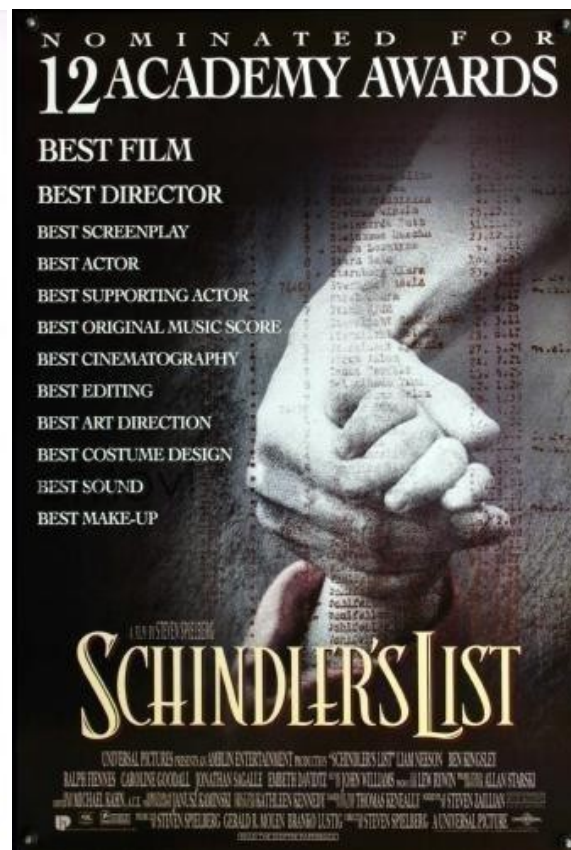




Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen

The Hollywood Holocaust Memory

A critical analysis of “The Diary of Anne Frank” and “Schindler’s List”



Bachelor Thesis

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Abstract and Keywords

The broader field of my research revolves around the American Holocaust Memory, a complex concept which is shaped both by politics as well as popular culture. By means of a visual analysis, this thesis takes as a central work both “The Diary of Anne Frank” and “Schindler’s List”. This thesis defines and explores the influence of both movies on Americanizing the American Holocaust Memory. The main research question is: How did the movies “The Diary of Anne Frank” and “Schindler’s List” Americanize the American Holocaust memory? Answering this question will help to define the influence of Hollywood movies on the audience’s memory of the Holocaust. In this thesis I will demonstrate that both *The Diary of Anne Frank* and *Schindler’s List* reduce the horrors of the Holocaust while highlighting the concept of heroism. Both films also represent the need for a justification of participation as well as closure. This, and many other amendments to the Holocaust have immensely Americanized the American Holocaust Memory.

Key words: Schindler’s list, Anne Frank, the Holocaust, Jewish victim, Holocaust memory, diary Americanization, Hollywood, popular culture, heroism, justification of participation, closure, amendments.

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I. Introduction

1.1. Context

My grandfather was both a prisoner and survivor of the Buchenwald concentration camp. I know that my grandfather's mark on his leg was caused by a bullet and that he was able to survive due to working in the kitchen. However, I required this knowledge from my mother and stories were barely ever told about his WWII experience. He died many years ago and my knowledge of the Second World War is, therefore, mainly dependent on what has been written and filmed about the Holocaust. We are currently living in a time where the possibility of transmitting "living memory" of the Holocaust is becoming more and more difficult due to the absence of survivors of World War II. Alison Landsberg, professor at Duke University, states that "when there are no longer survivors left to testify, when memories are no longer guaranteed and anchored by a body that lived through them, responsible memory transmission becomes problematic" (Landsberg 112). Since more and more survivors are beginning to pass away, the need for a truthful method of keeping the memory alive is becoming more pressing. While the Holocaust has gradually become a more central element of collective memory in many countries, collective memory in Western countries has become extremely fragmented. Although the Holocaust Memory is actively kept alive in American Culture, the widespread acknowledgement of the subject also comes with many challenges. Primo Levi, a survivor of Auschwitz, wrote the following about an encounter with a schoolboy who asked him why he hadn't managed to escape: "Within its limits, it seems to me that this episode illustrates quite well the gap that exists and grows wider every year between things as they were down there and things as they are represented by the current imagination... it is part of our difficulty or inability to perceive the experience of others, which is all the more pronounced the further these experiences are from ours in time, space, or quality" (Levi 128). Is it true to say that when years pass, Hollywood will have less ability to make the audience fully grasp the horrors of war? We are currently entering an age of digitalization where any image can be constructed to look "authentic" (Landsberg 112). Visual representations of history are becoming more and more attractive to our younger generation. Metz explains how "films give us the feeling that we are witnessing an almost real spectacle. Unlike photographs, films are able to create the impression that objects have concrete life by setting them in motion" (Metz 4). Hollywood's representation of the Holocaust is a highly debated topic, due to the fact that many directors were not even part of the Second World War. One may wonder then, who has the legitimacy to tell the story? What role does Hollywood play in our understanding of the past? It is without a doubt that filmic representations of the Second World War have a lot of influence on our perception of

the Holocaust. Therefore this thesis will analyze both “The Diary of Anne Frank” and “Schindler’s list” and focus upon their influence on the Americanization of the American Holocaust memory.

1.2. Previous Research

Previous research shows that George Stevens, director of *The Diary of Anne Frank*, was innovative in his method of allowing the audience to identify with a minority group. However, while doing so, Stevens deprives Anne Frank of her Jewishness and thus her identity (Bathrick 129). *Schindler’s List* is structured in a way that shoulders our memory-burden best, instead of encouraging the audience to struggle with the horrors of the Holocaust. Ott critiques the fact that “Schindler’s List fuels our desire for resolution and comfort which it then fulfills by constructing an ideologically conservative sanctuary for the spectator” (Ott 444). However, others believe the sanctuary to be a positive thing and Lanzman applauds the fact that “*Schindler’s List* marks a shift in the public commemoration of the Shoah: the film is concerned with survival, the survival of individuals, rather than the fact of death, the death of an entire people or peoples” (Lanzman 1).

1.3. Relevance within the Field, Research Question and Expectations

This research is relevant to the field of American studies since it is important to be aware of the role of popular culture in influencing the public’s memory of history. In the past two decades, the relationship between history, memory, meaning and representation have become central to social sciences. Filmmakers, novelists, poets, painters, composers and many others have struggled with how to treat radical evil in art (Rapaport 56). Holocaust representation is often tabooed yet fortunately both George Stevens and Steven Spielberg were willing to take the risk. In order to understand today’s memory of the Holocaust, it is important to analyze how their two significant Hollywood movies contributed to the process of creating this memory. This resulted in the following overarching research question: How did the movies “The Diary of Anne Frank” and “Schindler’s List” Americanize the American Holocaust memory? I will try to answer this question through both a theoretical and cultural analysis in which I will address Hollywood’s influence on shaping collective American memory. This research will be innovative since analyzing two movies that were published at different time periods in history will show the process of the national understanding and definition of the Holocaust. I expect to prove that while both movies are brave enough to take on this topic, both films are not able to fully grasp the horrors of the Holocaust. In addition to this I also expect to find that both films are adapted to the

American politics and societal norms of the time and therefore create an American Memory of the Holocaust which serves American interests best.

1.4. Sources and Definitions

Throughout this thesis, Stevens' film "The Diary of Anne Frank" and Spielberg's film "Schindler's List" will function as the two primary sources of this research. All other case studies will function as secondary sources and will provide answers to the influence of both movies on the American Holocaust Memory. The sources used for this thesis will focus upon the underlying scripts and agendas of Hollywood productions as well as on stylistic devices and film techniques. When possible, sources will be compared and contrasted in order to show different perspectives on the two films.

In order for the information of sources to be apprehensible, it is important to define the definition of both the Holocaust as well as the American Holocaust memory. According to the United States Holocaust memorial museum, "the Holocaust was the systematic, bureaucratic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of approximately six million Jews by the Nazi regime and its collaborators. 'Holocaust' is a word of Greek origin meaning 'sacrifice by fire'" (NIOD Institute). Most countries, specifically the United States, make use of this name to describe the genocide instead of the term "Sho'ah". The Jewish community, however, prefers the word "sho'ah" since it has an entirely different meaning which does not make them appear as a "sacrifice". The Hebrew word "Sho'ah" derives from the bible and translates to the word "catastrophe" (NIOD institute). This thesis will make use of the term "Holocaust" since the United States attributed greatly to the expansion of the Holocaust and barely ever made use of the term "Sho'ah". Overall, this thesis will focus upon the American version of the Holocaust, not the Israelian version.

Especially after the 1978's NBC show the "Holocaust", more and more people became aware of the Holocaust. The "Holocaust" TV series influenced the American Holocaust memory greatly which, according to the American professor Walter Reich, can be defined as the "public's consciousness of the Holocaust in the years since the event". Reich believes that the public consciousness of the Holocaust is dependent on a number of factors which include "the readiness of Holocaust survivors to talk about the Holocaust, the readiness of Jewish communities around the world to talk about it or to have it be talked about, the readiness of governments, the media and the general public to focus on it, the way it has been presented to the public and what the public has absorbed from those presentations" (Reich 1).

