transcendental imperialism as an aesthetic of anthropology in the process of "cultivation" was primarily inverted into today's *politics of culture* as the very act of setting the value and economic power over those who are to be represented. Radical imperialism, which is today recognized in media and cinema narratives, means that traditional colonial empires due to the importance of machine technology counterfeited and created the autonomy of *time and representation*, which shifts towards the historical relationship of image as the *image of the world*, therefore understanding it as an aesthetical form of experience. The concept of *political modernism*, as known today through the western cinematic medium, is a fundamental layer for understanding the misrepresentation of "double becoming" — from the past colonial *orientalized image of Muslims* and contemporary *creolization of Muslims* (formation of new identities), in post-cinematic imagery, which *reincarnated* already orientalized narratives and prescribed it into a new media political agenda. The whole western genealogy of image is based on this correlation between the technology and politics of transcendental construc-

tion of visuality. Martin Heidegger in *The Age of the World Picture* discussed the phenomenon of making modernity by science and technology as a new medium. "Man becomes the representative [der Repräsentant] of that which is, in the sense of that which has the character of object."[5] Furthermore he argues:

> The age that is determined from out of this event is, when viewed in retrospect, not only a new one in contrast with the one that is past, but it settles itself firmly in place expressly as the new. To be new is peculiar to the world that has become picture.[6]

Such a way of capitalization of biosocial functions and vision, through the power of technology, among others, is otherwise known as commodification dominating our cultural understanding of representation. Also, this type of historical genealogy of imagining in present-ing, opening a speculative form of today's *world view-image* in age of digital imag(e)/ing of world — putting at stake ideological and visual misapprehension. Contemporary digital *tools* are prone to manipulate perception, as picture does not "behave" as a classical picture — the representation of "impression of reality" through the medium. I find the following considerations provide convincing examples in contemporary mass-media-post-cinematic mode of production and digital ontology of images. They preceded the conscious visualisation and shaped those sensory deprived pictures of reality that have shifted the ground of the cinematic medium, and thus the general visual understanding and perceiving of the world. In other words, this paper insists on re-framing our understanding of what cinema was in light of what it is now becoming in the age of digital media cultural politics. The cinematic medium in a classical sense, as materiality of image and ancient desire for narrative(s), still orders present and post-modern society, but in a different way. It animates the most complex ideological and political secret of social movements which brought about new epistemological functions of the political economy through images. In order to understand the contemporary cinema/image within the new communication paradigm, it is of the utmost importance that the science of image is able to determine an ontological line between analogue and digital image in the process of the dematerialisation of society and its sociological image, memory and reality. It is where the cinema withstands the same destiny; that is the dematerialization between reality and ir-reality as well as the political discourse within society. Going from technics into techno-

logy is the change from an analogue into a digital paradigm, out of the historical deve-
lopment of thinking and being, and is evident in the technocratic society. Images become
the mimetic portraits of political engineering which change our perception toward the
Orwellian anti-utopian dehumanized power they have. And the economy was the concept
of their *living* linkage not in the mode of representation, but in the mode of simulation.
The space and time of the digital image demand us to take a different approach to the
images, not as in the old Greek term *eikon*, i.e., an impression or a representation, but
rather in experiences, events, and a special sort of manifestation. It reminds us that the
interplay between the *apparatus* and the *medium* always has a political dimension, accor-
dingly, post-cinema would mark not a caesura but a transformation that abjures, emula-
tes, prolongs, mourns, or pays homage to the cinema.

The digital sphere is a completely new way of ordering reality within which notions
such as originality, copy, reproduction or representation no longer hold their own authen-
tic sense in the way that two-dimensional photography resided on its own ontological
ground of indexicality(-trace), but rather the incomparable epistemological levels which
the image theory has to take into consideration as the line between reality and appearance
of reality is disappearing. That is not just the same old vivid sense of aliveness of televisi-
on or cinema, that is "real" with a difference, the time-image becomes the time control-
image, a tool for creation of a new political *imag(e)/ing of the world*. An indicative example
illustrating a "picture of the world" as an image is the 9/11 Twin Towers in New York
City.[7] It was represented in regard to Islamic terrorism, and in which the post-cinematic
narrative of terror conjures modern cinema's legacy of imperial narratives with the new
narrative; so then again it becomes one of many cinematic deceptions/effects of Hollywo-
od misinterpretation of the world. I am going to investigate elements and structures in the
post-cinematic medium that correspond with global frenzy and its representation through
the new political apparatus covered by "new" media as a post-cinematic moving images
medium in the mis-interpretation of Islam. An important feature of the contemporary
image is that it is not defined with language as *logos*, but information-*code*. Therefore, it is
a programmed and transcoded image that leads viewers — and viewers no longer indica-
te people passively sitting and watching propaganda movies in the cinema or on televisi-
on — towards a new approach of epistemology inside the cinema. From the effects they
might have on the recipient, i.e., our ability to make judgements, the historical connection

