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## **The Deep Focus Typecasting of Joseph Schildkraut as Judas Figure in Four DeMille Films**

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### *Abstract*

Cecil B. DeMille is an unsung auteur director, a master of the American biblical epic, and a founding figure of Hollywood. However, critics have routinely dismissed him as unfashionable, inauthentic or disingenuous. Rarely have DeMille's credentials as a legitimate religious artist been seriously investigated, acknowledged or applauded. One of his cinematic trade secrets was the utilisation of deep focus casting, that is, the engineering of significant correspondences between his on-screen characters and his actors' personal idiosyncrasies, which eventually resulted in their typecasting. Using humanist film criticism as the analytical lens, the critical literature is reviewed and eight components of DeMille's deep focus casting philosophy are identified. This understanding is then applied to Joseph Schildkraut and his Judasean betrayer roles within *The King of Kings*, *Cleopatra*, *The Crusades* and *The Road to Yesterday*. It is concluded that Schildkraut was typecast as an archetypal betrayer because DeMille needed a good "bad-guy" for dramatic effect and ethnic authenticity, which the Jewish-American actor excelled at performing. The notion that DeMille-the-Christian was fundamentally an anti-Jewish bigot, a rabid racist, or spiteful towards the Schildkraut family is firmly rejected. Further research into DeMille Studies and the pop culture construction of biblical, religious, historical and other screen characters was recommended.

### *Introduction*

[1] Italian filmmaker Pier Paolo Passolini directed *The Gospel According to St. Matthew*, "the Jesus story film most widely honored critically and ecclesiastically" (Tatum and Ingram, 1975, 474). Susan Macdonald (1969, 24) admired this film because Passolini "chose his characters by the ...rule of analogy', his peasants are genuine peasants, his sub-proletarian characters come from the sub-proletarian world, his bourgeois characters are bourgeois in real life, and so on." It was an intuitive and perfectly legitimate casting principle, but it was not unprecedented in film history. Constructing similar character-actor correspondences was the practice of American film director Cecil B. DeMille (1881-1959), the unsung auteur affectionately known as "C.B." (to close friends), "Generalissimo" (to commentators) and "Mr. DeMille" (to everyone else).

[2] C.B. DeMille (1) was an archetypal Hollywood director who helped turn an obscure California orange grove into a world class film centre - Hollywood, the very synonym for movies worldwide. During his filmmaking career (1913-1959), he crowned himself Director-General of Paramount, triggered the age of Hollywood, and became the master of the American biblical epic (DeMille and Hayne, 1960; Edwards, 1988; Essoe and Lee, 1970; Higashi, 1994; Higham, 1973; Koury, 1959; Ringgold and Bodeen, 1969). He subsequently earned the tags of "arch apostle of spectacle" (Clapham, 1974, 21), "King of the epic Biblical spectacular" (Finler, 1985, 32), and the "high priest of the religious genre" (Holloway, 1977,

26), especially with such indelible classics as *Joan the Woman*, *The Ten Commandments* (silent), *The King of Kings*, *The Sign of the Cross*, *Samson and Delilah* and *The Ten Commandments* (sound).

[3] Today, DeMille's Bible movies are considered wonderful films. For example, journalist Phillip Lopate (1987, 74) enthusiastically proclaimed that: "the past-her-prime Lamarr and the stalwart Mature will always remain in my imagination the quintessential, the *actual* Samson and Delilah." Similarly, biblical scholar J. Cheryl Exum (1996, 13) observes: "For all its hokeyness *Samson and Delilah* is a brilliant film" and that "Hedy Lamarr, with all of her trappings, *is* Delilah for me." David Jasper (1999) considers DeMille's Bible films to be significant to mainstream biblical exegesis:

In the Hollywood tradition of Old Testament epics...the cinema has occasionally contributed in a significant way to the history of biblical interpretations, perhaps unwittingly and most notably in the figure of Cecil B. De Mille in films like *Samson and Delilah* (1949) and *The Ten Commandments* (1956)... (51).

[4] DeMille was unashamedly a showman and a self-confessed pop culture professional (DeMille and Hayne, 1960, 195). He was a people's director who had a penchant for choosing actors whose private idiosyncrasies (whether personal, ethnic, political, religious, etc.) resonated with the on-screen characters he had assigned them. This DeMilleian "rule of analogy" evolved into a casting stereotype that could be legitimately termed "deep focus." This stereotyping praxis became an important trade secret and a vital component of DeMille's auteur signature that helped earn him many industry accolades (Essoe and Lee, 1970, 245-247). It made him one of the most powerful, richest and long-lived directors of old-time Hollywood, as well as earning him the animosity of colleagues with less success, talent or fame, including the "inexplicable hatred and contempt so many reviewers had for Cecil B. DeMille over the years" (Edmonds and Mimura, 1980, 48). As James Card (1994, 114) noted: "No famous film director has ever endured the critical contempt consistently heaped on DeMille through the last thirty-five years of his career."

[5] Once a casting stereotype was established, DeMille, as commercial filmmaker, would naturally employ it in subsequent productions to ensure easier character identification, increased publicity value, and for reasons of auteur consistency. Once an audience's predisposition had been cultivated in this way, it became an important film asset. This is why DeMille chastised Gary Cooper for playing against the public's heroic expectation in the Western spoof *Along Came Jones* (Kaminsky, 1980, 137). For DeMille as screen-artist, typecasting was an especially important and quick means of establishing the essence of his characters, regardless of name, place or costume. This reduced the need for additional character establishment time, costly production effort, and further investor money to recreate in successive projects. After all, DeMille was an astute businessman as well as a creative artist. He wanted to survive the cutthroat movie business and keep on making films, unlike many of his directorial peers who fell by the professional wayside (e.g., D.W. Griffith, Erich von Stroheim, Tod Browning).

