

A still from the movie Source Code showing Jake Gyllenhaal in a blue flight suit, looking up with a concerned expression in a dark, industrial setting with wires.

# space in movies

an underappreciated concept  
of subliminal persuasion

by Elisabeth Erken

JAKE GYLLENHAAL

source code

A large still from Non Stop showing Liam Neeson in a black jacket, looking serious, with a crowd of people in the background.

# Non stop

Liam NEESON

## Essay Cover Sheet

AMERICAN STUDIES

Teacher who will receive this document: M.van Gageldonk

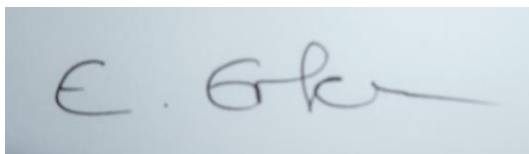
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A handwritten signature in dark ink on a light blue background. The signature appears to be 'E. Erken' with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end.

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## Abstract

This study is an attempt to determine how the concept of space is used in movies to shape viewers' perceptions and emotions. Previous studies on movies featuring terrorism have focused on the culprits only, while leaving the influence of the environment generally aside. Emotions of the audience, however, do not stem from the characteristics of these characters only, but are largely influenced by what is depicted in the background. Two Hollywood thrillers are used in this study to highlight these elements of space. The findings of this thesis indicate that 1) anchor points from the real world are shown in movies to create identification within the viewers, 2) there are different feelings related to public versus private spaces, 3) the various settings and angles are used to create different emotions, and 4) that the understanding of cultural spaces may change throughout the movies. These results suggest that space in movies is an underestimated concept, as it is capable of evoking emotions.

## Keywords

*Terrorism, Terror, Space, Space in Movies, Cultural Space, Public Spaces, Private Spaces, Emotional Space, Plane, Train, Restroom, Blockbuster, Thriller, Hollywood.*

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# Table of Contents

Essay Cover Sheet .....	1
Abstract .....	2
Keywords .....	2
Acknowledgements .....	3
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>1. The world in film</b> .....	<b>11</b>
1.1 Defining space.....	11
1.1.2 Space on Screen.....	14
1.2 A (fictional) reality .....	15
1.3 Terrorism.....	17s
1.4 Introducing the Case Studies .....	18
1.5 Movie Analysis .....	19
<b>2. Physicality of Space</b> .....	<b>20</b>
2.1 Public Spaces in Movies.....	21
2.2 Public Privacy .....	25
2.3 Cultures in Space.....	27
<b>3. Emotionally Changing Space</b> .....	<b>28</b>
3.1 Mise-en-Scene changes .....	28
3.2 The use of angles.....	31
3.3 Changing identities.....	32
<b>Conclusion</b> .....	<b>34</b>
<b>Discussion</b> .....	<b>36</b>
<b>Bibliography</b> .....	<b>37</b>

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## Introduction

*“Security is this country’s biggest lie. In our homes, in our cities, in our planes. No one’s safe.” – Non-Stop (2014)*

My entire life, I have been interested in the psychological mechanisms that work implicitly and lie behind what is obvious on the first sight. A professor in my introductory course of psychology then recommended us to watch Christopher Nolan’s *Inception* (2010), a movie that deals with the suggestibility of the subconscious within dreams. While I was watching it together with my partner, I soon noticed that the movie made me feel uncomfortable and a bit claustrophobic. But however often I re-watched it, it was impossible for me to find out what made me so uncomfortable. After a while I noticed that my emotions were related not only to the actors’ adventure or the risk that their enemies posed, but that they were deeply connected to what was displayed in the background. The more the environment was altered, the more I became scared. This made me wonder, whether it is really only the depiction of culprits that makes us fear certain situations, or if the presented space also had to do with it.

Movies constitute a great part of recreational activities in Western culture. They are able to carry us to other places and allow us to take part in adventures. Similar to other types of media, movies and television series are also powerful tools that can convey certain morals, values and beliefs to viewers. They can do so even at times when we do not wish to look at the actual news, but whenever we want to relax instead, which may even provide them with more power than for example newspapers, news channels or other types of media (Critchlow and Raymond 114). They may be used to create the image of common enemies and threats,

which, as a result of the emotions we experience while we are watching, we tend to transfer into the real world. This in turn, leads us viewers to develop feelings of solidarity (111).

Especially in times where the threat of terrorism is experienced by many to be a prevailing problem of our contemporary society, it is important to better understand movies that feature it, for they are able to steer their viewers' fears in certain directions, thereby leading to the creation of stereotypes and phobias directed at other cultures.

Researchers in film studies with a socio-historical approach often focus their analyses of movies featuring terrorism on the film form. Analyses of the cinematographic elements seem to be of greater importance than the mise-en-scène elements. Questions such as 'Were the actors able to convince their audience of the role they had to play?' and 'Did the movie pose a critique of contemporary society?' prevail in the discussion around films featuring terrorism. The problem with focusing on these questions is that we tend to overlook things that are not so obvious. Academic studies of movie adaptations of terroristic acts seem to focus on both perpetrators and victims who are involved in the situation, while the environment is generally left aside. Previous studies mostly tried to identify the culprits in a plot. A research by Ivory et al, for example, provides insight in terrorism depicted in movie trailers. Their findings suggest that there has been a dramatic shift of depictions of terrorists. Instead of depicting enemy nations, such as Germany or Russia during the Cold War, the *modern* terrorist is now often one that does not belong to a certain nation but to a religion, which is believed to pose threats against western societies (8). The study by Boggs and Pollard, moreover, tries to identify the different types of cultures and personalities behind terrorists. Their analysis suggests that after 9/11, the image of the enemy has shifted from Communists and Germans, to people of Middle Eastern origin (338). They suggest a *new terrorist personality*, whose aim it is to destroy all mankind, guided by blind aggression and suicidal impulses in most cases. These Hollywood creations are often inclined to make use of black/white, good/bad, we/them binary world views, in which most of the time government



representatives (e.g. agents of the FBI) fight against terrorism, which threatens a large number of people.

