

Mapping the Menace:

**A quantitative content analysis
on enemy image construction in
the American action thriller**

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ABSTRACT

This Working Paper critically investigates the presence of enemy images in the American action thriller genre. First, a theoretical framework is assembled by combining insights from conflict studies, genre theory and critical discourse analysis. Through a quantitative content analysis of 180 films in a 36 years period (1981-2016), an explorative mapping is given of dominant enemy identities, themes and generic conventions. Results show a large diversity in villain characters, largely defined by their ethnic 'otherness'. These identities are discursively tied to notions of the self and the 'other', often interacting with what is at different time periods perceived to be credible threats to the USA or the Western international community. At the same time many White American authority figures also appear as villains, signifying a rich potential for social criticism and counter-hegemonic strategies. However, such critical reflections are generally not accomplished since the generic conventions of these films largely affirm hegemonic discourses on enemyhood and conflict. The comparison between hero and villain characters also reveals that heroes are strikingly similar to villains in actions, motivations and means. Despite such resemblances, these actions are framed differently as to understand the violent measures of the heroes as sanctioned, and those of the villains as unacceptable.

PREFACE

This Working Paper is part of a larger research project of which the aim is to offer a longitudinal analysis on enemy image construction in the American action thriller¹. Consisting of two research cycles, this project aspires to investigate processes of vilification and demonization as both a discursive and cinematic practice. The contents of this Working Paper are the results of an explorative mapping of enemy identities as part of the first research phase. During one year, nearly two hundred action films were watched and coded. A process I originally thought of as an easy, relaxing activity quickly turned out to be a mentally exhausting ordeal. Explosions, oiled torsos and racist slurs were in abundance, and the lack of narrative and aesthetic complexity some of these films offered made me curse the topic altogether. For this reason special thanks go out to those that alleviated the process. Gratitude is foremost in order to my promotor and co-promotor, Daniel Biltereyst and Gertjan Willems, for their helpful feedback and emotional support during these months of testosterone filled tribulations. Furthermore, I'd like to offer my thanks (and apologies for all the mediocre films) to the 3rd bachelor students who helped in the coding process as part of the course 'Werkcollege in de Communicatiewetenschappen'. Although their results were in the end not used, the many sessions and stimulating presentations we had did direct me to many new insights. Silke Leenknecht, Kobe Demeester, Thijs De Schepper, Louise De Witte, Jill Van Der Biest, Rany Hugenaert, Astrid Degryse and Charlotte Van Campenhout, may you have fruitful careers, in academia or otherwise, and enjoy a lifetime lasting love for cinema.

¹<https://www.ugent.be/ps/communicatiewetenschappen/cims/en/research/faces-of-evil.htm>

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1. INTRODUCTION

Enemies are seemingly everywhere in our contemporary media culture. With images of war, terrorism and violence proliferating, it is hard to imagine a world without enemy ‘others’. While visions of danger and hostility are an indispensable part of political rhetoric and media logics of the twenty-first century, perhaps no cultural site provides such a steady supply of enemy ‘others’ than Hollywood. The American film industry is responsible for diverse assortment of villains on a regular basis, creating characters that act as targets for spectacular violence and societal unease. Action thriller films prove to be the most extreme manifestation of this phenomenon, presenting righteous heroes battling dastardly villains as in myths of old. Despite its opacity in popular culture, the discursive dynamics of enemy image construction remains a terrain relatively uncharted.

Building a theoretical framework out of discourse theory, conflict studies and literature on genre and mythology, this Working Paper perceives enemies as the product of collective invention. They are social constructions tied to discourses on ‘otherness’ and antagonism. Antagonistic divisions are essential components in the construction of meaning and the formation of identities, yet who these enemies exactly are and how to interact with them is an important site of contestation. If we are to understand enemy image construction as a discursive practice we have to understand how we structure the stories we tell and the place enemyhood takes in these narratives. This research adopts a cultural studies approach in critically reading and understanding stereotyping and vilification in contemporary mass media culture. These cinematic representations are not only understood as an expression of discourses on the self and the ‘other’, but also as rituals that help structure the social and the political. Whereas content analysis research is not entirely common in the post-structural approach of Cultural Studies and textual analysis oriented lineage of Film Studies, this Working Paper attempts to integrate mass media studies methodology into abovementioned fields as to provide previously explored material of new insights. Firstly, this Working Paper offers a literature review on concepts such as otherness, narrative, myth and genre, and the ritual function they serve in the representation of enemy identities in popular cinema. After methodological elucidation, the results of a quantitative content analysis into enemy identities are reported. This research functions as an explorative mapping into the presence and evolution of enemy identities, narrative structures, topical

themes, generic conventions and societal discourse. As such this research intersects on different narrative, thematic, representational and formal elements of enemy image construction, and deliver an engaging introduction into an underexposed area of film studies.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Enemy Image Construction: the Logics of Difference

Before the enemy comes the 'other'. Notions of 'otherness' and the logics of difference form an integral part of structuring social realities and individual identities. Harle (2000, 18) defines two types of "non-us" that help constitute identity relations: the 'other' and the 'enemy'. In its most basic definition the 'other' is what is fundamentally different from the self (Harle, 2000, 10). From a social-psychological point of view, Hegelian ideas on construction of human consciousness and individual consistency are often seen as operating through dynamics of negation. We know who we are and to what groups we belong by way of exclusion. In this manner, to speak of a self is to indirectly determine an 'other'. Yet as Kennedy (1997, 349) states: "all enemies are others, but not all others are enemies". To Fiebig Von Hase (1997, 2-3) 'others' are classified as 'enemies' if their appearance is coupled with some kind of extreme threat perception. Enemy images are never simply naturally existent, but grow from the perception of socio-historical circumstances. But more importantly, these are also seen as arising from a specific need. Or, in the words of Eco (2012, 17): "it seems we cannot manage without an enemy. The figure of the enemy cannot be abolished from the processes of civilization". A large number of theorists from disciplines such as political theory (Barker, 2006; Harle, 2000; Laclau and Mouffe, 1985), military history (Freeland, 1972; Keen, 1991; Spillman and Spillman, 1991; White 1984) conflict studies (Hamelink, 2015; Murray and Myers, 1999), media studies (Carruthers, 2011; Merskin, 2011; Munro, 2014) and social psychology (Aho, 1994; Barash, 1994; Murray and Myers, 1999; Silverstein, 1989) have noted that enemies play a role for individuals and societies alike. According to Barker (2006), we can identify two different explanations for the need for enemies. While the first rests on the belief in the psychological importance of enemies as desirable objects for projection of our personal fears and frustrations (Volkan 1985, 198), the second explanation is explicitly ideological. According to Chomsky (1987), enemies are constructed by state characters to cultivate support for hegemonic projects of control and coercion. Shapiro (2007) refers to this process as the 'architectures of enmity'. Here, sovereign states willfully transform foreign communities into distant 'others' that can be feared or fought. The narratives that enable such discourses

are defined by a belief in a desirable moral and social order that is threatened by an external and abnormal enemy (Barker, 2009). Aho (1994, 5-6) sees the enemy's sociopolitical genesis as stemming from forces as much social as political: "the enemy is a joint production, constructed by all of us together, not usually a phenomenon any one person accomplishes alone". Enemies are in this sense both real and perceived. There needs to be some out-group, distinct of our in-group, to direct this animosity towards, but this narrative has to – at least partially–be believed as warranted or reciprocated. In this sense, enemies can be considered more as constructed than represented, since their role is more often designated than chosen.

To Yanay (2012, 25) the concept of 'enemy' is condense, it is "a signification which produces an ensemble of effects mostly known as processes of othering, exclusion, abjection, animalization, distancing, opposition, rejection, aggression, and so forth". The logics of difference dominating the self/other distinction are continued in the conception of the enemy, only here exclusion graduates into hostile opposition. As such, the word enemy has symbolic power. As Kelman (1999, 592) articulates, the concept functions as "a weaponized signifier"; to create an enemy, one simply has to address a group as such. The concept of 'enemy image construction' is used throughout this Working Paper to refer to the process of discursively designating individuals and aggregates as enemies. Having already established that enemies have to be conceived before being considered part of social reality, prompts the question of what type of discursive strategies contribute to the creation of the enemy. Spillmann and Spillmann (1997) consider enemy image construction as a development based on perceptual evaluations and consisting out of several characteristics: negative anticipation, blameshifting, identification with evil, zero-sum thinking, stereotyping and de-individualization, and a refusal to show empathy. To them our conception of the enemy is intimately tied to how we believe the enemy should be dealt with. Or as Yanay (2012, 30) attests: "All societies have their Other demonic abject, but not every society fights its demons to death". Once a group is discursively defined as enemy, it enters in a wider chain of equivalence with other nodal points, both relating to the enemy's identity and the nature of this enemyhood. Galtung (1996) follows this logic and sees the construction of enemyhood as based on a series of binary oppositions that function as a variety on the good/evil dichotomy. Not only does the enemy occupy the latter role in the

self/other distinction, they are potentially also as savage, subhuman, cowardly, sadistic, hypersexual, unreasonable, demonic, and prone to many different negative characteristics. In his investigation into the psychology of enmity, Sam Keen (1986) illustrates the interchangeable nature of such enemy characteristics. An enemy can be considered both as aggressive and passive, strong yet weak, depending on the circumstances we want them to fall in. Whether the enemy is considered within the scope of normal humanity and whether his/her life can be considered grievable also enter within this discursive network (Butler, 2009). In extreme cases of enemy image construction, such as demonization, murder can be redefined as a legitimate, desirable or even necessary solution to the problem of enemy's existence. Enemy image construction delivers a simple narrative where the fault of the 'other' is accentuated and that of the nation minimized (Barker, 2009, 271), but functions far beyond the realm of state politics. In helping to discursively package the likes of self, 'other', nation, history, war and geopolitics, enmity is something akin to an ontology. By inventing the enemy, we are taking part in giving meaning to world. Borders, barriers, conflicts, collectives and grievable lives all come forward from such division, and these structures are negotiated indefinitely in a vast number of sites. To summarize with Said's (1993, xiii): "The power to narrate, or to block 'others' narratives, from forming and emerging, is very important to culture and imperialism, and constitutes one of the main connections between them". For this reason, cultural expressions such as cinema prove to be an important site for critical analysis.

The framing of conflict and identification of Self and 'others' proliferate in a multitude of ways within the political and the cultural. Various conflict studies scholars (Allen & Seaton, 1999; Carpentier, 2007; Cottle, 2006; Hamelink, 2011; Seib, 2015; Shapiro, 1997; Whitehead and Finnström, 2015) have investigated the relationship between media and the negotiation of discourses of and within times of war. Throughout the 20th century perhaps no other medium of mass communication than cinema has displayed such a great potential in the identification, reinvigoration and crystallization of enemy-identities (Merskin, 2004, 164). Carter (2014, 9) stresses the importance of cinematic representations when attempting to understand international power structures, stating that "Film can reinforce a fundamentally habitual form of geopolitics based on invoking and reinforcing those banal expressions of national identity and architecture of enmity". Because of this, film scholars focusing on

geopolitics should not limit themselves to the depiction of geopolitical relationships, but are obliged to reflect upon the ideological implications in film. When starting off an investigation into how cinema stands into relation with wider political phenomena of representation and the structuring of difference, the ‘soft power’ of the American filmed entertainment industry is the first category that comes to mind. “No institution”, as Richardson (2010, 1) points out, “has been more successful at binding together economic and cultural dominance on a world stage than Hollywood”. Since mass media are the main source of knowing our ‘others’ and enemies, Hollywood’s role in the depictions of these different cultures and the role they occupy in the larger geopolitical landscape cannot be underestimated. Kellner (2003, 83) affirms that Hollywood adventure films systematically “must have an Enemy, an evil ‘Foreign Others’”, and that such types of representations are often in line with states’ geopolitical relations and military campaigns. In a more abstract sense, a culturally produced and consistently propagated enemy image aids in the construction of a more coherent image of the self and the nation. According to Clarke (1997, 33), “Hollywood has created a series of ‘others’ which in no sense relate to the self-definition of these diverse other places and peoples: rather they project the needs, fears, fantasies and representations of particular American ideologies”. Similarly, Upton (2014, 4) believes that the reproduction of popular stereotypes and enemy images can be traced back to commercial industry has to be responsive to the needs and wants of consumers. However, as Pomerance (2012) points out, we should be critical towards notions of screen evil as the definite expression of hegemonic structures, since these expressions also belong to a form of social ritual. To synthesize these different approaches, we should understand the relationship between film and international politics “as more fundamental than one simply of film reflecting international politics. Rather, it should be considered to be far more performative” (Carter, 2014, 108). To better understand the performative and ritual nature of cinematic representations, this research employs the concept of myth.

2.2. Film Genre and Ideology: from History into Nature

By recognizing the power of myth in structuring social reality, Campbell (1988, 38) describes its sociological and pedagogical function. Myths communicate a desired order of

things and offer codes and structures of the existing social order for an ideological subject to adhere to. This is compatible with Barthes' (1972, 129) definition of mythology as being an expression of dominant ideologies, stating that the very principle of myth is that it transforms history into nature. For Barthes the form of myth can be best encapsulated as ideology in narrative. They are an affirmation of what is believed or desired in society, often building on vested power structures and popular fears, anxieties, concerns or longings. In this sense myth teaches us who to be and how to behave in the world, aiding in the construction and sustainment of subject positions. Laclau (1989, 61) points out that myths can be considered a primary tool in the construction of hegemonies. They function as to address and suture instances of dislocation, attempting to stabilize nodal points in the larger network of network. Through such narratives and sites of representation new objectivities are thus built that aid in the structuring of a specific social order. For this reason they not only speak to society, but also tell something about a specific society in a specific period in time. They can be used as a cultural barometer for identifying the many discourses present within a specific socio-cultural context. Barthes (1972) points out that myths are not merely the stuff of Greek fables and medieval fairytales, but are also pervasive in contemporary society. Merskin (2011, 8) identifies the American action thriller as a contemporary mythology. Merskin points out that heroes in stories of old have been replaced by the masculine trials and adventures of figures such as Bruce Willis. Just as myth helps to make the likes of culture and history into nature, classic narrative cinema offers a cultural mode of representation in which social realities are shaped.

Many authors (Altman, 1999; Braudy, 1999; Cawelti, 1985; Grant, 2007; Langford, 2005; Sobchack, 1977; Warshow, 1948) have made reference to the parallels between myth and the genre film. According to Altman (1999) genres provide a series of shorthands for audiences and filmmakers alike. Not only do genres set up rules, restrictions and conventions at an industrial and aesthetic level, they also offer a framework to understand meaning of the world around us, identifying problems in society and subsequently offering apt solutions. In doing so, these genres serve both ritual and ideological functions (Altman, 1999, 26). Grant (2007, 9-30) notes that "genre movies may be understood as secular stories that seek to address and sometimes seemingly resolve our problems and dilemmas, some specifically historical and "others more deeply rooted in the collective psyche". Authors

such as Wood (1986, 80) even take this argument further and stress that all genres are based on dynamics of ideological opposition. Such sentiments deeply echo the work of Claude Lévi-Strauss (1977) and his belief that cultural myths are structured along binary oppositions. The parallels between the likes of myth and genre provide a useful framework for reading societal structures and ideological attitudes shared in society and expressed through cinema. Altman (1999) further refers to a ritualist approach to genre in which genre can be considered as an expression of collective imagination and ideological meaning. Genres can be considered a social ritual of sorts since they provide rigid frameworks for stories. Their formulaic narrative and aesthetic structure leaves space to integrate subjects, sentiments and discourses that take place in society. Furthermore, they establish a sense of continuity between our cultural past and present, aiding in the construction of collective memory and traumatic histories (Kaplan, 2005). This explains why many scholars have considered genre to be a suitable instrument in measuring societal change.

Within the context of this research, the generic defined archetype of the 'villain' is used as analytical lens to interpret the ideological developments within American society, relating to discourses of the self, the 'other', the nation and both past and present geo-political conflicts. Just as Barthes (1972, 143) notices that the role of the 'other' plays a pivotal part in the structures of myth, Fiebig-von Hase and Lehmkuhl (2001) argue that from a narratological point of view antagonism is indispensable. The divides slumbering in society are usually reinvigorated in narratives on the expense of an essential 'other'. Similarly, Grant (2007, 33) points out that many of the structural divisions in film genres are based on the character of the antagonistic 'others'. Whether it is the monstrous in horror films, the exotic in the adventure film genre, or the savage in the Western, genres construct meaning by way of structures of conflict and antagonistic relationships. In his 'Morphology of the Folktale' Propp (1968) offered a structuralist account of the villain's role within folkloric narratives. He considers villains to be one of the 'dramatis personae', or core characters, that perform certain acts essential to the story. The villain is a core character that has a clear set of functions within the narrative, such as initiating the story by creating conflict or obstructing the hero in his mission. This structural logic is followed by Jawaare (2001, 212), who notes that the villain is defined through his role in the story. A villain has a narrative function (propelling the narrative into a certain direction), but also a discursive one (converging

certain ideological attitudes). Theorists in screenwriting such as Truby (2007), Bennett (2011) and Duncan (2014) all stress villains as an integral part of the narrative functioning. Propp also notes that the attributes and external qualities of these 'dramatis personae' relate heavily to a society's actual experience. Antecedents with actual individuals, communities, nations and ethnicities can thus function as inspiration to help give these characters shape. For commercial filmmakers a good villain, like a good monster, has to tap into a fear or anxiety that the audience already has or considers believable (Upton, 2014, 39).

Schatz (1981) clearly expanded on these notions in relation to genre, stating that genre-defined characters are essentially static, yet moldable in forms society want them to take: "he or she is the physical embodiment of an attitude, a style, a world view, of a predetermined and essentially unchanging cultural posture". As such, the villain of a specific film genre often tend to stand symbol for a particular form of threat. Harle (2000, 6), for example, believes that at the basis of every conflict underlies the variation of the same Manichean narrative, yet the specific shape of this essential evil changes over time. Re-phrased in the terminology of Altman (1999), the semantics of such antagonistic structure might alter, switching from Russians gangsters to Arab terrorists as villain of the week, but the syntax of the hero-self against the evil 'others' remains inherently fixed. In this sense the film villain is a locus for narrative conflict and an articulation of ideological structures. While movie heroes represent and conform to dominant ideology, cinema's villains often reflect the anxieties that a society has toward outsiders. For Altman (1999, 222) this interplay between the semantics and syntax of a genre "constitutes the very site of negotiation between Hollywood and its audience, and thus between ritual and ideological uses of genre". Imagining and representing the enemy in the cultural sphere of cinema can therefore be seen as fulfilling an almost ritual function in which anxieties, fears and desires of the time are articulated.

Despite the obvious propagandist potential of enemy othering, many components of this representational strategy can be seen as a dominant part of Hollywood's cinematic style. However, arguably no Hollywood genre builds more on such Manicheist oppositional structures than the action thriller. The concrete representation and articulation of the villain is key to action films' functioning as these film work through a set of rigid narrative rules and tropes. One of these essential characteristics is the persistence of the mythical divide

between good and evil, translated in the central archetypes of the American hero battling the (foreign) villain. Despite the spectacular narratives and melodramatic nature, many of these genre films are based on geopolitical relations and contemporary conflicts as backdrop. As a consequence, real nations, ethnicities and communities end up becoming the empty signified of the genre defined role as villain, being on the receiving end of the hyper violent rhetoric that defines the action thriller. Following Lawrence and Jewett (2002), not only are these films often based on contemporary geo-political conflicts, they also force these events in a mythical framework in which the heroic nation triumphs cathartically over the enemy 'others'.

It can be argued that the repetitious presence of an enemy image reinforces ancient dichotomies of good versus evil, over time solidifying a negative and stereotypical evaluation of the 'other' in mass media representations (Fiebig-von Hase & Lehmkuhl, 1997, 2). Studlar and Desser (1988, 9) accordingly describe the action thriller genre as containing a 'will to myth', absorbing topical issues into an hegemony affirming framework. Genre has thus developed a specific discourse of sorts; one where foreign ethnic and national identities are 'othered' into the role of a threat that disturbs peaceful stability. Because it belongs to the narrative function of the villain to be an inherently evil obstacle standing in the way of resolution, the action film's goal is often to elicit antipathy amongst the audience towards the villain character. The construction of this savage 'other' can also be considered an important component in the legitimization of the double standards of violence noticeable in these films (Boggs & Pollard, 2006, 349). For these reasons, the action thriller genre proves to be the ideal cultural site for studying cinematic vilification.