1.5. Outline of Thesis

The first chapter of this thesis will present the necessary information in order to understand Hollywood's relation with the Holocaust. This chapter will explore how the Eichmann trial broke a long period of silence and allowed for the Holocaust to become part of the American Agenda (Novick 135). This chapter will explain how the Jewish community brought attention to the Holocaust, the reasoning behind Hollywood's interest in the Holocaust and Hollywood's cinematic Americanization of the Holocaust. Finally, this chapter will focus upon trauma theory and explore the complexity of Jewish Trauma and its relation to Hollywood.

In the second chapter I will provide an answer to the way in which *The Diary of Anne Frank* has Americanized the Holocaust memory. In order to achieve this I will analyze characters of the movie and Stevens' film techniques. I will also investigate the reality of the film and whether amendments were made to the history of Anne Frank. Finally, I will analyze and define Stevens' way of portraying the Holocaust.

Furthermore, the third chapter will focus upon *Schindler's List* Americanization of the Holocaust. This chapter will also focus on the characters and film techniques of the film and how these contributed to the definition of the Holocaust. This chapter will explore whether alterations were made to the original script and how Spielberg makes use of the concept of realism during *Schindler's List*.

Lastly, the findings in the previous chapters will then lead to a conclusion of the overarching question of how both films influenced the Americanization of the American Holocaust Memory.

II. Chapter 1: Holocaust Awareness, cinematic Americanization of the Holocaust and Trauma theory

1.1. Introduction to Chapter 1

After the war ended in 1945, the Holocaust was rarely mentioned in American debate nor films before 1965. Several explanations are given for this in Martin Alm's book "Holocaust Memory in America and Europe": "the celebration of the American triumph over the enemy left little room for an unfathomable tragedy like the Holocaust, the survivors had difficulties speaking of their trauma and Jews were eager to immigrate to the United States and therefore tried to hide their "victimhood"". Americans, during the Second World War, were largely unaware of the Holocaust whilst it was happening (Novick 2). This, however, changed in the 1960s as the Eichmann trial was watched by the majority of Americans (Alm 7). After the 1960s a great amount of American films and documentaries have been made that make use of both real and performed American footage of the aftermath in concentration camps. The Holocaust soon became a master paradigm in Western popular culture for contemporary dangers of bigotry, bureaucracy, genocide demagoguery and nationalism (Ebbrecht 86). While certain photographs and videos are emphasized, other images of the war tend to be ignored. This process of Americanization in the visual framing of the Holocaust can be explained as a "mode of culture that is determined by its projected relation to the audience and the mentality it mirrors" (Krasuska 3). What is the relation of the Holocaust to Americans and why is the Holocaust so important to Hollywood? In order to understand today's Hollywood Holocaust Memory, it is necessary to critically analyze Hollywood's interpretation and understanding of the Second World War. In Novick's book "The Holocaust in American life", Novick raises questions such as: How has one of history's most terrible and complex catastrophes met this strange fate? How has it become both the object of official homage and a shorthand for atrocity? And what are the sources of the American fascination with this essentially European tragedy? Hollywood's fascination for the Holocaust appears to be interlinked with a worldwide campaign for human rights and against political terrorism and genocidal actions. Novick, however, also explains how "in the U.S. the Holocaust is explicitly used for the purpose of national self-congratulation... to demonstrate the difference between the Old World and the New, and to celebrate, by showing its negation, the American way of life" (Novick 10). On the one hand, Novick appears to explain America's interest in the Second World War as a political reason yet on the other hand, he also mentions how it is often used as a way of celebrating America. One may wonder what triggered Hollywood producers to make movies about the Holocaust and the Second World War, were there any other factors that played a role? This chapter will

therefore explore how the Holocaust gained America's attention, Hollywood's reasoning behind the fascination of the Holocaust, Hollywood's Americanization of the war and the concept of trauma theory.

1.2. Holocaust Awareness: The Jewish Community and Hollywood.

While many non-Jewish American producers, directors, authors and actors have become part of Hollywood's current fascination of the Holocaust, the "creation" of the Holocaust occurred because of the Jewish community themselves. Immediately after the Second World War, the pressure of assimilation into American society had pushed the Holocaust and the notion of Jewish victimhood into the background of Jewish-American consciousness (Dreisbach 78). However, due to the Eichmann trial in the early 1960s, attention was brought to the concept of the Holocaust. Johanna Cohn (Hannah) Arendt was a German-American philosopher and political theorist who travelled to Jerusalem to report about Eichmann's trial for the New Yorker. In her book *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (Arendt), Arendt criticizes the way judges dealt with the trial. Arendt mentions how "they judged freely, as it were, and did not really lean on the standards and legal precedents with which they more or less convincingly sought to justify their decisions" (Arendt 137). The Eichmann trial, held before the Jerusalem District Court, brought the Nazi atrocities to a worldwide audience. Arendt questions the nature and function of human judgment and criticizes the fact that no alternative is even considered in the trial. Arendt explains how "among the constructs that 'explain' everything by obscuring all details, we find such notions as a 'ghetto mentality' among European Jews or the collective guilt of the German people, derived from an ad hoc interpretation of their history; or the equally absurd assertion of a kind of collective innocence of the Jewish people" (Arendt 138). Although during the trial, the concept of "collective" guilt often comes to light, Arendt emphasizes how political responsibility is something completely different from what the individual member of the group has done and can therefore not be tried. Arendt states "every government assumes political responsibility for the deeds and misdeeds of its predecessor and every nation for the deeds and misdeeds of the past" (Arendt 138). Germany is still politically responsible for the Holocaust and Hollywood movies maintain the idea that Germany should collectively feel guilty about the Holocaust. Telford Taylor, the chief American prosecutor at the Nuremberg trials, also criticized the way Israel handled the trial and argued that "the Israeli action undermined the principle, established at Nuremberg, that genocide was an offense against the international community, not a private matter for the aggrieved party" (Taylor). The Eichmann trial broke a long period of silence and allowed for the "Holocaust" to become part of the American agenda. The Holocaust was no longer simply a subdivision of general Nazi barbarism but an event in its own right. Several Jewish leaders were, however, afraid that the trial would promote the Jewish-victim image and were concerned about its influence regarding anti-Semitism. The

trial allowed for a shift in focus to Jewish victims rather than German perpetrators. According to many Jewish Americans, this change of perspective was becoming disastrous for the future of the Jewish American race (Novick 135). Benjamin Epstein, director of the Anti-Defamation League stated that “The antennae of many of us who monitor the climate for Jewish security in America have been vibration vigorously. By 1970 we in ADL were convinced that the golden age of progress for Jewish security that marked the 20 years between 1945 and 1965 had indeed ended and that the pendulum was swinging in the opposite direction” (Epstein 4, 5, 16). The “golden age” was over and many critics claimed that hostile references to Jews in the media had increased. During the sixties and seventies, those who claimed that there was a new anti-Semitism often attributed its appearance to fading memories of the Holocaust (Novick 177). In order to prevent the growth of anti-Semitism, Jewish Americans knew something had to be done. Victimhood was what brought Jews together and enabled them to unite. Novick explains “In large part the movement of the Holocaust from the Jewish to the general American arena resulted from private and spontaneous decisions of Jews who happened to occupy strategic positions in the mass media. But that movement was not completely private and spontaneous. If, as many in Jewish organizations believed, Americans could be made more sympathetic to Israel, or to American Jews, through awareness of the Holocaust, efforts had to be made to spread that awareness throughout American society” (Novick 208). This statement would suggest that the spread of the Holocaust was initially both a political and social movement, started mostly by the Jews themselves. By raising awareness of the Holocaust, American Jews were eager to call for a reorientation of Jewish religious belief and practice (Novick 269). Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg, who was also a Jewish American activist, believed it was not coincidental that interest in the Holocaust began “at the point when anti-Semitism in America had become negligible”. Hertzberg explains how “Every major area of American Life... was now open to Jews. The children who had been born after the end of the Second World War... were now free to choose their politics, their sexual mores, and their connection, or lack of it, to Jewish faith and memory. Middle-aged parents saw what freedom had wrought and became frightened at the evaporation of the Jewishness of their children. The parents evoked the one Jewish emotion that had tied their own generation together, the fear of anti-Semitism. The stark memory of Auschwitz needed to be evoked to make the point that Jews were different” (Hertzberg 341). Reviving the Holocaust appeared to not only be a method of preventing the increase of anti-Semitism but it was also a way of maintaining the Jewish identity. "Holocaust awareness," the respected Israeli writer Boas Evron observes, is actually "an official, propagandistic indoctrination, a churning out of slogans and a false view of the world, the real aim of which is not at all an understanding of the past, but a manipulation of the present" (Finkelstein Ch. 2).