However, I argue that the major cause for discomfort of a threatening situation lies beyond the appearance of the main actors, and thus beyond the explicit meaning of a film. When terrorism is depicted in movies the surrounding space matters as well. Claustrophobic feelings are created when protagonists find themselves in environments they cannot easily escape, while the suspected terrorist plots the murder of as many people as possible. In my thesis, therefore, I will look at two movies on terrorism, because it is important to gather insights into the depiction of spatial elements that the viewer is presented with: I will ask how space is used in movies featuring terrorism and how it shapes an audience's emotions. This is done, in order to understand the psychological complexity of such movies, and to highlight the corresponding social responsibility they hold. This is of great importance, as they may enhance the creation of fear and anxiety directed at certain groups. The findings of this thesis will therefore be valuable to the current discussion on the definition of space (Hubbard 41). Furthermore, they will highlight how the concept is used within popular culture, as well as our understanding of the ways in which popular culture deals with terrorism. In the course of the scholarly discussion of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the concept of space has seen a methodological resurgence. It has shifted from being a solely geographical term into an interesting multidimensional concept for the arts (Warf & Arias 1). The meaning of space is no longer static and solely reserved for geographical analyses, but highly dependent on the angle that is used to examine it. It appears relevant for definitions of terms such as gender, race and ethnicity. As Harvey pointed out, the complexity of the term derives from its threefold division (121): it includes socio, temporal and geographical aspects, all of which are important to reach a definition of the term. Other scholars have attached some form of agency to environments, opposing the traditional view of space as an inorganic construction (Eden 58). The environment may shape human life in a way that it provides certain resources to

some while it withholds them from others. However, opponents of this view argue that the environment is merely a social and cultural construction, shaped and created by human agents (Hubbard 41). It is unsurprising, then, that this discussion has sparked the idea of an existing relationship between space and morals: moral geography, as defined by Driver, indicates a set of rules and expectations within a geographical region that allows us to differentiate us from them (Cresswell 128). For this thesis, I selected Jaume Collet-Serra's *Non-Stop* (2014) and Duncan Jones' *Source Code* (2011), both of which feature typical American anti-heroes who, to the targeted audience, are easy to identify with, and which both stem from the same movie genre the thriller. The term genre comes from the French language and "simply means kind or type" (Bordwell and Thompson 328). In previous literature, movie genres were defined as *aesthetic packages* that vary in popularity over time (Nelson 79). The popularity of genres can vary across cultures, but they give films a common identity through shared genre conventions (Bordwell and Thompson 330). The thriller genre often revolves around crimes, and it is the principle genre for movies that deal with politically motivated terrorism (Bordwell and Thompson 332; Nelson 89). It features certain types of characters, usually unqualified, if not ordinary, heroes and heroines, who suddenly need to face a villain, due to special circumstances (E. Martin 209). Furthermore, thriller settings present greater familiarity to the viewers than other genres, as they are often more "realistic, and up-to-date" (Nelson 89). What is meant by this is that they feature realistic anchor points from the real world, such as known buildings, cities, public spaces and so forth. The use and alteration of spatial depictions constitute the central concept of this thesis, as this is one of the major factors that triggers feelings of discomfort. Furthermore, it seems interesting to work with a genre that prominently features real locations, simply because it may lead to a greater transmission of empathic feelings for the protagonist to the real world. Lastly, the ability of thrillers featuring politically motivated terrorism to shape the experiences of viewers regarding terrorist attacks that happened both during and after 9/11, was a major factor for selecting the movies used in

this study (89). When watching these movies, our beliefs are steered into a certain direction, which, in the case of terrorism, could lead to the feeling that the world is a much more dangerous place than it actually is. In order to gain a better understanding of the power of movies to shape viewers' beliefs, it is important to look at movies whose distribution is great. Especially Hollywood's large scale productions reach out to many people, nationally and internationally at the same time, and therefore may have a larger social responsibility than smaller productions.

In the following brief section, I will outline the major points of this work. Chapter one is designed to introduce the reader to the central concepts of this thesis, in order to answer the question of why space matters to us and how movies are capable of creating emotions in their viewers through the use of spatial references. I will first use Edward Soja's theory of "thirdspace" in order to highlight how the term shifted from a solely geographical into a rather social concept. Then I will look at David Harvey's trifold definition of the term space, to analyze its physical aspects. Furthermore, the theories used in Sibley et al. will shed light on the emotional principles of space. Next, I will use the idea by Bordwell and Thompson, who argue that movies depict the world as we know it within a fictional setting. I will also elaborate on Black's idea that movies create an illusion of reality, thereby making it difficult for its viewers to differentiate between what is real and what is fiction. In the following chapter I will discuss the physical aspect of the concept of space, utilized as a way to create boundaries by taking into account the ideas by Harvey. Chapter three, then, will deal with the notion of emotional space, as I am interested in highlighting how space is responsible for emotions of anger and fear in threatening situations. Here I will predominantly use the theories used in Sibley et al. The chapters two and three will each include scenes of both movies to underline what is said. In order to do so, the general guidelines by Karen Gocsik, Richard Barsam and Dave Monahan's "Writing About Movies" will be applied in the analysis of both case studies.

# 1. The world in film

In films featuring terrorism, the most prevalent action is that the main actors need to fight their evil opponents and thereby save as many lives as possible. This story is largely distributed all around the world where it is seen by many. Additionally, the movies convey more information to viewers than is seen at first sight. Films may deal with well-known destroyed cities, famous people who are threatened, hurt or killed, or even those little things that remind us of our everyday lives, and which lead to a connection we subconsciously create between our life and the story presented. In order to fully understand the content and persuasiveness of these messages, and thereby the feelings that are evoked by them, it is important to understand the major concepts of space and terrorism that are central to this thesis. Therefore, I will first conceptualize space, and its use in movies. I will then examine what constitutes the reality within the film, its world so to speak, for it forms the basis of the concept of space. Subsequently, I will go on highlighting the reasons for the selection of the two movies used in this study. Lastly, I will conclude this chapter by pointing out the guidelines of a movie analysis as formulated by Karen Gocsik, Richard Barsam and Dave Monahan, for they will be used in the analytical sections later on.

## 1.1 Defining space

The focus of this current study is the use of space in films. Space is a rather complex concept that needs to be clarified first. It is a concept stemming from cultural geography studies, dealing with the way in which we make sense of different aspects of our everyday lives. Space is a major focus in a currently rediscovered discussion about knowledge and power in relation to geographical imaginations that produce our social worlds: questions such as “How do individuals and communities understand themselves and their relations with each other across space?”, raised the interest of many scholars (Sibley et al. 2). The term “thirdspace”, as introduced by Edward Soja, tries to uncover human understanding of space in