2.3. The Action Thriller Genre: a Cinema of Shock and Awe

Despite the fact that, as Langford (2005, 233) states, the American action thriller is "at once the most contemporary, [the] most visibly relevant to present-day Hollywood filmmaking", there is a certain scholarly disdain to be noted towards the genre. Compared to other genres of contemporary Hollywood, such as the horror film, gangster film and romantic comedy, there is little research on the genre of the American action thriller. The scholarly investigation that is done is plagued by a lack of diversity in scope and normative

judgements towards the genre's form and content. As Bordwell (2006, 141) asserts: "The action film has become the emblem of what Hollywood does worst". Instead of inciting further research, these preconceived notions towards the genre's simplicity and lack of quality have served as a stigma limiting the amount of research undertaken. Yet as one of the core scholars of the genre, Yvonne Tasker, rightfully notes: "[the genre] is a compelling cinematic phenomenon with a long and diverse history. Raising both political as aesthetic questions, it repays close analysis...". There are, however, a number of pitfalls in studying a genre so diffuse and at the same time so robust as the American action thriller. A first problem concerns the difficulty of defining the genre. The American action thriller somewhat resists clear categorization because of its genre hybridity (Welsh, 2000, 170). It can be considered a "commercial synthesis of Hollywood genres" (Langford, 2005), pillaging richly from the conventions, iconography and themes of genres such as the Western, spy film, crime thriller, war film, martial arts film and the melodrama. Not only are action thrillers generically indebted to a large part of American cinema history, but as for example Grant (2007, 83-84) notes, they could even be considered as an apotheosis of commercial blockbuster cinema. Since the narrative laws of spectacle and event driven action have been subsumed in science fiction films and historical epics over the last decades, the action film as mode of cinema could be considered almost pervasive in the contemporary cinematic landscape of Hollywood. But if action is both everywhere and nowhere to be found, where lies the genesis of the action thriller as genre? Surely the spectacles of Griffith such as *The Birth of a Nation* (1915) and *Intolerance* (1916) contained a lot of action. Is not cinema in itself even based on the phenomena of action and movement? Whereas these questions do hold some ground, O'Brien (2012, 13) notices that the action thriller genre does refer to a specific genre born out of aesthetic, technical, economic and political particularities of the 1970s, but still existing and continuing to develop to this day. The classical period of the action thriller film, when the genre fully came to form, is consistently situated in the early 1980s and can be defined by a rigid system of conventions and codes.

For Langford (2009, 230) these films can be considered as "centering on lone, or more often paired, male adventurers in contemporary urban and warzone settings, highlighting massive and spectacular destructive of person and property often accompanied by extreme

and graphic violence”. To Welsh (2000, 161), the action film is characterized by spectacular violence and special effects, boasting convoluted plots with “flamboyant and colorful characters, malignant villainy, dastardly deeds, and larger-than-life characters who will ultimately save the day”. Incorporating many different definitions by authors such as Arroyo (2000), Tasker (2004), Bordwell (2006) and Lichtenfeld (2007), this research considers the action thriller genre as built on three core principles: spectacle, violence and melodrama. Not only are these aspects an integral part of both the genre’s semantic and syntactic identity, but they are also inherently interlinked. King (2000) agrees that form is content in the genre. The action in these film is defined by its viscerality, it involves the spectator into affective and emotional relationships. Aaron Anderson (1998) coined the concept ‘kinesthesia’ to describe the dynamics of physical, textual and sensual action operating within the genre. They are full of what Bordwell (2000, 232) termed ‘expressive amplification’: a strategy that magnifies the emotional component of the actor’s performance. The body of the action hero is in a constant state of trial and endurance, alternating between being a weapon of mass destruction or a canvas for physical trauma. Not only is the genres trademark style of spectacular action designed to be a sensory engaging experience, but these films’ narrative structure is wielded as an expressive intensification of basic emotional structures of humiliation and vindication. O’Brien (2012, 1) fittingly ties all these definitions together by defining action cinema as the cinema of striking back; narratives of restoring agency through violent display of will.

If violence, in all its hypervelocity and emotional intensity, is the driving force behind the genre, we have to ask ourselves towards whom this violence is enacted. The action film’s many villains are usually the ones at the receiving end of this violence, forming an homogenous collection of enemy ‘others’ that can be blow up, beaten, run over and shot down. Many scholars (Higgins, 2008, Lichtendfield, 2007; O’Brien, 2012; Tasker, 2004; Welsh, 2000) point to the villain as being a core characteristic of the genre. The existence of villains, and the conflict they bring with them, provides the building ground on which the genre’s narrative is grafted. O’Brien (2012, 16) identifies the genre as built around a three-act structure of survival, resistance and revenge. Action films offer narratives of cause and effect, problem and solution, “structured around scenes of violent action in which the nemesis (villain) enacts or inflicts damage which threatens the survival (and status) of the

hero". Narrative progress in the genre stand synonymous with a hero fighting his way through a hierarchy of antagonists (Bordwell, 2006, 108), and resolution can only be attained when the enemy 'others' is destroyed and the status quo is re-established in society. However, despite their essential function in the genre, the interchangeable nature of these enemies has to be stressed. Kendrick (2009, 100) considers the action film's barrage of villains as a result of newspaper headlines and ideological simplification, because "this way filmmakers could speak to the American audience's anxieties as a nation by reducing what was perceived as a global threat into a manageable group of cinematic villains who could be systematically and violently defeated by American 'winners'. The genre ordained enemy is thus little more than what Žižek (1989) describes as hollow signifier. The role of enemy can be filled in by the filmmakers with whatever they are needed to be, or believed to be desirable amongst movie audiences - ethnicities, nationalities, religions and ideologies are all equally suitable to be constituted as enemy 'others'. In this sense, enemy image construction in the action thriller can be seen as the most powerful expression of what Schatz (1981, 31) termed the social ritual function of genres. However, in feeding off popular fears, anxieties, memories and frustrations these enemy images are also to be perceived as the result of an elaborate interplay between regimes of verisimilitude (Neale, 2000, 28). The generic verisimilitude of the action thriller ensures Manichean tales of hero-selves against enemy 'others'. The role of villain in the mythic template of the American action thriller lends itself to all types of identities, yet filmmakers will only employ those identities perceived as credible to audiences. In attempting to tell stories that resonate with contemporary audiences and adhere to a certain cultural verisimilitude, they thus reaffirm discourses on 'otherness' and enemyhood in society. For this reason, enemies that are perceived as allies or improbable threats, such as the Dutch army or Canadian criminals, make way for the role of Russian gangsters and Islamic terrorists. In process of representing what is perceived to be the social reality, discourse on these identities and associated notions of enemyhood are evidently reproduced as well.

Little scholarly investigation has paid attention to the formal structures and representational strategies of the genre and its villains. Furthermore, to this day not a single study has been made that systematically analyses enemy identities by means of content analysis. Despite the pervasiveness of enemy images in contemporary (action) cinema, these formal and

discursive mechanisms of vilification and demonization remain features requiring more extensive research. In his elaboration how violence is made condonable, Kendrick (2009, 99) lists ‘Simplifying and demonizing’ as one of its main resources: “Victory in the pure action genre requires that someone be vanquished, and filmmakers produced a stream of villains that the heroes could violently conquer in grand fashion”. By building on this emotion of triumph, the action thriller not only secures its generically ordained need for spectacle, but also offers a treatment of cinematic violence through which violent actions towards an enemy ‘other’ are warranted, satisfying and even entertaining. Langford (2005, 16) notices the double standard to violence present in these films. The paradox of the hero’s conflict in these films is that defending himself and protecting his loved ones can only come forth through the enactment of far greater destruction. Investigating enemy image construction and its role within conflict is thus crucial to understanding the discursive construction of self and ‘other’, and how these identities are brought into chains of equivalence with elements such as ethnicity, nationality, normality, morality, violence, conflict and grievability. The enactment of brutal violence towards villains can for example aid in understanding the process of what Joanna Bourke (1999, 1) calls “sanctioned bloodletting”. If these films involve us into affective logics, as Carter and McCormack (2006) state, of geopolitical intervention and other types of violent measures, it can be argued that these films contribute to our conceptions of the enemy and how these enemies should be fought. By considering the villain as an expression of America’s architectures of enmity and as master signifier in wider discursive networks, this research is interested in investigating how hegemonic and counter-hegemonic positions are embodied in these characters.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Setup

The aim of this research is to identify patterns and trends in enemy image construction over a period of 36 years. In doing so we hope to gain greater understanding into how issues of vilification, demonization and legitimized violence are integrated in American cultural mythology. Dominant enemy identities, themes, conflicts and discourses are measured longitudinally to see how different types of film villains, alongside the discourses connected to this enemy iteration, changes over time. In other words: this research attempts to capture the flow of villain-identities in a specific time period of the American action thriller. Secondary research questions are: How is the villain identified? Which components of identity are most often stressed to convey a sense of ‘otherness’? And how does enemy image construction relate to narrative and formal components of the film? The goal of this analytic cycle is to deliver insights into the existence of representational patterns concerning action film antagonist within the researched timeframe. Not only does this research cycle pay attention to how this type of antagonist is represented, but also to how the villain is contextualized and perceived as a threat. This means that characters’ appearances are studied in interaction with contemporary geo-politics. As many of these films are seen to deliver a specific reading of history, an investigation is made of how Hollywood has articulated certain conflicts (i.e. Vietnam war, The Persian Gulf War) and political issues (i.e. themes as enhanced interrogation, mass surveillance). Moreover, the types of solutions the film’s narrative presents in fighting this threat was also analyzed. Specific attention is therefore paid to narrative constructs used to legitimize certain politically motivated practices in a context of conflict. In delivering a mapping of enemy identities, this research foremost serves an exploratory purpose. In academic literature on the subject, the identities of enemies is always assumed than specifically measures. Which identities are repeatedly put in the role of villain and to which aspects ‘otherness’ is accordingly grafted are the main questions of this Working Paper. Firstly this research is only one part of a larger research project on the discursive and formal articulation of enemies in American action cinema. Whereas this Working Paper deals exclusively with the ‘who’ of enemy image construction,

another part deals with the 'how' by studying the textual techniques filmmakers employ in portraying characters as villains. Secondly, and more broadly, by offering a basis for new film-centered research on othering and enemy image construction this research hopes to identify new phenomena and inspire researchers to further investigate these findings.

To tackle these research questions, a quantitative content analysis of 180 American action thriller films has been conducted from 1981 until 2016. Film genre studies can benefit from identifying patterns and phenomenon from a more quantitative angle, because starting from a large amount of data instead of individual case studies can provides new perspectives and reap interesting results. Within mass media studies quantitative content analysis counts as one of the predominant methodologies when studying patterns and trends in media representations (Wimmer and Dominick, 1994; Jensen, 2013; Krippendorf, 2012; Riff et al, 2014). While a popular form of analysis within the field of media & communication studies, a quantitative content analysis is not entirely prominent when studying cycles of genre films. When studying modes, genres and periods of cinema, quantitative and large-scale systematic approaches are usually neglected in favor of case-studies based on qualitative textual analysis. Evidently there are exceptions to the rule: most famously, Bordwell (1985) conducted a quantitative content analysis to describe different textual genres within Hollywood cinema. Bordwell's research systematically analyzed 100 films between 1915 and 1960 to discover patterns of narrative logic and modes of representation in Hollywood cinema. Other, more statistically-oriented work has been done courtesy of the digital humanities. Salt's (1974) statistical style analysis and Tsivian's (2009) Cinematics project adopt a quantitative approach towards formal characteristics by attempting to measure film style numerically and conducting statistical analyses on this data. Such type of thorough and extensive coding is however rare when studying issues of identity representations.

Other methodologies more popular within classical cinema studies, such as thematic analysis (Nelmes, 2003, 144), attempt to offer similar insights. Research spanning a series of works from a director, time period, film movement or genre cycle is not uncommon, but often happens without any type of systematic analysis. One of the landmarks in this vein of research is Kracauer's *From Caligari to Hitler* (1947). Studying German cinema between World War I and World War II, Kracauer identified populist and escapist tendencies in popular German cinema, arguing that cinema could reflect existing mass desires and

psychological disposition. While Kracauer refers to a wide array of films, and essential as his insights might be, how he composed his sample of films remains entirely unclear. Moreover, as Elsaesser (2013) asserts, not only does his film sample fail to adhere to a strict procedure of selection, but furthermore his sample of films is too limited to make claims of dominant desires circulating in German society. Such research does thus contribute to the formation of historical imaginaries, framing history in way as to conveniently understand societal change. Another historical study connecting cinematic output to ideological structures is Wright's *Six Guns and Society: A Structural Study of the Western* (1977). Building further on notions of genre and mythology, Wright attempted to understand the sociology of the Western, considering the different incarnations of the genre as forms of cultural expression. Yet as Janey Place (in Walker, 2013) criticizes, Wright's structural analysis lacks in complexity and depth. Not only does he comprehend the relationship between culture and cinema as an ideological expression too narrowly, but moreover the sample of films he uses to illustrate his argument are too limited (not to mention his selection criteria non-transparent) to make any type of valid claims. Valuable as this type of research might be, the pitfalls of reading dominant ideological attitudes and societal change in genre cinema remain hard to sidestep. More contemporary research that investigates the interferences between popular culture and politics (Barker, 2011; Haas et al. 2015; Kellner, 2010; Khatib, 2006; Suid, 2002; Weber, 2006) also fails to move past the very shortcomings that plagued their precursors by building their arguments exclusively from individual case studies.

While paying tribute to past research, this Working Paper primarily attempts to learn from past mistakes by rejecting a vaguely identified selection of cases and resisting the construction of an academically useful film canon. Film scholars too easily fall back on cherry-picking films in order to support specific claims, in the process reaffirming certain perspectives or notions that are already perceived as natural. This type of research often ends up feeding into a discourse of film as being a mere 'reflection' of reality. In the more extreme cases of this view cinema is considered to be a mirror for society and the mediated aspect of filmmaking entirely ignored. Much rather than looking for hegemonic discourses in a specific selection of films, this research attempts to offer a systematically selected and analyzed sample that encompasses the iteration of dominant ideologies and counter-

discourses. As such, we perceive the American action films as a cultural site of struggle. There's a rich array of scholarly research longitudinally studying representational practices such as stereotyping and vilification in cinema. However, whether it is research based on representations of ethnicity (Shaheen (2003, 2012), enemy archetypes (Vanhala, 2011) or geopolitical conflict (Kellner, 2010) these studies too lack any type of systematic analysis. The topic of evolving enemy images in American cinema has been researched longitudinally on several occasions. The most prominent case in academic literature is Lichtenfeld's *Action Speaks Louder: Violence, Spectacle, and the American Action Movie* (2007). In his book, Lichtenfeld attempts to offer an authoritative account of how the American action thriller developed from the 1980s onwards. One section deals with how the change in villains throughout the decades can be traced back to certain political and industrial changes. While he does make several interesting claim and his deductions are probable, serious questions arise from his lack of methodology. Hiding behind the argument of authority, Lichtendfeld never really elaborates on the size of way of selection of his sample. Much rather than have any systematic procedure of selection, he picks serval canonized action films that support the claim he wants to make, never addressing the many counterexamples and exceptions to his case. In noting dominant trends of enemy image construction in the genre, Lichtenfeld makes claims that can only be made by way of quantitative content analysis, yet fails to provide such an systematic form of analysis. Other studies done into the topic, such as Marcos and Colon (2016), do not move past the problem of reading direct correlations and providing easy comparisons. This Working Paper adopts a quantitative content analysis to deliver a concise mapping of enemy 'others' in order to structurally investigate enemy image construction in relation to their cultural context.

3.2. Sample & Coding

For this research 180 American action thriller films in a 36 year-period (1981-2016) were subjected to quantitative content analysis. For this analysis both hero and enemy identities, narrative topoi, themes and formal characteristics were coded. The start of the time sample was chosen because, as stated in the literature review, the early 1980s were signaled as the dawn of the action thriller as a category for critics and the industry. Moreover, 1981 signals

the first year of the presidential term of 40th US president Ronald Reagan. The Reagan administration is considered to be an important historical marker for the likes of national and foreign politics, so it seemed fitting to start of a longitudinal research investigating the symbolic power of American popular culture from this point. The end of the time sample is determined according to a similar logic since it marks the end of the presidential term of 44th US president Barack Obama. Pragmatics were also here into play, since the research project started at the end of 2014. Using the criteria established in our conceptualization of the genre, the popular cinema database IMDb was scanned for films with the ACTION label. For every year between 1981 and 2016 five films were subsequently selected with the highest box-office and the highest number of user votes on IMDb every year. To make sure an equal amount of films from both categories were present, five films from every category were selected in every two year period. The first parameter is used because it indicates the popularity these films enjoyed upon their release; the latter because they can be considered a possible indicator of the popularity and impact these films have endured. Since this research mostly deals with the relationship between contemporary geo-politics and genre, films with the sci-fi and fantasy label were excluded from selection. As to ensure that selected films are part of a contemporary historical environment all films set exclusively before the 1950s and beyond the 2020s were not made part of the research frame. The total sample is included as appendix. To structure this large amount of data longitudinally, the results were categorized according to presidential administrations. This divide was made partially out of practical considerations, as to clearly cluster the data in a way that made sense with the aims of the project, and partially as to grasp the changes in representation over time. While this research does delve into how such representations are effected by societal discourse, this Working Paper does not attempt to imply a definite correlation between different types of representation and presidential policy. Much rather, this research remains critical towards reflection-like hypotheses between government politics and cinematic output, understanding ideological iterations in film to be something much more diffuse and complex.

A codebook was constructed and subjected to extensive feedback and guidance from Prof. Dr. Daniel Biltereyst (UGent) and Dr. Gertjan Willems (UGent). Moreover, Prof. Dr. Philippe Meers (UA), Prof. Dr. Kevin Smets (UA/VUB) and Prof. Dr. Sami Zemni

(UGent), all part of the doctoral guidance committee of this research project, screened and approved the methods of sampling and series of questions connected to the codebook. The complete codebook can be found amongst appendices at the end of this Working Paper. After preliminary test rounds, coding took place over a one year period starting August 2016 and finishing September 2017. For collecting the data research software program Qualtrics was utilized. After the coding process was completed the data was exported into statistical analysis program SPSS for more convenient structuring and surveying of the collected data. The data collection took place in the Dutch language, since this is the native language of the Working Paper's researcher.

Questions were structured in two parts: one focusing on the individual films (n=180) and the other on the different hero and villain characters featured in these films. Both categories also consisted of several subsets. The 'Film-category' for example, consisted out of questions on the level of 1) production context 2) societal themes and 3) formal properties. Hero and enemy characters were structured according to variables of identity, roles, narrative and stylistic properties, characteristics and more. A total number of 16 elements were coded per film, contextual data was gathered using online database IMDb, review aggregators such as Rotten Tomatoes and Metacritic, director interviews, film reviews and fan managed websites such as AOBG – a digital platform in which the action thriller fan community tolls the number of casualties in a large number of films. The variables of the thematic analysis were provided through a combination of literature study on the different time periods and their core issues, both sociocultural as cinematic, and a grounded registration of themes that surfaced throughout the coding process. For every film one 'Hero-character' was coded. In films with two or more protagonists, the character was selected with the estimated highest number of screen time and the most prominent place in the film's narrative. For 'Enemy-characters' the selection process happened more elaborately. Since some films boast foreign armies of several hundred different characters, a strict standard had to be set regarding which characters were coded or not. Enemy-characters in the selected films were therefore only coded when they had a narrative function within film (i.e. main and secondary figures in the film holding a prominent place in the narrative or occupying a considerable amount of screen time.) While no actual screen time was measured, figures had to have either a speaking role or appear in two or more

scenes to be coded as characters. Furthermore, a hierarchy of villains was established, in which three different categories gave two different numbers of questions. The reason why not all figures in the film were coded, is because of the considerable amount of enemies extras present in these films, such as members of warring armies and hostile henchmen. Instead of providing new insights, the incorporations of these minor figures within the sample would greatly distort the data. The category of coded characters thus comprises of narrative agents with a main and/or supporting roles. Within the category of Enemy-characters, an additional division was made between 1) primary and secondary Enemy-characters and 2) tertiary Enemy-characters. In every film one primary and one secondary Enemy-character was coded. They were considered the main antagonists of the film, around which the central conflict revolves, and placed the highest in enemy hierarchy. Usually, this revolves around the film's main antagonist and his/her right hand. All the other Enemy-characters that fitted the criteria were coded as tertiary. These characters, whilst possessing a narrative function, generally occupy much smaller roles and appear in larger numbers. For this reason we put no specific limit to the number of tertiary enemy-characters suitable for coding. To illustrate this hierarchy of villains in relation to the narrative structure of the action thriller, the classic action film *Cobra* (1986) can be used as an example. The doomsday cult threatening the film's solitary hero, Cobra, consist of many different figures. Many of them are only briefly glimpsed or occupy minor parts as extra's in the background, but the film boasts several characters, the serial killer Nightslasher and his main companion Nancy Stalk more specifically, who have agency in the narrative and considerable amounts of dialogue and screen time. Lesser villains, such as the henchman aiding the couple in the pursuit of Cobra, also appear in large chunks of the film, but are less important to the narrative since they remain devoid of characterization and are all dispensed off relatively early in the film. Because of this differentiation in types of villains within the film, intrinsically tied to the amount of backstory and narrative purpose they have, it is only natural that not all questions for the primary and secondary Enemy-characters apply for the tertiary ones. For this reason, different character groups also had distinctive questions: 28 variables were coded for primary and secondary enemy-characters, while the number of questions for tertiary enemies was limited to 22 variables. The redacted variables mostly relate to information that is either irrelevant with these minor characters, or simply not present, such as motivations, goals or personality traits. For every film and hero and villain

characters alike, an open question was added to include notes and remarks on the film or characters. Moreover, an average of 74 screen captures were made per film to visually summarize the story and provide substantive evidence to every coding decision. Because of the limited space in the Working Paper format only the most relevant results are shared in the result-section. The results shared here are principally intended to deliver an explorative account on enemy image construction in the genre.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Film Level: the American Action Thriller

4.1.1. Production Context

Before delving into the representation of hero and enemy characters, the American action thriller film (n=180), and its changes over the chosen time period (1981-2016), is examined. Because of the large amount of data, only the information relevant to the topic of enemy image construction is addressed in the result section. Similarly to the codebook, the analysis here is structured in different categories. Firstly a quantitative description is offered of the production characteristics of the average American action thriller.