becomes questionable prior to loss of its iconic analogy. Thus, cinematic narrative is not inscribed in matter within the physical world, but is displayed on a cognitive invisible world map — the display of a possible reality. The relationship between events and recognition as such is a basic layer upon which the digital image creates its power — the power to alter them into pure abstraction. It could be compared with the experience of Malevich's famous painting of *Black Square* (1915) as a radically-non-representational image/pixel, but with ontological recognition as an image in the sense of its physical reality and perceptual realism. Finally, this thesis, in regard to the becoming-abstract of the visual, suggests a new set of insights. Lev Manovich addresses the meaning of these changes in the filmmaking process comparing it with pre-cinematic practices — hand painting:

> As cinema enters the digital age, these techniques are again becoming the commonplace in the filmmaking process. Consequently, cinema can no longer be clearly distinguished from animation. It is no longer an indexical media technology but, rather, a sub-genre of painting.[8]

From this thought, one can conclude how everything can be easily airbrushed towards a totally new order of receiving the "truth." Computer memory is also not affected by the variability of time as well as politics and history; that is to say, it works between narratives and symptoms of narratives. From this paradox, the sense of post-cinema is inevitably caught in these feedback loops in a rapidly changing media environment, and any assessment of the historical and affective changes signalled by this term continue to define the future. D.N. Rodowick discussed the following:

> The most difficult question, then, relates to the ethics of computational interactions; that is, evaluating our contemporary mode of existence and addressing how our ontology has changed in our interactions with computer screens. What epistemological and ethical relations to the world and to collective life do simulation automatisms presuppose?[9]

At the core of digital technology, in relation to the industrial-mechanical, is the power of pure aesthetics (*hyper-aesthetic* realm), without instrumentalisation of body and perception

— *looking as labor* — that Jonathan Beller immediately suggested by the term *cinematic mode of production*. The present condition is better defined with Wendy Hui Kyong Chun's assertations of *programmed vision* as a direct dialogue with the software codification of feeling, geopolitics, and identity's socio-political features. Thus, to understand the contemporary image, it is not enough to recognize the operation of the economy solely, but also to understand the metaphor that conjoins them. Therefore, the image renders algorithmic code (cognitive manipulation) which already executes the *biopower* and *governmentality* in the very structure. In Foucauldian terms, *that* creates a dispositive of totally new modes of existence where the post-cinematic image becomes the future self. This compensation of the discourse of knowledge/power notion with the notion of dispositive is what Deleuze marks as the transition from disciplinary into controlling societies in 1992, i.e., society transitions toward the post-historical phenomenon. The present "post-historical time" (the new global vision) in cinematography, escapes from its historical context — what Jean-Luc Godard defined for cinema as "truth 24 frames per second" — and emerged as an ambiguous tool of paradoxal mis-interpretation of its own purpose to inscribe the narrative and to represent it — putting new cognitive and physical demands on the viewer. Digital images already look through pictures in metanarrative mode (a mode that works on an algorithm that scans all other pictures previously made and stored in memory). On this legacy digital images already make post-memory on which the contemporary platform of representations is based, where the present does not exist as it existed in the "old media" apparatus. Therefore, the "digital present" is programmed, consequently, the *image* could not be described as the metaphysics of Heidegger's *world picture* (the equivalent for modern beings is their position in the midst of this picture). It is a metaphor on its own which speculates on the preferences of present data-mixing into fabulation of reality where everyone is in a state of being misused and is not able to struggle to find a collective image of how to define themselves.

To comprehend cinema as a world vision-image, dependent on the "new" technology of media, means that it not only mediates between the observer and the observed, but also creates a metapolitical condition that concerns the emergence of a new concept of perceiving or *episteme*, as well as new forms of political and visual *affect/sensibility*. Therefore, the connection and sense in which the *(mis)-representation* of Islamic culture and identity should be understood is as a prefiguration between the *post-cinematic* mode and what Ma-