relation to mental concepts of place, location, environment, territory, home and so forth (56-57). In his paper, David Harvey describes space as “one of the most complicated words of our language, because there is a wide range of meanings attached to the term” (119). As we will see later in the course of this thesis, space can be subject to modification and depends on a wide variety of contexts that we use to make sense of it (119). According to Harvey, the term space is classified as threefold: There is the absolute notion of space, which is related to the geometrical aspects of space. It is the only fixed aspect of space that is associated with the frame in which we experience or plan events (121). The relative notion of space, on the other hand, relates to the way in which time and space are connected with each other, while Harvey’s relational concept of space highlights the importance of external influences that create a framework for space (124). The geographical aspects of space are responsible for the creation of social boundaries, which distinguish private from public spaces. Space is relative, and thus is able to create multiple geographical realities, depending “crucially upon what is being rationalized and by whom” (122). What is meant by this is that our environment determines to a great extent how we make sense of the physical reality we live in. This idea comes back in Hubbard’s idea, who believes that our direct environment has the power to influence our experiences and, at the same time, is shaped by our personal experiences (41). Living in a highly urbanized area, for example, provides us with knowledge about buildings and traffic, while living in a highly rural environment can provide us with knowledge about the countryside. Space is seen as a result of social relationships, something that is “socially produced and consumed” at the same time (42). As social interactions are not static over time, space cannot be either. In fact, space is highly dependent upon time and therefore a very dynamic concept, for events do not occur in their own spaces but within a spatial timeframe (Harvey 123). What is meant by that is simply that in a situation where a person feels safe and positive, the space around them is experienced in a similar fashion. If there is a threat and the person feels insecure and scared, the environment does not appear safe to them anymore

(Haanstad 71). Thus, space is not only dynamic in a way that it can change over time, but it can also change because of time. Feelings, beliefs and emotions can change, and therefore they are capable of changing what we make of our environment. This ties in with the second aspect of physical space, its function to highlight differences and shape our feelings of belonging. Instead of viewing identity as something truly individual, our identities are based on our relations across certain social boundaries that distinguish inclusion and exclusion from one another (J. Martin 98). The terminology of race and ethnicity are therefore closely intertwined with that of spatiality: space helps us to define who we are, while it is at the same time able to point out who they are (Bonnett 109).

Another aspect of space, as defined by Sibley, stems from its emotional, psycho-geographical aspects, where a differentiation between public and private space is made. While the private space is often related to home and homelike environments, public space is what lies outside of this safe haven (155). Public space is often seen as something that poses threats to people: in our contemporary lives, we experience a “heightened sense of threat from others”, not least because of what we hear in the news (156). In public spaces people may fear that they are at the mercy of all kinds of villains that threaten the society. News about terroristic attacks support this fear and lead to an even greater awareness of dangers in public spaces. Private spaces, on the other hand, provide us with a safe haven and a “terrain of control” (156). These spaces can be homes, where people experience a full sense of control, or privatized public spaces, such as shopping malls, which, because of the way they are constructed, try to lead us to believe that we are safe (156). The fear of public spaces may go as far as to people being afraid of others who enter their personal space in public. In Western society, for example, there is a certain distance we keep from other people in public. If a person abruptly enters that space without our anticipation, we feel helpless, insecure, and often wish to be able to remove ourselves from that situation.

As we have seen, space is a rather complex and difficult concept, which is not only based in but also dependent upon social interactions. It is important for our understanding of both the physical and the emotional aspects of our everyday lives. Space combines both elements into a mental image, which we use to relate to the external world, and is thus a concept we use to form our (perceived) personal reality. This personal notion of space will be of importance in chapter three, where we will look at the emotional aspects of space.

### **1.1.2 Space on Screen**

In movies, the composition of a shot matters to convey the meaning of the presented scene to the audience. Bordwell and Thompson even compare the film shot to a painting: through a process called framing, the filmmakers think about possible points of interest for their audience, prior to taking a certain shot (148). In so-called open frames it is implied to the audience that, in theory, there is an open space in which characters may enter and leave the frame as they wish (Gocsik et al 231). Closed frames on the other hand are used to create a sense of captivity, where the characters cannot move freely in or out of the screen. The frames imply that there is such a thing as on- and offscreen space: while onscreen space is what exists within the frame, offscreen space is related to viewers' imaginative abilities, as it lies outside the frame.

Filmmakers, thus, make assumptions about what viewers will focus mostly on, e.g. the upper or lower half of the screen, in order to determine how scenes or characters are to be depicted. They play with colors to focus the attention on specific parts of the screen, or using movement to create a notion of depth or centrality (Bordwell and Thompson 150). This last aspect is a crucial point for this thesis, as it can be used in a different manner as well. By using movement, filmmakers can easily reshape space in scenes: shifting from open to closed frames, for example, can lead to evoking more constricting emotions in people, because they empathize with them. If the onscreen space suggests that a character is standing in a street, the



offscreen space may imply that this street is located in a big (or small) city, while a narrow, maybe even isolated or locked room offers no greater environment for the offscreen space. Constriction and freedom are therefore closely related to what is shown on (and off) screen.

In addition to screen space, filmmakers also take the scene space into account (152). The two dimensionality of the depicted images creates depth and focus, and enables the audience to understand the depicted space as realistic space. The use of shadows and perspectives, fore- and background, these are all tools that are commonly used in movies to create depth. The specific compositions enable viewers to shift their attention to what is important in a scene, and to understand what they see in relation to where they, as viewers, are and what they are looking at (154).

## **1.2 A (fictional) reality**

To understand why movies are capable of evoking certain feelings within their viewers, it is important to understand how they are designed. A crucial element of the film's persuasiveness is that a sense of spatiality is created through the environment in which the plot is presented. If movies were only taking place in settings that do not remind us of reality in any form, we would probably not find them as intriguing as we do. There are three major factors of the film's setting that determine to what extent we can relate to the story, and are thus influenced by it. They are crucial anchor points that help us to make sense of what we see. First, in order for viewers to be able to empathize with the characters, and to be able to create deep emotional connections with the scene, filmmakers include features of the real world into their movies. The more viewers identify with a given setting, situation, or the characteristics of a presented character, the greater these emotional connections become (de Graaf, 2014). Film makers can choose between filming parts of the movie in real environments, e.g. cities or national parks, or they may decide to recreate a certain

environment in order to create these anchor points (Black 198). As Kracauer established in 1960, “films come into their own when they record and reveal physical reality” (vii).

When watching a film, viewers often experience the feeling of being part of the world that is presented (Yacavone 95; Perkins 30). Hence, the setting of a film, the environment that is depicted, can be regarded as a world itself, but it is often a representation of the world we really live in (Bordwell and Thompson). This means that there are two factors, which together form the film world: the represented world, which refers to the world we actually live in, and the expressed world, which is the fictional world that the viewer is presented with (Yacavone 94; Walters 44). In the movies that are central to this study, both factors are present. *Source Code*, for example, takes place in the city of Chicago, which is in danger of being attacked by a dirty bomb that is supposed to kill many of its inhabitants. Not only are the characters verbally referring to the city, as they also do in *Non-Stop* with London, but the actual skyline of Chicago is shown in the movie. Yet, talking about and depicting the “real” city is often not enough for Hollywood productions. Instead, “when an existing historical monument figures prominently in a movie, it’s usually necessary to construct a fake alternative” (Black 198). This means that Hollywood arranges bigger and better copies of the originals for the film productions in such a way, that it is nearly impossible for viewers to distinguish between them (199). This example shows that these factors are tightly connected to one another.