Table 1: production information	
Running time	114 minutes
Budget	55,237,283 \$
Box-office (national)	76,655,163 \$
Box-office (foreign)	121,723,785 \$
Nationality	Exclusively American: 78%
	Foreign coproduction: 22%

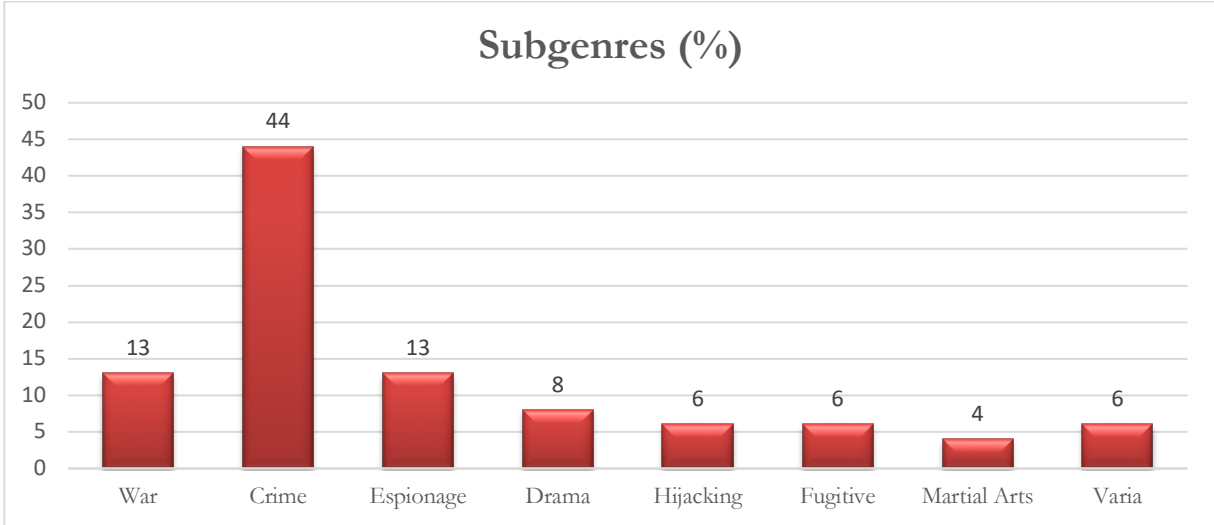
As displayed in Table 1, the analysis of production details revealed many characteristics described in the literature review to be true. The highly commercial nature of the American action thriller was confirmed by the high budgets and box-office numbers. This is illustrated by the data on the high number of sequels and prequels nature of these films. Almost half

(46%) of the action film coded turned out to be part of a larger franchise. With franchises such as *James Bond*, *Rambo*, *Jason Bourne*, *Death Wish*, *Dirty Harry*, *Delta Force*, *Fast and the Furious* and *Mission Impossible* spanning over several decades, many of them still continuing and commercially viable, a claim can be made for the franchise-oriented nature of the American action thriller's brand of hero making. The violent nature of the genre is also illustrated by its age-rating: 67% of these films are Rated R: restricted – under 17 requires accompanying parent or adult guardian. Further evidence of the structural violence in these film can be found textually. Body counts in these films were tracked, and complementary consulted in the body count database AOBG. Because AOBG is a website on which users collaboratively deliver content and the death tolls in these films are sometimes hard to measure precisely, our own estimations were compared with the data on AOBG, before taking the average of both. Because of the difficulty to code exact numbers, casualties were measured in twelve scales ranging from 'None' to '250+'. Results showed that, on average, the action thriller has an estimation of between 20 and 50 lethal casualties.

To put the data related to Hero and Enemy-characters further into context, several textual characteristics such as the time, place and subgenre of these films were coded. Foremost, an attempt was made to cluster the sample into supplementary genre categories, since even subgenres hold their own conventions and rules. These subgenres are derived out of the literature review (mostly O'Brien, 2012 and Lichtenfeld, 2007) and relate to the context, setting and type of conflict present in the film. Figure 1 show that the subgenre of 'Crime' is predominant in the American action thriller, featuring mostly urban environments as backdrop for tales of theft, murder, substance abuse, civil unrest and other types of metropolitan mayhem. The second category of subgenre can be summarized as the 'Geopolitical action thriller', divided between the 'War' subgenre and the 'Espionage' subgenre. These are tales of justice on an international scale, usually in the context of state conflict both in both public and covert manners. The 'Drama' subgenre is characterized by a focus on individual conflict and cannot be connected to a larger frame of conflict. Hijacking, martial arts and fugitive genre are defined by a very specific form, and usually tied to a limited period of the genre's timeline. The 'Martial Arts' film, for example, was profoundly present during the early 1980s (20%), tying in to the karate craze of the time, but disappeared almost entirely afterwards. 'Hijacking' films are a type of violent huis clos in

which a confined space such as a bus, boat or airplane is subjected to a hostage situation. ‘Fugitive’ films on the other hand, break open any form of fixed setting and offer narratives in which the protagonist is in a state of constant pursuit, mostly (and wrongly) by the arm of the law. Examples of ‘Miscellaneous’ are musical action films, fairy tales and survivalist stories of man against nature. Since the subgenre of ‘Crime’ features prominently within the American action thriller genre (44%), an inference can already be made of the types of conflict and themes that can be encountered in the genre. Action films are generally narratives centering around national security, however, what is protected and the type of threat faces is far from fixed. Different as they may be, the ‘Crime’ genre and ‘Geopolitical’ subgenre are essentially two sides of the same coin. They offer a threat to the community, both on a national and international scale, by a diverse number of (often existing) foes. These elements are expanded upon further by delving into data on the setting and themes present in the genre.

Figure 1: Subgenres in the American action thriller



4.1.2. Time and Place

If we further investigate the time-period in which these films are set, it is noticeable how these films are contextually defined by a sense of topicality. With the exception of a few

ventures to past conflicts, almost all films are set in the present (90%). The past is very much present in less explicit ways. Alluded to traumatic pasts and ‘others’ types of preceding events by way of flashback or referencing in character dialogue. These pasts mostly relate to times of American conflict, such as Vietnam, the Gulf War and the Cold War. However, despite the use of flashbacks, the majority of these films are set in a very limited timespan. 70% of the films are set either during several hours or several days. Seldom the events within these films go beyond several weeks, and only 4% spans over several years. A possible explanation may be the genre’s suspenseful nature: the smaller the timespan, the more tightly knit the drama and action taking place in these stories.

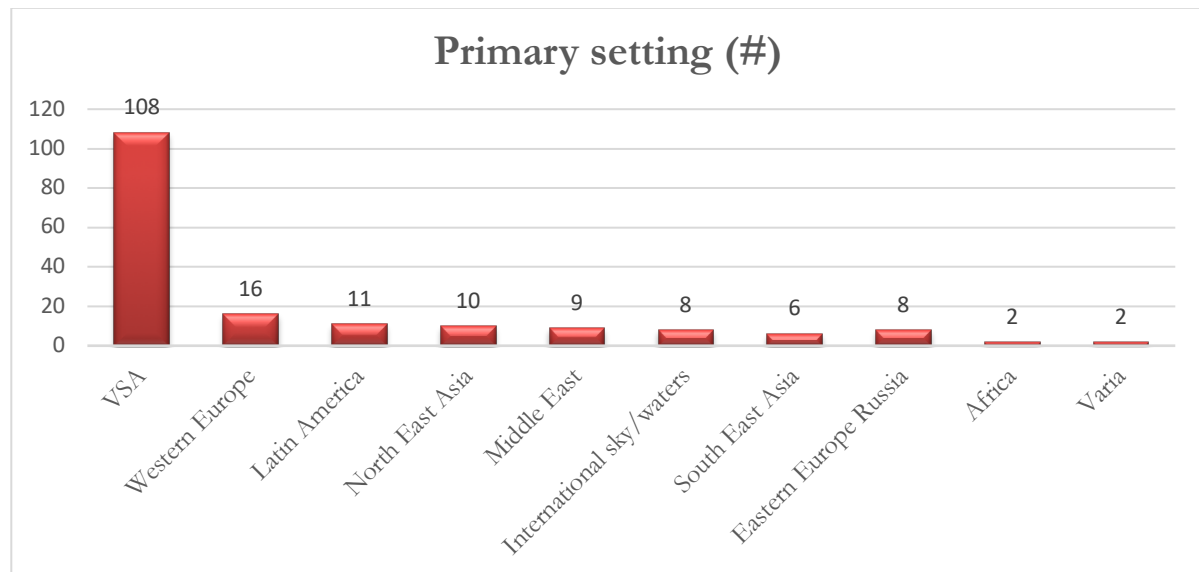
In respect to space and place of the American action thriller, the staggering diversity and highly international nature of the genre’s setting is nothing short of exceptional when compared to other genres. A total of 76 nations were coded in 180 films, reaching across every continent and in some cases even into the realms of sea, sky and space. The genre of the American action film boasts a vast amount of different settings and locals, spanning over the globe. This is particularly of interest to this research because the presence and representation of these countries often reveals many tourist and expansionist sentiments, feeding into Orientalist discourses on far and exotic lands. A look at the top ten countries featured in these action films, as displayed in Table 2, showcases the large amount of diversity in setting.

Table 2: most featured nations			
Country	%films featured	Country	%films featured
USA	81% (146)	France	6% (10)
UK	17% (30)	Italy	5% (9)
Russia	9% (16)	China	5% (9)
Germany	7% (13)	Japan	5% (9)
Mexico	7% (13)	Spain	4% (8)

On the one hand, this top ten illustrates a degree of dominance of the Western world as setting. Yet when taking a close look, it can be noticed that Western Europe and the USA

are often the battleground of domestic violence, border crossing crime syndicates and international terrorism. These conflicts also originate or expand into foreign lands. The likes of Russia, Mexico, Japan and China are also heavily present, although they represent more preemptive battles against foreign threats. Furthermore, a certain amount of fictional nations and non-identified settings is also featured, although it remains a small minority. Examples of these creative concoctions are *Licence to Kill's* (1989) Republic of Isthmus and the several franchise spanning Val Verde. The latter was used by producer Steven E. de Souza when in need of a Latin American setting. While there is a clear dominance of the USA as setting compared to other locations, it should be specified that the average action thriller film is all but limited to one country. The majority (54%) of the American action film is set in two or more nations. Over 10% of the coded films even utilize six or more nations as setting. This again points at the international nature of the genre. An interesting feat is that the USA is most often used as primary setting of these films, serving as a launching pad for the adventures set abroad. The geographies of the genre are thus entwined with its narrative structure. The majority of these films start out in the USA, but then feature certain events forcing the hero to travel to a foreign continent and fight the enemy at its Homefront. The relatively large proportion of films with 'International airspace or Waters' as primary setting (4%) can be explained by the generic structures of the Hijacking genre. With films such as *Under Siege* (1992), *Passenger 57* (1992) *Speed* (1994) *Executive Decision* (1996) *Con Air* (1997) and *Air Force One* (1997) this subgenre proved to be exceptionally popular in the 1990s.

Figure 2: primary setting in the American action thriller



It is notable that the majority of the action films are set within the USA. Overall, the action thriller genre distinguishes itself by its number of settings, mostly foreign. As franchise films, such as *James Bond* and *Mission Impossible* and their marketing campaigns demonstrate, the touristic aspect is generally one of these films' more important draws. The many exotic locations are used as an enticement for movie audiences, delivering a relentless amount of anima with stories that change into vastly different settings every twenty minutes or so. For example, during its 133 minute runtime, the events of *Mission Impossible: Rogue Nation* (2015) take its protagonists to the USA, the UK, Belarus, Cuba, France, Austria and Morocco. Every featured destination is accompanied with an onscreen title signaling the exact location and an array of exposition shots that again visually stress this destination by way of classic landmarks, popular sights and touristic iconography.

To provide a clear overview of the heterogeneity in setting, nations were clustered on basis of continents and the similarities on basis of representations between different regions in Table 3. A top ten of the different nations featured separately can be consulted in Table 4. The representation of these regions was then measured in proportion with the total number of presented settings in the sample. Whereas this research acknowledges the reductionist nature of such categorizations, these different regions are considered to be intensively tied to the genre-specific representations. This categorization was based on the set discourses

shared in the representation of different spaces. The reason, for example, that the larger Middle East is combined with the Maghreb category is because both are part of what American action thriller perceive as the 'Arab world'. The same can be said for larger Asia, Africa, and Russia in combination with Eastern Europe. Table 3 reveals a large degree of diversity of locations in the genre, as well as the dominance of the USA as setting. When clustered in these different regions, the difference between the Western world and the terrains of the 'others' is clearly illustrated. Apart from the dominance of the USA (35%) and Western Europe (20%) as setting, almost all regions share a similar degree of presence in the genre. Even within the category of the USA boasts a wide number of different locations, both urban and rural. The majority of these films are set in major cities such as New York City, Chicago, Los Angeles and San Francisco, although these narratives sometimes tend to relocate the events during the course of the narrative towards rural environments. Throughout the sample urban geography of these metropolitan areas becomes a battleground in the war on crime. Western European settings share a metropolitan character, mostly turning towards cities such as Paris, Berlin, London, Rome or Madrid when in search of a cradle for spectacular violence. The UK is by far the most present as setting in this category, signifying a stark 36% of all Western European destinations. When departing from the Western world, the Asian continent (11%) is most present. A heavy distinction should be made between the type of representations regarding South (featuring India, Nepal), South East Asia (featuring the Philippines, Indonesia, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam), and North East Asia (featuring China, Japan, North Korea, South Korea). Japan and China also feature most prominently in this category, since they are both separately present in 9% of the total sample of films. Latin America boasts the largest number of countries represented; a total of 16 different nations appear in the genre. Impressive as this diversity might be, it should be noted that the presence of Mexico (7%) in the genre is higher than any other nation, signifying one third of the times Latin America is represented. Cuba and Columbia are also quite visible, both separately present in roughly ten percent of the time. Corruption reigns freely in the many 'failed states' featured, therefore it is often the objective of the hero to install his brand of international justice. The Middle East (consisting mostly out of Iraq, Afghanistan, Lebanon, United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia) and the Maghreb countries (consisting mostly out of Morocco and Libya) together count for 9% of all locations. Most interestingly the Middle East is

often represented without referring to a specific country, but much rather to the entire region. The entire Middle East in its opacity and ambiguities is thus reduced to a series of insurgent riddled desert and mountain locations. Russia (both Soviet Russia and the Russian federation) and Eastern Europe (mostly represented by Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Czech Republic, Turkey and Finland) share a similar 8% of the entire amount of settings. Unlike Latin America as regional entity, the category Eastern Europe is more heterogeneous. However, these countries are one in their represented affinity for organized crime, weapons trade, human trafficking, separatist terrorism and various forms of internationally oriented villainy. There is an apparent similarity to be detected in the representation of Russia, since many of the same villains and discourse turn up in these settings. The absence of the African continent is striking, amounting to only 2% of the total number of settings. When featured, Niger is most prominent, followed by Djibouti, Ethiopia, Cameroon, Niger, Uganda and South Africa. These countries are likewise lacking in any type of diversity and appear as interchangeable guerilla warzones and hotbeds for genocidal cruelty.

Table 3 : represented regions, proportionally

Region	% of total locations	Region	% of total locations
USA	35% (146)	Russia/Eastern Europe	8% (35)
Western Europe	20% (83)	Miscellaneous	3% (11)
Asia	11% (47)	International skies/waters	2% (10)
Latin America	10% (41)	Africa	2% (7)
Middle East/Maghreb	9% (40)		

Table 4 : top ten most represented countries, proportionally

Region	% of total locations	Region	% of total locations
USA	35% (146)	France	2% (10)
UK	7% (30)	Italy	2% (9)
Russia	4% (16)	China	2% (9)
Germany	3% (13)	Japan	2% (9)
Mexico	3% (13)	Spain	2% (8)

The coding of settings is a pivotal part of understanding the nature of enemy image construction in the genre. As will be elaborated upon, the representations of different geographical regions and its population are intrinsically connected to different types of conflict and enemies. Conflicts such as the Vietnam and Iraq War evidently account for the large number of films respectively set in Vietnam and Iraq, but since conflict is pervasive in the genre, every nation, region and culture is a locus for different types of discourses and sets of stereotypes. As the large degree of consistency in these regional categories implies, the America action thriller understands geopolitical power relations as a series of conflicts between ethno-national identities akin to civilizations – reminiscing Huntington’s (1996) much contested theses. Therefore, if the representation strategies of enemy image construction are to be understood, the identities of the ‘others’ have to be examined in relation to these foreign nations, spaces, borders and battlegrounds. This research expands on these notions of foreign settings, enemy identities and conflict in the section on villain-characters.

4.1.3. Thematic Inquiry

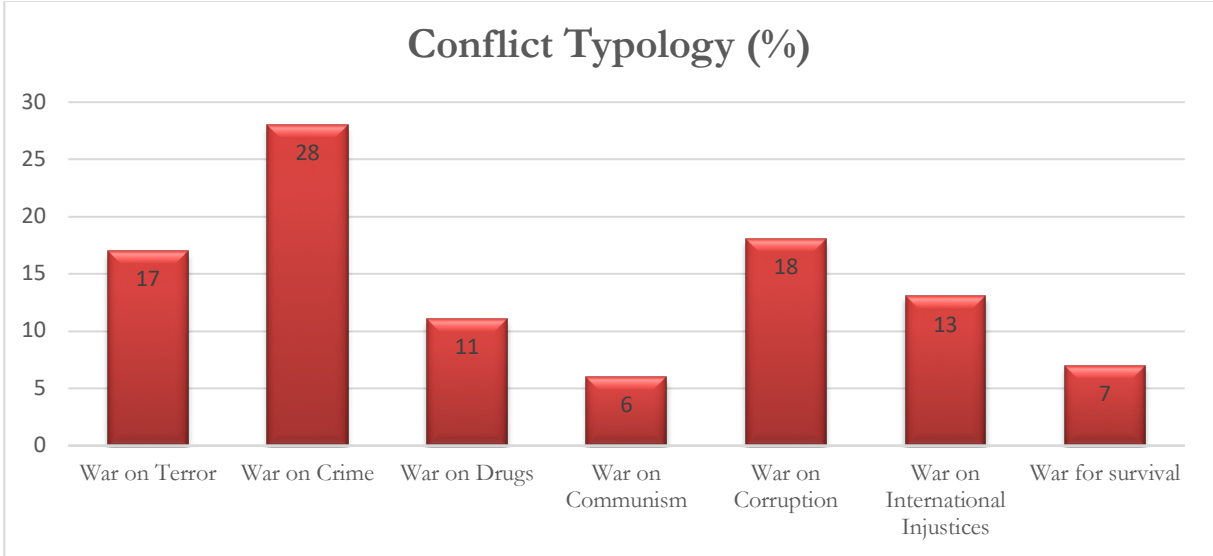
To understand the different discourses entwined with the types of representations present in these films, a thematic analysis was conducted. A total of twenty-nine different themes were coded in all films. These categories were built from themes discussed in academic literature and complemented with recurring themes found during the analysis. The first thing that is noticeable from the data is how thematically rich these genre films are. On a regular basis explicit reference is made to conflicts both past and present, violent practices such as drone warfare and enhanced interrogation, and topical themes relating to environmental pollution and surveillance. An apparent aspect is that many of these films explicitly contextualize the conflict on which the narrative is grafted. In somewhat equal degree these films frame the events of the narrative within the wider conflict of the ‘War on Crime’ (25%), ‘War on Drugs’ (21%) or ‘War on Terror’ (26%). Despite these conflicts being present in varying degrees over 36 years, it should be noted that all of these conflicts

are referenced to since the very first years of the sample. Despite all of these conflict being consistently touched upon, there are some connections to be found to presidential administrations and wider geopolitical events. The War on Terror as theme, for example, starts soaring from 2008 onwards, featuring in 74% of the films. Topicality turns out to be a driving force of the genre, something that is easily noticed when certain themes are placed into longitudinal perspective. In the Reaganite 1980s, the theme of 'War Veteran Integration' is especially popular, intergraded in over a third of the coded films (36%). The theme of 'Hijacking and Hostage Situation', while being a popular trope in the genre, also has a surge in 1990s, prominent in 28% of the films during the George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton presidential administrations. Similarly, films in the Obama administration, evocatively reference themes such as 'Enhanced Interrogation' (50%), 'Drone Warfare' (55%), 'Immigration' (46%), 'Government surveillance' (26%), 'Whistleblowing' (13%) and many other headline grabbing subjects. Not only is the present very much alive in the genre, the past also plays an important role. Past conflicts and national trauma frequently pop up and form powerful cultural markers that provide contextualization for new conflicts and enemies. During the 1981-1988 period, the 'Vietnam War' was present in 42% of the selected films, 'The Korean War' in 13% of these films and the wider 'Cold War' in 30%. When comparing to the 2009-2016 period '9/11' (38%), 'The Iraq War' (60%) and 'The War in Afghanistan' (57%) take on a similar role. These events operate either to imbue the narrative with a sense of cultural relevance, or to place the violent conflict of the film into context. Topical as these conflicts might be, many of these themes occupy the same narrative function and are often interchangeable. They are ornaments decorating the mythic frame of the genre. Despite their semantic differences, the function of these themes on a syntactic level remains structurally similar. This delicate balance between cultural and generic verisimilitude can also be noticed in the theme featured most heavily throughout the entire sample: that of 'Corruption'. Almost half (47%) of all films in the sample feature malfunctioning government institutions and corrupt law enforcers. Others themes such as 'Vigilante Justice' (16%), 'Urban Decay' (22%) and 'Racial Violence' (16%) also proved to be popular throughout the entire timeframe.