rianne Hirsch (2008) named *post-memory*[10] — a memory of cultural trauma not experienced first-hand but rather transferred vicariously. The age of a computer memory device rarely corresponds to the age of the memory it holds; the device and its content do not fade together. The new media, with its ephemeral structure provides a strong motion structure of aliveness, the *prosthetic memory* immediacy that amplifies single action, expanding it into a narrative that "restarts" temporarily a new *re-orientalization* of eastern identity in contemporary visual culture and cinema plots. As a paradoxal example for this assertation, it is crucial to mention the 9/11 event, as a consequence of which post-cinema apparatuses expanded *post-memory* (compressed time and space) onto global political and cultural patterns, resulting in the desired political effect/affect of the vilification of Muslims in the United States — and at present utmost global hate — indebted and remediated into new-media cinema-narratives, where the Muslims are subjected to rules on non participatory acts as well as of conscience in making the political and historical context. They remain either as consumers of foreign media power or as an object of stereotypical images for economic power. The key to digital technologies is not "immateriality" but the fact that they can be "programmed" and epitomized as new imagery — the parallel (and paranoid) myths of the Internet as total freedom/total control, stem from the dehumanization of political problems into technological ones. Lev Manovich asserts that "cinema gives birth to a computer," in a configuration between time, memory and perception that

> gradually, cinema taught us to accept the manipulation of time and space, the arbitrary coding of the visible, the mechanization of vision, and the reduction of reality to a moving image as a given. As a result, today the conceptual shock of the digital revolution is not experienced as a real shock - because we were ready for it for a long time.[11]

In the modern post-cinematic era of changeable ideologies, the most powerful link is the one between religions and cultures/identity. In the new era, it is not the Islam described in terms of faith and new world discoveries, but a ruthless terror of calling the Islam a "political religion" thus becoming the most dangerous phenomenon of the modern day which allows the media to shape repression out of historical ability and human impact.

Manovich explains that in regard to this visual technology, the subject in the digital setting

> has to be standardized, and the means by which they are standardized need to be standardized as well. Hence the objectification of internal, private mental process, and their equation with external visual forms which can be easily manipulated, mass produced, and standardized on its own. [12]

Traditional understanding of the new media — as analytical thinking — in intermediary and its realistic transfer of information can no longer provide an adequate reading of the visual; the digital media are based on softwaring the vision, as Gene Youngblood introduced this shift from new media to *metamedia*. Experience has turned into the appearance of the real, and appearance into the experience of the hyper-real. Thus, the return to the image seems to have launched experience far beyond language, into the images, that have gained power thanks to new technologies, and particularly thanks to the abuse of these new technologies. The very bond of this sense is the present reappropriation of past and future narratives — e.g., the colonial past of Arabs into a new narrative of the "Islamic terrorist," which is a perpetual example of the mis/interpretative models of Islamic culture and memory that are moving towards new epistemological models of knowledge and visual production.

The totalitarianism of the contemporary media no longer has its enacting subject — it is electronic politics that governs now with the help of images. The post-cinematic vision in films and media creates the historical transition of a new era of power evident in the new radically changed conditions of viewing and new ways in which films address their spectators. The perception of image as video or film is blurred in the consciousness of the recipients of images, because a computer as a mediator conflated memory with devices, creating the ideological (self-)censorship incorporating it into the "reality" of narrative. Wendy Chun elaborated software as an analogy for ideology; one could say that neoliberalism, as well as the control of the "masses," became a cinema form in the reality of post-cinematically mediated events, as multiple simulations display in a gamespaces-like world. Software embedded multi-corporational *télos* colonized through the new "visible" regime, creating a most oppressive historical mis-representation of Islam in the post-im-

perial world. Thus, the post-cinematic regime is the new political regime — the "war on terror" is a projection of the post-cinematic magic of multilayered "reality" that executes powerful historical capital of memory and historicity. The link between the cinema and post-cinematic is that the latter perceptuality capitalises the consciousness with images through an already capitalised image of the future, i.e., memory. It is referred to as *post-* as a pseudo-temporal and an abstract extension to which the proliferation of images is never simply a neutral process but rather something that greatly shapes the meaning and experience of the moving images. Through the perpetual project of democratization of mass mediation in the present day, the new mode of reducing the "others" via high-tech Orientalism objectified the reality and made it possible, that after all (media ideological underpinnings of Tower collapsing) the viewer is given no way of framing the attack as anything other than a completely irrational and totally undeserved act of aggression.