Due to the Jewish community, more and more attention was brought to the concept of the Holocaust. One of the first defining moments in Hollywood's expansion of Holocaust awareness in the United States was the NBC series "Holocaust". Launched in 1978, the TV series was a huge success and an estimated 20 million viewers watched each showing over the course of one week. The miniseries narrated the story of the Holocaust in its entirety through the eyes two families: the German-Jewish Weiss family and the German Dorf family. The "Holocaust" series focused primarily on Jewish victimhood and brought harsh realism into the intimate setting of the home. The "Holocaust" series proved that movies could focus primarily on Jewish victimhood yet still reach a largely non-Jewish audience and therefore make it more profitable. The "Holocaust" series had a great influence on Hollywood and films such as "Voyage of the Damned" and "Julia" were the first movies to focus primarily on Jewish suffering in the Holocaust. The "Holocaust series" successfully created a lively discourse in the media about Holocaust representation, Holocaust memory and also served as an educational tool. The "Holocaust" series was highly educational and spurred the public to find out more about the Holocaust. Tom Dreisbach explains how "following the broadcast, the National Archives in Washington, D.C. responded to a flood of inquiries about the Holocaust by putting on an exhibition of documents related to the planning and execution of 'the Final Solution'" (Dreisbach 88). Although it is unthinkable for many American producers that the Holocaust never existed, there are several activists who claim to be deniers of the Holocaust. During a protest aimed at NBC's "Holocaust", protesters explained how "the movie is a Zionist attempt to further instill a guilt complex in the minds of the American people so that we will fail to analyze our Middle East policy objectively, and thus not question the billions of American tax dollars squandered on Israeli military supplies" (Stern 13). While evidence undoubtedly proves the existence of the Holocaust, it is interesting to think about whether Hollywood's attention towards the Holocaust was not just about preventing anti-Semitism from increasing yet may have also been a political action. The "Holocaust" series proved Hollywood that financial gain could be made with regard to the Holocaust. In a capitalist society, one can assume that Hollywood does not simply only wanted to better the lives of the Jewish Americans nor educate Americans on the Holocaust. According to Steven Ross, a historian of the University of Southern California, "The Holocaust is a great drama, and the bottom line is that Hollywood is ultimately in the profit-making business, not in the consciousness-raising business. They make films that audiences want to see, and what audiences want to see are compelling dramas and melodramas, and Holocaust films offer that" (Ross 367). Norman Finkelstein, author of the book *The Holocaust Industry: Reflections on the Exploitation of Jewish Suffering* further acknowledges Hollywood's profit-making goal by stating that "those who run the so-called 'Holocaust industry' are embarked on a multibillion dollar scheme of extortion, and the major share of these funds goes not to the survivors but to those who exploit their suffering for personal and communal gain" (Finkelstein 7-8).

1.3. Cinematic Americanization of the Holocaust: Survivor Testimonies and Victimhood

During the 1960s, the Holocaust had barely anything to do with either the United States history nor Memory. This rapidly changed after Hollywood started to make more and more movies about the Holocaust. The emergence of the Holocaust Industry challenged and influenced the general knowledge of the Holocaust immensely. Reitz explains how “If we look throughout the world at countries with independent film cultures - India, Brasil, Spain, France, the Federal Public - yes even the United States - then what we find are film authors with the same basic problems: their concern is the individuality, the representation of experiences that are uniquely bound to one specific region. In order to do so, they must develop a cinematic language to narrate these experiences... In just this way filmmakers all over the world are struggling to take possession of their own history, and thereby the history of the group to which they belong. Yet they often experience that their history is being ripped out of their hands. The deepest kind of expropriation imaginable is the expropriation of a human being from his own history. With the Holocaust the Americans have taken away our history from us” (Reitz 102). Edgar Reitz, a German filmmaker strong believed that he was being deprived of his own history and highly criticized the Americanized version of his “own” history. Film critic Judith E. Doneson sees Americanization in the film as a process, in which “the American imagination decides how the Holocaust is to be remembered, making it, ironically enough, an American memory” (Doneson 83). It is important to notice that not many Hollywood productions make use of survivor testimonies and even if they do, many have been altered. Flanzbaum, author of “The Americanization of the Holocaust”, states that “our knowledge of the Holocaust in America has rarely been delivered by direct witness; it comes to us by way of representations, and representations of representations, through editors and publishers, producers and directors” (Flanzbaum 1-5). The lack of deliverance of direct witnesses has often been critiqued due to the fact that according to many, neither words nor images are sufficient to create the image of the unimaginable. Elie Wiesel, a Nobel Peace Prize winner for his lifelong political and cultural activism on behalf of the Holocaust mentions how “whoever has not lived through the event can never know it. And whoever has lived through the event can never fully reveal it” (Hakakzadeh 63). Despite the fact that Hollywood may never be able to fully grasp the “evilness” of the Holocaust, this did not stop Hollywood from approaching this subject.

According to Novick “the Holocaust is explicitly used for the purpose of national self-congratulation: the ‘Americanization’ of the Holocaust has involved using it to demonstrate the difference between the Old World and the New, and to celebrate, by showing its negation, the American way of life” (Novick 13). Hollywood uses the Holocaust in ways that benefit both the audience and the country most.

Mintz emphasizes that “most disturbing and most prevalent, moreover, is the way the Holocaust is traduced by being appropriated to serve purposes- national interest, universal ethics, personal identity- that are not only unrelated to the Holocaust but are often antithetical to its memory” (Mintz 111). To the United States, it was important to create an image which justified their participation in the Second World War. Critique has often been made towards Hollywood’s almost celebratory portrayal of the individual during the Holocaust. Alvin Rosenfeld explains: “In the Americanized narration of the Holocaust, there is a tendency to downplay the dark and brutal aspects of the genocide, and instead focus on acts of moral or physical courage that lead to redemption. The Holocaust is thereby fit into the greater American narrative of the individual’s ability to change his destiny and create a better future for himself.” (Rosenfeld 123). Instead of focusing on the brutal aspects of the Holocaust, many Hollywood productions celebrate the individual. However, these individuals are rare and Hollywood appears to forget about the bigger picture and also about other victims. Novick explains how “Holocaust consciousness serves the purposes of Jewish self-aggrandizement and prevents other victimized peoples from receiving a proper share of public attention and sympathy” (Novick 6). As mentioned in the previous paragraph, victimhood was what enabled Jewish Americans to unite. Due to both the Eichmann trial and the NBC TV series "Holocaust", Hollywood was increasingly creating films that focused solely upon the Jewish victim. Many traditionalists, however, were not content with Hollywood’s strong focus upon victimhood. Rosenfeld explains how Hollywood’s portrayal of “the Holocaust is to be blame for much of what ails American Jews. Traditionalists hold it responsible for distorting Judaism and replacing religious observance with a new civil religion that enshrines Jewish victimization, instead of God, at its core. The result, then, is that almost every deviation from what is held to be normative or desirable - the growing assimilation of American Jews, an alleged indifference to the pain and sufferings of other people, an apologetic attitude to what some regard to be Israeli ‘atrocities’ - all of this, and more, is placed at the doorstep of those who have worked to perpetuate Holocaust memory” (Rosenfeld 11). Perhaps Hollywood’s portrayal of the “Jewish Victim” was never a method to stop anti-Semitism, yet it might have been a way to make the Jewish community assimilate to the American ways.

1.4. Trauma Theory: The Complexity of Jewish Trauma

In order to understand Hollywood’s portrayal of Jewish trauma, it is important to understand why the concept of Trauma often occurs within movies that deal with the Holocaust. The book *The Horrors of Trauma in Cinema: Violence Void Visualization* (Elm et al.) explains how “cinema serves as a shield/screen offering pathways to insights into dreadful scenes of actual horror, cruelty and violence without petrifying our bodies. As such, film is a powerful and liberating media because it allows us to

‘incorporate’ unsighted horrific scenes in our memory, to ‘behead’ or distort the horror it mirrors, and to influence the discourse about violent events in real life” (Elm et al. 2). Hollywood allows for the extremities of the Jewish trauma to be portrayed in a more “bearable” matter yet this also highly influences the memory of the Holocaust. Trauma originally referred to a physical phenomenon: a violent disruption of the body’s integrity (Hirsch 8). Although many American soldiers and Jewish immigrants suffered from multiple mental illnesses, it was not until the Vietnam War that the psychological symptoms of “trauma” became more accepted on a larger scale and with greater consensus. In 1980, these mental illnesses and symptoms received the label “post-traumatic stress disorder” (Elm et al. 7). The book *The Horrors of Trauma in Cinema: Violence Void Visualization* (Elm et al.) compares the “Prolonged Exposure Therapy”, a method to reduce PTSD symptoms, to watching a scary film. The book points out that “during the Exposure Therapy, the subject is encouraged to retell his/her story in the present tense in order to more directly encounter the “traumatic memory” and ultimately alleviate one’s fear” (Elm et al. 8). Watching a horror movie over and over again will eventually reduce or even get rid of the level of fear of the viewer as well. Film therefore can both activate and deconstruct taboos associated with traumatic wounds in a unique way. Elm, Kabalek and Köhne also explain how Hollywood films “function as a medium that witnesses, remembers and is haunted and obsessed by traumatic events that can neither be seen in clear light nor be fully decoded. While film does not provide an absolute decoding of the traumatic experience, this medium comes, in a way, close to this goal, if only as a depiction of that which defies representation” (Elm et al 10). Many argue that “trauma loses” its special characteristics when translated to a film, yet Elm, Kabalek and Köhne strongly disagree with this. The book emphasizes that “film not only stores and replays traumatic energies in a sort of ‘cultural container’ viewed by the public, it oftentimes also processes and transforms these energies into even more complex cultural material. It gives them a new, altered shape, a symbolic, more readable form that might arouse less of a society’s fear than the historical event itself. The transposed ‘trauma’ comes in the garment of distortion, as translating traumatic language into film language often implies moments of deformation, disfigurement, fracture, breakup, dislocation, or transmutation that are not easy to decipher (Elm et al 10). Hirsch, author of the book “Afterimage: Film, Trauma and The Holocaust” agrees that films do get rid of certain aspects of trauma however he mentions that “one may be traumatized by an encounter with the Holocaust, one may be unable to assimilate a memory or an image of atrocity, but the discourse of trauma - as one encounters it in film - gives on a language with which to begin to represent the failure of representation that one has experienced” (Hirsch 18). Even if films do not accurately describe the complexity of Jewish trauma, at least it is a start. What is interesting about both the United States’ and Germany’s approach of trauma is that initially they appeared to have two different perspectives upon this matter. According to Joshua Hirsch, “shortly after the Second World War Germans collectively had difficulty accepting responsibility

for the Holocaust and mourning the victims since they had not worked through their own melancholic dilemmas: the loss of their idealized self-image in Hitler and the Third Reich” (Hirsch 10). Hirsch critiques how many have increasingly begun to use the word “trauma” to the German loss of self-image. Hirsch believed that there are barely any Germans who were traumatized by the loss of Hitler and the Third Reich. Many Germans were undoubtedly traumatized by the war, yet according to Hirsch this trauma was linked to the horrifying aspects of the war and not a loss of image. Hollywood movies that deal with trauma thus serve as a bearable introduction to the Holocaust, yet alters many of the complexity of Jewish trauma while doing so.