Because these themes are often part of wider conflicts, a typology of conflict in the genre was established and utilized during a second round of coding. Goal of this categorization

is to understand what exactly is being battled in these film. To do so, it is important to look at how these films frame the threats to the nation of the hero-self. Which precise element functions as a master signifier of abstract antagonism in the Manichean tales of the American action thriller? A distinction was made that incorporated the three prominent discursive categories for conflict: The War on Crime, Drugs and Terror. Other types of warfare were also included, as can be consulted in Figure 3. Since a large part of the sample can be situated during the Cold War, the 'War for Communism' was an obvious addition to make. This was complemented with the 'War on Corruption', based on the results from the thematic analysis, referring to the battle against failing government institutions or the individuals operating in these environments. The 'War on International Injustices' is used to describe geopolitical struggle that does not fit in any of the prior categories, often concerning Eastern European and Central African conflicts in which the nation or the hero-self is an interventionist force preventing the violation of human rights. And finally, the 'War for Survival' functions as a type of miscellaneous category in which the protagonists are entangled in a personal struggle or a fight for survival against the elements of nature. As the data shows, all of these conflicts are present in varying degrees. The 'War on Communism' (6%) is least present in the sample, which evidently has to do with the end of the conflict in 1989. Highest is the 'War on Crime' (28%), being the prime conflict in over a quarter of these narratives. This corresponds with the results of the subgenre-variable, showing that the 'Crime' subgenre was the most prevalent. The 'War on Terror' (17%) also features heavily, right below the 'War on Corruption' in the ranking, as was to be suspected from the thematic analysis. Sometimes these categories flow into one another. For example, discourses on substance abuse and narcotics trade also feature heavily in the 'War on Crime', and dysfunctional national security narratives frequently appear in narratives centered on the 'War on Terror'. How these conflicts interact with the identity of the enemy-characters occupying these films, forms a central question in the following part of the results.

Figure 3: type of conflict



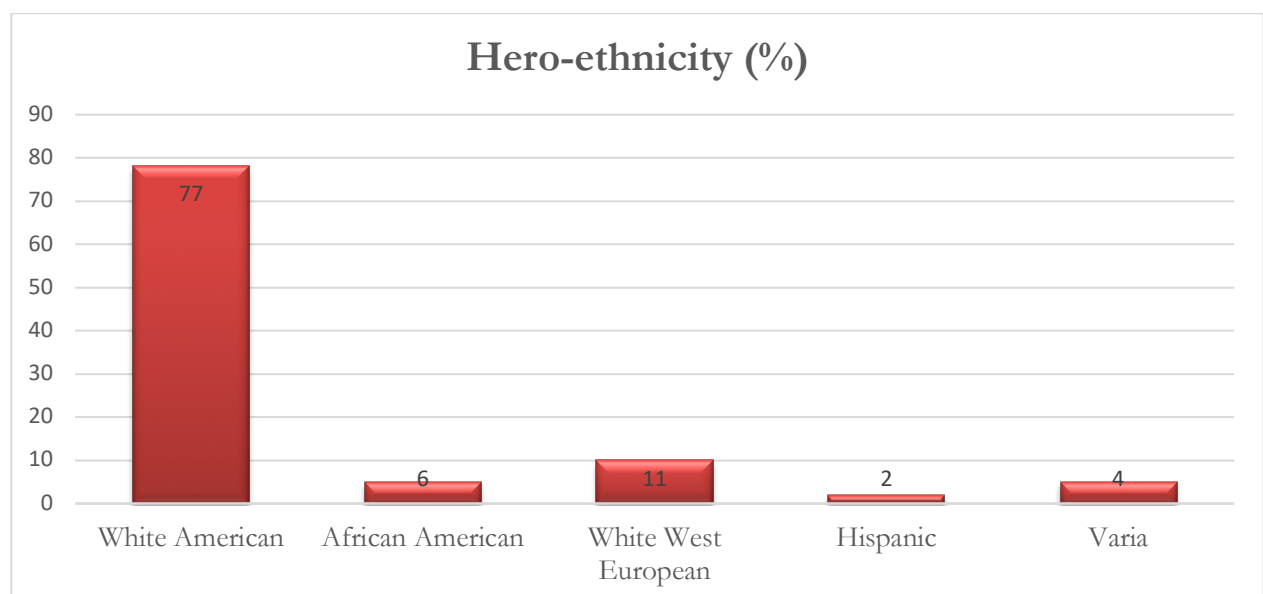
4.2. Character Level: Heroes and Villains

4.2.1. The American Action Thriller Hero

With data delivered on the context of production, textual characteristics and societal themes, the table is set to analyze the presence of hero and enemy identities in the genre. Firstly, to offer a point of comparison, the identity of each film's protagonists were measured through several key variables. If the antagonist is the inherent 'other', does the hero then serve as a hegemonic opposite? Or are these identities more complex and diffuse than popularly perceived? Since for every film a hero-actor was coded, the sample consisted out of 180 characters.

Firstly, the ethnicity of these characters was coded and is displayed in Figure 4. This variable consisted out of 21 different ethnic identities, however, the majority of these options remained unutilized. The large majority of the hero-characters in the sample is either 'White American' (77%) or 'White Western European' (11%). 'African American' (6%) and 'Hispanic' (2%) heroes are present, but form a small minority. A small 'Miscellaneous' (4%) can also be noted, comprising mostly out of Easter-European and various types of Asian heroes in even more insignificant numbers.

Figure 4: hero-ethnicity



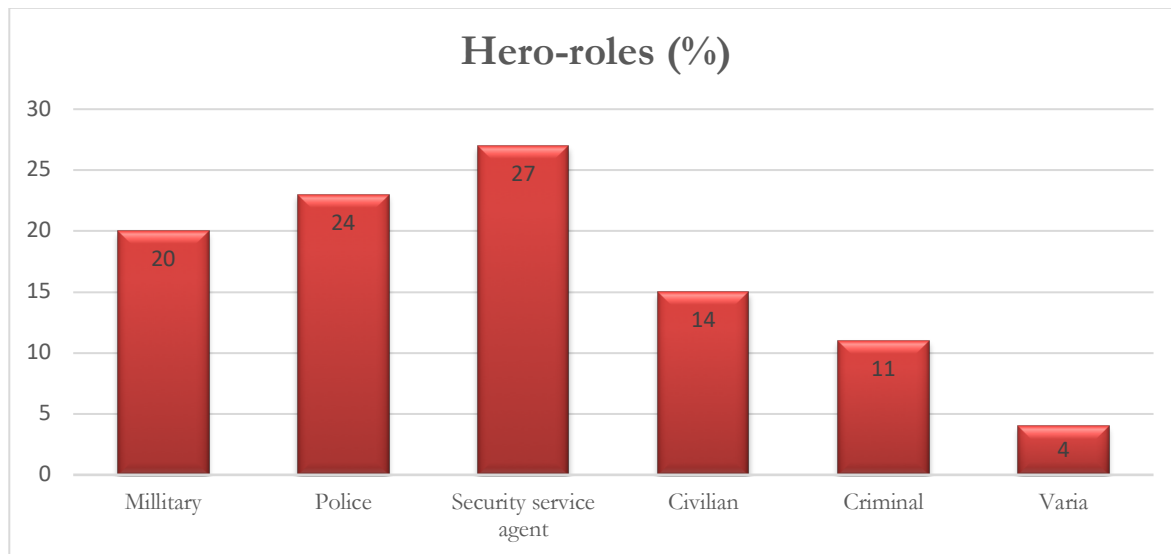
When looking at other variables of identity in Table 5, the same lack of diversity is noticeable. In terms of ‘Gender’ 96% of the coded heroes are ‘Male’, and only 4% ‘Female’. This is especially concerning since two of the seven female heroes stem from the *Kill Bill* series, and action heroines only started appearing in the sample from 1993 on. Since 2003 there is an increase in female action stars, albeit only slightly. Next, 86% of all hero-characters are identified in the film as heterosexual. Whereas this type of coding always remains a reduction, the sexual orientation of these characters was made on the bases of their sexual and romantic conduct. Characters in wedlock or other types of romantic relationships, or who perform sexual acts, solely with individuals of the opposite sex were coded as heterosexual. The remaining 14% refers to characters who did not fall in this category and whose sexual orientation remains unknown. No openly bisexual or homosexual characters appeared in our sample. To investigate these gender relations further, the type of physicality of these characters was coded. Jeffords’ (1993) Hard Body/Soft Body distinction, which states that the physical built of these characters reiterates certain hegemonic discourses on masculinity and nationality, was largely negated, since only 37% of the hero characters had what Jeffords identified as Hard Bodies. Reading the body of the action hero as holding political discourses on gender and nationality, she makes the distinction between the overtly muscular ‘Hard Bodies’ of the 1980s and the more slender ‘Soft Bodies’ of the later years. Not only did the coding show that ‘Soft Bodies’ are predominantly present, moreover, they appear since the first formative years of the genre.

Table 5: hero gender identities (n=180)					
Gender	%	Sexuality	%	Body Type	%
Male	96% (173)	Heterosexual	86% (155)	Hard Body	37% (67)
Female	4% (7)	Unknown	14% (25)	Soft Body	63% (13)

Other identity variables such as age, religion and roles were also coded. An estimation of hero-characters was made through their appearance, position in life or textual exposition. Because more often than not the character’s age is not specified, this variable was clustered into five different categories: ‘Teen (age 12-18)’, ‘Young Adult’ (age 19-29), ‘Adult’ (30-49)

‘Middle-aged’ (50-65) and ‘Senior’ (65+)’. The data revealed that the large majority of action heroes falls into the middle category of ‘Adult’ (71%). The remaining third of the action heroes is divided equally amongst the closest categories of ‘Young Adult’(16%) and ‘Middle-aged’ (10%). Even smaller percentages can be found in the two remaining categories of ‘Teen’ (1%) and ‘Senior’ (2%), with films such as *Iron Eagle* (1986) and *The Expendables 2* (2012) posing an exception to this rule. The hero’s religious background turns out to be even more obscure. A total of nine different religions were coded, however, in 93% of the heroes’ religious convictions remained ‘Unclear’. The only religion that was explicitly practiced by these films’ protagonists is that of ‘Christianity’ (7%). Lastly, the many different roles hero-characters can occupy are dealt with in Figure 5. By coding twelve different role categories, the professional position of the protagonists was summarized, ranging from ‘Soldier’ to ‘Student’. As was to be expected, almost all hero characters attain professional roles in service of law enforcement or international justice. Most often they are member of an ‘American security service’ (27%), such as the NSA, CIA, FBI or DEA, being professionally involved into matters of homeland security. This position of authority is also recognizable with characters serving as ‘Military Official’ (20%), soldiers, generals and special ops being only a few examples, and ‘Police Officers’ (24%) of varying specializations. The reason why these roles are an unmissable element in the discursive organization of heroes and their violent actions is because they are often intrinsically linked to the hero’s motivations in enacting violence toward the story’s villains. Therefore to complement this category, the main motivations of hero-characters in fighting enemies was coded in context of the narrative.

Figure 5: hero-roles



Corresponding with the results of the Role-variable, 'Professionalism' (34%) is shown as the primary motivation. Obviously, such narrative positioning coincides with certain discursive structures. By presenting characters whose professional role in society grants them a definite jurisdiction in combatting enemies on different scales, these films offer an immediate framework to understand the actions of these characters as just. The role of these heroes literally grants them a license to kill. Seldom are these positions critically investigated or the actions of these characters in the context of their profession questioned. In upholding the law, protecting the nation, or avenging a loved-one, these heroes express a will to save the world, but their profession never really grants them the opportunity to save it. Their narrative function rests in restoring order and re-installing stability to the community, therefore they are locked into an ideologically affirmative position. The many structural imbalances in power and means is not rectified by the hero, as much as the discursive hegemony responsible for these very structures is upheld. The category of 'Civilian' (14%) heroes offers little solace. The social status of these characters as a 'nobody' or an 'everyman' is narratively utilized to more effectively capture the rise from zero to hero. Here, the protagonist conquers trials and tribulations despite his lack of professional training, thus more convincingly demonstrating his position as hero within the narrative. While discourses on authority and expertise are not so much into play here, the generic

framework of the genre provides a different set of discourses and more individually oriented motivations generally result in the same outcome.

Of these more individually oriented motivations, 'Revenge' (25%) and 'Altruism' (18%) prove to be the most dominant drives. Much rather than providing an authoritative argument, revenge and altruism (here perceived as either avenging loved ones, or rescuing/aiding them) operate on an affective register to deem the violent actions of the heroes as just. Moreover, such motivations are engrained in several narrative topoi of the genre. For instance, in 66% of the films of our sample, an enemy is responsible for killing a loved one of the hero, thereby granting the hero further motivation to engage into battle. Along those lines, villains are often seen to subject the heroes to 'Torture' (21%). This ritual of humiliation and demasculinization mostly happens midway throughout the film, granting the hero a final push of violent anima before he delivers his final assault towards the villain. To conclude: similarly to the Western (Slotkin, 1992), violence enacted by the hero has to be clothed in righteousness. Apart from the motivations previously mentioned, many of these films embed the violent actions of the heroes in 'Necessity' (18%), framing them as acts of self-defense or instrumental to survival. Seldom these actions stem from sentiments of 'Enjoyment' (2%). This motivation typically connects with the role of 'Criminal' (11%) amongst heroes. When taking a closer look at hero-enacted violence, it again becomes apparent that bloodshed and 'others' types of extreme force are a central component of the genre. Not only is the body count for hero-characters exceptionally high compared to that of 'others' genre's, but by quantifying the type and amount of the destructive measures that heroes execute, a relentless brutality at the hand of the film's protagonists is revealed. On average the film's protagonist kills 19 enemy characters featured in the film. Furthermore, several of these violent actions were coded as shown in Table 6, illustrating a wide array of violent actions such as 'Executions' (74%), 'Surveillance' (74%) 'Torture' (58%), 'Threats and Intimidations' (71%), 'Large Scale Bombing in Civilian territory' (23%) and 'Mutilation' (47%). How these actions are textually represented and discursively framed within the genre is elaborated further on in this Working Paper.

Violent action	% of heroes	Violent action	% of heroes
Murder	96% (173)	Violence towards women	61% (110)
Surveillance	74% (133)	Torture	58% (104)
Executions	74% (133)	Mutilation	47% (85)
Threats and intimidation	71% (128)	Large Scale Bombing in Civilian territory'	23% (41)
Unwarranted trespassing	66% (119)	Drug Abuse	14% (25)

4.2.2. The American Action Thriller Film Villains

After providing an explorative account of heroes in the genre, this Working Paper offers an analysis of their enemy counterparts. The villain was first conceptualized in the theoretical framework, before being operationalized in the methodological overview as to conduct the quantitative content analysis. The set of questions utilized for Hero-characters was expanded for the three different types of Enemy-characters. Per film a primary and secondary villain actor was coded, likewise on average six different tertiary villain characters were included. In 180 films 1017 enemy characters were coded. The coding mostly related to the identity and formal characteristics of these characters. Furthermore, contextual questions relating to the villain's narrative function were also included. One of these questions related to these characters' roles as story instigator, as posed by Propp (1968). In 82% of the sample, the villain turned out to be the narrative element that initiated the events that drive the story. These are usually violent actions, or what Potzsch (2013) defines as 'Evil Deeds', or first transgressions that threatens global peace. As is illustrated in Table 7, threats in the films are either articulated as dangers to the individual, their inner circle, a larger aggregate of people of the same town or city, the nation, the international community or the safety of the world. Most often 'Communities' (28%) such as large American cities are the target of these villains. Criminals, drug dealers and terrorists often take aim at the vested order within cities such as New York City, Los Angeles, Chicago and San Francisco. Interestingly enough, over a quarter of enemies featured in these films only target the hero and his/her inner circle. This corresponds somewhat with the results found in the 'Hero-Motivations'-variable. It is also noticeable that there is a higher percentage of 'International'

threats (20%) than threats solely on a ‘National’ scale (14%). This has to do with the fact that when the USA is under attack in these films, the international stakes and global risks are systematically accentuated. ‘Global’ threats (12%) are relatively rare, since these mostly relate to the risk of world destruction or catastrophes of apocalyptic proportions, such as the theft and/or usage of nuclear arms.