Using the term *expanded cinema*, Gene Youngblood defined a promising historical process to manifest consciousness as a reality of synaesthetic images. His essays in *Expanded Cinema* (1970) were very innovative concerning not the aesthetics of the cinema, but putting the accent on the viewers. They will later become the key point in the era of post-cinematic mediation. I have chosen the iconic example of the "9/11" Twin Towers collapsing (2001) mediation — the brute fact-event made up of the" images" — as powerful action-images which tend to illustrate this new role of post-cinema world vision, as well as the awareness of an aesthetical image manipulation with religion and culture in the era of new media ecologies. Post-cinema emerged within digital media neo-colonization. The government's monopoly on post–9/11 war-related media images was strong. The *9/11* documentary runs for two hours, with an hour of bonus material on the DVD which is comprised primarily of testimonials by New York Fire Department (NYFD) personnel. It was made by two French filmmakers, Jules and Gédéon Naudet. I would like to point out that this was a strong catalyst and inauguration of the ideologically-political post-cinematic narrative. This documentary and others are a typically affective structural incarnation of identity politics, where the ideological construction of subjectivity is central to creation of the movie — on the one hand victimization and, on the other the image of terror. This is, of course, exactly the form taken by the Naudet brothers' documentary as it attempts to convert a "decentring" tale of terror into a "re-centring" story of heroism and community spirit. The irony is that the camera on that day was waiting on the spot with the film director for the event, likewise other people's mobile cameras. It is this image/narrative that

plays a decisive role in the viewer's opinion, where cinematic techniques were employed in documentary and as well in other documentary films in which the audience is confused by the edited point of view, with highly successful fictional movie effects represented as a document of reality:

> The framing of the story departs from traditional films about the disaster, which typically shows the first plane hitting Tower 1, the "Oh, my God" response of those on the ground, then the second plane hitting Tower 2, followed by the collapse of the two towers and the screams and frantic attempts of those on the ground to avoid the debris. *9/11* opens in the traditional manner, but then adds depth by flashing back to the history of Ladder 1 and the selection of Tony Benetatos upon his graduation to be the featured rookie as he finally becomes the fireman that he has always wanted to be. He lost his life on 9/11. The film ends with a pictorial montage scroll of the firemen who lost their lives that day to the fade-out song, "Danny Boy."[13]

Ziauddina Sardara and Merryl Wyn Davies in the book *American Dream, Global Nightmare* (2004) argue that the American media has a bad influence on its citizens, as well as the destiny of every individual on this planet. The authors believe that the American film industry is vital in creating mythical prejudice: "Cinema is the engine and empire metaphorically and in reality."[14] They analyse a few American films and come to conclusions which then create these *myths*, and they serve to govern American society and global politics. One of them is *Cinematography* (Hollywood) *and War* (colonization) as being necessary for creating the nation and state — whereas symbols of war are in every aspect of American society and culture (films, TV series, video games, toys) and war rhetorics are a component of the *end of history* hypothesis by Francis Fukuyama, also *The Clash of Civilizations* by Samuel Huntington, a liberal *project for the new American century.* Islam as a culture and religion has changed immensely in the cinematic language — it has become a cinematic *aftereffect* image serving global visual neo-imperialism. The relation between media reception (cinema) and Islam is profound and multi-layered, especially in the age of digital manipulation of time and space, what Chun has called a *hi-tech Orientalism*. Concerning the medium, contemporary cinema reshapes images on a new level of digital ontology — image without image (images do stand on aesthetic or moving image). The absence of his-

tory or political life in post-cinematic apparatus creates hybridized telos, what I would like to put under the term of *hi-tech Orientalism,* that is to say that all temporal zones (past, present, future) are dissolving into the medium without materiality/reality in which images do not possess historical genealogies. This is a crucial layer on which the system of post-representations that constitutes our modernity stands. Thus, the image without medium and medium without image became a virtual weapon of the new media technocracy. But, the digital is just another time-based spatial media; it should not be understood as something newborn or degrading, but as a process that contextualized a new form of visual and political life of the image. The last decades have seen a multiplication of scholars dealing with Islam and media, especially post-9/11. A great number of studies have investigated the (mis)representations of Islam and Muslims, mostly in Western media (Olfat Hassan Agha 2000; Rubina Ramji 2003; Mark Silk 2003; Elizabeth Poole 2006; Amir Saeed 2007), but also in the media of the Middle East (Lila Abu-Lughod 2005; Lina Khatib 2006). Representations of Muslims in the media in the post-9/11 context have shown some levels of complexity, as opposed to the one-dimensional caricatures of earlier times. These representations are occurring in what Evelyn Alsultany in her book *Arabs and Muslims in the Media: Race and Representation after 9/11* (2012) describes as a post-race era through "simplified complex representations,"[15] and these representations unwittingly collaborate in forming multicultural and post-race illusions, and are ultimately framed in the context of terrorism. Religions are powerful, dynamic socio-cultural systems, working at both micro (the socialization dimension) and macro (political dimension) levels of society. The link between film reception and religion opens new terrains of audience engagement with film in a digital era of post-cinematic production.