[6] DeMille's deep focus casting philosophy was powerfully demonstrated by the selection of Jewish-American actor Joseph "Pepi" Schildkraut (1895-1964), who played Judas in *The King of Kings* and various C.B. films thereafter. It will be argued below that Schildkraut was repeatedly cast as the archetypal betrayer because DeMille as storyteller needed a good "bad-guy" for dramatic effect and the resonance of ethnic authenticity. Both Joseph and his co-starring father Rudolf (playing Caiaphas, the High Priest) excelled professionally in these roles as biblical heavies, and both were respectable and easily identifiable actors for DeMille to capitalise upon. Firmly rejected is the notion that DeMille was fundamentally an anti-Jewish bigot, a rabid racist, or spiteful towards the Schildkraut family.

[7] Below, humanist film criticism is employed as an analytical lens (i.e., examining the textual world *inside* the frame, but not the world *outside* the frame - Bywater and Sobchack, 1989) to identify, illustrate and explicate eight components of DeMille's deep focus casting philosophy. This understanding is then applied to Joseph Schildkraut and his "Judas" roles in four DeMille films: (a) the Jesus film *The King of Kings* (1927); (b) the ancient history film *Cleopatra* (1934); (c) the medieval film *The Crusades* (1935); and (d) the modern-day reincarnation fantasy *The Road to Yesterday* (1925).

### ***I. Eight Components of DeMille' Deep Focus Casting Philosophy***

[8] A preliminary scan of DeMille's filmic *oeuvre* reveals at least eight components of his deep focus casting philosophy. Namely: (a) success association and appropriation; (b) personal trait extrapolation and control; (c) forced reverse engineering of the stars; (d) authenticity-based PR newsworthiness; (e) character transference, mimicking and misidentification; (f) reputation redeployment; (g) personal support and professional redemption; and (h) religious/ethnic correspondence as character enhancement and contrast. Only when one understands what drove DeMille's casting choices can the reasoning behind his more controversial decisions be appreciated. For DeMille, casting was never obvious, unilluminating or perfunctory, and it certainly required far greater skill to achieve than the usual casting anxieties of his Hollywood peers.

#### ***1.0 Success Association and Appropriation***

[9] In his review of DeMille's shipwreck film *Male and Female*, Ronald Bowers (1982) reported that:

...the post-World War I year of 1919 saw the release of two motion pictures which heralded a new hard-edged materialism and which "openly acknowledged sex." The two films were *The Miracle Man*, a Paramount production directed by George Loane Tucker, and *Male and Female*, the Cecil B. De Mille/Paramount production of Sir James M. Barrie's successful play, *The Admirable Crichton*. Quite by accident both films starred Thomas Meighan (689).

[10] However, this latter casting "accident" was no mistake. *The Miracle Man* was made before *Male and Female* (Katz, 1980, 795). DeMille was so impressed with Meighan that he hired him when Elliot Dexter, another DeMille stock player scheduled to play the part became seriously ill (Bowers, 1982, 691). DeMille had astutely capitalised upon the "sexy" reputation of both *The Miracle Man* and Thomas Meighan by using a tactic of ensuring success by association and appropriation, presumably with the hope that the positive, sexual auras of both film and actor would transfer to his production and enhance its box-office success. This is a common tactic employed in the advertising industry (i.e., successful sports star=successful buyer via their product), akin to the halo error in management literature, like a form of sympathetic magic in anthropological discourse.

#### ***2.0 Personal Trait Extrapolation and Control***

[11] DeMille employed Fanny Ward as the defrauding wife/sexual suspect Edith Hardy in his silent masterpiece *The Cheat*, despite her inexperience. As she complained:

"But Mr. DeMille, I am a comedienne. I have never played emotional roles." He [DeMille] told her: "Which is exactly the reason I want you to play in *The Cheat*."

As he had planned, that put her on her mettle, and she accepted; what she had not realized, of course, was that another reason he had cast her as *The Cheat* was because he was convinced after seeing her at parties and on screen that she was very deceitful (Higham, 1973, 44).

[12] Whether Ward was truly deceitful or not, DeMille acted upon that belief. He had cast a subjectively perceived real-world cheat who could convincingly portray deceptiveness on-screen, and made her the cheat-protagonist-star in his movie about financial and sexual cheating. DeMille was certainly not averse to multi-layering his chosen theme to make his film "thick" with meaning.

[13] In a more humorous vein, during the making of *The King of Kings*, DeMille proved that he liked his actors to be typecast under the oddest of circumstances. While H.B. Warner was playing the role of Christ, he started an intimate off-screen relationship with actress Sally Rand, who later became the notoriously famous erotic fan dancer (Knox, 1988). At the time, Sally was just a film extra playing Mary Magdalene's slave girl. One day, the real-world lovers arrived late on the set, which greatly angered the punctilious DeMille, and so he thundered from on high: "Miss Rand, leave my Jesus Christ alone! If you must screw someone, screw Pontius Pilate [Victor Varconi]!" (Hay, 1990, 53). The incident quickly became a DeMille legend.

[14] At the very least, this apocryphal Hollywood story demonstrates that DeMille's commercial heart was in the right place because a sexually disgraced Jesus spelled financial disaster for his pious project. Nor was DeMille averse to publicly embarrassing his stars to get their "willing" compliance in the future. Indeed, such put-downs in public were an actor management strategy employed by DeMille throughout his career. As Hollywood actress and reporter Sheilah Graham (1984) explains:

He was a stern taskmaster. If an extra, or bit player made an unexpected sound, C.B.'s wrath was shattering, and depending on the extent of his anger, he or she would be fired on the spot, accompanied by a stream of sarcasm. De Mille...would usually pick on the most vulnerable people on the picture and reduce them to emotional rubble (75).

[15] Although tough interpersonally, this was a sound control tactic for few extras would deliberately make mistakes on a DeMille set to earn extra pay because of the manufactured need for retakes. Such public humiliation also had a sobering effect on anyone contemplating similar sabotage or laxity. The use of applied sarcasm was also a cunning control tactic for DeMille to manage his stars. He would not "attack" them directly, given their crucial roles and often temperamental natures. Instead, it was designed to make them feel guilty for the "pain" they caused "lesser" cast members. The stars would inevitably fall into line without the need for direct conflict and the associated dangers of serious production sabotage, non-cooperation, or outright resignation. In effect, DeMille, a former-actor, deliberately constructed the stereotype of the ogre-director to aid his auteur control needs, a strategy which was so successful that it allowed him to become "the master of spectacle and mob scenes" (Singer, 1954, 119).

