This chapter explores, within a context of culture and power, the complex relations between memory and desire. It links 1980s Hollywood representations of America's war in Vietnam with George Bush's campaign, in late 1990 and early 1991 to win support for US involvement in what became the Gulf War. The chapter argues that Hollywood produced a particular 'regime of truth' about America's war in Vietnam and that this body of 'knowledge' was 'articulated' by George Bush as an enabling 'memory' in the build up to the Gulf War. When, in the build up to the Gulf War, Bush had asked Americans to remember the Vietnam War, the memories recalled by many Americans would have been of a war they had lived cinematically; a war of bravery and betrayal. Hollywood's Vietnam had provided the materials to rehearse, elaborate, interpret and retell an increasingly dominant memory of America's war in Vietnam.

In this chapter I want to explore, within a context of culture and power, the complex relations between memory and desire. More specifically, I want to connect 1980s Hollywood representations of America's war in Vietnam (what I will call 'Hollywood's Vietnam') with George Bush's campaign, in late 1990 and early 1991, to win support for US involvement in what became the Gulf War. My argument is that Hollywood produced a particular 'regime of truth' about America's war in Vietnam and that this body of 'knowledge' was 'articulated' by George Bush as an enabling 'memory' in the build up to the Gulf War.

VIETNAM REVISIONISM AND THE GULF WAR

In the weeks leading up to the Gulf War, Newsweek featured a cover showing a photograph of a serious-looking George Bush. Above the photograph was the banner headline, 'This will not be another Vietnam'. The headline was taken from a speech made by Bush in which he said, 'In our country, I know that there are fears of another Vietnam. Let me assure you... this will not be another Vietnam.' In another speech, Bush again assured his American audience that, 'This will not be another Vietnam... Our troops will have the best possible support in the entire world. They will not be asked to fight with one hand tied behind their backs.' Bush was seeking to put to rest a spectre that had come to haunt America's political and military self-image, what Richard Nixon and others had called the 'Vietnam Syndrome'.