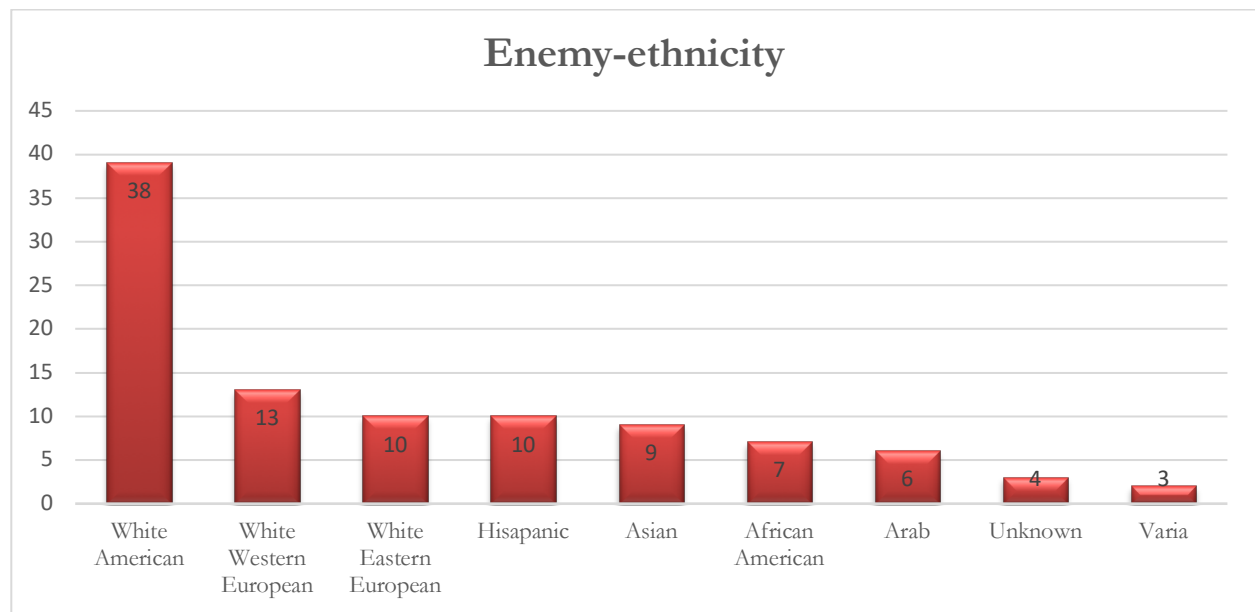
Table 7: type of threat	% of films
Individual	26% (n=47)
Communal	28% (n=50)
National	14% (n=25)
International	20% (n=36)
Global	12% (n=22)

Figure 6 shows that ethnically the identity of the villain is distinctively more diffuse than that of the hero. However, contrary to what the literature review suggested, the largest group remains that of ‘White American’ with a considerable 38%. This is followed by ‘White Western European’ boasting a markedly smaller, but still relatively high, 13%. Taken together, white Westerners form over half of the represented villains. This is a surprising result since many of the existing theories on enemy image construction and the American action thriller accentuate the dominance of foreign ‘others’. The majority of foreign ‘others’ often forms the crux in many studies of the genre. Lichtenfield (2007), for example, considers the enemies featured in action thrillers as intrinsically relating to the many enemies of the presidential regimes tied to the era. Whereas these villains do appear, and should not be ignored in scholarly analysis, they signify a minority when compared to White American and Western European villains. Regarding the ethnic diversity in Enemy-characters, it should be noted that the most categories share a similar presence. Villains of ‘Hispanic’ (10%), ‘White Eastern European’ (10%), ‘Asian’ (9%), ‘African American’ (7%) and ‘Arab’ (6%) ethnic background all take up a somewhat comparable portion within the sample. Identical to the coding process of the heroes, the ethnicity variable with enemy-characters was coded by contextual information such as setting, nationality and explicit referencing. When there were major ambiguities at play, the ethnic background of these characters was coded as ‘Unknown’. This ethnic diversity is further displayed when focusing

on the nationality of enemies, listed in Table 8. Over 60 different nationalities were coded amongst these villains, excluding the fictitious countries and unknown nationalities. Unsurprisingly the American nationality tops the bill by far, but the other places in the ten most present enemy nationalities show some interesting consistencies. Russians are the second most common villain nationality, followed by a range of countries from different regions, such as Mexico, Great-Britain, Germany and Japan. The action thriller turns out to be surprisingly specific in determining the nationality of its many villains. Through dialogue and different types of exposition the country of birth is almost invariably referenced. When there is any form of abstraction, it is most often related to characters with an Arab ethnicity. Of all ethnic backgrounds, Arab enemies' precise nationality is most often not specified.

Table 8: top villain nationalities			
Motivation	# of enemies	Motivation	# of enemies
American	511	German	27
Russian	72	Japanese	21
Mexican	39	Italian	16
British	36	Iraqi	14
Chinese	29	Unspecified Arab country	14

Figure 6: enemy-ethnicity



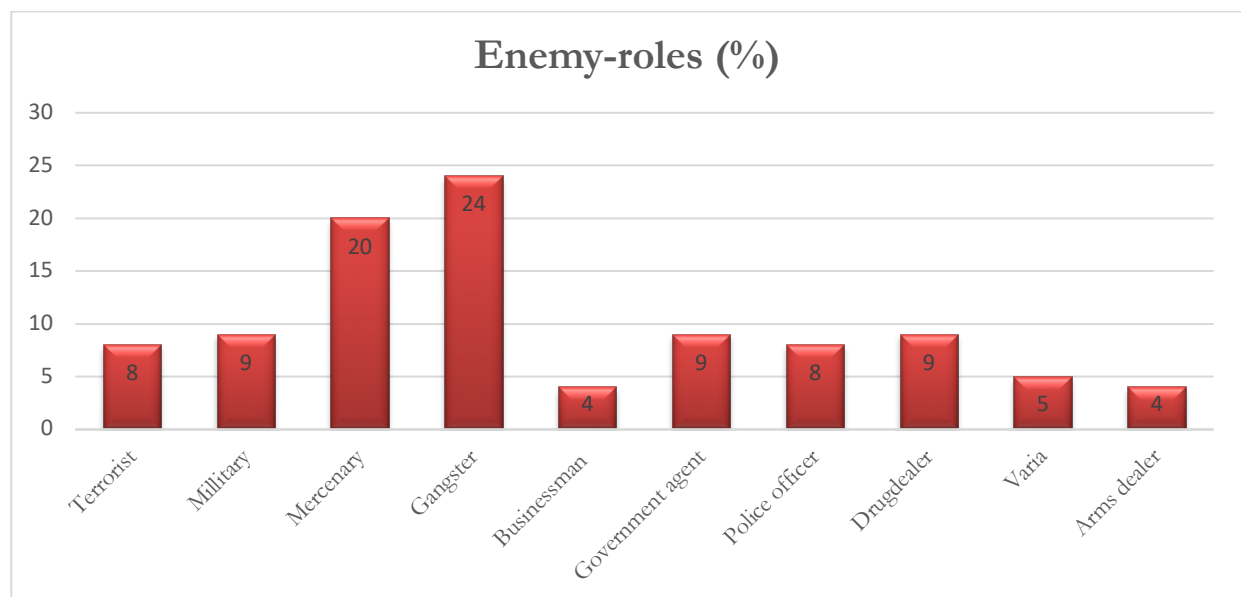
Whereas the ethnicity and nationality of the villain differs greatly from that of the hero, results on the coding of gender and sexuality turn out to be surprisingly similar. Table 9 illustrates that 94 % of all coded villains is ‘Male’, and only 6% ‘Female’. Just as with the action thriller’s hero-characters there is no transgender villain present in the sample. The sexuality of these characters is much less overt. Only 20% of the coded villain-characters their sexuality is identified. 18% of which heterosexual, and only 2% bisexual. Whereas a large portion of these enemy-characters has queer characteristics or does not adhere an hegemonic ideal of masculinity, not a single enemy-actor could be coded explicitly as gay. This small percentage of bisexual characters is nevertheless important, both because of the sheer absence of such identities amongst hero-characters and because of the high number of villain-characters whose sexuality is unknown. It could be stated that out of the villain-characters whose sexuality is explicated, 10% is bisexual. This is a considerable amount in comparison to heterosexual villains. Another interesting feat is that nearly all of these non-heterosexual enemies are women, two of which in the category ‘Elderly’. A possible reason for this intersectionality could be that filmmakers want to stress this sexual deviance as much as possible as part of the representation practice of ‘othering’.

Gender	%	Sexuality	%
Male	94%	Heterosexual	18%
Female	6%	Bisexual	2%
		Unknown	80%

The ideological identity of the enemy turned out to be less important than originally suspected. Only 6% was identified as ‘Communist’, and ‘others’ ideologies such as ‘Nazism’ and ‘Anarchism’ are all marginally present (less than 2%). However, as much as 11% of the villain characters were coded as ‘Capitalist’, based on their occupation and larger motivations. The variable ‘Religion’ yielded similar results: only 4% of these characters was explicitly/implicitly defined as ‘Muslim’ and 2% as ‘Christian’. The religious identity of 93% of all enemy-characters remained unknown throughout the course of the narrative. At the level of ‘Roles’, these villains provide a suitable antithesis to the heroes’ positions. When taking a look at Figure 7 it can be noted that professionally these villains consistent offer a wide array of criminal and deviants, offering a colorful assortment of ‘Gangsters’ (24%), ‘Mercenaries’ (20%), ‘Soldiers’ (9%), ‘Terrorists’ (8%), ‘Drug dealers’ (9%) and many more. It goes without saying that these roles largely relate to the verisimilitude of the different subgenres. Gangsters and drug dealers belong to the urban battleground, soldiers and arms dealers to the geopolitical playfield. What is also noticeable is that with the presence of roles such as ‘Police Officers’ (8%) and ‘Government Agent’ (9%) there are some evident parallels with the roles amongst hero characters. A major part of the villain characters occupy authority positions, working for or with institutions enforcing national and international law. This corresponds with the high number of White American villains and the results from the thematic analysis that identified ‘Corruption’ as one of the core themes of the genre. A large part of the national enemies presented in the American action thrillers are corrupt police officers, rogue government agents, disgruntled war veterans and Machiavellian businessmen. Whether one could consider this as a sign of resistance against the vested order, the presence of these white male American authorities as villain can also be read as an affirmation of hegemonic discourse on power and professionalism. By relating these identities to the villain’s narrative position, this identity was revealed to be

dominant at the top of the villain hierarchy. The presence of these ‘Homegrown Villains’ turns out to be far from mutually exclusive with ‘other’ enemy identities. Often characters from ‘other’ ethnic backgrounds, such as Afro American drug dealers, Chinese Triad and Arab terrorists, appear in the role of henchman or assistant to these White American characters in power positions. Being represented as primitive and disorganized, enemy ‘others’ often occupy a supporting role in the larger antagonistic structures featured in these films. The white American villain is depicted as instrumental to the success of these villains, offering resources and a degree of professionalism to the ‘other’, which they are not capable of attaining themselves. While this Working Paper does not go any further into the discursive dynamic of this villain hierarchy, it is an interesting insight that even in enemyhood the ‘other’ is limited in agency. Therefore the subversive potential of the ‘Homegrown Villain’ has to be taken with a necessary degree of nuance. These results, however, do provide an interesting starting point to investigate the relationships between ethnic identities and enemy role patterns.

Figure 7: enemy-roles



Even though 51% is White Western American, the coding process on enemy identities shows that action thriller villains are mostly structured around elements of ethnic ‘otherness’. More than class ideologies, religion, gender or sexuality, enemyhood in the American action thriller is heavily related to discourses of ethnocentrism. This was already hinted at in the results of the variable ‘Setting’ in the contextual analysis. Not only are the

ethnic identities presented in these films heavily exoticised, but these identities also function as a nodal point in a wider chain of equivalence, tying together several key discourses on self and 'others' (Laclau & Mouffe, 1986). When grouping villains on the basis of ethnicity, a striking amount of similarities can be found in these categories on basis of characteristics, iconography, actions, setting, stars, and entangled discourses. Action thriller filmmakers utilize these stereotypes as shorthand for meaning, building on perceived differences and associated threats. Structuring enemies on ethnicity, these characters can be divided in roughly several 'Characteristics'. This was done by combining the 'Roles' variable with a 14-type enemy characteristics typology based on Sam Keen's (1997) enemy morphology. Arab villains are by far the most homogeneous in their depiction. These characters feature most as terrorist, insurgent, mercenary and smuggler of weapons and women. In rare cases Arab characters are depicted as wealthy Sheiks, but characteristics such as laziness and barbarism, as defined by Shaheen (2001), remain.

Many of these characteristics can be found with Latin-American villains. Whether Mexican, Columbian or Brazilian, these enemies are often corrupt government officials, dictators, terrorists and guerilla soldiers, characterised by their lack of organization and greedy goals. The most common association, however, is that with narcotics. The War on Drugs is a conflict similarly applicable with African American characters, together with other forms of low level crime. African villains are considered almost exclusively in a military context, together with South East Asian villains, stemming from countries such as Thailand, Vietnam and Cambodia. This is in stark contrast with Japanese and Chinese villains, who are represented as highly organized, following rigidly defined codes and hierarchies, and who are often members of organized crime syndicates or part of nefarious corporations. A relatively large portion of Japanese enemies also turns out to be a ninja. There is also a presence of North Korean enemies, in which many of these stereotypes are combined with that of the Russian villain. Russian and Eastern European villains turn out to also be part of a consistent category. Where there is an interesting shift in role patterns related to the end of the Cold War (from military to criminal context), the characteristics of these enemies remains largely consistent. The Eastern European villain is a stoic, sadistic, ruthless and often sophisticated character. Eastern European American diaspora are represented as shaped by the hardships under Soviet rules, yet corrupted by the American dream, resulting

in a criminal career as drug or weapon trafficker. The Western European enemy is the most heterogeneous, with stereotypes that build more on national than on ethnic identities. British supercriminals, Irish terrorists, French drug traffickers, Italian mafia, German mercenaries and Austrian neo-Nazis are all part of the assortment enemies.

To delve further into the concise depiction of these enemy characters, certain formal and contextual characteristics were also coded. Whether the enemy was named, seen, heard and, what languages spoken, was partially the goal of this part of the research. Of all enemies in the sample only 21% had a name; nearly all of these characters (99%) were represented visually on screen?. When attempting to uncover whether these characters had speaking parts in the narrative, 98% turned out to have speaking roles (even if only minor or inaudible). Amongst these speaking enemies, English proved to be prevalent with 76%. In 8% of the cases these characters exclusively spoke a foreign language, 16% spoke both English and a foreign language. The high number of English speaking villains obviously has to do with the dominance of White Western American villains. What can further be deduced from this data is that the designated villains are almost always visualized, even if partially disguised or abstracted. Moreover, something akin to a star system is to be seen tied to the role of the villain. Similar to Eisenstein's logics of 'type', certain actors generally get consistently typecast to play the villain. Out of 360 primary and secondary villain characters, Willem Defoe and Rick Yune turned out to be most present. Characters as Joaquim de Almeida and Shô Kosugi also seem to be the go-to actor when filmmakers need a villain of Latin-American or Japanese ethnicity. Other characters, such as the New-Zealand born Art Malik, play a versatile amount of enemy identities because of their ethnic ambiguous looks. However, despite the majority of villains that are both seen and heard, devisualisation and abstraction still remain popular strategies of enemy image construction. The ambiguities around the enemies identities can further be explored by looking at their goals and motivations. The objectives of these enemies mostly concern a wish to 'Kill the Hero' (21%), and, secondary, to 'Attack the West' (12%), 'Stay in Power' (11%) 'Assassinate an important figure' (10%) and 'Deal Drugs' (9%). All of these results confirm themes and conflicts already encountered in previous parts of the research. What is interesting is the large percentage of these characters whose goals remain 'Unspecified' (12%), hinting again at a form of enemy abstraction, and the high number of villains who act in an individual

conflict with the hero or solely out of self-defense. These results somewhat correspond with the larger motivations behind these objectives. Most of such dastardly actions turn out to be ‘Financially motivated’ (34%), out of ‘Revenge’ (11%), ‘Survival’ (10%) or are left ‘Unspecified’ (15%). A sizable amount of these characters it is noticeable that no form of backstory, motivations or even specific goals are revealed. As spectators we are simply asked to believe their evilness without any further details. In doing so, the actions of the enemy are wholly decontextualized; they become an evil deed devoid of reason and thus of justifiability. These results were, however, somewhat contradicted when registering the different social position of enemy characters. Whether enemies were represented in different social contexts was measured to comprehend if these characters were exclusively perceived as enemies. Results show that 8% of the enemy characters are represented as ‘Parent’ , 6% as ‘Child’ and 8% as ‘Significant member of the community’, offering a small sign of humanity to these otherwise demonized characters.

Figure 11: enemy objectives

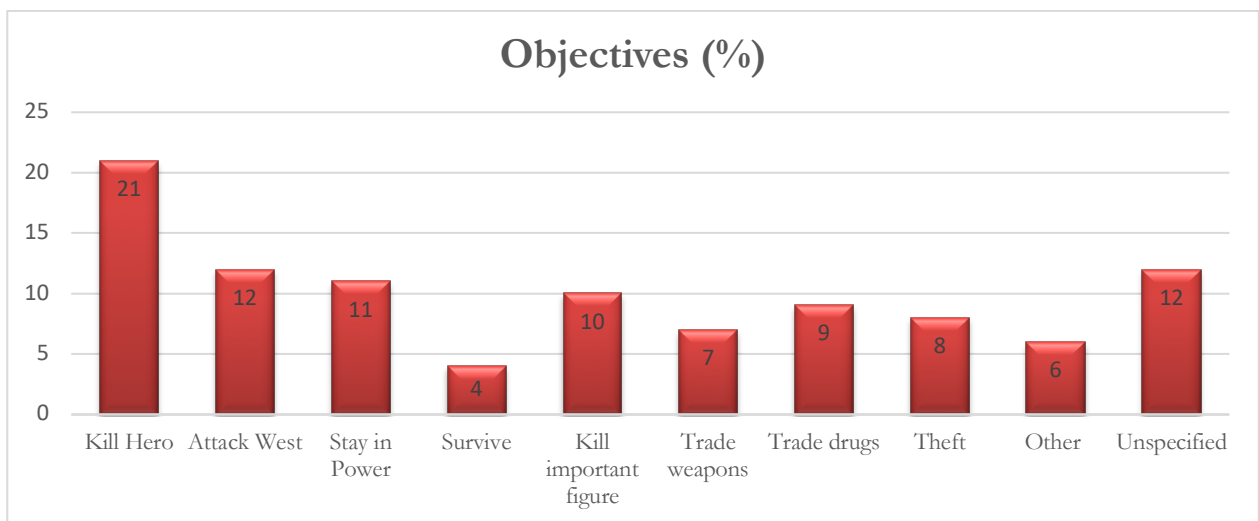
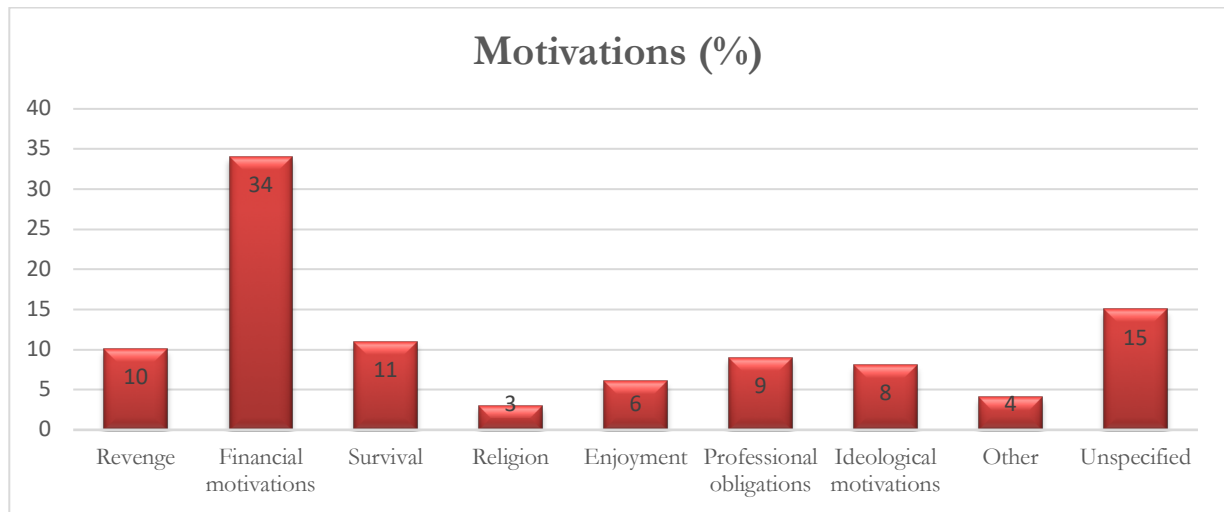


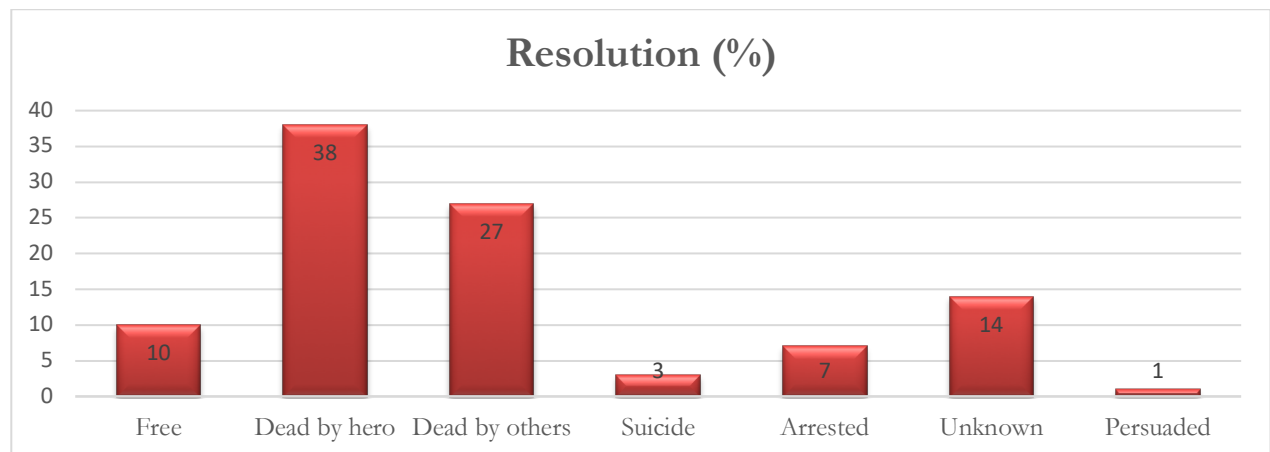
Figure 12: enemy motivations



These results are especially interesting because they help us understand how violence is discursively structured in the genre. When approaching the number of kills and violent actions in the context of these two character types, heroes and villains turn out to be two sides of the same coin. On average the entire enemy populace murders slightly less than one singular individual hero characters ($18 < 19$). Even more staggering is that the violent actions performed by the enemies are similar, if not less severe, than those enacted by the heroes. Violent actions such as ‘Executions’ (39%), ‘Torture’ (21%) and ‘Threats and Intimidations’ (20%) are all proportionally rarer amongst enemies than heroes. ‘Sexual Violence’ (7%), ‘Violence Against Women’ (25%) and ‘Betrayal’ (25%) do appear more frequently with villains, but even these actions are not completely absent amongst hero-characters. If in actions and motivations heroes and villains turn out to be strikingly similar, how this violence is generically and discursively framed needs to become a subject of scholarly attention. Enemies are systematically at the receiving end of a generic brand of sanctioned bloodletting (Bourke, 1999). Since the genre demands a large degree of closure, these characters do not fare well in the third act. For 94% of the films a form of resolute closure is presented, in which the hero thwarts the plans of the enemy and triumphs over the enemy (76% of these resolutions are tonally ‘Happy’, 18% count as ‘Melancholic’). Only in 6% of the films did the enemy ultimately succeed or escape, or were they replaced for a new enemy. In service of narrative resolution, enemies most often end up deceased

(68%). How they arrive in body bags can vary (generally at the hands of the protagonist), but only a small number of these characters remains out of reach of the law (10%). The films that resist closure provide interesting cases for further analysis since their lack of resolution opens up possibilities for generic subversion or politics of resistance.