III. Chapter 2: Hollywood's Holocaust Memory: "The Diary of Anne Frank"

2.1. Introduction

Unless you write yourself, you cannot know how wonderful it is; I always used to bemoan the fact that I could not draw, but now I am overjoyed that at least I can write. And if I do not have the talent to write books or newspaper articles, I can always write for myself. But I want to achieve more than that. I cannot imagine having to live like Mother, Mrs. van Daan and all the women who go about their work and are forgotten. I need to have something besides a husband and children to devote myself to! I don't want to have lived in vain like most people. I want to be useful or bring enjoyment to people, even those I have never met. I want to go on living after my death! And that's why I am so grateful to God for having given me this gift, which I can use to express myself and to express all that is inside me (Frank 317).

Since its initial publication in 1947, Anne Frank's story has circulated more widely than any other personal narrative from the Second World War. Anne Frank's diary has slowly evolved from a European document of World War II into an Americanized representation of the Holocaust. George Stevens' film *The Diary of Anne Frank* follows Anne Frank, a 13-year old Jewish Girl who hid with her family and friends for two years in an attic from the Nazi occupation army in Amsterdam until her apprehension and subsequent murder at the Bergen-Belsen death camp in March 1945. Anne Frank has become a symbol of the Holocaust and has often been used as an instrument of educating youth about a dark period of recent history (Rosenfeld 2). Few American films of the late 1940s and 1950s deal with the Holocaust and George Stevens was brave to screen a foreign event. One may wonder how George Stevens dealt with the concept of the Holocaust in *The Diary of Anne Frank*. How did Stevens adjust and adapt images of Anne Frank's life? What made this film different from other movies at the time and how did it Americanize the Holocaust memory? Why is it that, among the more than one million Jewish children who died, Anne Frank has become so important to the Holocaust? The following paragraphs will explain all the previous questions and analyze the movie regarding its impact on the American Holocaust memory. The second paragraph will analyze important characters of the movie and explain the heroic image of Anne Frank. The third paragraph will explore film techniques and how Stevens used the concept of silence and time during the film. The fourth paragraph will focus upon amendments made to the original diary and the reduction of a Jewish identity. The final paragraph will explain how Stevens Americanized the Holocaust and how *The Diary of Anne Frank* greatly influenced the American Holocaust Memory.

2.2. Characters: The Moral Heroine, Jewish Identity and Otto Frank

Anne Frank, the protagonist of the film, represents moral achievement, courage and sacrifice. During troubling times, Anne Frank not only represents a Holocaust victim but also a young girl coming of age. Anne Frank became a symbol for adolescent girls trying to assert their individuality in the complexity of family life, which allowed her to become a more approachable figure (Rose 13). Despite the fact that Anne Frank lived in the Netherlands, Stevens was eager to portray Anna as a normal, American young girl. Foray emphasizes that “Anne Frank represents every young adult struggling to find her own voice. She fights with her parents and sister, confronts her ever-changing body, and is wracked by self-doubt, an apparently attractive formula for a particular demographic of readers” (Foray 330). This formula was definitely attractive to young girls in the United States during the 1950s and 1960s. Anne’s personal narrative spoke for women in a frightening world where female stories were silenced or unspoken (Rose 13). Not only female stories were silenced during the Holocaust, but many Jews were also deprived of their individuality. Bodziock explains how “The Holocaust changes the value of personal narratives, if not their functions, because it was an event designed to strip the individual of significance” (Bodziock 230). Stevens allows Anne Frank to establish an identity throughout the film and invokes a narrative of heroism while doing so. Judith Tydor Baumel explains that “in short, it appears that Anne Frank’s image as a passive Holocaust heroine was created as much by publishers, playwrights and screenwriters as by the reality of her own life. She therefore falls into the category of ‘created heroines, unknown during the war, and unrecognized as heroines even in their own circles. Their post-war fame resulted from deliberate promotion which often moulded an image created more for public consumption than for historical accuracy” (Baumel 144). Stevens contributed greatly to Anne Frank’s post-war fame yet one may wonder what exactly caused Anne Frank to be celebrated as a “passive” heroine. Before further analyzing what made Anne Frank’s situation special, it is important to realize the difference between passive and active heroism. According to Baumel, active heroism refers to physical resistance to Nazism and Fascism whereas passive heroism included moral steadfastness, spiritual resistance and daily struggle for survival (Baumel 144). While there were many active heroines resisting Nazism, they did not receive the same amount of attention as Anne Frank. Perhaps Anne Frank’s celebration as a heroine can be linked to the fact that throughout the movie Anne Frank strives to believe in the good of people. Stevens was eager to show both the eternal verities of the human spirit as well as the triumph of goodness over evil (Rosenfeld 4). According to Young, Anne’s believe in the good of people may have to do with the fact that “even though she felt the suffering of millions, in the context of her assimilated world view, she seems to have been as an extremely sensitive and intelligent member of the human community, and not as one who identified herself as part of a collective Jewish tragedy” (Young 27). Unfortunately Anne

Frank was a part of a collective Jewish tragedy and died in the concentration camp, yet this is never told in the movie. Whether a heroine or not, Anne Frank remains the most well known victim of persecution, oppression, and genocide, a morbid gold standard by which survivors and victims alike continue to be measured (Foray 330).

Besides a heroine and morally “good” person, Anne Frank was also a great writer who was able to seriously reflect upon herself. By illustration, Anne Frank writes about her identity as a Jew and states “We have been pointedly reminded that we are in hiding, that we are Jews in chains, chained to one spot, without any rights but with a thousand duties... Who has inflicted this upon us? Who has made us Jews different from all other people? Who has allowed us to suffer so terribly up until now?” (Frank 87). Unfortunately, this passage is not spoken during the movie and barely any attention is paid to Anne’s “Jewishness”, aside from the celebration of Hanukkah and a few other scenes. Perhaps this has to do with the fact that both families do not identify themselves as Jews. The Jewish dentist, who also becomes a resident of the “Achterhuis” mentions the following during the film: “I always thought of myself as Dutch. I was born in Holland. My father was born in Holland, and my grandfather. And now, after all these years...” (Stevens). Rosenfeld believes that it was necessary for both Anne Frank as well as the other characters to lose their Jewish identity. Rosenfeld explains that “Anne Frank’s message to the world was to be remembered as one of hope, faith, tolerance and understanding. Such ideals are admirable and do indeed have a presence in Anne Frank’s writings, but to lift them above everything else in the film is a feat that can be performed only by uncoupling Anne’s story in Amsterdam from her story in Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen- that is, uncoupling her story as a Jewish victim of Nazism from that of millions of other Jews who shared her fate” (Rosenfeld 13). Another important character, without whom we would have never known about Anne’s story, is her father Otto Frank. Johnson mentions that “in the role of Otto Frank, Joseph Schildkraut is perfect; an actor of depth and inner conviction, he is able to permeate the entire film with the essence of Europe in turmoil. In the sequence in which he jocularly gives Anne her new diary, for example, he speaks lightly of their enforced seclusion, but his face reflects both paternal love and a resigned awareness of doom” (Johnson 43). Otto Frank appears to be protecting his daughter from the true horrors of the war and therefore allows his daughter to remain hopeful.