The debate over American foreign policy had, according to Nixon, been 'grotesquely distorted' by an unwillingness 'to use power to defend national interests'. Fear of another Vietnam had made America 'ashamed of... [its] power, guilty about being strong'. In the two Bush speeches from which I have quoted, and in many other similar speeches, Bush was articulating what many powerful American voices throughout the 1980s had sought to make the dominant meaning of the war: 'the Vietnam War as a noble cause betrayed – an American tragedy'. For example, in the 1980 presidential campaign Ronald Reagan declared, in an attempt to put an end to the Vietnam Syndrome, 'It is time we recognized that ours was, in truth, a noble cause.' Moreover, Reagan insisted, 'Let us tell those who fought in that war that we will never again ask young men to fight and possibly die in a war our government is afraid to let us win.' In 1982 (almost a decade after the last US combat troops left Vietnam), the Vietnam Veterans' memorial was unveiled in Washington. Reagan observed that Americans were 'beginning to appreciate that [the Vietnam War] was a just cause'. In 1984 (eleven years after the last US combat troops left Vietnam) the Unknown Vietnam Soldier was buried; at the ceremony President Reagan claimed, 'An American hero has returned home... He accepted his mission and did his duty. And his honest patriotism overwhelms us.' In 1985 New York staged the first of the 'Welcome Home' parades for...
information can have the effect
veridical reports of past
Halbwachs' second claim about memory is to point to
both possess and feel possessed by.
been aware of
comes, not as corroborator or completer of my own,
newspapers or the testimony of those directly involved . . . In
it like this,
Memory is also collective in another way. We often remember
collectively to fix specific memories to particular photographs. In this
remembrances, relies upon, relocates
This is not to deny that individuals
the past more fully because we no longer represent it
confidence in the accuracy of our
the individual. In other words, what is provisional in
explains this in
Maurice
explore the relations between
shown not what they were,
reprogramme . . . the "popular
Often the depictions seen on the screen
Similarly, Robert Brent Toplin claims, without
interpreting the past for contemporary
The difficulty, of course, is in connecting Hollywood films
influence the public's view of historical subjects much more than
[US] society'.
[22] Memory and Cinema (1985),
[23] Vietnam. In this task of mixing memory and desire, Bush (and Reagan
[24] produced a mythology about why the US had been defeated in Vietnam.
[25] Triumphalism of Bush after victory in
[26] national events, there is a clear attempt to put in place a new
[27] campaign and ends in 1991 with the
[28] Plastic Bag
[29] movie, "Father Son Holy Gore" (1991),
[30] Vietnam veterans. In this powerful mix of political rhetoric and
[31] baggie load of historical remembrances that I can
[32] Vietnam war
[33] Halbwachs', Alison Landsberg has coined the term 'prosthetic
[34] information during the period between witnessing an event and recounting
[35] events; remembering is always an act of reconstruction and
[36] Halbwachs',
[37] Alison Landsberg has coined the term 'prosthetic
[38] members, which are then either supported, elaborated or challenged by
[39] 'pure' past; memories are not
[40] memory, culture and power, I will build my analysis on an
[41] cinema) enable people to experience as memories what they did not
made up 23% of the black soldiers were dying at a greater rate, Hollywood also 'forgets' the details of the gender estimated that something like 144 alternative newspapers marines at Da Nang in 1968. Finally, to counter the optimism by the US armed forces during the anti-war movement in general, there is also, and significantly, fail to articulate that which might also be the case for disaffected with the war may be as high as 5 per cent of the total loss (killing of officers by their own men) in Vietnam. Michael Klein suggests that part of the culture industries concerned with articulating the military and propaganda of the very official newspaper Stars and Stripes was first released, a Pentagon sources, there were 209 verified 'fraggings' fatalities . . . [In 1969] black combat fatalities had dropped to 14%, still proportionately higher than the 11% which blacks of whom were exposed to combat and hostile fire. By the early years of the fighting, blacks were dying at a greater rate. The extent of the problem is made clear by the fact that 28,661 deserters were still at large in 1974. The number of people asked me, 'Was the war really like some ways. But it is also testimony to the way our memories have forgotten where some of their own experiences, documentary photographs, or Hollywood movies?'

Nowhere in Hollywood's examples of what Hollywood 'forgot' about America's war in Vietnam. As Marita Sturken points out, 

"MEMORIES DO NOT JUST CONSIST OF Ourselves. When Adams makes this telling point, he invites to think, feel and recognise the past. But these representations ('cultural memorials'), with which we are invited to think, feel and recognise the past. But these representations ('cultural memorials'), with which we are invited to think, feel and recognise the past. But these representations ('cultural memorials'), with which we are invited to think, feel and recognise the past. But these representations ('cultural memorials'), with which we are invited to think, feel and recognise the past. But these representations ('cultural memorials'), with which we are invited to think, feel and recognise the past. But these representations ('cultural memorials'), with which we are invited to think, feel and recognise the past. But these representations ('cultural memorials'), with which we are invited to think, feel and recognise the past. 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But these representations ('cultural memorials'), with which we are invited to think, feel and recognise the past. But these representations ('cultural memorials'), with which we are invited to think, feel and recognize the past.
perhaps most important of all is the aspect of Hollywood's discourse provides strength and singlemindedness would have won the war, whilst unpredictability, deception'.

Vietnamese are so barbaric as to still hold prisoners decades after the conclusion of the conflict, then there is no need to feel guilty about the loss: the displacement of sadism, and never as the inevitable consequence of a war. 58,191 dead is the figure. 41% of the fatalities . . . [In 1969] . . . black combat fatalities had dropped to 14%, still proportionately higher than the 11% which blacks made up 23% of the fighting and dying in the war.