Figure 13: enemy resolution



Lastly, this Working Paper discusses the larger type of enemy image construction present in the genre. This variable refers to different types of conflict ontology perceivable in the sample, more specifically how the notion of enemyhood is tackled. Most present were what was conceptualized as ‘Manichean’ narratives in which a clear divide between good and evil is to be noted. The logics of enemyhood at play here depict an almost theological conflict between light and dark as represented through the film’s hero and villain characters. 69% of all films could be coded in this category. This type of conflict is in contrast with a more ‘Graduated’ variant, in which characters are presented in a more agonist manner. Categories of good and evil are not really applicable here, much rather enemies are perceived as characters with different, but therefore not illegitimate goals (Mouffe, 2005, 20). While distinctly rare, a proportionately large 22% could be considered part of this definition. The two final categories relate to: ‘Abstraction’, a type of enemy image construction in which the enemy is not expressed in specific individuals, but is much rather part of an abstract entity (3%), and ‘Ambivalent’, in which the film subverts the core conflict of the genre and blurs the lines between hero and enemy (6%).

5. CONCLUSION

As Sam Keen (1986) stated: “Before the weapon comes the image. We think ‘others’ to death and then invent the battle-axe or the ballistic missiles with which to actually kill them”. In order to dismantle the vilifying mechanism of enemy image construction, these logics first have to be understood. This Working Paper provides an initial step in deconstructing enemy identities proliferating in the American action thriller by offering an explorative account of enemy image construction in the genre. By building on previous literature from genre studies and conflict theory, the quantitative content analysis confirms a series of generic conventions, stereotypes and vilifying practices already present in scholarly literature, whilst also breaking open grounds for new research. The data from this Working Paper showed that ‘otherness’ is indeed one of driving forces of enemymaking within the American action thriller. The genre boasts a wide series of foreign locals, exotic settings and enemy others, stereotyping and often demonizing America’s ethnic ‘others’. The differences between heroes and enemies are most often played out on the fault lines of nationality and ethnicity, making surprisingly little mention of structures of otherness based on gender, sexuality, ideology and religion. Multitudinous as these enemy ‘others’ might be, the research showed that a majority of the villains in these films are White Westerners, either from the USA or Western Europe. These ‘Homegrown Villains’ are represented as corrupt or overzealous authority figures, often functioning as law enforcer or national security agent. Whereas this does show some subversive potential towards counter-hegemonic projects within the genre, one should remain critical towards the presence of the Western villain. These identities are not mutually exclusive with the presence of various enemy identities and often place enemy ‘others’ in an inferior position of service towards the Western villain. In the process hegemonic discourses on Western superiority, legitimate violence and grievability are reaffirmed.

Concerning the conjunction between contemporary geopolitics and enemy representation, this research pleads for a critical and nuanced position. It is evident that conflict, be it national/international or past/present, does relate to the types of narratives, discourses and threats expressed in the genre. The thematic analysis, for example, showed how the action thriller utilized topical crises and perceived problems, such as the Vietnam legacy,

hijackings, drone warfare and surveillance scandals, as variables in constructing believable threats. Such dynamics between history, politics and representation points to the ritual nature of genre. However, if the action thriller genre is to be understood as a mythical site of expression or as ideological site of struggle, it should be stressed that the relationship between politics and cinema is dynamic and overdetermined with meaning. Longitudinally, some enemy identities are in precise accordance with possible perceptions of enemyhood of their time (i.e. the rise of Arab villains post-9/11), while ‘others’ identities are in complete disagreement of such historical understandings (i.e. the rise of the Russian villain post-Cold War). Moreover, the research pinpointed a staggering amount of similarities between the hero and villain characters on basis of the identity, actions and motivations. These findings should be critically interpreted, and their ambiguity accordingly stressed, since the likeness between both protagonist and antagonist entails an obvious double standard of violence in the genre. Despite the fact that the data reveals that hero-characters perform more violent actions than their enemy counterparts, these actions are almost always structurally rooted in righteousness, presenting the triumphant elimination of ungrivable lives.

By mapping the generic conventions, narrative topoi, societal themes, and identities of both hero and villain characters, this Working Paper hopes to offer a reconnaissance in the direction of further scholarly investigation. This is, however, only a small step in the larger march for raising critical consciousness towards the representational practice of enemy image construction and the entanglement of the webs of animosity. These results are meant to be prolegomenous. A quantitative content approach does not go without its theoretical and methodological ailments. This reading can only capture manifest elements in the text, which includes the risk that any reading of film based solely on such an analysis results in ‘simple histories’. Therefore, this Working Paper suggests utilizing these quantitative research methods into a mixed-methods framework of textual analysis as a form of preliminary exploration of genres and representation.

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7. Appendices

Appendix 1. Selected film sample

Title	Year	Director
Enter the Ninja	1981	Menahem Golan
An Eye for an Eye	1981	Steve Carver
Sharky's Machine	1981	Burt Reynolds
Southern Comfort	1981	Walter Hill
Nighthawks	1981	Bruce Malmuth
First Blood	1982	Ted Kotcheff
Death Wish II	1982	Michael Winner
Firefox	1982	Clint Eastwood
Forced Vengeance	1982	James Fargo
The Challenge	1982	John Frankenheimer
Never Say Never Again	1983	Irvin Kershner
Octopussy	1983	John Glen
Lone Wolf McQuade	1983	Steve Carver
Blue Thunder	1983	John Badham
Sudden Impact	1983	Clint Eastwood
Red Dawn	1984	John Milius
The Evil That Men Do	1984	J. Lee Thompson
Ninja III: The Domination	1984	Sam Firstenberg
Missing in Action	1984	Joseph Zito
Streets of Fire	1984	Walter Hill
Rambo: First Blood Part II	1985	George P. Cosmatos
American Ninja	1985	Sam Firstenberg
Commando	1985	Mark L. Lester
To Live and Die in L.A.	1985	William Friedkin
Year of the Dragon	1985	Michael Cimino
Cobra	1986	George P. Cosmatos
Top Gun	1986	Tony Scott
Heartbreak Ridge	1986	Clint Eastwood
Heat	1986	Dick Richards
Iron Eagle	1986	Sidney J. Furie
Lethal Weapon	1987	Richard Donner
The Principal	1987	Christopher Cain
Hamburger Hill	1987	John Irvin

Extreme Prejudice	1987	Walter Hill
Death Wish 4: The Crackdown	1987	J. Lee Thompson
Die Hard	1988	John McTiernan
Rambo III	1988	Peter MacDonald
Colors	1988	Dennis Hopper
Red Heat	1988	Walter Hill
Bloodsport	1988	Newt Arnold
Licence to Kill	1989	John Glen
Lethal Weapon 2	1989	Richard Donner
Tango & Cash	1989	Andrey konchalovski
Black Rain	1989	Ridley Scott
Road House	1989	Roway Herrington
The Hunt for Red October	1990	John McTiernan
Hard to Kill	1990	Bruce Malmuth
Lionheart	1990	Sheldon Lettich
Marked for Death	1990	Dwight H. Little
Die Hard 2	1990	Renny Harlin
The Last Boy Scout	1991	Tony Scott
Double Impact	1991	Sheldon Lettich
Out for Justice	1991	John Flynn
Backdraft	1991	Ron Howard
Point Break	1991	Kathryn Bigelow
Passenger 57	1992	Kevin Hooks
Under Siege	1992	Andrew Davis
El Mariachi	1992	Robert Rodriguez
Patriot Games	1992	Phillip Noyce
Lethal Weapon 3	1992	Richard Donner
Cliffhanger	1993	Renny Harlin
The Fugitive	1993	Andrew Davis
In the Line of Fire	1993	Wolfgang Petersen
Hard Target	1993	John Woo
Point of No Return	1993	John Badham
On Deadly Ground	1994	Steven Seagal
Clear and Present Danger	1994	Phillip Noyce
The Specialist	1994	Luis Llosa
True Lies	1994	James Cameron
Speed	1994	Jan de Bont
GoldenEye	1995	Martin Campbell
Die Hard with a Vengeance	1995	John McTiernan

Desperado	1995	Robert Rodriguez
The Net	1995	Irwin Winkler
Under Siege 2	1995	Geoff Murpfty
Mission Impossible	1996	Brian De Palma
The Eraser	1996	Chuck Russell
The Rock	1996	Michael Bay
Broken Arrow	1996	John Woo
Executive Decision	1996	Stuart Baird
Air Force One	1997	Wolfgang Petersen
Tomorrow Never Dies	1997	Roger Spottiswoode
Con Air	1997	Simon West
Conspiracy Theory	1997	Richard Donner
The Jackal	1997	Michael Caton-Jones
The Siege	1998	Edward Zwick
Lethal Weapon 4	1998	Richard Donner
Ronin	1998	John Frankenheimer
U.S. Marshals	1998	Stuart Baird
The Negotiator	1998	F. Gary Gray
The Boondock Saints	1999	Troy Duffy
The Corruptor	1999	James Foley
The World Is Not Enough	1999	Michael Apted
Three Kings	1999	David O. Russell
Chill Factor	1999	Hugh Johnson
Mission: Impossible II	2000	John Woo
Gone In Sixty Seconds	2000	Dominic Sena
Shaft	2000	John Singleton
Romeo Must Die	2000	Andrzej Bartkowiak
Proof of Life	2000	Taylor Hackford
The Fast and the Furious	2001	Rob Cohen
Swordfish	2001	Dominic Sena
Behind Enemy Lines	2001	John Moore
Spy Game	2001	Tony Scott
The Last Castle	2001	Rod Lurie
Phone Booth	2002	Joel Schumacher
The Bourne Identity	2002	Doug Liman
xXx	2002	Rob Cohen
The Sum of All Fears	2002	Phil Alden Robinson
Die An'others' Day	2002	Lee Tamahori
S.W.A.T.	2003	Clark Johnson

Kill Bill: Vol. 1	2003	Quentin Tarantino
Once Upon a Time in Mexico	2003	Robert Rodriguez
2 Fast 2 Furious	2003	John Singleton
Tears of the Sun	2003	Antoine Fuqua
The Bourne Supremacy	2004	Paul Greengrass
Walking tall	2004	Kevin Bray
Cellular	2004	David R. Ellis
Man on fire	2004	Tony Scott
Kill Bill: Vol. 2	2004	Quentin Tarantino
Four Br"others's'	2005	John Singleton
Hostage	2005	Florent-Emilio Siri
XXX: State Of The Union	2005	Lee Tamahori
Assault on Precinct 13	2005	Jean-François Richet
Domino	2005	Tony Scott
Casino Royale	2006	Martin Campbell
Smokin' Aces	2006	Joe Carnahan
Crank	2006	Mark Neveldine & Brian Taylor
The Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift	2006	Justin Lin
Mission: Impossible III	2006	J.J. Abrams
The Bourne Ultimatum	2007	Paul Greengrass
Shooter	2007	Antoine Fuqua
The Kingdom	2007	Peter Berg
Live Free or Die Hard	2007	Len Wiseman
Hitman	2007	Xavier Gens
Quantum of Solace	2008	Marc Foster
Rambo	2008	Sylvester Stallone
Body of lies	2008	Ridley Scott
Vantage Point	2008	Pete Travis
Max Payne	2008	John Moore
The Taking of Pelham 123	2009	Tony Scott
Ninja Assassin	2009	James McTeigue
The International	2009	Tom Tykwer
Fast & Furious	2009	Justin Lin
Crank: High Voltage	2009	Mark Neveldine & Brian Taylor
The Expendables	2010	Sylvester Stallone
Machete	2010	Ethan Maniquis & Robert Rodriguez
Green zone	2010	Paul Greengrass
The A-Team	2010	Joe Carnahan
Salt	2010	Phillip Noyce

Unknown	2011	Jaume Collet-Serra
Hanna	2011	Joe Wright
Fast Five	2011	Justin Lin
Mission: Impossible – Ghost Protocol	2011	Brad Bird
The Mechanic	2011	Simon West
Safe House	2012	Daniel Espinosa
Skyfall	2012	Sam Mendes
The Expendables 2	2012	Simon West
The Bourne Legacy	2012	Tony Gilroy
Jack Reacher	2012	Christopher McQuarrie
Fast & Furious 6	2013	Justin Lin
Lone Survivor	2013	Peter Berg
Olympus Has Fallen	2013	Antoine Fuqua
White House Down	2013	Roland Emmerich
Escape Plan	2013	Mikael Håfström
American Sniper	2014	Clint Eastwood
Kingsman: The Secret Service	2014	Matthew Vaughn
The Equalizer	2014	Antoine Fuqua
John Wick	2014	Chad Stahelski & David Leitch
Non-Stop	2014	Jaume Collet-Serra
The Man from U.N.C.L.E.	2015	Guy Ritchie
Sicario	2015	Denis Villeneuve
Spectre	2015	Sam Mendes
Mission: Impossible - Rogue Nation	2015	Christopher McQuarrie
Furious 7	2015	James Wan
The Accountant	2016	Gavin O'Connor
Jason Bourne	2016	Paul Greengrass
London Has Fallen	2016	Babak Najafi
13 Hours	2016	Michael Bay
Jack Reacher: Never Go Back	2016	Edward Zwick

Appendix 2. Constructed codebook

1 NIVEAU 1 – ALGEMENE INFORMATIE

Op [NIVEAU 1] wordt de algemene informatie gecodeerd.

2 NIVEAU 2 – PRODUCTIONELE DIMENSIE

Op [NIVEAU 2] wordt productionele informatie uit de film gecodeerd.
Deze informatie moet bijkomend worden opgezocht.

2.1 TITEL VAN DE FILM

Wat is de titel van de film?
Schrijf de titel voluit op het registratieformulier.

2.2 JAAR

In welk jaar verscheen de film in de Amerikaanse zalen?

2.3 REGISSEUR

Door wie werd de film geregisseerd?

2.4 STUDIO (DISTRIBUTEUR)

Welke studio heeft de film gedistribueerd?

2.5 BUDGET

Wat was het totale budget van de film? Schrijf de getallen zonder spaties of tekens naast elkaar.

2.7. LEEFTIJDSTRATING

Welke leeftijdsratings kreeg de film bij diens release?
Slechts 1 antwoord mogelijk.

1. G – General Audiences	Alle leeftijden toegelaten
2. PG – Parental Guidance Suggested	Kinderen toegelaten mits begeleiding van volwassenen
3. PG-13 – Parents Strongly Cautioned	Inhoud gevoelig voor kinderen onder de 13 jaar
4. R – Restricted	Onder 17 jaar is de begeleiding van een volwassene noodzakelijk.
5. NC-17 – Adults Only/ Rated X	Onder 17 niet toegelaten
99. Weet niet	Leeftijdsrating niet gevonden

2.8. ORIGINE VAN DE PRODUCTIE

Wat is de origine van de film?
Slechts 1 antwoord mogelijk.

1. Amerikaans	De film is een zuiver Amerikaanse productie
2. Coproductie	De film is een coproductie tussen verschillende landen
3. Buitenlands	De film is geen Amerikaanse productie
99. Weet niet	Oorsprong van de film niet gevonden

2.9. DUUR FILM

Hoe lang duurt de film in minuten?

2.9. BOX-OFFICE GLOBAAL

Hoeveel verdiende de film aan de globale box-offices? Opzoeken via <http://www.boxofficemojo.com>

2.10. BOX-OFFICE NATIONAAL

Hoeveel verdiende de film aan de Amerikaanse box-offices? Opzoeken via <http://www.boxofficemojo.com>

2.11. BOX-OFFICE OVERZEES

Hoeveel verdiende de film **buiten** de Amerikaanse box-offices? Opzoeken via <http://www.boxofficemojo.com>

2.13. SUB-GENRE

Onder welk sub-genre van de actiefilm valt de film te plaatsen

1. Oorlog	Films die handelen rond een militair conflict, meestal binnen een geopolitieke context (bv. Black Hawk Down)
2. Misdaad	Films die handelen over misdaad, meestal in nationale context
3. Spionage	Films die handelen rond het onderwerp van internationale spionage
4. Drama	Films die meer karakter gedreven zijn
5. Martial-arts	Films waarin verschillende personages verwickeld zijn in gevechten van Oosterse gevechtkunst.
6. Blacksploitation	Exploitatiefilms waarin zwarte acteurs de hoofdrollen spelen
7. Comedy	Films die in de eerste plaats humoristisch bedoeld zijn en pas secundair zich op actie richten
8. Hijacking	Films over een gegijzeld voertuig
9. Vigilante	Films over een gewelddadig individu die op handhandige wijze de wet afdwingt
10. Fugitive	Films over opgejaagde -vaak valselijk beschuldigd-crimineel die aan de autoriteiten probeert te ontsnappen
11. Andere	
2.12. 'BASED ON A TRUE STORY'	
Maakt de film vermelding van gebaseerd te zijn op waargebeurde feiten? Zo Ja, geef aan welk historisch feit in de thema-analyse van niveau 4. Slechts één antwoord is mogelijk.	
1. Ja	De film is gebaseerd op waargebeurde feiten
2. Nee	De film is niet gebaseerd op waargebeurde feiten
99. Weet niet	

2.14. MILLITAIR/POLITIEKE STEUN Kreeg de film politiek/militaire steun? Gaande van financiële en logistieke ondersteuning tot advies Meerdere antwoorden mogelijk	
1. De film kreeg financiële ondersteuning	De film werd deels geproduceerd door een politiek/militaire instelling
2. De film kreeg logistieke ondersteuning	De film kreeg geen steun van een politiek/militaire instelling a.d.h.v. non monetaire middelen
3. De film kreeg ondersteuning in een andere vorm	De film kreeg op een andere manier ondersteuning van een politiek/militaire instelling
4. Het script werd door betreffende instelling onderworpen aan adviezen	Alvorens productie van start ging, werd de film goedgekeurd door een politiek/militaire instelling
5. Het eindproduct werd door betreffende instelling onderworpen aan adviezen	Alvorens productie in de zalen kwam, werd de film goedgekeurd door een politiek/militaire instelling
6. De film geen ondersteuning van dergelijke instellingen	Er kan met zekerheid gezegd worden dat er geen expliciete steun van een politiek/militaire instelling bij de productie aan te pas kwam.
99. Weet niet	Onzeker

3 NIVEAU 3 – VORMELIJKE DIMENSIE

Op [NIVEAU 3] wordt gepeild naar een reeks vormelijke eigenschappen die betrekking hebben tot de film. Deze dienen gechronometreerd te worden, gebruik makende van Cinematics.

3.1. TIJD VIJANDEN IN BEELD

Wat is de totale tijd van vijanden in beeld?

Hier dient elk moment dat een vijand in beeld komt gechronometreerd en opgeteld te worden.

3.2. ACTIESEQUENTIES (AANTAL)

Hoeveel actiesequenties telt de film?

Hier dient het aantal actiesequenties die in de film aanwezig zijn opgeteld te worden.

3.3. ACTIESEQUENTIES (DURATIE)

Wat is de totaalduur van deze actiesequenties?

Hier dient elke actiesequentie gechronometreerd en opgeteld te worden.

3.4. BODY COUNT- HELD

Hoeveel vijanden worden er door de held en diens bondgenoten uitgeschakeld?

Sommige van deze statistieken kunnen geraadpleegd te worden op www.moviebodycounts.com.