2.3. Film Techniques: Silence, Time and Extraordinary Scenes of *The Diary of Anne Frank*

The movie starts off when Otto Frank finds Anne’s diary and starts reading it. Sounds eventually change and we can hear Anne Frank reading from her diary. The scene suggests that while it is Anne’s story, it serves as Otto’s work of mourning (Stephan 137). Critique has often been made about this scene

and Johnson explains that “it begins shakily: the initial sound of an American-accented voice, an unobtrusive and intrusive musical score and the flashback, bringing Anne’s voice to our ears too quickly and harshly, somehow tends to break the magic of one’s earlier response to the striking images of Otto Frank’s dispirited figure musing dazedly among remnants of the past” (Johnson 43). Throughout the rest of the film, Stevens constantly turns the spectator back and forth from this secret annex to the world outside. This is highly visible in the scene in which Anne Frank is having a nightmare, where George Stevens deliberately makes use of Hitlerian cries and faces of the doomed. At the same time, shots are being fired and Stevens creatively sequences the sounds of both Anne Frank as well as a random pedestrian’s cries (Johnson 42). Stevens is eager to portray parts of the outside world and allows the audience to see “glimpses of a German band marching briskly past the canals, the soldiers patrolling the streets with boredom or violence, and once, through the Franks’ embroidered curtains, a grim procession of Jews moving to wintry death - all come together to form a pattern of sorrow and despair” (Johnson 42). Stevens, however, did choose to limit the amount of sorrow and despair since he suspected that many may not wish to be reminded of the grimmer side of Anne’s story. What is also interesting about the film is the lack of sound and the abundance of silence at certain frightening moments. When a watchman enters the building, both Peter, Anne and Otto run upstairs yet their footsteps are unheard. While it is obvious that they need to be as quiet as possible, the lack of sound is slightly unrealistic. Something that is very realistic, however, is the way Stevens allows time to go by very slowly. Stevens put great emphasis on the concept of time throughout the film which is closely related to the true story. Time plays a unique role in the story of Anne Frank, where hope for a future release coexists with the concept of doom. Patterson explains how “time, in the sense of a normal perspective of days and months, was replaced by an ephemeral present instant - and eternity. Lying down to sleep, nobody was sure that he would not be awakened by the sound of a prison van - or shot dead in bed. There existed only the possibility of smuggling an existence from one instant to the next, or of utter resignation” (Patterson 71).

2.4. History and Reality: Alterations to the Diary and the Reduction of “Jewishness”

The last entry in an Anne Frank foundation book of 1979 is a quotation from Otto Frank. Otto Frank emphasizes that “nowhere in the diary does Anne speak of hate. She writes that she believes in spite of everything, in the good in man; and that when the war is over she will work for the world and for mankind” (Frank). While Anne Frank certainly was a good person, alterations were made to her diary. Alexander Stephan stresses that “the father of Anne Frank, Otto Frank, made a number of significant changes, starting with an expurgation of Anne Frank’s highly critical depiction of her mother, her confessions of budding sexuality, her description of her female parts, her erotic dreams and fantasies and

her unfolding sexual relationship with Peter” (Stephan 139). Otto Frank also got rid of any mention by Anne Frank of her growing anti-German sentiments since the book was intended for sale in Germany. Stephan further mentions that phrases such as ““there is not greater hostility than that which exists between Germans and Jews’ and ‘speak softly, all civilized languages are permitted, therefore no German allowed’ were erased from the original diary. All the initial amendments of the book greatly influenced the image of Anne Frank as one of “wholesome teenage innocence and boundless forgiveness against her tormentors” (Stephan 139). While these phrases were erased, others were altered in ways that benefited the American expectations most. Stephan explains that Stevens altered one passage that reads “we’re not the only Jews that have had to suffer, right down the ages there have been Jews and they have all had to suffer” into “we are not the only people who have had to suffer, there have always been people who suffer, sometimes one race sometimes another” (Stephan 137). Anne Frank’s father helped shape the image of his daughter as that of a universal victim of Nazi war crimes rather than as someone who had been murdered as a part of a systematic Nazi genocide of European Jewry . Griselda Pollock further acknowledges Otto Frank’s influence and argues that “the nature of his reading, his desire for comfort in his terrible grief, and discovery of a vivid record of her acute vision and remarkable writerly skills, renders the published book itself his work of mourning. His mourning shaped its selection and determined its purpose in the form of the needs of an individual” (Pollock 127). George Stevens’ film could also be seen as a work of mourning, since Anne Frank is being portrayed as a believer in the good in man. While it is indeed true that both Otto Frank and George Stevens made many amendments to the story, Stevens was eager to reconstruct authentic settings in which the events took place. Stevens was allowed to film some of the scenes at Prinsengracht 263 and was actually allowed permitted to remake the building the way it was at the time (Felderer 11). This, however, also signifies that while Stevens did film at an authentic location, changes were indeed made.

What is interesting about *The Diary of Anne Frank* is that Stevens decided to provide a prolonged and detailed account of eight Jews in refuge. An anonymous reviewer for “The London Times” noted that Stevens seemed to have directed a film “where Belsen remains throughout only a name; the Gestapo, even at the tremendous climax of discovery is an unseen presence, a menacing evil in the wings” (The London Times 7). The lack of violence and horror proved that the 1950s was a time when many communities were trying to decide whether it was best to remember or to forget. For the purpose of audience identification, all suffering is minimized and violence barely occurs throughout the film (Doneson 155). While some are very fond of the uplifting film of heroism and hope in a time of great privation, Foray emphasizes that “others have argued that the wartime situation of the Frank family was too far removed from the horrors- the gas chambers, the death pits, the overcrowded ghettos- inflicted

upon European Jews for the diary to serve as a representative Holocaust document or an experiential text” (Foray 331). Besides the lack of violence, there is also a lack of culture throughout the movie. One of the most extraordinary and controversial aspects of the Hanukkah scene is that George Stevens decided that the songs would not be sung in Hebrew but in English. The following justification was offered for this: “It would set the characters in the play apart from those people watching them... for the majority of our audience is not Jewish. And the thing we are striving for, toiled for throughout the whole movie is to make the audience understand and identify themselves; to make them feel that ‘there for the grace of God might have been I’” (Stephan 137). Realistically, there would be a nihil chance that American citizens would find themselves in a similar situation. However, in order to reach a bigger audience it was important for Stevens to allow Americans to identify with the characters and thus he reduced the “Jewishness” of the film. As mentioned in the previous paragraph the original diary was heavily edited, both by Otto Frank as well as George Stevens. Bathrick emphasizes how this eventually resulted in “an erasure of her Jewishness, her budding sexuality and her occasional anti-German diatribes, together with a refusal- in the choice of a happy and hopeful ending- to deal with the post-diary issues raised by the murder of Anne simply because she was a Jew” (Bathrick 129).

2.5. Stevens’ Holocaust: Americanizing and Defining the American Holocaust Memory

Critics of *The Diary of Anne Frank* have often critiqued the “heroic myth” of Anne Frank while it could also be seen as a necessary need of a democratic society. Henri van Praag, Chairman of the Dutch Anne Frank Foundation proclaimed that “when moral achievement can be amplified through the myth, to the salvation of all those who see it as a shining example... why shouldn’t this noble humane document by a courageous child further elucidate that testimony for us?... Democratic society needs an honest, pure myth, directed toward the future of mankind, which can inspire our young people to actions of courage and sacrifice in the service of tomorrow’s world... From the pedagogical point of view it is relevant to explain here that education is impossible without identification with an exemplary past, an educational ideal” (van Praag 38, 39). Perhaps, the United States was in need of a morally good symbol of the war. As suggested in the previous paragraph, one may assume that the myth of Anne Frank reflected the concern of 1950s America much more than it reflected the Holocaust. Assuming returning veterans were struggling to find their place within society, Anne Frank served as a symbol that kept them going. Anne Frank’s heroic and pure image showed the audience that even when times are bad, citizens are supposed to act “good”. *The Diary of Anne Frank* shielded the German audience from facing the horrors of the crime since Anne Frank put emphasis upon the positive in life, instead of speaking accusingly about her torturers. Bathrick stated that “the figure of this young girl and her story offered the possibility of access:

contact with this highly idealized victim as a point of identification; access through an implied forgiveness and reconciliation to a larger community” (Stephan 140). Anne Frank’s story serves as a reminder of what was sacrificed in the past and allowed the audience to identify with a Jewish Family during the Second World War. However, according to Bettelheim, this identification eventually resulted in entire populations beginning to believe that “repression” rather than “action” was the best way to deal with Nazi atrocities or other evils. Anne Frank’s diary is seen by the public as a personal defiance of the Nazis and a dutiful recording of a traumatic period in Jewish History (Jackson 7). Bettelheim explains “the universal success of *The Diary of Anne Frank* suggests how much the tendency to deny the reality of the camps is still with us, while her story itself demonstrates how much denial can hasten our own destruction. I believe that its world-wide acclaim cannot be explained unless we recognize our wish to forget the gas chambers and to glorify the ability to retreat into an extremely private world, clinging to the usual daily attitudes even in a Holocaust” (Bettelheim 46). During a time of glorification, Stevens was well aware that the audience needed a product that would give them peace and represented the Franks as an idyllic family. Bettelheim believed the situation of the Frank family to be too idyllic, the Frank family should have acknowledged that life could not be carried on as usual and that they were living in extreme social circumstances (Bettelheim 46).