Marie-José Mondzain significantly utilized the term *iconophilia* to show the obsession with visual imagery. She elaborates the visual spectacle's capacity to appeal, seduce or strike and control the consciousness and remarks on how this "sensuality" is recruited in order to execute political ideologies. According to Mondzain, even the most *aniconic* regime that rejects the visual exerts power through the manipulation of visual spectacle which she refers to as *wars of images*.[16] The digital image is an absence of image. This type of aesthetics is visible in the post-continuity aesthetics of contemporary film, which juxtaposes and layers spatially and temporally discordant images with little interest in the kind of totality of the twentieth-century filmic diegesis, as well as its pervasive reliance upon

compositing as such (CGI-Computer Generated Imagery, GIS imagery, Bullet time effects). The filmic strike of post-9/11 imagery of the collapsing Twin Towers is a very powerful post-cinematic effect by the fact of the absence of such pictures in the media. Namely, the only images that exist were shot by documentary filmmaker Jules Naudet and sold to Gamma agency the same day, which has crucially opened the phenomenon and method of a public "image-iconoclasm" that conflates with perceptual deprivation *to see* on the global stage, and was used as a justified means of implicitly laying the groundwork for the impending invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan. This postcinematic media has continued in iconoclastic sacrifice of Muslim people — the first victims were Islamic leaders, such as Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden. A whole conglomerate of films was produced during the post-9/11 era, crucially for the purpose of depicting a fundamentalist interpretation of the *Qur'an* and Islamic people, what we today can recognize in global anti-Islamic films, such as: *New York Firefighters: The Brotherhood of 9/11* (2002), *United 93* (2006), *Unanswered Question from 9/11* (2005), *The Search for Osama bin Laden* (2007), *Uncle Saddam* (2000), etc. — those films are only a small part of the large propaganda against Islam, and are thematically linked in their treatment of the Muslim identity.

Therefore, it is not an accident that pictures of the Iraqi leader were made by a filmmaker. A ridiculous 14-minute YouTube trailer *Innocence of Muslims* (2012) is an anti-Islamic film that sparked violent protests throughout the Muslim world, and later became a leitmotif in feature films. The film *Uncle Saddam* — that won the award for best documentary at both the Northampton Festival and New Orleans Film Festival — was not shot by a director, but was composed from file footage, mainly cut from military channels. According to John Markert "The film reflects a rather simplistic and stereotypical perception of the Iraqi leader. This is undoubtedly the reason the film, shot in 2000, and was finally shown in post-9/11 America, just a few months before the invasion of Iraq."[17] Markert gives a further explanation:

> Most of the films that follow *Uncle Saddam* rely on the same format: talking heads, file footage, judgmental narrative. In part, the simplified picture that is found on many of these films is related to their status as television documentaries that are ground out for the Military Channel, History Channel, and Discovery Channel, whose logo, "*Entertain* your brain" [author's italics], is itself an indicative of their approach to current

events. Their inclusion here is due to their availability on movie sites. They are dealt with summarily, largely because they add little to the documentary format or to the portrait of Saddam or Iraq that has not already been critiqued in *Uncle Saddam.* They do, however, reflect a popular mind-set toward Saddam in the United States, and their initial showing and subsequent viewing only served to reinforce the popular belief about him.[18]

Images are the fastest mediators when sent to the consciousness. In this way the film and media industry achieves the status of an almost religiously iconic effect on the human psyche thus making technological and social transitions, an expanding sensorium by erasing and remaking the consciousness. It would be naïve to say that the media create reality and culture; it is only an emanation of the construction which in its core holds the technology which would make capitalism disappear. While explaining post-modernism Fredric Jameson argues that it is *experienced as a spatial dysfunction that consists of* the symptom and expression of a new and historically original dilemma "insertion as individual subject into a multidimensional set of radically discontinuous realities."[19]

Augmentation of the visual (however past and present) is an instrument for capital which targets not just territory but also consciousness, visual relations and the imagination itself. The present cinematic spectacle embodied in the post-cinematic mode is a close nexus between the declining colonial power in the days of Western-European colonialism, overlapping with the rising of the new global "enemy" after the Cold War — namely, in the Islamic War on Terror. The fall of the Berlin wall on 11th September 1989 was a metaphor for the dangers of East-communism, mostly represented in science fiction plots, and the fall of the Twin Towers in New York on 11th September 2001 embodies a new metaphor of the big enemy incorporated in the image of Muslims / terrorists in post-cinematic media, and those are the main historical events deliberated by the revolution of images. In the twilight of 1990 the power of the image becomes a crucial agent with the rise of digital ecologies (computer-generated images) with a new mode of cinematography — remixing and re-ordering past and present events into future ones. The thirty-six-seconds shot of the Tower collapsing should be regarded as both an isolated film image—as part of a *set*, i.e., the documentary film *9/11* — and as a part of a historical event. Jacques Rancière argues that *movement-image* and *time-image* are two different points of view on the image.