1. Geen	
2. 1-4	
3. 5-9	
4. 10-14	
5. 15-19	
6. 20-24	
7. 25-50	
8. 50-100	
9. +100	
99. Weet niet	

3.5. BODY COUNT- VIJAND

Hoeveel slachtoffers worden er aan de handen van de vijanden gemaakt?

Sommige van deze statistieken kunnen geraadpleegd te worden op www.moviebodycounts.com.

1. Geen	
2. 1-4	
3. 5-9	
4. 10-14	
5. 15-19	
6. 20-24	
7. 25-50	
8. 50-100	
9. +100	

99. Weet niet	
---------------	--

3.5. BODY COUNT- TOTAAL Hoeveel slachtoffers vallen er aan beide kampen? Sommige van deze statistieken kunnen geraadpleegd te worden op www.moviebodycounts.com .	
1. Geen	
2. 1-4	
3. 5-9	
4. 10-14	
5. 15-19	
6. 20-24	
7. 25-50	
8. 50-100	
9. 101-150	
10. 151-200	
11. 201-250	
12. 250+	
99. Weet niet	

4 NIVEAU 4 – CONTEXTUELE DIMENSIE

Op [NIVEAU 4] wordt gepeild naar een reeks contextuele eigenschappen die het narratief van de film situeren op een socio-politiek vlak.

4.1. TIJD/PERIODE

In welke tijd speelt het verhaal zich af?

Meerdere antwoorden zijn mogelijk

13. Pré-1930	
14. 1930s	
15. 1940s	
16. 1950s	
17. 1960s	
18. 1970s	
19. 1980s	
20. 1990s	
21. 2000s	
22. 2010s	
23. Post-2020	
24. Fictionele tijdlijn	
25. Andere	
99. Ongedefinieerd	

4.2. DOMINANTE LOCATIE/PLAATS

Waar speelt de film zich **voornamelijk** af?

Slechts één antwoord is mogelijk

4.3. ALLE LOCATIE/PLAATS

Waar speelt de film zich **allemaal** af?

4.4. SOCIAAL-POLITIEKE THEMA'S

Welke sociaal-politieke thema's komen in de film aan bod, of worden naar verwezen?

Meerdere antwoorden zijn mogelijk

1. Vietnam oorlog	
2. Korea oorlog	
3. Koude oorlog	
4. 1 ^{ste} Irakoerlog	
5. 2 ^{de} Irakoerlog	
6. Oorlog in Afghanistan	

7. 9/11	
8. 'War on terror'	
9. 'War on crime'	
10. ' War on drugs'	
11. 'Prisoners of war'	
12. 'Vigilante justice'	
13. 'Enhanced interrogation'	
14. 'Colleteral Damage'	
15. Drone-oorlogsvoering	
16. PTSD- Getraumatiseerde veteranen	
17. Corruptie	
18. Emigratie	
19. Milieubescherming	
20. Genocide	
21. Andere	

5 NIVEAU 5– ACTOR DIMENSIE

Op [NIVEAU 5] wordt gepeild naar de identiteit, eigenschappen, kenmerken en narratieve functies van de verschillende vijanden (antagonisten) die in beeld komen, evenals de held (protagonist) van het verhaal.

1. Allereerst wordt het hoofdpersonage van de film gecodeerd. Indien er meerdere hoofdpersonages in beeld komen, wordt het personage gecodeerd die het langst in beeld komt. Het coderen van dit personage gebeurt over één niveau.

2. Bij de volgende stap worden alle vijand-personages gecodeerd. Onder personages verstaan we alle individuen in de film die de rol van antagonist opnemen en held proberen kwaad te doen of te verhinderen in zijn missie. Deze actoren moeten echter een groot genoeg rol in het verhaal hebben en van enige uitdieping voorzien zijn. De voorwaarden tot coderen kan je vinden bovenaan het document. Het coderen van deze personages gebeurt over twee niveaus.

- Alle actoren met meerdere zinnen dialoog
- Een naam
- In meerdere scenes aanwezig
- Voorzien van enige achtergrondinformatie

3. Als laatste worden alle vijand-actoren in verzamelde vorm onderzocht; dus als aggregaat. Hiermee bedoelen we alle vijandelijke entiteiten die in de film aanwezig zijn; zoals benden, legers, naties, instituten, organisaties en andere (homogene/heterogene) groepen. Deze categorie heeft dus betrekking tot groepen die expliciet in de film aan bod komen, maar beslaat ook alle vijand-personages die in de film aan bod komen zonder van uitdieping voorzien worden (zoals gecodeerd in categorie 2). Handlanger, soldaten en andere vijandrollen die eerder figuratie aan bod komen worden dus gecodeerd als deel van een groter geheel. Bij elke vijand die aan bod komt dient dus nagedacht te worden over tot welke 'groep' deze vijand behoort. Een enkele film kan meerdere van deze groepen bevatten; elke groep dient afzonderlijk gecodeerd te worden als ware het een reeks verschillende actoren.

5.1. Held

5.1.1 ETNICITEIT

Welke etniciteit heeft de actor? Het coderen van de etniciteit is zeer complex en dient met de nodige omzichtigheid te gebeuren.

Bij twijfelgevallen hoef je de etniciteit niet te coderen en duid je [99. Weet niet] aan.

Slechts 1 antwoord mogelijk.

1. [Wit Europees] Noord-Amerikaans	Vb. VSA, Canada
2. [Wit Europees] West-Europees	Vb. België, Nederland, Frankrijk, VK, Ierland, Zweden, Oostenrijk.
3. [Wit Europees] Oost-Europees	Vb. Polen, Hongarije, Slovenië, Letland, Estland, Tsjechië, Bulgarije. Rusland, Wit-Rusland, Oekraïne.
4. [Wit Europees] Oceanisch	Vb. Australië, Nieuw-Zeeland
5. [Zwart Afrikaans] Afrikaans	Niet Noord-Afrikaans.
6. [Zwart Afrikaans] Afro-Amerikaans.	Noord-Amerika.

7. [Zwart Afrikaans] Centraal-Am.	Vb. Antillen, Jamaica, Suriname, Haïti, Mexico.
8. [Zwart Afrikaans] Niet-gespecifi.	Zwart Afrikaans, maar niet verder gespecificeerd.
9. [Aziatisch] Aziatisch-Amerikaans	Aziatisch-Amerikaans.
10. [Aziatisch] Indisch	Vb. India, Pakistan.
11. [Aziatisch] Noord-; Centraal-Azië	Vb. China, Japan, Mongolië, Kazachstan, Turkmenistan.
12. [Aziatisch] Zuidoost-Azië	Vb. Filippijnen, Vietnam, Cambodja.
13. [Aziatisch] Niet-gespecificeerd	Aziatisch, maar niet verder gespecificeerd.
14. [Mediterraan] Maghreb	Vb. Marokko, Tunesië, Algerije, Libië.
15. [Mediterraan] Zuid-Europa	Vb. Spanje, Cyprus, Italië, Griekenland, Portugal.
16. [Mediterraan] Nabije Oosten	Vb. Turkije, Syrië, Egypte, Libanon.
17. Midden-Oosten	Vb. Irak, Iran, Saoedi-Arabië, Afghanistan.
18. Noord-Amerikaans	Native Americans (Inuit, Indianen).
19. Zuid-Amerikaans	Vb. Latino, Hispanic, Puerto Rico.
20. Arctisch	Arctisch (Noord- en Zuidpool).
21. Mix van etniciteiten	De actor heeft een mix van etniciteiten.
22. Andere	Geen van bovengenoemde etniciteiten. Vb. Fantasiefiguren.
23. Weet niet	Het is onduidelijk welke etniciteit de actor heeft.
5.1.2 GENDER Welk geslacht heeft de actor? Slechts 1 antwoord mogelijk	
1. Man	De actor is man
2. Vrouw	De actor is vrouw
3. Transgender	De actor is transgender
4. Geen	De actor heeft geen gender
99. Weet niet	Het gender van de actor is onbekend
5.1.3 SEKSUELE GEAARDHEID Wat is de seksuele geaardheid van de actor? Enkel aanvinken als uit de film duidelijk blijkt wat de seksuele geaardheid van de actor is. Indien dit niet duidelijk aan bod komt, duid je aan [99. Weet niet] . Slechts 1 antwoord mogelijk.	
1. Hetero	De actor is heteroseksueel.

2. Homoseksueel	De actor is homoseksueel.
3. Lesbisch	De actor is lesbisch.
4. Biseksueel	De actor is biseksueel.
5. Andere	De actor heeft andere seksuele voorkeuren
99. Weet niet	Het is onduidelijk wat de seksuele geaardheid van de actor is.

5.1.4 ROL

Welk rol/positie heeft de actor? Hiermee verwijzen we naar de professionele categorie waartoe de actor behoort. In de eerste plaats dient er gekeken te worden naar hoe er naar de actor verwezen wordt in de film. Indien hier geen expliciete vermelding van wordt gemaakt, dient dit afgeleid te worden uit contextuele factoren (zie ook: synopsis, IMDb-beschrijving) of eigen deducties.

Slechts 1 antwoord mogelijk.

1. Soldaat	
2. Generaal	
3. Veteraan	
4. Politieagent	
5. Agent veiligheidsdienst	
6. Arbeider	
7. Crimineel	
8. Wetenschapper	
9. Staatshoofd	
10. Bodyguard	
11. Student	
12.	
99. Weet niet	Het is onduidelijk wat de rol van de actor is.

5.1.5 AFFILIATIE

Tot welke organisatie behoort de actor? Als de actor individueel handelt, schrijf je **GEEN**. Slechts 1 antwoord mogelijk.

5.1.6 RELIGIE

Welk geloof koestert de actor? In te vullen aan de hand van verwijzingen binnen de film, of af te leiden uit de handelingen van de actor (bv. actor bidt of draagt religieuze symbolen).

Slechts 1 antwoord mogelijk.

1. Rooms-Katholiek	
2. Protestant	
3. Moslim	
4. Joods	
5. Boeddhistisch	
6. Hindoeïstisch	
7. Satanisch	
8. Occultisch	

9. Atheïstisch	
10. Andere	
99. Weet niet	

5.1.7 IDEOLOGIE

Welke ideologische overtuigingen koestert de actor. In te vullen aan de hand van verwijzingen binnen de film, of af te leiden aan de hand van contextuele informatie (bv. Sovjetsoldaat is communistisch, Westers bedrijfsleider is kapitalistisch).

Slechts 1 antwoord mogelijk.

1. Kapitalistisch	
2. Communistisch	
3. Nazistisch	
4. Anarchistisch	
5. Andere	
99. Weet niet	

5.1.7 LEEFTIJD

Wat is de geschatte leeftijd van de actor? De leeftijd hoeft dus niet exact te worden vermeld.

Slechts 1 antwoord mogelijk.

1. Baby (0-1)	De actor is een baby.
2. Kind (2-11)	De actor is een Kind.
3. Tiener (12-18)	De actor is een tiener.
4. Jongvolwassene (19-29)	De actor is een jongvolwassene.
5. Volwassene (30-49)	De actor is een volwassene.
6. Middelbare leeftijd (50-65)	De actor is van middelbare leeftijd
7. Senior (65+)	De actor is een senior.
8. Weet niet	Het is onduidelijk welke leeftijd de actor heeft.

5.1.9 MOTIVATIES HELD

Wat zijn de motivaties van de held in het bestrijden van de vijand?

Meerdere antwoorden zijn mogelijk.

1. Wraak	De held probeert op deze manier een andere handeling te wreken
2. Altruïstisch	De held heeft persoonlijke motivaties zoals het redden van mensen die hij belangrijk vindt
3. Plezier	De held doet dit voor persoonlijk genoegen
4. Noodzaak	De held doet dit om zelf te overleven of ontsnappen uit een situatie
5. Professioneel	De held doet dit uit professionele verplichtingen (bv: soldaat/agent)
6. Andere	
99. Weet niet	

5.2. Vijand: Individuele actor

5.2.1 ETNICITEIT	
<p>Welke etniciteit heeft de actor? Het coderen van de etniciteit is zeer complex en dient met de nodige omzichtigheid te gebeuren.</p> <p>Bij twijfelgevallen hoef je de etniciteit niet te coderen en duid je [99. Weet niet] aan.</p> <p>Slechts 1 antwoord mogelijk.</p>	
1. [Wit Europees] Noord-Amerikaans	Vb. VSA, Canada
2. [Wit Europees] West-Europees	Vb. België, Nederland, Frankrijk, VK, Ierland, Zweden, Oostenrijk.
3. [Wit Europees] Oost-Europees	Vb. Polen, Hongarije, Slovenië, Letland, Estland, Tsjechië, Bulgarije. Rusland, Wit-Rusland, Oekraïne.
4. [Wit Europees] Oceanisch	Vb. Australië, Nieuw-Zeeland
5. [Zwart Afrikaans] Afrikaans	Niet Noord-Afrikaans.
6. [Zwart Afrikaans] Afro-Amerikaans.	Noord-Amerika.
7. [Zwart Afrikaans] Centraal-Am.	Vb. Antillen, Jamaica, Suriname, Haïti, Mexico.
8. [Zwart Afrikaans] Niet-gespecifi.	Zwart Afrikaans, maar niet verder gespecificeerd.
9. [Aziatisch] Aziatisch-Amerikaans	Aziatisch-Amerikaans.
10. [Aziatisch] Indisch	Vb. India, Pakistan.
11. [Aziatisch] Noord-; Centraal-Azië	Vb. China, Japan, Mongolië, Kazachstan, Turkmenistan.
12. [Aziatisch] Zuidoost-Azië	Vb. Filippijnen, Vietnam, Cambodja.
13. [Aziatisch] Niet-gespecificeerd	Aziatisch, maar niet verder gespecificeerd.
14. [Mediterraan] Maghreb	Vb. Marokko, Tunesië, Algerije, Libië.
15. [Mediterraan] Zuid-Europa	Vb. Spanje, Cyprus, Italië, Griekenland, Portugal.
16. [Mediterraan] Nabije Oosten	Vb. Turkije, Syrië, Egypte, Libanon.
17. Midden-Oosten	Vb. Irak, Iran, Saoedi-Arabië, Afghanistan.
18. Noord-Amerikaans	Native Americans (Inuit, Indianen).

19. Zuid-Amerikaans	Vb. Latino, Hispanic, Puerto Rico.
20. Arctisch	Arctisch (Noord- en Zuidpool).
21. Mix van etniciteiten	De actor heeft een mix van etniciteiten.
22. Andere	Geen van bovengenoemde etniciteiten. Vb. Fantasiefiguren.
23. Weet niet	Het is onduidelijk welke etniciteit de actor heeft.

5.2.2 GENDER

Welk geslacht heeft de actor

5. Man	De actor is man
6. Vrouw	De actor is vrouw
7. Transgender	De actor is transgender
8. Geen	De actor heeft geen gender
99. Weet niet	Het gender van de actor is onbekend

5.2.3 SEKSUELE GEAARDHEID

Wat is de seksuele geaardheid van de actor?

Enkel aanvinken als uit de film duidelijk blijkt wat de seksuele geaardheid van de actor is.

Indien dit niet duidelijk aan bod komt, duid je aan **[99. Weet niet]**.

Slechts 1 antwoord mogelijk.

6. Hetero	De actor is heteroseksueel.
7. Homoseksueel	De actor is homoseksueel.
8. Lesbisch	De actor is lesbisch.
9. Biseksueel	De actor is biseksueel.
10. Aseksueel	De actor is aseksueel (<i>niet te verwarren met non-seksueel</i>).
99. Weet niet	Het is onduidelijk wat de seksuele geaardheid van de actor is.

5.2.4 ROL

Welk rol/positie heeft de actor? Hiermee verwijzen we naar de professionele categorie waartoe de actor behoort. In de eerste plaats dient er gekeken te worden naar hoe er naar de actor verwezen wordt in de film. Indien hier geen expliciete vermelding van wordt gemaakt, dient dit afgeleid te worden uit contextuele factoren (zie ook: synopsis, IMDb-beschrijving) of eigen deducties.

Slechts 1 antwoord mogelijk.

13. Terrorist	
14. Insurgent/rebel	
15. Soldaat	
16. Generaal	
17. Dictator/staatshoofd	
18. Huurling	
19. Huurmoordenaar	
20. Gangster	
21. Gangsterbaas	
22. Wapenhandelaar	
23. Wetenschapper	
24. Zakenman	

25. Overheidsagent	
26. Seriemoordenaar	
27.	
99. Weet niet	Het is onduidelijk wat de rol van de actor is.

5.2.5 AFFILIATIE

Tot welke organisatie behoort de actor? Als de actor individueel handelt, schrijf je **GEEN**
Slechts 1 antwoord mogelijk.

5.2.6 RELIGIE

Welk geloof koestert de actor? In te vullen aan de hand van verwijzingen binnen de film, of af te leiden uit de handelingen van de actor (bv. actor bidt of draagt religieuze symbolen).
Slechts 1 antwoord mogelijk.

11. Rooms-Katholiek	
12. Protestant	
13. Moslim	
14. Joods	
15. Boeddhistisch	
16. Hindoeïstisch	
17. Satanisch	
18. Occultist	
19. Atheïstisch	
20. Andere	
99. Weet niet	

5.2.7 IDEOLOGIE

Welke ideologische overtuigingen koestert de actor. In te vullen aan de hand van verwijzingen binnen de film, of af te leiden aan de hand van contextuele informatie (bv. Sovjetsoldaat is communistisch, Westers bedrijfsleider is kapitalistisch).
Slechts 1 antwoord mogelijk.

2. Kapitalistisch	
2. Communistisch	
3. Nazistisch	
4. Anarchistisch	
5. Andere	
99. Weet niet	

5.2.8 LEEFTIJD

Wat is de geschatte leeftijd van de actor? De leeftijd hoeft dus niet exact te worden vermeld.
Slechts 1 antwoord mogelijk.

9. Baby (0-1)	De actor is een baby.
10. Kind (2-11)	De actor is een Kind.

11. Tiener (12-18)	De actor is een tiener.
12. Jongvolwassene (19-29)	De actor is een jongvolwassene.
13. Volwassene (30-49)	De actor is een volwassene.
14. Middelbare leeftijd (50-65)	De actor is van middelbare leeftijd
15. Senior (65+)	De actor is een senior.
99. Weet niet	Het is onduidelijk welke leeftijd de actor heeft.

5.1.9 AGGREGAAT/ZELFSTANDIG

Wat is de geschatte leeftijd van de actor? De leeftijd hoeft dus niet exact te worden vermeld.
Slechts 1 antwoord mogelijk.

16. Aggregaat	De actor maakt onderdeel uit van een grotere groep
17. Zelfstandig	De actor werkt alleen..
99. Weet niet	Het is onduidelijk welke leeftijd de actor heeft.

5.2.10 CATEGORIE SLECHTERIK

Welke positie heeft de slechterik binnen het verhaal?
Slechts 1 antwoord mogelijk.

1. Primaire antagonist	Het personage is de hoofddreiging die verslaan dient te worden alvorens het verhaal tot een einde kan komen (bv. Darth Vader)
2. Secundaire antagonist	Het personage is niet de hoofdschurk, maar is wel opgezet als belangrijke dreiging binnen het verhaal (bv. Boba Fett)
3. Tertiaire antagonist	Het personage voldoet aan de criteria, maar heeft geen grote rol binnen het verhaal (bv.
4. Hoofdschurk	Het personage is geen directe antagonist, maar is een grote dreigend aanwezigheid doorheen het verhaal.
5. Handlanger	Het personage is een handlanger van een andere schurk (bv. Lando)
6. Valse antagonist	Het personage is schijnbaar een schurk, maar schaart zich uiteindelijk aan de kant van de held om de hoofdschurk te verslaan (
7.	
8. Weet niet	

5.2.11 CATEGORIE KWAADAARDIGHEID

Onder welke categorie van kwaadaardigheid valt de actor?
Slechts 1 antwoord mogelijk.

1. Lawful evil	De vijand is kwaadaardig omdat hij gelooft in de structuren die hij verdedigd.
2. Neutral evil	De vijand is kwaadaardig omdat hij handelingen stelt uit zelfbehoud of zelfgewin die anderen schaden.
3. Chaotic evil	De vijand is kwaadaardig omdat hij geniet van de kwaadaardige handelingen die hij stelt.