The Diary of Anne Frank was published in a time when the word “Holocaust” was not a global term yet. The definition for the Holocaust that we know now, the Nazi extermination of the Jews, was not commonly used or known. Most postwar films, mainly atrocity films, focused upon spreading information about the crimes committed by the enemy. *The Diary of Anne Frank* was extraordinary in its use of a different form of Americanizing the Holocaust compared to atrocity films. Stevens decided to take on a different kind of approach and instead dealt with the victims (Stephan 136). Stevens did not show what it was like to be a victim in a concentration camp, yet he did allow the audience to feel the immense fear of possible doom. Despite certain Jewish traditions, Stevens is eager to portray the Frank family as an ordinary family with whom the American audience can easily identify. *The Diary of Anne Frank* mirrored America’s attitude toward its Jews and other minorities, it showed America’s desire for “sameness”. During the 1950s, America’s goal was to Americanize minorities. Doneson explains how “this included ideas of equality and freedom as well as conformity and assimilation on both the left and right. The liberals, in calling for equality, sought ‘sameness’ for minority groups” (Doneson 151). Doneson argues that Stevens assimilates the Frank family into American society and thereby diminishes the family’s Jewishness (Doneson 150). One might find it interesting that Otto Frank expressed that he did not even want Anne’s story to become a Jewish story. Otto Frank understood the limitations of his daughter’s writing and mentioned “I always said, that Anne’s book is not a war book. War is the

background. It is not a Jewish book either, though Jewish sphere, sentiment and surrounding is the background. It is read and understood more by gentiles than in Jewish circles” (Doneson 152). Both Otto Frank and Stevens decided that the story should not be specifically about the Jewish experience of the Holocaust. While it is true that Stevens allows the Frank family to assimilate to American norms and thereby reduces their Jewishness, through portraying the family as victims Stevens still “others” Jews. Doneson explains how the “Jew in the film is weak because he is a victim. His ability to act in any meaningful fashion is subject to the whims of his oppressor or the kind deeds of his potential savior. It is this dependence on the gentile that makes the passivity of the Jew unavoidable” (Doneson 156).

Bettelheim believed the family to be too passive and argues that “there is little doubt that the Franks, who were able to provide themselves with so much, could have provided themselves with a gun or two had they wished. They could have shot down at least one or two of the ‘green police’ who came for them. The fate of the Franks wouldn’t have been very different, because they all died anyway except for Anne’s father. But they could have sold their lives dearly instead of walking to their deaths” (Bettelheim 46). The passiveness of the Frank family and their “victimness” continues to alienate them from majority groups. While Stevens was eager to Americanize the Frank family, he was unable to do so without “othering” them as well. The Americanization of the Frank family made the audience believe that the Holocaust was a matter of survival instead of suffering.

IV. Chapter 3: Hollywood's Holocaust Memory: "Schindler's list"

3.1. Introduction

"The ideological structures of Spielberg's films 'hail' the spectator into a world of the obvious that affirms the viewer's presence (even while dissolving it), affirms that what the viewer has always believed or hoped is (obviously) right and accessible, and assures the viewer excitement and comfort in the process. The films offer nothing new beyond their spectacle, nothing the viewer does not already want, does not immediately accept. That is their conservative power, and it has spread throughout the cinema of the 80s" (Kolker).

Against all odds, *Schindler's list* was almost universally hailed for its stark illumination of the Holocaust. Loshitzky mentioned how "Spielberg was honored as a contemporary Resistance hero for opposing the native tide of forgetfulness and the vile insinuations of contemporary Holocaust revisionists. Parallels were drawn between the director and his subject, comparing Spielberg's own nascent Judaism with Schindler's awakening to a higher purpose" (Greenberg 58). The film was a great success and received seven Oscars, including best dramatic picture and best director. Since the 1993 release of *Schindler's list*, the volume of production of Holocaust films, and of debates of them, has risen dramatically, at the same time that Steven Spielberg's Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation has created a new cultural space of production, incorporating video, film and digital forms (Hirsch 3). One may wonder why *Schindler's list* had such an influence on the "Holocaust Industry" and why it became such a success. *Schindler's List* contributed greatly to the American Holocaust Memory and was able to shoulder the memory-burden many Americans experienced. What made *Schindler's List* different from other movies at the time and how did it Americanize the Holocaust memory? The following paragraphs will explain all the previous questions and analyze the movie regarding its impact on the American Holocaust memory. The second paragraph will analyze important characters of the movie and discuss the complexity of Schindler, Stern as the trustworthy storyteller and Goeth as the epitome of evil. The third paragraphs will explain how Spielberg's cinematic techniques were of great importance to both the success as well as the audience's interpretation of the Holocaust. This paragraph will explain the influence of monochromatic film, handheld cameras and will go more in depth regarding certain scenes of the film. The fourth paragraph will analyze how Spielberg altered the original story of Schindler in order to fit American ideologies best. The final paragraph will explain how Spielberg Americanized the Holocaust and how *Schindler's list* greatly influenced the American Holocaust Memory.

3.2. Characters: The Womanizing Nazi Entrepreneur, the Jewish Accountant, the Jewish Victims and the Epitome of Evil

In Hollywood movies, characters serve as stable and constant elements with whom we can identify or who we can blame. According to Lynn Rapaport, “Spielberg provides us with an archetypical hero, Oskar Schindler, a movie monster, Nazi Amon Goeth, and the ultimate alien, the Jews” (Rapaport 58). Spielberg bravely decided to take on the challenge to make a non-Jew, a “good German”. Germans were often collectively blamed for all that was done during the war, yet with Schindler’s character, Spielberg was able to battle this tradition. In a cynical reading of the film, Eike Geisel states that “the man of conscience (and better still an industrialist), who sacrificed his fortune to save the Jews, is a godsend to German conservatives, who are always on the lookout for some new alibi for Nazism, a new way to get the German nation off the hook’ (Eley, Grossman 51). Spielberg puts himself in a vulnerable position while heroising Schindler who is actually “an opportunist, a war profiteer, a carpet-bagger of the worst sort, capitalizing on the Jews’ misfortune” (Eley and Grossman 52). Schindler uses people and Spielberg does not try to hide this, since he openly shows the capitalist nature of Schindler. Schindler refuses to accept descriptions of virtue and does not want to be acknowledged as a “good man”. Schindler’s moral values appear to change when he watches the ghetto clearance from above and comes in touch with the inhumanity and violence of the Nazis. Eley and Grossman further acknowledge this moral change and explain how “the move into conscious agency is marked by a conversation with Stern, where Schindler reflects on the pathologies of wartime: ‘And war brings out the worst in people, never the good’” (Eley and Grossman 52). This movie is all about Schindler, yet one may wonder why Spielberg precisely chose the character of Schindler as the protagonist. Why did Spielberg choose a womanizing petty Nazi entrepreneur who turns into a righteous Gentile? Why did he not choose a less equivocal Jewish protagonist to tell the history of the Holocaust? Whether on purpose or not, Spielberg actually did make use of a Jew to tell the truth of the Holocaust. Itzhak Stern, a Jewish accountant, worked as a mediator between Schindler and the Jews. Stern functions as both the eyes and the voice of this story in an observing manner, as he carries the responsibility of portraying the story in a historically accurate way. Eley and Grossman mention how Stern “clearly describes the system’s absence of rationality: it may be bureaucratic, technologized, banal, linked to the requirements of the war economy, and with all the trappings of rationality, but it has no rationality any rational person can decipher, and the Nazis don’t care about production” (Eley, Grossman 54). It is interesting to see that Spielberg precisely chose Stern to function as the eyes and voice of this story. Spielberg secures the film’s acceptance as testimony by choosing a Jew to tell the historical truth about the Holocaust. Stern becomes the definition of truth and one may wonder whether only Jews are allowed to tell the story of the Holocaust.

However, while it is true that Stern functions as an observing character through whom we see the Holocaust occur, it is often argued that Stern only serves the sole purpose of a “Jew telling the truth”. According to Gourevitch, “the film narrates the history of 1,100 rescued Jews from the perspective of the perpetrators, the German Gentile Nazi turned resister and his alter ego, Goeth, the psychotic SS commandant. *Schindler's List* depicts the Nazis' slaughter of Polish Jewry almost entirely through German eyes” (Gourevitch 51). While it may be true that the 1,100 rescued Jews are mostly depicted through Schindler’s eyes, their existence is acknowledged during the film. Throughout the film, there are numerous scenes of Jews calling out their names. Eley and Grossman explain how “the letters, clattered out by the typewriter, become names, which become faces, which become individual people. The Jews are neither anonymous numbers nor are they character with whom we will come to identify. They are very clearly individuals with bourgeois identities, with first and last names” (Eley, Grossman 48). While it is true that the Jews gain at least a sense of identity, Rosenzweig argues that “the Jewish characters are reduced to pasteboard figures, to generic types incapable of eliciting identification and empathy. Or worse, some critics contend, they come to life only to embody anti-Semitic stereotypes (money-grubbing Jews, Jew-as-eternal-victim, the association of Jewish women with dangerous sexuality, the characterization of Itzhak Stern, Schindler's accountant, as “king of the Jewish wimps” (Rosenzweig 4). The use of anti-Semitic stereotypes can be seen as a political strategy, in order to prevent anti-Semitism from spreading. However, it could also be seen as the “othering” of another race which, once again, makes them different from the rest. There is one specific Jewish little girl who is also “othered” from the rest of the Jews, which is the girl in the red coat. The girl’s coat is the only element of color aside from the candle flames and she therefore functions as a sign of possibility. Eley and Grossman describe the girl as the “un-sentimentalized representation of hope in a way that’s genuinely powerful and moving, and a believable device for dramatizing Schindler’s moment of recognition as he watches from the hillside” (Eley, Grossman 56). This optimism and hope soon fades away when her red dress shortly appears during the burning of the bodies. While the Jews function as the victims, Amon Goeth is the person to blame. Amon Goeth, the Nazi commandant, is the true epitome of evil throughout the film. Ott explains how through Goeth’s “unpredictable brutality, Spielberg can easily evoke feelings of anomie in the audience. The whimsical and random brutality of Goeth defies any attempt by the spectator to make rational sense of his actions. The moral order is exploded and Goeth’s actions become a trope for the Holocaust: unexplainable and unthinkable” (Ott 455). Goeth embodies the true chaos of the Second World War and therefore functions as the person to blame for the Holocaust.