Another factor that relates to the delimiting aspect of spatiality that determines the degree to which we are able to relate to the story, is the situation in which it takes place. Films are able to create a visual image for the viewer, for they show stories as directly and vivid as possible (Black 145). In films, when we are able to watch others pursuing goals in their lives, taking their kids to school or working very hard while the boss treats them badly, we may be reminded of our own lives. This enables us to dive deeply into the portrayed situation and experience some sort of connectedness with the characters. Time references support these depictions of situations and events are felt as if they were actually true. This aspect relates to

the way in which we make sense of our surroundings, and it is crucial for our understanding of space (Harvey 120). Tightly connected to the presented situations are the acting persons in a movie, which are also part of this fictive reality. As mentioned earlier, viewers identify better with a given situation, if they feel that characteristics of a presented character match their own (de Graaf, 2014).

So far we have seen that the notion of reality in film is deeply connected to the depicted environment, situation and the characters that are involved. This reality enables the viewers of a film to look at a representation of the world we live in, and to identify with what is shown on screen to such an extent that we cannot make out the fine line between reality and fiction. At the same time, this fictive reality is what equips the movie with the power to persuade its viewers of the plot.

### **1.3 Terrorism**

The prevailing concept around which this project revolves is terrorism, and especially its depictions in films. It is defined, unlike other forms of violence, as violence that is aimed not only at the victim as such, but at people around them as well (G. Martin 45-46). A terrorist attack is often a form of violence that is used to influence others, while attackers want people to know that they are responsible (11). Whether it was after 9/11, the Boston marathon, or the more recent attacks in Brussels, Paris or the Middle East, the perpetrators usually claim the responsibility for the attack(s) through various videos and letters that are posted shortly after the attacks are accomplished. The real targets of terrorism are thus not the direct victims, it is the audience that, which is also to some extent a result of the wide media coverage, suffers from fear of potential future attacks (46). What scares people most is the major loss of control over their environment – terrorists enter public places violently and seemingly unhindered and take their victims' lives as they wish. Beloved sites and social reference points, such as

famous buildings or monuments, are destroyed in a demonstration of pure hate. The attackers show that they have no compunction about their deeds, which makes them harder to stop.

## 1.4 Introducing the Case Studies

For this thesis, I selected Jaume Collet-Serra's *Non-Stop* (2014) and Duncan Jones' *Source Code* (2011), because both stem from the thriller genre. They were both large-scale productions with a wide-ranging audience, which not only increases their impact to a greater extent, but also shows the power of studios such as Hollywood to shape viewers' opinions extensively (Bordwell and Thompson 34). Both films also feature the central figure of the anti-hero. In *Non-Stop* it is former cop Bill Marks who, after his daughter's death, became an alcoholic working as U.S. air marshal; in *Source Code* it is U.S. Army helicopter pilot Colter Stevens who is in a comatose state after being injured on a mission in Afghanistan. *Non-Stop* (2014), furthermore, takes place in an airplane on a transatlantic flight at 40,000 ft. height, flying from New York to London. Somewhere across the Atlantic, the marshal receives several messages on his mobile phone via a secured network, which is reserved for airline members only: an unknown terrorist is threatening to kill one person every twenty minutes in which the marshal does not transfer 150 million dollars to an offshore account. Together with another passenger, Jen Summers, who is seated next to the marshal, Marks tries to discover the identity of the terrorist and ward off the threat. A tricky undertaking – besides the need of preventing mass hysteria by leaving the other passengers in the dark, the marshal needs to find and defang the suspected terrorist and save as many lives as he can. The second movie, *Source Code*, also takes place in an overly public place: when Captain Stevens awakens from what seems to be a military mission, he finds himself on board of a train, which is on its way to Chicago. Opposite of him sits a young woman whom he does not recognize, but who seems to know him. After eight minutes the train suddenly explodes leaving everyone on board dead. Surprisingly though, Stevens appears to have survived the attack. While he orients

himself, the voice of someone named Goodwin is heard. She instructs the soldier to go back into the train, and this time find the bomb before it explodes, in order to find out who placed it there. She explains to him that there had been hints to a series of attacks of which the bomb in the train was only the first strike, and that if he does not succeed, the series the city of Chicago will be hit. We learn that the train is an alternate reality, which allows a military science unit of U.S. terror experts to prevent future terror attacks by projecting soldiers into the settings that were already hit by attacks. Stevens is expected to find out who the terrorist behind the explosion was and whether there are any other targets besides Chicago. Again and again he lives through those last eight minutes in the life of a passenger who was on the train, in order to prevent the imminent mass murder.

## 1.5 Movie Analysis

Chapter two and three will both include analyses of scenes from both movies, in order to highlight the physical and emotional use and alteration of space, utilized to create emotions in viewers. As said earlier, the analysis will be done by the use of the general guidelines of Karen Gocsik, Richard Barsam and Dave Monahan. Their work suggests that meanings of a film are “expressed through the complicated interplay of its many formal elements” (34). I selected one element that best supports the analysis of space, which is the evaluation of mise-en-scene. The term is tightly entangled with the concept of realism, and is an aspect of cinema that is regarded as playing a very active role in films (Bordwell and Thompson 121). It describes the what is filmed in a scene, i.e. the manner in which the frame is created and how every aspect within a frame is positioned. It consists of four general areas – the costumes and makeup, lighting, staging as well as the setting, and it may take on a leading role in a scene (121). The more realistic a movie’s setting appears to its viewers, the more they can relate to it. Furthermore, spatial references in the setting can shape the viewer’s understanding of certain scenes: in scenes where the shot enables the view of background activities, these may enter the main focus of attention of the audience (123).

However, cinematographic aspects – which describe the how scenes are filmed - are just as important as mise-en-scene elements when it comes to space. In the close readings, I will look at the use of camera angles in the scenes. While high angles enable a view on the action from above and are often related to the creation of superior feelings in the audience, low angle shots are taken from below the action and are known for placing the viewer in an inferior position (Gocsik et al. 182). In cinematographic depictions of terrorism, these angles could be used to create certain feelings of anxiety while the attack takes place, or those of success, when the character wins. Furthermore, the use of aerial versus close up views will be examined. With an aerial view of a known city, filmmakers can lead the audience to closely relate to the characters and situations by showing them local anchor points. Close ups, on the other hand, may be used in order to restrict the frame and bring the character's emotions closer to the viewers. Lastly, I will look at the space presented in the scenes by using the techniques of open and close frames, together with on- and offscreen spaces that were mentioned earlier in section 1.1.2, because they are essential for the understanding of space in films.