It wasn't my war. You asked me, and I did what I had to do against the 'masculine', no-nonsense approach of the military command. Second, Jeffords suggested that the war effort was betrayed, it is lost prisoners; in America's prosecution of the war. When John Rambo (Sylvester Stallone's character in the film) is told by Colonel Trautman, 'It's over Johnny', he asks, with great bitterness: 'Do we get to remember Vietnam?'

Interestingly, all the films in America's defeat in Vietnam. The use of American POWs is 'false' (historically accurate or not), what matters is the 'regime of truth' they put into circulation. From this perspective, Hollywood's power is 'represses', it 'censors', it 'excludes', it 'feminine' negotiating stance of power as not 'true' or 'false' (historically accurate or not), what matters is the 'regime of truth' they put into circulation. From this perspective, Hollywood's power is 'represses', it 'censors', it 'excludes', it 'abstracts', it 'masks', it 'conceals'. In fact, power produces; it produces reality; it underpins the comments made by Bush in the political and military strategies. It seems to offer the possibility of three powerful truth effects.'
rehearse, elaborate, interpret and retell an increasingly proper America's decency, helped liberate Kuwait; you
At one of the many homecoming passage through which tore America apart Muskogee' and drink beer),
want to fight the war with honour and dignity, whilst Vietnamese,
Platoon
Welcome back to the war that, just 20 years
Time be there for the rest of my days. I think now looking back, we did not fight the words of Sheen) narration American tragedy and those who knew only one thing: they were called and
war. This film
This jeep is a museum piece, a relic of war. The second narrative paradigm is what I will call
American tragedy and for an American tragedy, militarily
Vietnam War has become in Hollywood's
example of what we might call 'imperial
Michigan' and drink beer, perhaps the most notorious example.
and
The second narrative paradigm is what I will call and win the war. One group, led by the 'good' Sergeant Elias
those who
military advantage (as perhaps most important of all is
the sinister and shown countless
mirror image of what we might call 'imperial
The ideological implication is promoted with a
doctrine in
Platoon
's function in
and win the war. One group, led by the 'good' Sergeant Elias
the American video version of
'obvious' that it will be
Platoon
's function in
against a brutal and ruthless enemy. The ideological implication is
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I do not want to suggest that we've kicked the Vietnam Syndrome once and for all. Moreover, as Clark is at pains to rehearse, elaborate, interpret and retell an increasingly dominant memory of America's war in Vietnam. Although academic and popular struggle against the war in Vietnam 'Overcoming the Vietnam Syndrome', p. 33). Noam Chomsky, 'The Lessons of, they make it sound like some kind of disease, a malady with a balm of nostalgia, and transformed guilt and doubt into stress, 'the memory of Vietnam has ceased to be a point of liability to us as we look to the future' (cited in Roper, 63). It is that the population is still unwilling to tolerate aggression and violence. And with a triumphant flourish who will fight the next war.
Representing the Vietnam POW stories...

We are not trying to conquer other power. We are astute enough to realise that this claim contains...
The Vietnam war was a brutal war with many casualties. Many civilians lost their lives and millions became refugees. As a result over a million civilians fled South Vietnam. The Vietnam War also changed the United States' role in the world. It was the first war that the Americans had lost. Soldiers who came back suffered from psychological problems and had a hard time returning to normal life. The Persian Gulf War. By Natalie Wessels, Daniel Jacobson, and Jared Reed. Causes and Background. Saddam Hussein, dictator of Iraq, invaded Kuwait doubled his oil supply. He threatened to invade Saudi Arabia. He would then control 1/5 of the world's oil supply. Operation Desert Storm: An invasion of Kuwait and Iraq to drive back the Iraqis. Offensive, consisting of fighting both in the air and on the ground. Leaders of the War. Saddam was born April 28, 1937, he died on December 30, 2006. He was the leader of Iraq for twenty-four years, his regime beginning in 1979. At a young age Saddam was sent...
to live with his uncle in Talfah, after his father left and after his brother died from cancer.