That is, the difference is not ontological but epistemological that considers this participatory role of the spectator as an important characteristic of the aesthetic regime of art. It is because the effect of the aesthetic can never be anticipated; it calls for spectators acting as active interpreters. Thus, the role of post-cinematic media is crucially bonded to the memory of present and future, hence the epistemological layer between viewers-users of reality is no longer cinematic (indexical and analogical). It is represented and perceived before any events, therefore there is no visual transcription — the witnessing of an event, that goes along with the example of the 9/11 attack as post-cinematically directed politics. In other words, today Islam embodies an iconography of power and subordination that dispersed as Jean Baudrillard writes: "Terrorism, like virus is everywhere."[20]

It is highly necessary to understand the new epistemology of what Shaviro termed *post-cinematic*, arguing: "We are now witnessing the emergence of a different media regime, and indeed of a different mode of production, than those which dominated the twentieth century. Digital technologies, together with neoliberal economic relations, have given birth to radically new ways of manufacturing and articulating lived experience."[21] Contemporary cameras, in short, are deeply enmeshed in an expanded, indiscriminately articulated plenum of images that exceed capture beyond the form of photographic or perceptual "objects." These cameras — and the films that utilize them — mediate a nonhuman ontology of computational image production, processing, and circulation, leading to a thoroughgoing discorrelation of contemporary images from human perceptibility. Political ideology becomes sensory every-day living, which appropriates the memory and aliveness through images. In *Orienting Orientalism, or How to Map Cyberspace*, Wendy Chun discusses how cyberspace narratives perpetuate Orientalist fantasies within machine mythology. Chun offers a helpful discussion on how cyberspace functions as a new frontier to be explored and colonized. Therefore, the close interconnection of digital technology with neoliberal/neo-colonial politics of the West, in culture opens — evident in the cinema representations — a new correlation between media, perception and reception. Chun argues:

> By interrogating software and the visual knowledge it perpetuates, we can move beyond the so-called crisis in indexicality toward the new way in which visual knowledge — seeing/visible reading as knowing — is being transformed and perpetuated, not simply rendered obsolete or displaced.[22]

The result of this change is a change in the status of experience, as perception is changing at great speed while consciousness compared to it is changing slowly. Computer-generated images influence the scheme of what can be seen and not seen, known and not known. Therefore, we become drama users, not the viewer-mediator of film-drama as we used to be. There is this larger epistemic drive to make sense of the visible through an invisible program that links past to the present, as well as an individual to the population, in terms of elucidating invisible programs of the post-cinematic language. In the post-cinema, viewers are in a position of control, they are not only the subjects but also the objects of the manipulation — not only does programmability mean that images are manipulable in new ways, it also means that post-cinema interacts on the level of fake images. Lev Manovich, in *The Language of New Media*, asserts: "New media may look like media, but this is only surface."[23] The image which shows on the screen, as stable as it seems, is actually generated, or *governed*. As Chun writes, computers "coincide with the emergence of neoliberalism. As well as control of "masses" computers have been central to processes of individualization or personalization."[24]

The term *Orientalisation* — as well as *Balkanisation*[25] — embodies a rise of identity politics theory that escalated in the so called *cultural wars* driven in the 1990s and after. Chun indicates that "when digital cameras were introduced to the mass market in 1990s, many scholars and legal experts predicted the end of photography and film."[26] The post-cinematic mode of mediation — via the digital image — "by contrast break the temporal link between record and event, […] there is, theoretically, no fixed relationship between captured event and image."[27] The software or computer *logic* as an "immaterial" relation changes the nature of subject-object relations. Hence, religion — as it is the presently political satanization of Islam — corresponds to a new media conversion onto an immaterial base, as a *vapory*,[28] tool for governmentality, as Chun asserts: "vapories are not accidental but rather essential to the new media."[29] The new media continues to create and is spreading the *programmed visions* that "automatically brings together disciplinary and sovereign power through the production of self-enforcing rules."[30] In the post-cinema, audiences do not become just users — they are converted into actors, political objects, and act as though they are the "source." From the ontological point of view, the image of an event is what makes the memory of one nation. The issue that arises from 9/11 is one of the key examples of modern-day manipulation of memory through post-cinematic tools using visual