### ***3.0 Forced Reverse Engineering of the Stars***

[16] Sometimes, DeMille had to reverse-engineer ruinous possibilities by forcibly making the attributes of the character dominate the actor's private life. For example, during the making of *The King of Kings*, DeMille deliberately separated H.B. Warner (playing Jesus) from the rest of the crew and placed him under *de facto* house arrest:

No one but the director [DeMille] spoke to H.B. Warner when he was in costume, unless it was absolutely necessary. He was veiled or transported in a closed car when he went between the set and his dressing-room or when we were on location, his tent, where he took his meals alone (DeMille and Hayne, 1960, 256).

[17] DeMille did this to "maintain the spirit of reverence" (DeMille and Hayne, 1960, 256) and to avoid "gutter journalism or blackmail" (DeMille and Hayne, 1960, 257), particularly the latter. As scriptwriter Jesse L. Lasky Jr. (1973) reported, DeMille entered Warner's private dressing room one day and to his shock found him:

...bare, beatific and splendidly besotted. And not alone. His body was entwined with the alabaster limbs of an equally naked girl extra, in what was unmistakably the aftermath of an epic production far removed from that which C.B. had planned. She turned her deliberately sober attention to the stunned Director-General with the smile of the serpent celebrating his successful take-over bid in Paradise (84).

[18] DeMille subsequently paid her blackmail money and she left the set never to bother the production again. Why did he acquiesce? Because DeMille "knew he would not dare to answer her demands with a legal charge of blackmail. No matter how compliant the Public Prosecutor might be, how could De Mille keep it out of the Press?" (Lasky Jr., 1973, 85). The sensation-hungry media could have ruined the picture, crippled DeMille's reputation, destabilised his fledgling production company, scandalised Christianity and imperiled Hollywood yet again, especially considering Hollywood's previous near death resulting from previous *cause celebre* scandals involving serious sin. Notable among the scandals were Roscoe "Fatty" Arbuckle's rape and manslaughter trial, the William Desmond Taylor murder, the Mabel Normand and Mary Miles Minter sexual affairs, and Wallace Reid's drug addiction and death (Anger, 1981). This was certainly a heavy price to pay for the Christian DeMille and "high priest of the religious genre" (Holloway, 1977, 26).

[19] H.B. Warner's enforced segregation was also used to manage the recurrent alcoholism that the stress of playing Christ triggered in him (Higham, 1973, 167), making him even more susceptible to blackmail attempts. Any of these potential problems would have given DeMille strong incentive to monitor Warner closely. C.B. wanted to avoid potential disaster should the Press accuse his Jesus of being sexually active, immoral, and influenced more by the vine than the divine.

[20] In the 1920s, the relationship between religion and film was an uneasy one (Lindvall, 2001). According to Lasky, there "were too many deeply religious people who were troubled by the fact that Christ should be portrayed in a movie at all, let alone that his portrayer should be subject to human frailty" (Lasky Jr., 1973, 83). This fear was a serious concern rooted in the biblical injunction against graven images - the second of God's ten commandments (Exod. 31:18). (2) In fact, religionists have experienced numerous fears regarding popular films throughout the history of the cinema (Kozlovic 2003c, 2003d). For example, in 1913, the British Board of Film Censors banned *From the Manger to the Cross* just because it showed Christ on-screen. Even more amazingly, the ban was lifted only with Nicholas Ray's *King of Kings* in 1961, nearly half a century later (Robertson, 1989, 33).

#### **4.0 Authenticity-Based PR Newsworthiness**

[21] DeMille was a businessman who deliberately capitalised upon film-fact associations that had significant public relations (PR) value. Indeed, he would hunt for such associations, no matter how tenuous. This desire helps explain why DeMille chose the glamorous Jean Arthur

to play the lead role of Calamity Jane in *The Plainsman*, his Americana western film (in addition to her being sexy). As Arthur's biographer speculated:

Another reason Arthur may have fancied the role of Calamity Jane was the connection between the famous plainswoman and Arthur's own relatives. Growing up in Deadwood, Hannah Greene would have known Calamity by sight, and her family likely had some contact with the itinerant legend in South Dakota or in Billings, a town frequented by Calamity at the same time Hans and Georgianna Nelson were living there (Oller, 1997, 95).

[22] Although DeMille was far more accurate, historically speaking, regarding *The Plainsman* than he has been given credit for (Kozlovic, 2003b), he erred badly because he overlooked a more significant historical fact, namely, that the "real Calamity Jane was a vulgar, tobacco-chewing, raw-boned kid who resembled nothing more alluring than an oversized Huckleberry Finn, minus the charm of innocence" (Cody and Perry, 1982, 198), described by Sarf as: "a female only in the narrowest technical sense" (1983, 38). In this case, DeMille's passion for deep focus casting severely tripped him up as to obvious surface issues, but understandably, in that DeMille's instincts as a showman took priority over his desire for historical verisimilitude. This component of DeMille's casting habits appeared again in his pirate film *The Buccaneer*. Andrew Jackson was played by Hugh Sothern, a real-life "descendent of one of Jackson's uncles" (Rivers, 1996, 113), and thus good PR fodder for DeMille to entice the paying public, critics and financiers, in addition to fortifying his reputation for authenticity. "DeMille was a master at visual detail, gadgetry and period objects" (Kaminsky, 1980, 83), and also actor-history correspondences when he could manage them.

### ***5.0 Character Transference, Mimicking and Misidentification***

[23] DeMille demonstrated this component of his deep focus casting philosophy during the making of his sea adventure *Reap the Wild Wind*, which was set in Key West and had a strong Deep South resonance. He approached the famous black actress Hattie McDaniel who had brilliantly played Scarlett O'Hara's house Mammy in *Gone With the Wind*, a blockbuster Civil War epic set in the Deep South. C.B. asked McDaniel to play another charming mammy, Maum Maria, for his Southern film (with "Wind" also in its title). However, prior business commitments prevented her from accepting DeMille's offer, so, Hattie look-alike, Louise Beavers got the role instead (Jackson, 1990, 76). If DeMille could not get the "real" thing (i.e., hot public recognition), then he got the next best thing that looked like the real thing (i.e., success by mimicking and applied misidentification).