3.3. Film Techniques: Monochromatic Film, Handheld Cameras and Extraordinary Scenes of Schindler's List

Besides the use of complex yet sometimes mainstream characters, Spielberg also made use of classical Hollywood cinematic techniques. According to Hansen, "Spielberg utilized these devices in a relatively more intelligent, responsible and interesting manner than expected (Hansen 307). Hansen believes that this has to do with the "the striking affinities of film style - the self-conscious use of sound, low-key lighting, particular angles and compositions in frame, montage sequences, as well as the comic use of still photography early on in the film (Hansen 307). *Schindler's list* is mostly shot in black-and-white, except for the beginning, ending and several selectively colored frames. For Spielberg himself "filming in monochrome was clearly a matter of authenticity and the striving for verisimilitude, part of the realist style of his desire for history, for a film that would be "true" to the record" (Eley, Grossman 52). The monochromatic aspect of the film gives it a historical quality and encourages the impression that it is itself a historical document. This was exactly what Spielberg was keenly aware of, since he often mentioned how he was making not a film but a document. According to Ott, the black-and-white images of the movie "create the perception of objectivity generally associated with documentary filmmaking" (Ott 446). This "perception of objectivity" made the movie seem more truthful and thus highly influenced the audience's knowledge of the war. However, according to Eley and Grossman, the use of black and white can have two different kinds of effects on the viewer. Eley and Grossman explain how "in one way, it distances: it marks this particular past as different, as elsewhere, as "another country." But in another way, it reduces distance: our images of the Holocaust are constructed in black and white, whether from newsreel or photographs, and the film resonates with this existing archive of representation; it places us immediately into that place of memory" (Eley, Grossman 52). Not only through the use of monochromatic film does Spielberg locate us into a place of memory, also the use of handheld cameras allows the audience to become part of the Holocaust. The way cameras were used created a product that looked more like live, unedited footage than dramatic film (Ott 446). This film technique is incredibly important and also groundbreaking during a scene at a concentration camp. Hansen explains how "Spielberg transgresses the boundaries of representability most notoriously, critics agree, when he takes the camera across the threshold of what we, and the women in the film "mistakenly" deported to Auschwitz, believe to be a gas chamber. Through this scene, as well as the scene where Goeth eventually kills his houseboy, Spielberg creates both chaos as well as order and comfort" (Hansen 308). Never before, was the audience able to become part of the gas chamber "experience" in such a way. Instead of being an observer, the hand held cameras allowed for the audience to become a participant in this horrifying event.

The gas chamber scene was not the only scene which deserves attention regarding its cinematic techniques. During the beginning of the movie, it takes a little while before we are introduced to Oskar Schindler's face. Eley and Grossman explain the scene as following: "We follow him round his room, assuming the accoutrements of the operator and profiteer - the fine clothes, the cigarettes, the money, and lastly the party badge, the swastika pin - all composed very deliberately, with the mark of assurance. As the scene shifts to the nightclub, we see Nazism, the world of authority and influence, through his eyes - with the party badge as the passport, the entry ticket - and we don't see his face until he's seated in the restaurant, eyeing power, making connections, securing his access with money, buying his way in" (Eley, Grossman 49). Through filming the scene in such a way, Spielberg allows the audience to become part of the majestic, masculine and powerful world of the Nazis. However, shortly after this scene, the focus shifts towards the Jews and the audience finds themselves right in the middle of the registration line and the massed movement into the Ghetto. Eley and Grossman explain how "Spielberg moves us abruptly from one space into another - into the space of terror, an enclosed and narrowing space organized by the bureaucracy of impending annihilation. The chiaroscuro interiors of the Schindler story and the large-scale narration of the Holocaust offer a powerful juxtaposition, entailing a striking inversion of physical and existential space. On the one hand we get the sense of walls closing in, of breathing space being cut off, of the ominous mounting of horror; on the other hand, we see the expansive Oskar, spreading out in his new big apartment, draping his large body across chairs and women, making money, rising in the world" (Eley, Grossman 50). Spielberg successfully puts two different worlds together, which creates an extremely interesting comparison. Two "worlds" are also put together during the liquidation of the Kracow Ghetto, where disjunctive sound and image relations are combined with camera narration that foregrounds Stern's point of view. During this scene, Goeth's well known speech "today is history" starts in the middle of a series of four shots alternating between Schindler and Goeth shaving, which briefly makes it an acoustic flash-forward. It is not until the fifth shot, that we are able to see the speaking character, Goeth, who addresses his men during the speech. Hansen explains how "the speech appears to function as a kind of voice-over, speaking the history of the Ghetto's inhabitants and the imminent erasure of this history and its subjects" (Hansen 310). However, Hansen contradicts this by stating that "the images of the living people we see - a rabbi praying, a family having breakfast, a man and a woman exchanging loving looks - also resist this prediction. So does the voice of the rabbi that competes with Goeth's voice even before we see him pray, and it continues, as an undertone to Goeth's voice, into the subsequent shots of Ghetto inhabitants; the praying voice fades out just before the last sentence of Goeth's speech" (Hansen 310). What is interesting about this scene is how Goeth speaks about the elimination of all Jews while simultaneously, the Jewish characters shown in this sequence will survive and therefore "give the lie to Goeth's project" (Hansen 311). The scene makes use of a point-of-view pattern which

centers on Stern and allows him to be the first to witness the ominous preparations. The whole sequence is eventually “closed by reattaching Goeth's voice to his body, thus sealing the fate of the majority of the Ghetto population, the people not shown on the image track” (Hansen 311).

3.4. History and Reality: Alterations to the Original Script

While the story is based on a true person, Oskar Schindler, many facts about his life were extremely tampered. One example of this is when Schindler pledges sexual loyalty to his long estranged wife, Emilie, during a church service just after he arrives there. However, what the script of the film chooses to ignore, is the fact that Schindler's womanizer image and sexual carousing continued as before. Rosenbaum illustrates how “two of the Schindlerjuden told Keneally about finding Schindler one day skinny-dipping with a voluptuous blond SS woman in a water tank inside the factory” (Rosenbaum 102). Part of Schindler's sexual wants are briefly introduced during Schindler's birthday party where he kisses the young woman worker, yet this is the only scene where his womanizer image is a negative one (Eley and Grossman 54). However, Brian Ott disagrees with the negative aspect of this scene and believes it shows that Schindler is willing to endanger himself in the name of what is right (Ott 452) Spielberg chose to get rid of many aspects that made Schindler “human”. The book describes sometimes conflicting and often speculative accounts of the people who knew him, yet Spielberg decided to create a conversion story where Schindler ultimately becomes a saint. The script also ignores Emilie's efforts in helping the Schindlerjuden in Moravia and barely pays tribute towards her loyalty to her relatively unreligious husband. According to Rosenbaum this is Schindler's show all the way, and only Stern was worthy enough to receive great attention (Rosenbaum 102). While Emilie is kept silent, Amon Goeth is kept “slim and glamorous”. Originally Goeth slowly but surely becomes obese and loses much of his glorious reputation. Spielberg chose to minimize Goeth's growing obesity in order for the public to “identify” with the Nazis. Through Goeth's privileged vantage point, glamorous power and preeminence, the audience becomes part of the Nazi parties and the luxurious Nazi lifestyle (Rosenbaum 103). Apart from the ghetto clearance and Goeth's growing obesity, the film also spares us the brutalizing of small children or the horrifying appearances of the prisoners. We do see children in danger, fleeing and hiding, yet the horrors of mass killing of children don't appear in this movie. Elli Wohlgelernter mentions how “Spielberg doesn't show the really terrible things - nothing horrendous, not the beatings, not the hunger, not the commands to be put to death, all those things we suffered, in order not to drive away the viewers” (Rapaport 61). It is true that all actors appear to be too healthy, well-fed and too helpful. One may wonder if, when experiencing incredible hunger, people would truly be so helpful to each other. The film also does not deal with Jewish resistance to persecution. Lynn Rapaport emphasized how “in fact, the real

Krakow Ghetto had an active Jewish Fighting Organization that stages several attacks on German targets. Moreover, a Jew who worked for Schindler was recruited by Zionists in Budapest as an intelligence source on the mistreatment and murder of Jews in the ghetto and Plaszow camp” (Rapaport 60). What is also interesting is that only Schindler and Stern were working on the final compiling of the list of Jews they will save. However, in reality, a personal clerk named Marcel Goldber was the one who put finishing touches on the list. Rosenbaum emphasizes how Goldberg “accepted diamonds as bribes from some families in exchange for their inclusion and excluding others when they could not cough up the necessary loot” (Rosenbaum 102). Spielberg deliberately omitted disturbing facts in order to avoid moral complications and celebrate the aspect of capitalism. Spielberg was eager to portray Schindler’s goodness as the defense of capitalism, while portraying Nazism and the Holocaust as the ultimate perversions of capitalism (Rosenbaum 102). While doing so, Spielberg focused almost exclusively on Schindler’s story and barely mentioned Hitler, World War II and many other major Jewish and German characters.