shock, also showing the importance of the understanding of politics. The post-cinema, according to Shaviro, is a new form of the 21st century film that incorporates digital technologies into their narratives. The Film is no longer defined just by a canon of great works, or historical truth about events, but rather as a mass of moving pictures that calls for new taxonomies of images which turn it into an element of everyday governance and mis-usage of the cultural memory. As Wendy Chun explains: "Digital media is degenerative, forgetful, erasable. This degeneration makes it both possible and impossible for it to imitate the analogue media, making it perhaps a device for history, but only through its ahistorical (or memoryless) functioning, through the ways in which it constantly transmits and regenerates text and image."[31] It is not anymore the question of time-image as temporal ontology — to be connected with present or with past — it is the question of *post-* (without any temporality) that becomes the wheel of the future.

IMAGE AS SHOCK DOCTRINE

Naomi Klein wrote groundbreaking studies uncovering historical research in the book *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* (2007), where she brings to light the making of *shock doctrine theory* based on experiments in electroshock and sensory deprivation theory in the 1950s, also applied as political tool in Pinochet's coup in Chile in 1973, in the Falklands War in 1982, in the Tiananmen Square Massacre in 1989, in the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, in the Asian Financial crisis in 1997, in Hurricane Mitch in 1998, and in the disintegration of Yugoslavia,[32] until the 9/11 Twin Towers attack where this doctrine came to be the political staging for economic-free market-power and world-wide genocide. Along with Deleuze, an important feature of the film image is the shock, as a direct and physiological relationship between the mind and perception. He draws the term *shock* from Antonin Artaud and Sergei Eisenstein to underline his view that thinking is an unavoidable result of film — an effect on the cortex. In this way it can be seen that Deleuze has established the foundation for rethinking images throughout the relationship of "shock" and perception, or he might have foreseen the image which will appear in the psychotic presence at the height of digital circulation and reproduction. This aesthetic version of "terrorism" is very similar to the first action image of train-steam-powered action

in the early cinema — i.e., the first action movie from Lumière brothers which worked on the basis of sensory shock. The theory of sensory deprivation that Naomi Klein elaborated in the economical sense of great power, reflects on the medial image of the 21st century, i.e., the post-cinematic image as a striking and effective apparatus. In order to understand the historical relationship of the film and the images better, one difference is noticeable in classical film as a geopolitical means of colonisation and contemporary post-film as a unitary sensory-cognitive apparatus. The awareness in the latter is based on the hybrid reality that introduces the unconscious formations of the relationship of the reality of the past and the future filling it with fear and shock through the realistic-visual (as the post-cinematic images take place literally in front of our eyes).

In the critical study of Edward Said's at the end of the 1970s, *Orientalism,* it is shown how the West used all forms of knowledge and was able to take part in the creation of an ideological image about the so-called *East* during the history of colonization in order to keep it tamed. The modern era is characterized by the post-historical loss of permanent territory and a secure position in new virtual worlds, games, simulations of cybernetic films in which a man is determined by being plunged into the media events of the technocratic world.

The exotic "Other," which still adheres to the East-orient, including also the Balkan world, is explained above all by the film of great cultural uniformity which characterizes the Western world. The picture is truly no longer mimesis. Its "function" is the new media (creating the new reality) which creates new sensory devices — watching, listening, and above all, a new political building of the cultural image of the world. The best way to see this is in the example of a film script in the form of recording techniques of the falling of the Twin Towers on 9/11. The perception of these images made a complex collision of fiction and reality. The images of the falling tower were immediately made into action-images rendering the attacks as "fictional." Thus, electronic images have created a combination of triviality and shock in the *post-cinematic* visuality. In neoliberalism, the image feeds itself with an image. In order for an image to come into existence, it has to make and renew constant crises, which it achieves through the economic *shock doctrine* of Milton Friedman and the Chicago school.

Marie-José Mondzain argues that the question of the economy cannot be separated from the question of the image itself. Photography and film allow us to compare the past and the present in a way that they represent an organic process which contains the me-

mory and its length of appearance, something that is impossible in the modern media. Various attempts to identify the defining characteristics of these newer media (and hence their salient differences from older media) emphasize that they are essentially digital, interactive, networked, ludic, miniaturized, mobile, social, processual, algorithmic, aggregative, environmental, or convergent, among other things. Culture becomes the media, and religion becomes a media category in which the deprivation and destruction of the ontological and material side of the former analogous relationship between the media-like apparatus and the telos embodied in that relationship lose every touch. So, the time and duration that we have in the classical film sense of events is expanded. This relationship between the viewer and what they see is a crucial relationship of events that must take place in a certain historical time and narrative. It then depreciates and becomes a fantastic reality — which is the total opposite of the SF film genre, because it turns into a realistic fantasy in which the post-cinema as an exorcistical medium extracts the effects and affects of the picture. And then, we can say that the post-cinema is some sort of auto-pilot, developing and managing the event itself, which is not an organic movement. Images from the transition are transferred into transaction images where affects have been radically transformed; they become the object of a global programming in which *cinema* occupies a unique place — "real life" becomes a redesigned temporal object.