[24] At other times, he would mimic character geometries. For example, *Gone With the Wind* had triadic interactions between Mammy (Hattie McDaniel), Scarlett O'Hara (Vivien Leigh) and Melanie Hamilton (Olivia De Havilland). Therefore, in *Reap the Wild Wind*, DeMille conjured up similar triadic echoes between Maum Maria (Louise Beavers), Drusilla Alston (Susan Hayward) and Loxi Claiborne (Paulette Goddard). After all, if the paying public was happy with this character geometry once, why not twice in DeMille's film (it being akin to the success-by-association principle documented above)?

### ***6.0 Reputation Redeployment***

[25] DeMille's habit of establishing character-actor associations appeared again in a slightly different fashion in *Unconquered*, a pre-Revolutionary film set in the American colonies. C.B. had cast Boris Karloff as the Indian villain Gyuasuta, chief of the Senecas, a ruthless, bloodthirsty menace to white maidenhood. Why Karloff? Because in his day, Boris was

considered the reigning "King of the Monsters" and the "Titan of Terror" (Bona, 1996, 55), especially after his starring role in *Frankenstein*. Apparently, DeMille hoped to use Karloff's famous reputation as the consummate monster to dramatically shade his "evil Indian" characterisation. This was a favourite ethnic theme in numerous Hollywood Westerns, racist by today's moral standards.

### ***7.0 Personal Support and Professional Redemption***

[26] DeMille even utilised his adopted daughter Katherine Lester DeMille in deep focus fashion in *Madame Satan*, *The Crusades* and *Unconquered*. Throughout her film career, Katherine was usually portrayed "as a jilted, jealous, or just plain unhappy woman in second leads or supporting roles" (Katz, 1980, 326). Why such morbidity and subdued prominence given the potential nepotism and DeMille's undoubted door-opening power in Hollywood? Because DeMille had an anti-nepotism ethic: "I have always believed that a son or daughter should make his or her way on the strength of his or her own abilities (DeMille and Hayne, 1960, 275). C.B.'s niece Agnes DeMille found this out the hard way. DeMille fired her as his Assistant Dance Director and Ballet Artist on *Cleopatra* when she did not perform satisfactorily (Edwards, 1988, 136), despite their intimate flesh and blood connection. (3) Therefore, when DeMille chose Katherine for the above three films it was because she was professionally competent to play these morbid roles. From a deep focus perspective, however, she was cast because she was morbid herself, having experienced *real* unhappiness in her own private life.

[27] Katherine was haunted by many personal demons, which according to her former husband Anthony Quinn made her "a hidden girl: frightened, insecure, timorous" (Quinn and Paisner, 1995, 133). For example, she suffered bad orphanage experiences, rejection by her biological relatives and a troubled marriage to Quinn. These woes were later compounded by the haunting spectre of sexual infidelity, the accidental drowning of her young son Christopher, and numerous emotional insecurity issues. These plagued her life and assisted her fanatical devotion to religion and the afterlife (Edwards, 1988, 157). Notwithstanding all this personal pain, DeMille successfully turned Katherine's private insecurities into professional advantages. He matched her dour disposition with screen roles that reflected elements of the same. That is, by using deep focus casting, DeMille strove for auteur continuity that conceived work as psychotherapy and personal redemption.

### ***8.0 Religious/Ethnic Correspondence as Character Enhancement and Contrast***

[28] One of DeMille's most powerful and culturally resonant applications of his deep focus philosophy was the engineering of religious and ethnic correspondences between characters and actors. This was most notable in the casting of real Indians in DeMille's Western films. For example, *The Plainsman* was "one of the first movies to use an Indian chief by name as the tribal leader, Yellow Hand in this case" (Price, 1980, 80). It was a principle that he also applied to his religious films. For example, during the making of the silent version of *The Ten Commandments*, DeMille had used real contemporary Jews as his ancient Israelite/Hebrew extras. As he explained:

We had brought from Los Angeles several hundred Orthodox Jews because we believed rightly that, both in appearance and in their deep feeling of the significance of *the Exodus*, they would give the best possible performance as the Children of Israel (DeMille and Hayne, 1960, 231).

[29] What better way to achieve a resonance of religious/ethnic authenticity than by having the

chosen of today play the chosen of yesterday? What better way to highlight the concept of "difference" than by aiming for ethnic consistency and contrast? This is an acceptable move-making practice. For example, *Ben-Hur* employed an "Americans-as-Jews, Brits-as-Romans cast" (Heston, 1995, 196), and in the TV mini series *Masada*, a pivotal event in Jewish history:

George Eckstein, the producer, and Boris Sagal, the director, had a neat way of ensuring that the audience was not confused between the Jewish Zealots in their togas and the Roman Army in theirs. All the Jews would be American actors; all the Romans would be British" (Wapshott, 1983, 188).

This type of casting decision is designed for dramaturgical clarity, not racism, and if a director can also evoke emotional respect and authenticity, like DeMille did, then this is to be applauded, not condemned.

## *II. DeMille's Deep Focus Casting Meets the Schildkrauts*

[30] An excellent example of the embodiment of all these casting components occurred with the hiring of Joseph "Pepi" Schildkraut (1895-1964) and his actor father Rudolf Schildkraut (1862-1930) (4) for *The King of Kings*. This Jewish father-and-son acting team played the biblical characters of Judas and Caiaphas respectively, that is, the iconic Jewish "villains" in the New Testament as viewed by Christendom. This silent classic was DeMille's screen biography of Jesus Christ that he once described as "His second coming upon the screen" (Maltby, 1990, 210). DeMille's deft casting helped cement his reputation as the master of the American biblical epic. However, it generated a lot of religious controversy in its time, and it still hampers a fair and balanced assessment of DeMille today.