## **2. Physicality of Space**

A prerequisite for emotional space is the establishment of physical space. As mentioned earlier, the concept of space is a rather “fuzzy” concept. This chapter is designed to shed light on the ways in which public, private and cultural spaces are created in movies. As we will see, both movies first establish the broader environment, the country and city, before introducing the smaller site at which the actual story takes place. Showing typical locations that are part of many people's everyday lives, producers induce their audience to identify with the main characters. Furthermore, I will briefly touch upon how cultural space ties in with the process of identification. Both main characters are from a similar ethnical background, as they are both Caucasian, which leads to a clear understanding of the audience that is targeted with the

movie: the white Americans. It creates the image that it is the white Western culture that is threatened by terrorism. However, this assumption is not met in any of these movies, as it turns out that the victims ultimately stem from many ethnical and social backgrounds, and that terrorism does not target white people only.

## 2.1 Public Spaces in Movies

As mentioned earlier, physical aspects of space allow us to understand where and who we are. With regard to movies, the notion of absolute space suggests that viewers conceive space as a distinctive, bounded location with anchor points indicating in which environments the storyline will evolve (Hubbard 41). These may be taken from a real environment or implicitly referring to countries, cities, or other well-known places. Moreover, it appears irrelevant whether these reference points are shown or mentioned only, as “place emerges as a particular form of space, one that is created through acts of naming as well as through the distinctive activities and imaginings associated with particular social spaces” (Soja 1996; Hubbard 42). The portrayal of these places, as stated previously, enables viewers to relate to the story and empathize with its characters. Depicting U.S. land and property, for instance, may lead to stronger patriotism in U.S. Americans than in viewers from other countries. Both movies pose a different approach to revealing to the audience where the stories take place. *Source Code* features the city of Chicago: In the opening scene, the skyline of the city is presented to the viewer through a diverse aerial shot, while we follow a train on its path through the city’s suburbs, creeping its way towards the city center (00:00:34-00:02:15). Both, the buildings of the skyline and the train immediately narrow down the probability of where the story takes place and it automatically excludes other places. A few moments later, the protagonist asks a train passenger “What is that?” while looking at the skyline, “Chicago.” the passenger answers, thereby confirming what the audience has presumably already figured out (00:04:50). Other, more subliminal reference points can be used as well. In *Non-Stop*, the local reference points are not as obvious. The main character sits in his car, which appears to



be a place of retreat (00:00:19). Additionally, the viewer is able to hear airplane sounds and is shown an airport in a somewhat close distance (00:01:18; 00:01:51-57). The security checkpoint scene gives a crucial hint as to where exactly this airport is, when a passenger refers to New Yorkers, and the protagonist claims that he does not intend to stay in London for long (00:03:33-55).

Besides determining the broader environment in which the movies take place, the viewers are furthermore capable of making out the sub-environment that the story takes place in. These smaller sub-environments are still related to the wider public aspects of space, but they are used to confine the actual place of action even further. This is related to what humans experience in their everyday lives as well: even though we have a theoretical understanding of the country which we live in, we do not tend to think in those broad terms. In reality, it is our direct environment that has a greater influence on our understanding of where we are. This process is called mental mapping, and refers to the fact that humans relate to the world by general knowledge about its existence (Cosgrove 27-28). In other words, our direct environment, such as the neighborhood we live in, the coffee house we are sitting in or other, directly perceptible locations are much more important for our understanding of space on an everyday base. Since movies are representations of reality as we know it, they, too, share this need of cutting the broad environment into smaller pieces that are easier to digest. *Source Code* provides the viewer with more than one sub-environment in which the protagonist needs to orient himself: at 00:07:20, Captain Colter Stevens awakes in a capsule with a seatbelt strapped around his chest. Just as the protagonist the viewer “knows nothing” (00:10:50), it is unclear where exactly he is. The viewer can make out that the background resembles features of a cockpit like environment, but the capsule remains a room of unidentifiable shape. The other sub-environment in *Source Code* is the train compartment in which the major action takes place. Even though the Captain did not expect to be in the train, he knows immediately where he is. He may be compared to the viewers, who, even though the train was not

introduced all to well, are able to understand within seconds where they are. The little seating group in which he travels with Christina, an acquaintance, makes another sub-environment within the compartment. In *Non-Stop*, on the other hand, the sub-divisions of environment are not as explicit. Instead, the viewers learn that the main protagonist is travelling from New York to London in a non-stop flight. The onscreen space here is first the airport at which he boards the plane, and later the plane itself. What differs in this movie compared to *Source Code* is that the reference points are made invisible: right at the beginning of the movie, at 00:01:18, the marshal exits his car and stands right at an airport. Behind him, the viewers see – besides a sign stating ‘terminal’ – nothing that could help them to understand where exactly they are, because it is very foggy in the background. This is remarkable, as it collides with the theories of realism in movies, namely that viewers can identify anchoring points in order to make references to reality. While *Source Code* refers to a great extent to the city in which it takes place, *Non-Stop* does not intend to do it at all. This results in the fact that any viewer could identify with the protagonist, and that anyone could be the target of the attack. While in *Source Code* only viewers with a direct relation to or a strong preference for the U.S. and maybe the city itself are reached, *Non-Stop* does not restrict them in their imagination: anyone across the world can identify with the situation of being on that plane, which takes terror to an international level.

With the above mentioned techniques, the producers have not only established the respective movie world, but also managed to help their audience to identify with the people and places. While the sub-environments are often shown in close ups, the wider environment is mostly filmed from an aerial view. This may be due to the fact that we have these mental images, or maps, which help us to make sense of our environment (Cosgrove 28). In these maps we may also have an image of a certain city (in the case of Chicago), that we then compare to what we see on screen. By using the aerial view, we are presented with the major anchor points that we can then relate to our own image. If it matches, our mind tells us that

this is indeed the city of Chicago. The sub-environments are filmed in rather close shots that resemble the way in which we perceive our direct environment as well. Also, by using closer shots, the broader environment is pushed even further to the back, making it increasingly implicit and turning it into offscreen space (Bordwell and Thompson, 191).