Hypervideo technologies, generated image and sense, and post-media industry, that have converted the *industrial* world into the *hyperindustrial* are subordinating entire worlds of culture, knowledge, and mind, along with artistic creation and advanced research and instruction, to the imperatives of development and the market as economic and political power. In this century in the world where images have become the dominant relation among people, in the increasingly global society that produced the political-economic ideology of religion, image becomes the tool for repression.

---

1. For further discussion see Wolfgang Fuhrmann, "*Imperial Projections: Screening the German Colonies*" (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2015). German colonial cinematography is needed to be represented more publicly, due to lack of data as well production processes.

2. Gorham Anders Kindem, *The International Movie Industry* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2002). "Senegal was introduced to film activities as early as 1905, when *L'Arrivée d'un train en gare de la ciottat* and *L'arroseur arose*, […] were exhibited in Dakar by French circus group and filmmakers." (117).

3. Kamran Rastegar, *Surviving Images: Cinema, War, and Cultural Memory in the Middle East* (Oxford: University Press, 2015), 19-20.

4. Steven Shaviro, *Post Cinematic Affect* (Winchester: Zero Books, 2010), 31.

5. Martin Heidegger, "The Age of the World Picture," in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essay,* trans. William Lowitt (New York: Garland Publishing, 1977), 132 (brackets in original).

6. Ibid.

7. On this question see "Daniele Ganser: Die Wahrheit über den 11 September," YouTube video, 6:22, July 30, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qxglXfOu8GY. There are strong scientific and political argument that 9/11 are conspiracy theories which American authorities created to start war in Iraq.

8. Lev Manivich, "What is Digital Cinema," http://manovich.net/content/04-projects/009-what-is-digital-cinema/07_article_1995.pdf.

9. D. N. Rodowick, *The Virtual Life of Film* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 174.

10. Marianne Hirsch, "The Generation of Postmemory," http://facweb.northseattle.edu/cscheuer/Winter%202012/Engl%20102%20Culture/Readings/Hirsch%20Postmemory.pdf.

11. See Manovich, "Cinema and Digital Media," in *Perspectives of Media Art*, ed. Jeffrey Shaw and Hans Peter Schwarz (Ostfildern: Cantz Verlag 1996), 4.

12. Manovich, *The Language of New Media* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2001), 74.

13. John Markert, *Post-9/11 Cinema: Through a Lens Darkly* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2011), 29.

14. Sardar Ziauddin, and Merryl Wyn Davies, *American Dream: Global Nightmare* (London: Icon Books, 2004), 127.

15. See Evelyn Alsultany, *Arabs and Muslims in the Media: Race and Representation after 9/11* (New York: NYU Press, 2012).

16. See Marie-José Mondzain, "Can Images Kill?," *Critical Inquiry* 36.1 (2009): 20-51.

17. Markert, *Post-9/11 Cinema*, 2.

18. Ibid., 7.

19. Fredric Jameson, "Cognitive Mapping,"in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 351.

20. Jean Baudrillard, *The Spirit of Terrorism and Other Essays*, trans. Chris Turner (London: Verso, 2003),10.

21. Shaviro, *Post Cinematic Affect*, 2.

22. Wendy Hui Kyong Chun, *Programmed Visions: Software and Memory* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2011), 92.

23. Lev Manovich, *The Language of New Media*, 48.

24. Chun, *Programmed Visions*, 7 (my emphasis).

25. Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009). Maria Todorova wrote a key book on the Balkan problem, which she defined as an ideological product of the West's policy rather than an eternal geographic and cultural twilight zone.

26. Chun, *Programmed Visions*, 15.

27. Ibid.

28. The phrase *Vapor theory* was coined by Peter Lunenfeld and Geert Lovnik.

29. Chun, *Programmed Visions*, 21.

30. Ibid., 27.

31. Chun, *Programmed Visions*.

32. Naomi Klein, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2007). In the book, the case of dissolution of Yugoslavia was not given as an example for Shock Doctrine; the author of this text draws the connection.