[31] It was certainly no accident that DeMille employed a successful and honoured Jewish acting family to play these two "villainous" characters. Caiaphas and Judas had been indelibly stamped by negative Christian sensibilities and so extra care was required for them to be represented successfully. Rudolf Schildkraut was an internationally recognised thespian while Joseph was an up-and-coming star in his own right. DeMille hoped for the aura of their previous theatrical successes, especially in the Jewish community, to transfer to his Jesus film (i.e., 1.0 success association and appropriation, and 6.0 reputation redeployment). Joseph and Rudolf were also professional friends of DeMille, who offered them repeated work (i.e., 7.0 personal support and professional redemption). Nor was it insignificant that C.B. chose a father-and-son team for the religiously and symbolically linked villain roles - it being good PR fodder for DeMille-the-showman to proffer the public (i.e., 4.0 authenticity-based PR newsworthiness). Since both thespians were passionately religious Jews, they also provided a faith-based historical link between the ancient past, the Christian Bible story and DeMille's epic rendition of it (i.e., 8.0 religious/ethnic correspondence as character enhancement and contrast).

[32] These two Jewish actors were also passionate about the craft of acting (i.e., 2.0 personal trait extrapolation and control, and 8.0 religious/ethnic correspondence as character enhancement and contrast). DeMille shaped Caiaphas in the stereotypic "evil/Shylock" mould, that is, a "good" man (Rudolf) playing a "bad" man (Caiaphas) (i.e., 3.0 forced reverse engineering of the stars, and 2.0 personal trait extrapolation and control). This casting decision upset Jews who were offended at the human frailty of this famous High Priest. Indeed, the stereotyping of any cinematic sacred servant is both fascinating and problematic (Kozlovic, 2002c). As dramaturge, DeMille thus generated powerful emotions using applied misidentification by subtextually linking Caiaphas to Shylock (i.e., 5.0 character transference, mimicking and misidentification), and overtly linked to the traitor Judas (Matt. 10:4; John

18:2,5). Because of this character-actor geometry, Joseph Schildkraut would be typecast as a villainous Judas-like betrayer throughout his career in DeMille's films, but most powerfully in *The King of Kings*, which crystalised his "evil" character at the level of archetype.

### ***A. Joseph Schildkraut Plays the Betrayer Judas Iscariot in The King of Kings (1927)***

[33] DeMille cast Joseph Schildkraut as the infamous Judas Iscariot (Matt. 10:4), the betrayer of Jesus Christ - the "king of the Jews" (Matt. 27:37). DeMille's Judas betrays Jesus after he has become "bitter, panic-stricken ... desperate ... all hope of an earthly kingdom gone" after finding out that Christ's kingdom was not of this world (John 18:36). In another deft move, DeMille cast Joseph's real-world father Rudolf Schildkraut as Caiaphas, the High Priest of Israel (5), the primary Jewish Establishment opponent of Jesus. Through intertitles, DeMille argues that Caiaphas "cared more for Revenue than Religion - and who saw in Jesus a menace to his rich profits from the Temple," which had degenerated into "a corrupt and profitable market-place."

[34] As befits DeMille's penchant for dramaturgical binarism (Kozlovic, 2002b), both Judas and Caiaphas are represented as "the film's archetypes of evil" (Babington and Evans, 1993, 121). One is young, one is old; one beautiful, one not; one poor, one rich; one influential, one not; both actively work against the interests of Jesus and fledgling Christianity. Indeed, from a Christian perspective, *anyone* who actively opposes or maligns Jesus must automatically be defined as misguided, bad, evil, or at least, not of God.

[35] DeMille crafted the "bad guy" image of his Caiaphas so powerfully that it touched a raw nerve among the Jewish community of his day. For example, Rabbi Stephen S. Wise considered Caiaphas to be a "five and ten cent Shylock" (Herman, 2000, 16), with Shylock being *the* archetypal greedy Jew from Western popular culture who represented meanness, wickedness, avarice (Perry and Schweitzer, 2002, ch. 4) and according to Karl Elze, "Judaism in its lowest degradation" (O'Connor, 1978, 325).

[36] Rabbi Wise's critical observation was perceptive because this particular characterisation of Caiaphas was one of Rudolf Schildkraut's acting specialties.

The elder Schildkraut had "worked 1900-05 at the Hamburg theatre and from 1905 under Reinhardt at the Deutsches-Theater, Berlin, excelling as Shylock, Lear and Mephistopheles (Goethe's *Faust*)" (Esslin, 1977, 240). Rudolf even "won fame for his Shakespearean roles of Shylock and King Lear" (Lyman, 1987, 265). This resume item alone would have been sufficient reason for DeMille to cast him in *The King of Kings*. Indeed, it was a casting dream come true. Rudolf, the famous thespian, was a respected modern Jew, playing a nasty ancient Jew (Caiaphas), in a stereotypically evil way (treacherous and money-obsessed), modelled upon classical literature's (Shakespeare's) most unappealing pop culture Jew (Shylock), by a Shylock specialist (Rudolf). After all, *The King of Kings* was purposely designed for popular consumption by a pop culture professional and Christian believer (DeMille) for Christians, not Jews.

[37] Therefore, if there was a correctly perceived and crafted negative resonance in DeMille's Caiaphas characterisation, it was certainly rooted in Rudolf's acting skills and character specialties that encompassed financial greed (Shylock), foolish pride (Lear) and devilishness (Mephistopheles). Many Christians believed that the biblical Caiaphas possessed these negative traits. Besides, "the Gospels are consistent in their depiction of hostility toward Jesus by the high priest" (Coogan, 1993, 97). Caiaphas was considered a "ringleader in the plot to do away with Jesus" (*Watch Tower*, 1988, 385) and a "chief persecutor of infant Christianity" (*Watch Tower*, 1988, 386). In this sense, DeMille successfully fused the past and the present

through his deep focus casting choices, which simultaneously appeased and inflamed audiences, depending upon which side of the Christian-Jewish fence one sat.