An important element in understanding the physical environment is the use of time in the films. According to Harvey's relational space, space cannot exist without a reference to time (123). As mentioned earlier, time frames can change what we feel and how we experience our environment. Time is often perceived as highly malleable, and victims, witnesses, and perpetrators likewise seem to perceive the slowing down, speeding up, or an increased awareness of time during moments of violence (Haanstad 71). Time seems to be a very sensitive point in terrorism: it is not just during an attack that every second counts, the war against terror has become a race against time as well. After the American trauma that is 9/11 tragedy, people seem to be waiting for the next attack to happen (Ackerman 1-6). Both movies, also, pay special attention to the use of time. In *Source Code*, Captain Stevens has exactly eight minutes to find out who the attacker is and where the bomb is located, which will kill all passengers inside the train. Eight minutes in which he is placed in the compartment and needs to go through every single traveler on board, and after which he is violently pushed back into the capsule, which seems to be the starting and ending of each sequence. Moreover, there is a second timer that is placing an even greater pressure on the already very short time span that he has to find bomb and attacker: it is the very short amount of time that is left for Chicago's citizens, who will die from the detonation of a dirty bomb, which is part of a series of terror attacks (00:19:35-00:19:47). A similar scenario is given in *Non-Stop*. Air Marshal Marks only has a limited time span to save his passengers, as an unknown terrorist threatens to kill someone every twenty minutes (14:55-17:11). However, the film makes use of a different global time structure than *Source Code*, as the movie places itself within a historical time frame referring to reality. In one of the penultimate scenes in

which the air marshal has identified the attackers and asks them for their reasons, the viewers are provided with a reference to the actual tragedy of 9/11: “you have any idea how easy this was? [...] you failed miserably. 3,000 people died that day [...] security is this country’s biggest lie. In our homes, in our cities, in our planes. No one’s safe [...]” (01:28:30-01:28:40). When relating this scene back to the concept of space, it shows how great the anxiety about being exposed to attackers can be. Culprits entering our spaces and destroying all we have is the worst vision that some people can think of.

## 2.2 Public Privacy

Opposite public space is private space, which, according to Sibley, is mostly related to homes and homelike environments (155). As mentioned in the introduction, public spaces are often threatening to people because they do not feel that they have control over them. Private spaces on the other hand, do provide us with a sense of security and a terrain of retreat and control: we seek comfort and security at home, but when we are in public, we look for similarly comforting places by identifying this one spot that is reserved just for us (156). This can be a seat or a table in a restaurant for which we made a reservation, a bench in a park where we regularly go to read, or a seat group in planes and trains. Even though these private spaces exist only on a temporary basis, they are crucial to our well-being (156-157).

*Source Code* and *Non-Stop* both feature these privatized public spaces in a very similar manner. In *Source Code*, there is the seat group that Captain Stevens and Christina are sitting in, which forms a space for privacy. Throughout the movie, these seats gain importance, as it is where Captain Stevens and Christina start their search for the terrorist and the bomb from there. It is only the two of them that sit there and talk freely without interference from other passengers. In an essential scene, Captain Stevens asks her to move over to the seat next to him, so they can theorize about other passengers’ ‘suspicious’ behavior even more privately (00:22:30-00:24:00; and 00:37:00-00:37:17). This private space

is created because of a social interaction, a trusted connection that develops between the two over the course of the movie. A trusted connection that is capable of forming private space is depicted in *Non-Stop* as well. At first the passengers are depicted placing their belongings into the overhead bins above the belonging seats (00:07:08). This is a first step into creating a private space. For the duration of the trip, every passenger will stick to their place which makes it theirs for the time being. When Marshall Marks shows signs of anxiety at the departure of the airplane, his seat neighbor Jen Summers helps him through his fear (00:10:36-00:12:48). This creates a bond between the two that will come back throughout the film: Marks eventually trusts her enough to share the fact that there is a terrorist on the plane, whom he needs to stop (00:32:42-00:33:42).

An even more interesting space that is created in both movies is the restroom as a source of privacy. In *Source Code*, it is used by the captain during one of the very first scenes (00:05:41-00:06:18). When he feels uncomfortable because he cannot remember how he got on to the train, he hides in the restroom – a place where he can be on his own. It's a separate world so to speak, in which only the person who is using it is the one present. The walls can be touched and leaned on, and they shield a person's private space from that of the other people around. It is thus an intimate room with great importance for public spaces, because it offers security and privacy to people who may need to get away from the crowded areas. Later on in the movie, it becomes obvious that private spaces within public spaces are really just places that offer temporary comfort: at 00:14:34-00:15:12, the audience finds out that the bomb had been placed within the air duct above the restroom. This is especially devastating for Captain Stevens, for the terrorist has thereby intruded on his private space. Hereby the terrorist is able to take away people's private spaces of retreat – decreasing their feelings of security and control in public. In *Non-Stop* the restroom as a private space is present as well. Shortly before Marks receives a text message threatening to kill a passenger every twenty minutes, the air marshal enters the restroom to smoke and enjoy some privacy (00:13:36-

00:14:26). At 01:02:55 until 01:04:20, he makes the same discovery as Captain Stevens in the train: terrorists can use private spaces such as restrooms to conceal their deeds from the eyes of others, which makes these spaces less safe than believed.

As we have seen in this section, private spaces in public, even though they offer only temporary privacy, are very important to us. Each and every one of us seems to create them, whether intentionally or subconsciously, whenever we need to cope with being in public.

Next, the cultural implications that space offers will be discussed.

## 2.3 Cultures in Space

Both movies feature the cultural aspects of space, which according to Sibley et al. are identity, gender, whiteness, citizenship, and heritage (89-90). They allow us to create the borders of our societies and cultures. When we use space to identify the where we are, it also had to be able to provide us with information about the what and who of our surroundings. This is what cultural space is referring to. It allows us to think in terms of nationalities, ethnicities, and other aspects of belonging. When it comes to terrorism, we often have certain expectations of the attackers, depending on who is most active in terrorism. Movies create an understanding of who the “good” versus who the “bad” people are, by making them the focus of certain scenes. This cultural aspect of space is seen in *Source Code*, when Captain Stevens knows that his mission is to find a bomb, which will go off in the train that he is on. His first instincts lead him to attacking a “Muslim looking” man, because he suspects him of being the culprit. The true attacker, being white, is seen various times and even becomes the focus of a scene in the beginning of the movie (00:13:36), though he is not a suspect until much later. In the scene where Christina and Stevens, together, look for possible suspects, he also focuses his search on an Indian looking man. Christina brings attention to it by saying he is committing “racial profiling” (00:22:28-00:24:26). In *Non-Stop*, these aspects clearly come into play at several moments, for example when the marshal examines the passengers before

even boarding the plane (00:05:12-00:05:36). His eyes certainly rest longer on “typical” suspects than on white people, for example on a Muslim man at both 00:03:17 and 00:05:19, or a black man typing on his phone (00:04:33).