4. Stupid evil	De vijand is kwaadaardig omdat hij bevelen opvolgt die hem tot kwaadaardige handelingen dwingen.
99. Weet niet	

5.2.12 EXTERN/INTERN VILLAIN Komt de actor van buiten of van binnen de Amerikaanse samenleving? Dit heeft eerder betrekking tot nationaliteit dan tot etniciteit. Slechts 1 antwoord mogelijk.	
1. Extern	De actor komt van buiten de Amerikaanse gemeenschap
2. Intern	De actor komt van binnen de Amerikaanse gemeenschap
99. Weet niet	

5.2.14 GOED OP HET EINDE VAN DE FILM Is de actor bekeerd op het einde van de film? Slechts 1 antwoord mogelijk.	
1. Ja	De actor schaart zich aan de kant van de held alvorens de film ten einde is
2. Nee	De actor blijft vijand tot aan het einde van de film
99. Weet niet	

5.2.15 AANWEZIG IN ANDERE CONTEXTEN Wordt het personage gerepresenteerd in rollen anders dan die van vijand? Meerdere antwoorden mogelijk.	
1. Als vader	De actor wordt getoond als vader
2. Als echtgenoot	De actor wordt getoond als echtgenoot
3. Als zoon	De actor wordt getoond als zoon
4. Als gemeenschapslid	De actor wordt getoond als waardevol lid van een gemeenschap
5. Andere	
99. Weet niet	

5.2.16 GENAAMDE SCHURK? Heeft de actor een naam? Dit hoeft niet noodzakelijk betrekking te hebben tot een klassieke voor- en familienaam. Slechts 1 antwoord mogelijk.	
1. Ja	De schurk is genaamd
2. Nee	De schurk blijft ongenaamd
99. Weet niet	

5.2.17 GEZIENE SCHURK? Wordt de actor gezien? Slechts 1 antwoord mogelijk.	
1. Ja- fysiek aanwezig	De actor wordt gezien in fysieke aanwezig
2. Ja- fysiek-aanwezig-gesluierd/gemaskerd	De actor wordt gezien in fysieke aanwezigheid, maar slechts gedeeltelijk
2. Ja- enkel indirect (bv. op foto)	De actor wordt gezien, maar enkel indirect
3. Nee	De actor blijft verborgen voor de kijker.
99. Weet niet	

5.2.18 SPREKENDE SCHURK? Heeft de actor dialoog? Slechts 1 antwoord mogelijk.	
1. Ja- Engels	De actor heeft dialoog en spreekt uitsluitend Engels
2. Ja- andere taal (ondertiteld)	De actor heeft dialoog en spreekt uitsluitend een andere taal. Hij wordt echter wel ondertiteld.
3. Ja- andere taal (niet-ondertiteld)	De actor heeft dialoog en spreekt uitsluitend een andere taal. Hij wordt niet ondertiteld.
4. Ja- Engels & andere taal (ondertiteld)	De actor heeft dialoog en spreekt zowel Engels als een andere taal. Hij wordt echter wel ondertiteld.
5. Ja- Engels & andere taal (niet-ondertiteld)	De actor heeft dialoog en spreekt zowel Engels als een andere taal. Hij wordt niet ondertiteld.
6. Nee	De actor heeft geen dialoog
99. Weet niet	

5.2.19 BESTAAND FIGUUR Verwijst de actor naar een bestaand figuur? Slechts 1 antwoord mogelijk.	
1. Ja	De actor verwijst naar een bestaand figuur. Indien dit het geval is, geef je in 3. Toelichting aan wie desbetreffend figuur is.
2. Nee	De actor verwijst niet naar een bestaand figuur
3. Toelichting	Indien 1. Ja , naar welke actor verwijst het bestaand figuur?
99. Weet niet	

5.2.20 ACTEUR Wie is de acteur die deze actor speelt? Slechts 1 antwoord mogelijk.
--

5.2.24 MIDDELEN SLECHTERIK ('EVIL DEEDS')

Welke handelingen worden aangewend door de slechterik om diens doel te bereiken?
Meerdere antwoorden mogelijk.

1. Foltering	
2. Executie	
3. Ontvoering	
4. Seksueel geweld	
5. Massamoord	
6. Moord op vrouwen	
7. Moord op kinderen	
8. Wreedheid tav dieren	
9. Verraad	
10. Blackmail en afpersing	
11. Diefstal	
12. Kannibalisme	
13. Andere	
99. Weet niet	

5.2.22 TOESTAND SCHURK OP HET EINDE VAN DE FILM

Wat is de toestand van de slechterik op het einde van de film?
Slechts 1 antwoord mogelijk.

1. Vrij	De actor is voortvluchtig
2. Dood (vermoord door held)	De actor is vermoord door de held
3. Dood (vermoord door derden)	De actor is vermoord door derden
4. Dood (zelfmoord)	De actor pleegde zelfmoord
5. Gearresteerd	De actor is gearresteerd
6. Overtuigd	De actor heeft zich bekeerd tot de kant van de held
7. Onbekend	Er bestaat hier onduidelijkheid rond

5.2.23 DOEL SLECHTERIK

Wat is het doel van de slechterik binnen het verhaal?
Slechts 1 antwoord mogelijk.

1. Wereldvernietiging	
2. Het doden van de held	
3. Superioriteit van het Westen ondermijnen	
4. In macht blijven	
5. Overleven	
6. Burgers doden	
7. Belangrijk figuur doden	
8. Wereldeconomie destabiliseren	
9. Informatie verkrijgen	
10. Andere	
99. Komt niet aan bod	

5.2.25 MOTIVATIE SLECHTERIK

Wat is de voornaamste motivatie van de slechterik binnen het verhaal?

Slechts 1 antwoord mogelijk.

1. Wraak	De actor neemt wraak voor acties in het verleden gesteld door de held of door het Westen.
2. Hebzucht- financiële motivaties	De actor wordt gedreven door financiële motivaties of persoonlijk gewin
3. Zelfbehoud- overlevingsdrang	De actor probeert te overleven en gelooft te handelen uit zelfverdediging.
4. Goddelijke inspiratie	De actor wordt gestuurd door religieuze motivaties
5. Liefde	De actor wordt gestuurd door liefde of loyaliteit naar een derde toe
6. Plezier-sadisme	De actor stelt dergelijke handelingen louter voor het plezier dat hij daaruit ondervindt.
7. Andere	
99. Komt niet aan bod	

5.2.27 FYSIEKE KARAKTERISTIEKEN

Welke uiterlijke kenmerken heeft de actor?

Meerdere antwoord mogelijk.

1. Lelijk	
2. Aantrekkelijk	
3. Dik	
4. Mager	
5. Gespierd	
6. Tatoeages	
7. Littekens	
8. Fysieke beperking	
9. Bovenmenselijke kracht	
10. Andere	
99. Weet niet	

5.2.29 MUZIKALE BEGELEIDING

Heeft de actor een non-diëgetisch muzieknummer dat veelal aanwezig is als deze in beeld komt?

Slechts 1 antwoord mogelijk.

1. ja	De actor heeft vaste muzikale begeleiding
2. nee	De actor heeft geen vaste muzikale begeleiding
99. Weet niet	

5.2.30 SCHELDWOORDEN

Hoe wordt er doorheen de film beledigend verwezen naar de vijand?
Meerdere antwoorden zijn mogelijk

5.2.32 ROL VAN DE SLECHTERIK

Welke karakteristieken zijn van toepassing op de vijand? Dit dient afgeleid te worden aan de hand van de identiteit en handelingen van de actor.
Meerdere antwoorden zijn mogelijk

1. Als Andere	De vijand kent andere karakteristieken van identiteit dan de held
2. Als Hebzuchtig	De vijand is gedreven door hebzucht en financieel gewin
3. Als Ongedierte	De vijand is zwak en kwetsbaar
4. Als Crimineel	De vijand is verwickeld in illegale activiteiten (buiten conflict-context)
5. Als Agressor	De vijand is de aanvallende partij
6. Als Sadist	De vijand onderneemt wreedaardige handelen (bv. foltering)
7. Als Heiden	De vijand is atheïstisch of heeft een godheid anders dan die van het Westen
8. Als Hyper-seksueel	De vijand is gedreven door lusten die deze moeilijk kan beheersen
9. Als Psychopaat	De vijand is psychologisch onstabiel
10. Als Waardige Tegenstander	De vijand wordt in zijn eergevoel en code deels gerespecteerd
11. Als Demonisch	De vijand is een semi-transcendentale aanwezigheid
12. Als Abstractie	De vijand wordt slechts gedeeltelijk of niet gedefinieerd
13. Als Verrader	De vijand kent geen loyaliteit
14. Als Slachtoffer	De vijand is zelf ook slachtoffer
99. Weet niet	

5.2.33 ZIJN ER NIET-VIJAND PERSONAGES VAN DEZELFDE ETNISCHE/NATIONALE ACHTERGROND

Zijn er personages aanwezig van dezelfde achtergrond als de slechterik, die geen vijand-rol innemen. Pas op: deze dienen sprekende actoren te zijn.
Slechts 1 antwoord mogelijk.

1. Nee	
2. Ja- personages die neutraal zijn tav de held	
3. Ja- personages die geallieerd zijn tav de held	
4. Ja- personages die zowel neutraal als geallieerd zijn aan de held	

99. Weet niet	
---------------	--

33.2 INDIEN 2, WELKE ETNISCHE ACHTERGROND HEEFT DIT PERSONAGE(S)
 Wat is de etnische achtergrond/nationaliteit van deze personages?
 Slechts 1 antwoord mogelijk.

33.3 INDIEN 2, WELKE NARRATIEVE FUNCTIE HEEFT DIT PERSONAGE(S)
 Welke narratieve functie heeft dit personage?
 Slechts 1 antwoord mogelijk.

1. Love-interest	Het personage fungeert als romantische interesse van de held
2. Side-kick	Het personage fungeert als hulpje van de held
3. Mentor	Het personage fungeert als mentor van de held
4. Adviseur/ondersteunend	Het personage biedt hulp en ondersteuning tot de held
5. Redder	Het personage fungeert als redder van de held in een hachelijke situatie, en heeft geen andere narratieve functie
6. Andere	
99. Weet niet	

Vijand

Aggregaat

5.3.1 CATEGORIE
 Hoe kan dit aggregaat beschreven worden?
 Slechts 1 antwoord mogelijk.

1. Leger	
2. Natie (burgers)	
3. Veiligheidsdienst	
4. Paramilitaire groepering	
5. Terroristische groepering	
6. Etnische gemeenschap	
7. Geloofsgemeenschap	
8. Religieus instituut	
9. Religieuze sekte	
10. Geheim genootschap	
11. Bedrijf	
12. Misdaadorganisatie	

13. Misdaadbende	
14. Andere	
99. Onduidelijk	

5.3.2 AFFILIATIE

Indien het aggregaat een specifieke organisatie met een naam is, geef aan dewelke.
Slechts 1 antwoord mogelijk.

5.3.2 DOMINANT/ONDERSTEUND

Indien het aggregaat een specifieke organisatie met een naam is, geef aan dewelke.
Slechts 1 antwoord mogelijk.

15. Dominant	De vijandgroep is de hoofdvijand van de film
16. Ondersteunend	De vijandgroep heeft een ondersteunende functie
99. Weet niet	

Uit welke identiteiten bestaan deze aggregaten? Geef aan wat het profiel is van elke actor die tot deze groep behoort. Er zijn steeds dus steeds meerdere antwoorden mogelijk.

5.3.3 ETNICITEIT

Welke etniciteit zijn er aanwezig binnen het aggregaat? Het coderen van de etniciteit is zeer complex en dient met de nodige omzichtigheid te gebeuren.
Bij twijfelgevallen hoef je de etniciteit niet te coderen en duid je **[22. Weet niet]** aan.
Meerdere antwoorden mogelijk

24. [Wit Europees] Noord-Amerikaans	Vb. VSA, Canada
25. [Wit Europees] West-Europees	Vb. België, Nederland, Frankrijk, VK, Ierland, Zweden, Oostenrijk.
26. [Wit Europees] Oost-Europees	Vb. Polen, Hongarije, Slovenië, Letland, Estland, Tsjechië, Bulgarije, Rusland, Wit-Rusland, Oekraïne.
27. [Wit Europees] Oceanisch	Vb. Australie, Nieuw-Zeeland
28. [Zwart Afrikaans] Afrikaans	Niet Noord-Afrikaans.

29. [Zwart Afrikaans] Afro-Amerikaans.	Noord-Amerika.
30. [Zwart Afrikaans] Centraal-Am.	Vb. Antillen, Jamaica, Suriname, Haïti, Mexico.
31. [Zwart Afrikaans] Niet-gespecifi.	Zwart Afrikaans, maar niet verder gespecificeerd.
32. [Aziatisch] Aziatisch-Amerikaans	Aziatisch-Amerikaans.
33. [Aziatisch] Indisch	Vb. India, Pakistan.
34. [Aziatisch] Noord-; Centraal-Azië	Vb. China, Japan, Mongolië, Kazachstan, Turkmenistan.
35. [Aziatisch] Zuidoost-Azië	Vb. Filippijnen, Vietnam, Cambodja.
36. [Aziatisch] Niet-gespecificeerd	Aziatisch, maar niet verder gespecificeerd.
37. [Mediterraan] Maghreb	Vb. Marokko, Tunesië, Algerije, Libië.
38. [Mediterraan] Zuid-Europa	Vb. Spanje, Cyprus, Italië, Griekenland, Portugal.
39. [Mediterraan] Nabije Oosten	Vb. Turkije, Syrië, Egypte, Libanon.
40. Midden-Oosten	Vb. Irak, Iran, Saoedi-Arabië, Afghanistan.
41. Noord-Amerikaans	Native Americans (Inuit, Indianen).
42. Zuid-Amerikaans	Vb. Latino, Hispanic, Puerto Rico.
43. Arctisch	Arctisch (Noord- en Zuidpool).
44. Mix van etniciteiten	De actor heeft een mix van etniciteiten.
45. Andere	Geen van bovengenoemde etniciteiten. Vb. Fantasiefiguren.
46. Weet niet	Het is onduidelijk welke etniciteit de actor heeft.
5.3.4 GENDER Welk geslacht heeft de actor ?	
1. Man	De actor is man
2. Vrouw	De actor is vrouw
3. Transgender	De actor is transgender
4. Geen	De actor heeft geen gender
99. Weet niet	Het gender van de actor is onbekend
5.3.5 SEKSUELE GEAARDHEID Wat is de seksuele geaardheid van de actor? Enkel aanvinken als uit de film duidelijk blijkt wat de seksuele geaardheid van de actor is. Indien dit niet duidelijk aan bod komt, duid je aan [99. Weet niet] .	
1. Hetero	De actor is heteroseksueel.

2. Homoseksueel	De actor is homoseksueel.
3. Lesbisch	De actor is lesbisch.
4. Biseksueel	De actor is biseksueel.
5. Andere	De actor heeft een andere seksuele voorkeur
99. Weet niet	Het is onduidelijk wat de seksuele geaardheid van de actor is.

5.3.7 RELIGIE

Welk geloof koestert de actor? In te vullen aan de hand van verwijzingen binnen de film, of af te leiden uit de handelingen van de actor (bv. actor bidt of draagt religieuze symbolen).

21. Rooms-Katholiek	
22. Protestant	
23. Moslim	
24. Joods	
25. Boeddhistisch	
26. Hindoeïstisch	
27. Satanisch	
28. Occultist	
29. Atheïstisch	
30. Andere	
99. Weet niet	

5.3.8 IDEOLOGIE

Welke ideologische overtuigingen koestert de actor. In te vullen aan de hand van verwijzingen binnen de film, of af te leiden aan de hand van contextuele informatie (bv. Sovjetsoldaat is communistisch, Westers bedrijfsleider is kapitalistisch).

1. Kapitalistisch	
2. Communistisch	
3. Nazistisch	
4. Anarchistisch	
5. Andere	
99. Weet niet	

5.3.10 LEEFTIJD

Wat is de geschatte leeftijd van de actor? De leeftijd hoeft dus niet exact te worden vermeld.

7. 0-1: Baby	De actor is een baby.
8. 1-11: Kind	De actor is een Kind.
9. 12-18: Tiener	De actor is een tiener.
10.19-29: Jongvolwassene	De actor is een jongvolwassene.
11.30-49: Volwassene	De actor is een volwassene.
12.50-65: Middelbare leeftijd	De actor is van middelbare leeftijd
13.65+: Senior	De actor is een senior.
14. Weet niet	Het is onduidelijk welke leeftijd de actor heeft.

5.3.11 MIDDELEN SLECHTERIK ('EVIL DEEDS')

Welke handelingen worden aangewend door de slechterik om diens doel te bereiken?

1. Foltering	
2. Executie	
3. Ontvoering	
4. Seksueel geweld	
5. Massamoord	
6. Moord op vrouwen	
7. Moord op kinderen	
8. Wreedheid tav dieren	
9. Verraad	
10. Blackmail en afpersing	
11. Diefstal	
12. Kannibalisme	
13. Andere	
99. Weet niet	

5.3.13 SCHELDWOORDEN

Hoe wordt er doorheen de film beledigend verwezen naar de vijand?

5.3.14 ROL VAN DE SLECHTERIK

Welke karakteristieken zijn van toepassing op de vijand?

1. Als Andere	held
2. Als Hebzuchtig	De vijand is gedreven door hebzucht en financieel gewin
3. Als Ongedierte	De vijand is zwak en kwetsbaar
4. Als Crimineel	De vijand is verwickeld in illegale activiteiten (buiten conflict-context)
5. Als Aggressor	De vijand is de aanvallende partij
6. Als Sadist	De vijand onderneemt wreedaardige handelen (bv. foltering)
7. Als Heiden	De vijand is atheïstisch of heeft een godheid anders dan die van het Westen
8. Als Hyper-seksueel	De vijand is gedreven door lusten die deze moeilijk kan beheersen
9. Als Psychopaat	De vijand is psychologisch onstabiel
10. Als Waardige Tegenstander	De vijand wordt in zijn eergevoel en code deels gerespecteerd
11. Als Demonisch	De vijand is een semi-transcendentale aanwezigheid
12. Als Abstractie	De vijand wordt slechts gedeeltelijk of niet gedefinieerd
13. Als Verrader	De vijand kent geen loyaliteit
14. Als Slachtoffer	De vijand is zelf ook slachtoffer
99. Weet niet	

6 NIVEAU 6 – NARRatieve DIMENSIE

Hier wordt gepeild naar een reeks handelingen en omstandigheden die het verloop van het narratief bepalen.

6.1. GESTELDE HEROISCHE HANDELINGEN

Welke handelingen worden er door de held of diens bondgenoten gesteld in het bevechten van de vijand

Meerdere antwoorden mogelijk.

1. Moord	
2. Executie	
3. Foltering/ praktijken van fysieke intimidatie	
4. Bedreiging/ praktijken van psychologische intimidatie	
5. Strategieën verwant aan surveillance	
6. Het doden van vrouwen	
7. Het doden van kinderen	
8. Het doden van ouderen	
9. Grootschalige bombardementen in mogelijke burgergebieden	
10. Inname narcotische middelen	
11. Verminking	
12. Inbraak zonder bevelschrift	
13. Chemische oorlogsvoering	
14. Gijzelneming	
15. Andere	
16. Weet niet	

6.2. NARRatieve RESOLUTIE

Hoe eindigt het verhaal?

Slechts één antwoorden mogelijk.

1. Missie volbracht/vrolijk einde	De held slaagt in zijn doel. Het einde is gesloten en er is volledige resolutie.
2. Missie volbracht/melancholisch einde- held leeft	De held slaagt in zijn doel. Het einde is eerder ambigu, maar de held is in leven.
3. Missie volbracht/melancholisch einde- held sterft	De held slaagt in zijn doel. Het einde is eerder ambigu, de held is niet langer in leven.
4. Missie volbracht/nieuwe vijand onthult zich	De held slaagt in zijn doel. Een nieuwe vijand onthult zich echter.
5. Missie volbracht/vijand niet verslagen	De held slaagt in zijn doel. De vijand is echter nog op vrije voet
6. Plan vijand gelukt/vijand verslagen	De vijand slaagt in zijn doel. Deze ging echter ten onder in het proces.

7. Plan vijand gelukt/vijand niet verslagen	De vijand slaagt in zijn doel. Deze is ook nog op vrije voet.
8. Andere	
99. Weet niet	

OPMERKINGEN

Noteer hier alle overige opmerkingen m.b.t. het volledige programma en de actoren uit de film.

Dit heeft betrekking tot:

- Twijfelgevallen bij het coderen. Codeer-beslissingen die moeilijk waren en waar je een 2^{de} mening waardevol bij acht. Geef duidelijk het niveau, de vraag en de ingevulde codeeroptie aan (bv. 4.1 Vietnam oorlog)
- Films die uitzonderlijk zijn in toon, verhaalverloop en representatie. Dit heeft betrekking tot aspecten die opvielen en interessant lijken, maar die bij het coderen niet makkelijk aan bod komen (bv. politieke ambiguïteit). Geef duidelijk aan waarom.
- Case die jou interessant lijken voor verder onderzoek. Geef duidelijk aan waarom.
- Grappige oneliners van actiehelden en dergelijke.