[38] In real life, both Joseph and Rudolf Schildkraut were proud, committed Jews who had worked in New York Yiddish theatre and film (Lyman, 1987). Rudolf even founded his own Yiddish theatre company in 1925 (Esslin, 1977). They were a particularly close father-and-son team. Joseph claimed: "Our lives were indissolubly intertwined. Our relationship was more than the usual biological tie that binds a father to the son he loves and the struggling youngster to the man he admires and hopes to emulate" (Schildkraut and Lania, 1959, 3) - just as Judas and Caiaphas are indissolubly intertwined in the Gospel narratives. This dramatic on-pairing screen of this intimate off-screen father and son had profound consequences for them all, including the future of Hollywood and censorship.

### *The Christian Bible, Judas Iscariot and Plotting Priests*

[39] Many Christians throughout history, including 1920s America, strongly believed (albeit, erroneously) that the Jews were guilty of deicide (Gager, 1983; Perry and Schweitzer, 2002). In fact:

...Jews were often seen not as just disbelievers but as heretics of the worst kind. They had turned their backs on the Christian God and rejected the Christian Savior. According to the Bible, furthermore, the Jewish multitude had demanded Jesus' crucifixion and brought down upon themselves a curse for all time. Thus Jews for centuries have been branded as "Christ-killers" (Quinley and Glock, 1979, 25-26).

[40] DeMille was an Episcopalian, not a Catholic, but it should be noted that Vatican II's *Nostra Aetate* (28 October 1965) that absolved the Jews of the Christ-killer slander was forty years in the future.

[41] DeMille could not have ignored the many passages from the New Testament that unequivocally verified the Jewish religious authorities' earnest desire to kill Jesus, or the Gospels' agreement that the plot against Jesus was aided by Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve Apostles who "betrayed him [Jesus]" (Matt. 10:4; John 18:2,5) and was subsequently paid "thirty pieces of silver" (Matt. 26:15). For example, the Gospels state:

- "...assembled together the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas. And consulted that they might take Jesus by subtilty, and kill him" (Matt. 26:3-4).
- "Now the chief priests, and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death" (Matt. 26:59).
- "...all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death" (Matt. 27:1).
- "But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas [to be freed], and destroy Jesus" (Matt. 27:20).
- "They [the multitudes; the people] all say unto him [Pontius Pilate], Let him [Jesus] be crucified...Let him be crucified" (Matt. 27:22-23).
- "...the chief priest and the scribes sought how they might take him [Jesus] by craft, and put him to death" (Mark 14:1).

- "...the chief priests and scribes sought how they might kill him [Jesus]" (Luke 22:2).

[42] The Gospel accounts portray the Jewish authorities as harassing Jesus, his followers and his fledgling religious movement. For example, when Jesus is dying on the cross, the chief priests, scribes and elders mock him (Matt. 27:41-42). The chief priests proclaim "We have no king but Caesar" (John 19:15). Caiaphas objects to the Roman prefect Pontius Pilate calling Jesus "The King of the Jews" and asks that the sign on the cross bearing this title be corrected, but Pilate refuses (John 19:19-22). After Jesus' death and burial, the Jewish Establishment petitions Pilate to guard the tomb lest someone steal his body and vindicate his (supposedly preposterous) resurrection claims (Matt. 27:62-66). When Judas Iscariot realises his error and tries to return the thirty pieces of silver, the chief priests and elders refuse to put it into the treasury because it is the price of blood (Matt. 27:3-8). Indeed, since Lazarus is a living witness to Jesus' power to bring the dead back to life, they also conspire against him. According to the Gospel of John: "the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death. Because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus" (John 12:10-12).

[43] There is certainly no Christian textual doubt *whatsoever* within the New Testament (as opposed to historical and archaeological doubt, or from extra-canonical sources) that Jewish officials harboured harmful intent against Jesus. His teachings conflicted with the Sanhedrin's belief system, privileges and exalted place in the Roman-dominated power structure. Jesus was starting to seriously threaten their position, status and reputation as the ultimate Jewish religious authority in Jerusalem. As a conquered people, the Jews in power were also fearful of a Roman backlash: "If we let him [Jesus] thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation" (John 11:48). Their villainous plot against Jesus *predates* Judas' involvement as their willing tool.

[44] There is no scriptural indication that Judas knew beforehand that the Sanhedrin was plotting Jesus' execution. Moreover, the only person officially empowered to kill Jesus was the Roman governor Pontius Pilate. So, what was a devout Christian filmmaker to do who desired to translate the Book of Books onto the silver screen, and to be faithful to the undeniable Gospel facts in the process? After all, even a Hollywood version of nascent Christianity is inconceivable without the New Testament, anti-Judaism notwithstanding. Can a truly devout Christian filmmaker who sincerely believes that "Jesus lives!" avoid echoing, no matter how mutedly, a deep-seated Christian triumphalism with overtones of supercessionism?

### ***DeMille: Biblical Filmmaker and Committed Christian Believer***

[45] As believer, DeMille was engaging in a perceived act of scriptural authenticity using the ultimate Christian religious text (i.e., the Bible, which needed *no* corroborating historical, archaeological or extra-canonical evidence for its followers). Therefore, DeMille, by the standards of his time, accurately reflected this treacherous Jewish leadership in *The King of Kings*. This was not a fabrication, or a whitewash of Christian biblical facts, or an egregious, racist attempt to vilify the Jews. Rather, it was an authentic act of film adaptation; DeMille translated the Bible onto film, warts and all. As DeMille (1976, 168) proudly claimed: "From the start of *The King of Kings* I have never had any idea except to put the actual story on the screen. We show this in episodes that do not depart from the text," and as DeMille confessed elsewhere: "I follow the pattern of the Bible as it is written" (Koury, 1959, 209). Nor was this translation of sacred text to popular screen done in a social vacuum. However, further research using contextual methodologies (i.e., examining the relationship between film and the world *outside* the frame - Bywater and Sobchack, 1989), although fascinating, is beyond the scope of this work.