### 3. Emotionally Changing Space

What becomes most important, once the protagonist is aware of the threat, is the salvation of the space that is directly threatened. In *Source Code* this is not only the train that is racing towards the city of Chicago, but also the capsule in which Captain Stevens is trapped. It is important to note here that with the possibility of a destruction of this capsule, Stevens suffers from an increasing fear of confinement. The protagonist is thus not only incapable of escaping the repeated explosions on the train, but also of rescuing himself from this prisonlike environment. *Non-Stop* on the other hand, revolves around this one terrorist who not only threatens to kill passengers, but at the same time is one of them. The plane becomes a crime scene and jail at the same time for the innocent passengers on board, because at 12,000 miles height, no one can leave the plane easily. Feelings of being caught are therefore not just related to the smallness of a certain room, but also to the knowledge that there is no way out of the situation.

#### 3.1 Mise-en-Scene changes

Knowing that space can play an important role in shaping people’s perception of the situation they find themselves in, we are now turning to the ways in which mise-en-scene contributes to this perception. The major focus of the analysis will be the background of the scenes, which is why we will look at the lighting as well as the setting of the scenes as such (Bordwell and Thompson 21-123). In what follows, the changes made to the wider and the sub-environment, as described in chapter 2.1, will be examined.

In *Source Code* a major source of insecurity lies with the ever changing environment. Especially the capsule, which the captain finds himself in every time the sequence of eight



minutes is over, changes to a great extent throughout the film. Besides its function as a sort of jail, a locked room, which Stevens cannot escape, it also appears to change with his changing moods. It appears at 00:06:59 for the first time in the movie, after the first explosion happens. The captain awakens in it, turned upside down and apparently without any knowledge over where he is. The background is so dark, that the viewer only sees the seatbelt that is strapped across the captain's chest, so that the environment may be recognized as a sort of cockpit. At 00:07:55 he is turned with his head up, and it is possible to make out some monitors (one of them showing a video chat to Goodwin, his leading officer commanding), which suggest that he indeed is in a sort of cockpit. The darkness conceals all information about the background, which leaves the viewers with a feeling of insecurity and constriction. When he returns to the capsule after the second explosion, a change can be recognized (00:17:25). Besides the darkness, now, some hydraulic fluids enter the capsule thereby leaving Stevens' with even greater discomfort. Now, we can make out a blinking red light somewhere in the dark, one that looks like it is announcing that something broke within the capsule. When the captain learns about the fact that he has already been in the capsule for two months, the surrounding space becomes dark again. The only light source remaining is an odd shaped window in the ceiling, offering a moment of comfort to Stevens (00:19:41). Goodwin dismisses Stevens' concerns about the fluid and forces him to return to the train instead, leaving us wondering whether she does not care about the captain's well-being. Again, he returns to the capsule after the eight-minute time span: now, the capsule has changed dramatically, as its walls are now covered in ice, and the screens appear broken (00:28:49-00:32:39). In addition to the returning darkness, the air supply is now broken, which causes panic in Stevens. He unbuckles his seatbelt and falls heavily to the floor, while he desperately tries to keep the room from breaking apart. His fear increases constantly, for he believes that he is running out of time because of the amount of air remaining inside the room is slowly depleting. When he finally reconnects to the video chat, it is not Goodwin, but a mysterious researcher who

responds to him. At this point of the movie, the room of the captain has already been identified as a sort of broken cockpit, but the researcher calls this spatial knowledge into question by asking: “A capsule, is that where you are?”. By taking away the captain’s orientation, he takes away any feeling of being secure: how can Stevens feel safe if he does not even know where he is? Lastly, it seems worth noting that the capsule also changes as Stevens becomes better in finding the terrorist. It seems to become bigger and loses the rest of its shape (00:52:35-01:04:42). The bigger the room becomes, the less seems able to understand where he is. In the end, he sits in a black room again, asking Goodwin to turn off his life-extending measures. The black room resembles his feeling of being lost again, and knowing no escape but death. As with time, the changing room is thus a method to depict Stevens mental state, which shows that the way we interact with space is tightly connected to our emotional state (Haanstad 72). Without fear, we can calmly explore and perceive the space we find ourselves in. In moments when we feel anxious, the space around us appears menacing.

*Non-Stop* on the other hand, plays more with light than with the environment. When the passengers are boarding the airplane, the cabin lights are turned on, so they are able to easily find their seats (00:06:38). At 00:10:23, the lights are turned off, which creates a night like atmosphere – passengers are granted a good night’s sleep in their private spaces. It creates comfort and silence. A little while later, at 00:15:01, this relaxed atmosphere turns into a scary one, when the marshal receives the first text message. He turns around in discomfort, looking at passengers that are still awake. The darkness does not longer have a support function anymore, but turns into a hindrance. The light becomes an increasingly important factor a few shots later, when we see Marshal Hammond, Marks’ colleague, walking to the restroom at 00:27:18. This is just after we have learned that the terrorist knows Marks’ family circumstances, which narrows down the possible suspects to someone Marks knows personally. This shot creates suspense by filming Hammond in a close shot, with the blue

colored night light of the airplane cabin illuminating the room from behind. The fact that no other passenger is seen in the sequence highlights the suspicions the viewers regard the marshal with. The last, extremely important scene in which the light becomes crucial is when the air marshal tries to take away the insecurity of not knowing who the terrorist is on this flight, by turning on the lights in the cabins (00:37:27). The fear of the night and darkness is thus removed and turned into action against the terrorist. By turning on the light, Marshal Marks is able to take away the private space of each passenger, including that of the terrorist.

### 3.2 The use of angles

As mentioned earlier, cinematographic aspects of movies that talk about how a movie is filmed, also matter when it comes to the depiction of space. First, there is the possibility to place the characters and audience in a superior or inferior position, through the use of aerial shots or shots from below the action (Gocsik et al. 182). An example of that can be found in *Source Code*, when Stevens catches Frost in the end (01:13:09). The scene is shot in an open frame but with a close shot on both characters respectively. What is remarkable is that the viewer does not get the feeling that Stevens is caught in the frame, which according to the definition by Bordwell et al should not be the case anyways, but at the same time it is filmed in a way that Frost cannot leave the scene anymore (231). It is already a hint to the winning role of Stevens over Frost. When Frost's face is shown in the frame, we seem to be slightly looking down on him, placing the viewers in a superior position as well. In an earlier scene, Frost takes the winning role, namely at 01:01:29, when he shot Stevens and Christina in front of his van. When Frost speaks to the dying captain, he looks down into the camera, giving the audience the feeling that he wins and they lose. In *Non-Stop*, the audience is also placed in an inferior role. Namely in the scene in which Marks believes his partner Hammond is the terrorist (00:06:53-00:05:22). Hammond is shown walking to the restroom with some blue light in the background. The scene is taken from a lower angle, thus positioning Hammond