While it is true that many facts about Schindler’s life were altered, Spielberg did film on location whenever possible. Ott stated that “in Kraków, Spielberg used the actual factory Schindler had operated and even the apartment he once occupied. At Auschwitz-Birkenau, he shot under the towering gate of the death camp itself. By shooting on location, Spielberg forged an intersection between spatial reality and narrative that contributed to a sense of history experienced” (Ott 446). Besides the use of actual locations, there were scarcely murders in the film that were not reported by witnesses in trials after the war. Both the shooting of the young Jewish woman, who dared to know more than her SS overseer, as well as the young boy who did not do his work properly were actually killed during the war (Ott 446). It is without a doubt that Spielberg did not incorporate all aspects of the Holocaust in his movie, yet he often mentioned it was never his intention to describe the complete dimensions of the Holocaust. Spielberg was eager to make the movie as close to the concept of realism as possible and made use of less well-known actors. The final scene, where past and present are joined, creates the illusion that the spectator is experiencing a true retelling of history. While it was not his intention to do so, many Americans believed *Schindler’s list* to be the complete Holocaust story. While *Schindler’s List* is based on a true story, the audience tends to forget about its fictionalized dramatization. Rapaport emphasized that “people who see Spielberg’s film might leave thinking they have witnessed or somehow know the story of the Holocaust, or at least that of Oskar Schindler. They might forget that ‘Amblin Entertainment’ are the first words depicted on the screen as the film begins” (Rapaport 60).

3.5. Spielberg's Holocaust: Americanizing and Defining the American Holocaust Memory

What is important to realize is that *Schindler's List* is and remains a Hollywood product. This means that despite Spielberg's good intentions to create a historical document, the movie is circumscribed by the economic and ideological tenets of the culture industry. *Schindler's list* is often accused of having turned the Holocaust into a theme park and recreating the Holocaust in a way that serves American ideologies best (Spiegelman, Hoberman 27). While it is true that *Schindler's List* is indeed a Hollywood production, Spielberg was not afraid to challenge stereotypes and traditions regarding the Holocaust. Eley and Grossman agree with this change of commemoration of the Holocaust and explain that "*Schindler's List* reworks the Holocaust in an incredibly different way: the list and selection as life, not as condemnation to death; the sealed trains as transport to safety, not destruction; and (most problematically) the shower scene, in which water and not gas descends" (Eley, Grossman 49). The immense destructiveness of the Final Solution is overlooked at and Spielberg almost portrays the Holocaust as a matter of survival, instead of undergoing a brutal death. Stories such as *Schindler's List* that focus almost solely on the struggle for survival and human relations, pale next to the actual stories of the murder of millions of people. Wyschogrod mentions that "the rescue of the Schindler Jews is a matter of luck and gamble rather than melodramatic coincidence; and although the story is historically "authentic," it cannot but remain a fairy tale in the face of the overwhelming facticity of man made mass death". (Wyschogrod 82). Manchel agrees with the fairy tale concept and emphasizes that Schindler's Holocaust story is that of exception rather than the rule. Manchel states that "it is the true story of the few who survive because of the kindness of an individual, rather than the story of the majority who were murdered amidst great evil and indifference. Hollywood from 'Anne Frank' to 'Oskar Schindler' offers a 'Holocaust' which 'still believes that humans are good at heart.' It constructs an 'Auschwitz' and a 'Holocaust' it can come to terms with.... And as those who died in Auschwitz-Birkenau are nothing more than ashes now, contemporary Hollywood can ignore them" (Manchel 84).

Spielberg creates moral chaos at the beginning of the movie and allows Schindler to resolve this. Brian Ott explains how "the narrative in *Schindler's List* begins by positioning the viewer in a world of moral chaos represented on one level by the Holocaust and on another by Goeth. It then fosters a desire for moral resolution and comfort which it ultimately fulfills through Oskar Schindler" (Ott 455). Through Oskar Schindler, Spielberg privileges an individual perspective over a social one. Ott explains how this results in "an Americanized story that neither suggests agents have any kind of social responsibility nor encourages viewers to consider larger issues of community and social conscience" (Ott 455). Similar to the story of Anne Frank, Schindler is an exception to the rule yet the audience barely becomes aware of

this matter. Another aspect of the film of which the audience is also unaware of, is the influence the traditional “happy ending” has on the audience’s Holocaust memory. When *Schindler’s list* ends, both the story and the Holocaust come to an end which forces closure upon the viewer. Ott emphasizes that “there is no invitation to connect memory of the Holocaust with contemporary events. By forcing resolution and comfort upon the viewer, the film fails to suggest itself as a basis for sociopolitical action and the viewer is absolved of such action. Furthermore, it suggests that the atrocities of the Holocaust have not substantially altered our vision of human dignity. In short, we are left with the dangerous idea that we need not actively guard against the possibility of this historical catastrophe occurring again” (Ott 455). Spielberg almost makes it seem as if humanity has been restored after the Holocaust and dangers, in this case Amon Goeth, are not present anymore. It is not until the final caption that the killing of six million Jews is mentioned. Ott further discusses the way the film deals with the Holocaust chaos and emphasizes how the film “fails to prompt us to reflect on the causes and effects of the moral chaos, to internalize the memory, to connect it to social conscience, or to judge the usefulness or value of the previous order” (Ott 455). The film does not immediately invite the spectator to ask questions about the political conditions that allowed for the Holocaust to happen yet it does relieve the audience of their memory-burden. Ott explains how the film “offers moral resolution and comfort from a memory that should be neither resolved nor comforting” (Ott 456). The American Holocaust story becomes, based on this specific movie, told in terms of heroic dignity, moral courage and the triumph of the human spirit (Ott 456). While the extremity of the German army definitely is part of the movie, it is not a theme that receives as much attention as the triumph of a “good” man. Perhaps America’s heroic performance during the Second World War was an image they wanted to maintain and used popular culture in order to do so.

V. Conclusion

To summarize my points I can confirm my expectations and conclude that both films are indeed unable to fully grasp the extreme evils of the Holocaust. In *The Diary of Anne Frank*, Stevens deliberately decides to minimize all suffering and violence for the purpose of audience identification (Doneson 155). Violence is also limited in *Schindler's List* where the Holocaust story is that of rule rather than of exception (Manchel 84). Like Stevens who creates an almost idyllic situation of confinement, Spielberg also creates a "fairy tale concept" that focuses upon the story of the few who survive, instead of on the majority who were murdered during the Second World War. Both Stevens and Spielberg construct a Holocaust, the audience can come to terms with. The lack of violence eventually leads to an extremely mild understanding of the horrors of the Holocaust and therefore creates an incorrect American memory of the Holocaust.

My expectation of finding both films to be adapted to the American politics and societal norms of the time has also proven to be correct. *The Diary of Anne Frank* was published in a time where many were unaware of the definition of the "Holocaust". Stevens was cautious with the portrayal of the victims of the Holocaust and reduced much of the Frank family's sense of "Jewishness". This reduction showed the 1950s American aim of assimilating minorities to the American society. While Anne Frank remains a Jewish victim and is not completely deprived of her Jewish identity, Anne Frank is portrayed in an Americanized way that allows the audience to identify with minority groups. This "Americanized way" is achieved through the portrayal of Anne Frank as a symbol for adolescent girls, with whom the American audience can easily identify. However, in order to justify America's participation in the Second World War, Anne Frank is also presented as a heroine, who represents moral achievement, courage and sacrifice (Rose 13). *Schindler's List* also represents the need for a justification of participation as it confirms America's heroic performance during the Second World War. The American Holocaust story becomes told in terms of heroic dignity, moral courage and the triumph of the human spirit (Ott 456). Both *The Diary of Anne Frank* as well as *Schindler's List* allow the audience to base their memory of the Holocaust on a story of heroism and survival, rather than on the true destructive nature of the Holocaust.

Furthermore, I can also conclude that the endings of both movies have a significant influence on the Holocaust memory. *The Diary of Anne Frank* does not deal with any post-diary issues such as the killing of Anne Frank and almost her entire family. *Schindler's List* also does not deal with the Holocaust's aftermath and therefore forces resolution and comfort upon the viewer. By doing so, Spielberg fails to allow the film to be a basis for sociopolitical action and suggests that the events of the

Holocaust have not yet altered our vision of human dignity (Ott 455). Spielberg gets rid of any possible dangers, such as Amon Goeth, and assures the audience that humanity has been restored. The film thus offers moral resolution and comfort from a memory that should be neither resolved nor comforting. Americans are relieved of the burden of the Holocaust's aftermath and will base their memory on Hollywood's traditional happy ending.

Now that I have explored both Stevens' and Spielberg's version of the Holocaust and influence on the American Holocaust memory, it would also be different to explore a different medium. Another possibility for further research would be to either focus upon a different kind of popular culture, such as radio or photography, or explore other films that were also of great significance with regard to the American Holocaust memory. A final recommendation for further research is to explore more deeply how the actual book of Anne Frank influenced the Holocaust Memory or how films that were created after *Schindler's List* now dealt with the Holocaust.

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