[46] Nevertheless, it is historically significant that DeMille's Jesus film coincided "with the most antisemitic period in American history," but back then "antisemitism was, in large measure, socially acceptable" (Herman, 2000, 13), if morally reprehensible, theologically erroneous and politically incorrect today. Therefore, it is understandable how DeMille-as-pop-culture-professional reflected the unpalatable social reality of his day, not as a religious bigot, a rabid racist or out of personal spite against the Schildkraut family. But rather, as the people's director who mirrored his own society's beliefs and values back to itself, and especially if the prevailing interpretation of Christian scriptures reinforced negative views of the Establishment Jews in Jesus' time (i.e., Christian "truth"). DeMille-as-filmmaker also needed stereotypical "bad-guys" (Judas and Caiaphas) to counterpoint his archetypical "good-guy" (Jesus) while deploying his auteur penchant for character binarism as a dramaturgical device (Kozlovic, 2002b). Therefore, constructing black-white screen characters made good dramatic sense and was not the result of racist intent.

[47] It is also vital to remember that DeMille was *not* doing history, or archaeology, or some form of pseudo-documentary. Rather, DeMille-the-auteur was engaging in what can be legitimately called cinematic theology (aka religion-and-film, celluloid religion, theo-film, film-faith dialogue) while employing the film adaptation mode of moviemaking. As C.B. claimed: "all I have striven to do in any of my Biblical pictures, was to translate into another medium, the medium of sight and sound, the words of the Bible (DeMille and Hayne, 1960, 261). Alternatively, as he put it elsewhere: "I don't interpret the Bible, as some people say. I reprint it in the universal language of the motion picture (Anonymous, 1958, 92).

[48] DeMille was certainly earnest in his religious desires, which were nurtured by his father: "*The King of Kings* and *The Ten Commandments*, were born in those evenings at Pompton, when father sat under the big lamp and read [the Bible] and a small boy sat near his chair and listened" (DeMille and Hayne, 1960, 28). As C.B.'s biographer Charles Higham (1973) reported:

Bessie Lasky...convinced me that DeMille, so far from being a cynic, was a devout believer in the Bible who saw himself in a missionary role, making the Scriptures attractive and fascinating to the masses in an age of increasing materialism and heathenism. A deeply committed Episcopalian, he literally accepted every word of the Bible without question... (ix-x).

Of course, he accepted even the nasty bits about the Jewish hierarchy plotting against Jesus, which he appropriately condensed and artistically reconstructed for the popular cinema of his day.

### ***The Schildkrauts in Father-and-Son Betrayer Roles***

[49] DeMille's deep focus decision for *The King of Kings* took on even thicker layers of significance and subtextual legitimacy by his selection of the Schildkraut family. He had reflected the biblically intimate Caiaphas-Judas association of stereotypic Christian "badness/evil" by having Rudolf and Joseph, as an intimate real-world Jewish father-and-son team, play the treacherous anti-Jesus roles. This act of religious verisimilitude had a genetic-biological resonance that symbolically implied a father-son style of mentoring between Caiaphas and Judas. It was a powerful verification in flesh and blood and correctly paralleled religious identification, of the then Christian claim of Jewish culpability for deicide. DeMille's "bad" Jews (Caiaphas and Judas), as opposed to DeMille's "good" Jews (Jesus, the Apostles, Israelite/Hebrew followers), were publicly revealed to be plotting against Christ. Therefore, both Caiaphas and Judas were indissolubly intertwined in the audience's eyes as treacherous betrayers, especially by a contemporary Christian public who automatically perceived Christ

as a Christian (i.e., not a Jew; albeit incorrectly). However, this casting decision ultimately reflected badly upon Rudolf and Joseph when people confused them personally with their disreputable screen characterisations - the classic mistake of confusing actors with the parts they played.

[50] To further enhance the biblical "bad-guy" thematic, DeMille depicted Judas (Joseph Schildkraut) officiously stopping little children from meeting Jesus, the iconic lover of children and the putative heirs to God's kingdom (Matt. 19:14; Mark 10:14; Luke 18:16). Besides, stereotypically speaking, anybody who does not like children cannot be considered good, balanced or wholesome! At the film's end, both Judas and Caiaphas are bitter and sorrowful about their grave errors of judgment concerning Jesus; thus powerfully indicating to the audience that Jesus was indeed an instrument of the Divine, if not actually God himself. It was a cinematic admission that the Christians were theologically right after all, which itself is intrinsically unpalatable to Jewish religious sensitivities everywhere. Historically speaking, Judaism rejects Christianity's claim of Jesus being the Messiah.

[51] Half-a-century after the release of *The King of Kings*, film commentator Critt Davis (1973, 79) argued that Joseph Schildkraut "was a magnificent Judas Iscariot. That classic is still exhibited throughout the world and at Easter is shown on television and in churches." But one suspects that the admiring Davis was referring to Joseph's acting ability and not the potential religious, political or ethnic offence intrinsic within it. Since Jewish communities are always sensitive about Christ-killer accusations, they pilloried DeMille and were even more vitriolic towards the Schildkrauts. For example, Rabbi Louis I. Newman angrily claimed that Rudolf "made a pathetic and unpardonable excuse of himself ... [Joseph] had also sold the honor of his people for a mess of pottage" (Herman, 2000, 18).

[52] These religious accusations, rather than the hoped for adulation for their professional acting skills, had a profoundly negative affect upon the proud Schildkrauts. As DeMille reported:

The Schildkrauts were Jewish. They suffered for playing the roles of Caiaphas and Judas in *The King of Kings*. They had taken their roles as artists, with no thought of credal prejudice, and they played them superbly. Then they were caught in the wash of opposition to the film, and condemned by some of their fellow Jews as traitors. Rudolph Schildkraut came to me, stunned but not embittered, and took my hand and said, "I understand what this means, but I'm not sorry about it" (DeMille and Hayne, 1960, 259).

Again, within the history of religious cinema, film art had become a political football for the religiously offended to kick about.

### ***Casting, Authenticity and Manipulation***

[53] Religious betrayal was a touchy interreligious issue in its day and it still is today (Herman, 2000; Maltby, 1990). Nevertheless, DeMille should be acknowledged for trying to portray what he believed was textually accurate and authentic according to Gospel accounts and the received religious wisdom of his day. DeMille was certainly not anti-Semitic. Rather, he was a Christian believer who had to say unpalatable things about the leaders of Judaism, because they were true according to the Christian Bible. Frequently forgotten about the condemnation of DeMille are the various Jewish attempts to sabotage his Jesus film. For example, Rabbi Edgar F. Magnin tried to stop DeMille making the film altogether, and when that failed, he tried to thwart DeMille's production trajectory. Indeed, the good Rabbi was acutely aware of the dangers of his own religious manipulations. He consciously tried to avoid

generating a religious backlash should his own censorship enthusiasm be interpreted "as an attack upon the Christian Bible" (Herman, 2000, 19). (6) Although a detailed analysis of this side of the story would be enlightening, it is beyond the scope of this work.