into a superior position. The focus is on him, cutting out all other passengers. The scenes in which the marshal received the mails are all taken in closed frames to create a sense of captivity from which he cannot escape (14:55-00:00:00). Wide angles and close ups are mixed into the scene, to switch from his feelings about the messages to the environment that traps him. Furthermore, *Non-Stop* uses a very prevailing technique: as mentioned in chapter two already, there are no references in the background referring to any well-known reference point when Marks is at the airport. Viewers are therefore incapable of finding out where exactly this airport is located. What is causing this distraction is that the background is blurred. However, this blurred background exists throughout the movie, and is sometimes highlighted with movement to create a notion of depth or centrality (Bordwell and Thompson 150). The scene which I am referring to here is when Marks exits the restroom in which he killed the co-marshal (00:29:49-00:30:02). When he walks back to his spot, he receives another message from the real terrorist – he suspected Hammond before, the camera zooms in on him, revolving around his upper body. This scene shows the confinement that the environment poses to the character. It is a space which he cannot escape.

The framing, therefore, is a very crucial aspect in the creation of emotions. The viewer feels does not only empathize with the characters, but is literally placed into the situation, because they can identify with it.

### 3.3 Changing identities

The last scenes of both movies shows that the racial expectations have vanished. In *Source Code*, Stevens tries to connect to a black business man who is obviously upset about something in order to make him feel better (01:19:09-01:21:50). The comedian whom he first suspected because he looked as if he had a Muslim background joins the conversation and tells Stevens to mind his own business. Stevens then bets him \$100 in order to make the people on the train laugh. In the final frame, after the eight minutes ran out, the viewer sees all

people on the train laughing together, all of whom certainly have a different racial and ethnic background (01:21:50-01:22:21). *Non-Stop* also shows these initial forms of racism that change into a new, mixed group. The NYC officer, for example, asks whether the marshal is really sure about “letting that guy into the cockpit”, referring to the Muslim Doctor (00:47:47). Moments later, they are both parts of a group turning against the marshal, whom they suspect to be hijacking the plane (01:01:58-01:02:53). These newly formed boundaries stay until the very end of the film, when they fight against the attackers. It clearly does not matter anymore who comes from which background, as long as they form a new grouped space, a force they can use against the culprits (01:15:47-01:25:04).

Both movies pose a message to the viewers, namely that the “we” in both cases is not whites, blacks, Asians, Muslims or any other distinct group, it is every single person in the situation who is threatened. It resembles the American culture, and poses a positive message to take away for the viewers: as long as we as a country, a nation, the good people, act as one, we will fight the evil of this world. It is an exceptionally American message, and created even without words, but through social spaces.

## Conclusion

This study has attempted to find out how space is used in films to shape viewers' emotions while watching them. First, we saw that the concept itself is highly debated today, as it gains importance in every aspect of our lives. Anchoring points, which refer to certain places in reality, can lead the audience to a better understanding of the place in which the movie takes place and an identification with the presented situation. We have seen how physical space consists of several layers: a person's environment, the actual place where the person is, as well as the time references that are made to refer to the space. Furthermore, the complexity of public spaces may create insecurities and feelings of being exposed to others. Private spaces on the other hand provide us with the security that is missing in public spaces, even though these spaces only last for a limited amount of time.

As we have seen, private as well as public spaces are subject to changes. Both movies show that a private space in public, for example, can turn into a very dangerous place within a short amount of time: both protagonists seem to regard the restrooms on board of the public transportations as their private haven of retreat from the other passengers. However, as the terrorists make use of the same private spaces, the feeling of security is deceptive. This shows how filmmakers use the concepts of space, time and terrorism, in order to create anxiety within their audience. Furthermore, we saw how cultural space is important for our understanding of identities and cultures, but also how it may be responsible for supporting or diminishing people's stereotypical thinking. These results suggest that space in movies is an underappreciated concept, which is able to evoke various emotions.

We saw that certain angles and setups of the shots are very important when it comes to evoking an audience's emotions. The angles at which a scene is shot are meant to create anxieties and feelings of loss when the attack takes place or when the attacker is placed in a superior role. They can also create feelings of success in situations when the protagonist wins. Moreover, open and closed frames are utilized to suggest a character's freedom or

constriction within a scene. As the audience builds emotional connections to and identifies with the presented characters, these feelings may be transferred into the real world. Mise-en-scene elements can also underline the threatening factors of changing spaces in movies: we saw in *Non-Stop* (2014) that the darkened airplane cabin can provide shelter to anyone, the victims as well as the perpetrators, and is therefore a source of emotional security as well as of fear.

All of these stylistic elements show how the intrusion and deprivation of private spaces in public by others make changing spaces in movies an overarching concept that, due to the audience's identification with characters and settings, can be transferred into the real world. The techniques used in these movies to create emotional responses, could be the source of many anxieties, such as claustrophobia and the fear of others. As we have seen in chapter one, the reality that is created in films makes it hard for the audience to distinguish between fiction and reality. This poses great responsibility on the film industry, not only because of the sometimes rather disturbing emotions that are created in and by certain scenes, but also because of the stereotypes that may be created by these movies, when a terrorist is clearly identified as member of a certain (religious) group, or ethnical background. However, because stereotypes may gain power through movies gratifying to see that filmmakers do not only use space and time to create anxieties, but also to overcome cultural boundaries of space by depicting the victims of terror as anyone regardless of their backgrounds.



## Discussion

Before I conducted this study, I felt that movies could have a great impact on the emotionality of its audience. The analysis of two films featuring terrorism brought the importance of space to light, when it comes to tools used by filmmakers to steer these emotions into diverse directions. During endless hours of watching the movies, another feature came forward – these Hollywood productions, though predicted by previous studies such as the one by Boggs and Pollard, did not stress Arabs or Muslims as the perpetrators (336). Instead, the culprit was a white American, who was dissatisfied with the system. This is a very interesting finding, which needs further research. Another very noteworthy aspect of private space in public that came forward during the course of this study was the use of the restrooms. It was very interesting to see how in both movies this space was used for different situations and purposes. Future studies about the concept of space should look at this feature, in order to find out how it offers comfort and safety to its users in different situations.

The reader should bear in mind that this study is based on a limited number of movies. In order to fully understand how the concept of space is utilized in films, it is necessary to conduct extensive future research. This study should be regarded as a first insight in how the concept of space is related to terrorism.

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