[54] However, even Felicia Herman (2000, 17), who criticised the anti-Jewish elements in DeMille's film, conceded that it was "an essentially accurate rendering of the Christian scripture." This supports DeMille's own claim that: "*The King of Kings* does not contain any story or a suggestion of a story that is not actually in the Four Gospels" (DeMille, 1976, 165). Even if, as a Hollywood peace compromise, Caiaphas was subsequently turned into "a living epitome of ethnic guilt" (Babington and Evans, 1993, 122) when DeMille portrayed him taking personal responsibility for Jesus' death. In an intertitle, Caiaphas says: "Let it be upon me - and me alone," that is, on Caiaphas instead of the Jewish nation, as in Matt. 27:25: "Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children." If not pressured by the immense pro-Jewish forces of his day, DeMille would have portrayed the Gospel text unadulterated. However, in practice, DeMille could only be as religious and as authentic as the censorial and other political forces of his day would allow him. This is a crucial fact often forgotten by the critics who condemned DeMille personally, whether for being anti-Jewish or for misrepresenting the Bible.

[55] Indeed, DeMille reinforced the notion of Caiaphas' personal culpability for Jesus' death a second time. This occurs when the crucified Christ gives up the ghost and the Temple curtain is dramatically torn amid unnaturally violent weather. A cowering Caiaphas cries out (in an intertitle): "Lord God Jehovah, visit not Thy wrath on Thy people Israel - I alone am guilty." His emotive plea/confession shows audiences that Caiaphas could be noble, admit error, and see the (Christian) "truth" when he realised it. Thus, implying that he was not irrevocably bad, but rather, a good religious leader who truly had his people's interests at heart during this profound revelatory moment. In fact, it was a significant step toward the redemption of Caiaphas' own reputation, as viewed by Christianity and DeMille.

[56] Indeed, even DeMille's Judas was "not an inhuman monster driven by unmotivated evil, but a man divided in his allegiances and beliefs" (Paffenroth, 2001, 2), despite being the most despised man in Christendom. As an historical consequence of this religious ruckus, DeMille was credited with forging a new arrangement in Hollywood: "the institutionalization of Jews as critical observers...the creation of the first official relationship between...the Independent Order of B'nai B'rith, and the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors Association (MPPDA)" (Herman, 2000, 12), albeit unexpectedly, unintentionally and probably involuntarily, since DeMille was fundamentally anti-censorship. He had spent most of his professional life trying to find creative ways to defeat the innumerable restrictions placed upon cinematic freedom.

### ***DeMille: The Christian Jew***

[57] Biologically speaking, DeMille was a "half-Jew" (Herman, 2000, 18). That is, he was the son of a Christian (Episcopalian) lay minister father, Henry Churchill DeMille (DeMille and Hayne, 1960, 12-13) and a (Sephardic) Jewish mother, Matilda Beatrice "Bebe" DeMille nee Samuel (Edwards, 1988, 14). C.B. also lived in a putatively Christianised America and worked in an industry dominated by powerful Jewish film moguls, including his own Paramount bosses Adolph Zukor (Gabler, 1988) and Jesse L. Lasky (Lasky and Weldon, 1957). DeMille had personally walked a religious tightrope all his life, and although he firmly identified himself as a Christian, he was proud of his Jewish heritage. As Alice Williamson (1928) reported:

People sometimes say "the de Milles are Jews." That is a mistake. The only

admixture of Jewish blood comes from the mother's side. One of her parents was English of the English: the other was half Jewish: and Cecil gives thanks for the few drops of that blood which reddens the veins of most great musicians, many great artists (67).

[58] Indeed, among Christians, DeMille was viewed as a Christian, while among Jews, because of the Judaic matrilineal descent system, since his mother was a Jew, DeMille was viewed as a Jew. Therefore, on the surface, either faith could interpret him as "one of their own" if they chose. This ambiguity over religious identification was profitably exploited by DeMille on many occasions. Indeed, this personal idiosyncrasy was reflected in DeMille's many engineered ambiguities on-screen, especially in *Samson and Delilah* (Kozlovic 2002a, 2002b, 2003a), and itself became another important element of his unique auteur signature. Significantly, DeMille made his Jesus film while *not* working for the Jewish-controlled Paramount Pictures. When DeMille did make his three other biblical films at Paramount, they were about mainstream Jewish heroes from the Old Testament: Moses (Theodore Roberts) in *The Ten Commandments* (silent), Samson (Victor Mature) in *Samson and Delilah*, and Moses (Charlton Heston) in the second *The Ten Commandments* (sound).

[59] In fact, at the end of his film career, DeMille was championed by his powerful Jewish boss Adolph Zukor for putting Judaism on-screen. During Zukor's defence of the proposal for the 1956 version of *The Ten Commandments*, he enthusiastically claimed:

I find it embarrassing and deplorable that it takes a *Gentile like Cecil here* to consistently remind us Jews of our heritage! What do you have to argue with, gentlemen? After we have just lived through a horrible war where our people were systematically executed, we have a man who makes a film praising the Jewish people, that tells one of the great legends of our Scripture - and *he isn't even a Jew*. We should get down on our hands and knees and say 'Thank you!' And now he wants to make the life of Moses? I've had to sit here this morning and listen to nothing but screaming and yelling about how *awful* that would be! You should be ashamed of yourselves. All of you. What kind of men are you? What kind of Jews are you? I, for one, think it's a good idea, not a stupid idea (quoted in Wilcoxon & Orrison, 1991, 228) [my emphasis].

Interestingly, the notion of Jews controlling the making of a Jesus film (whether financially, aesthetically or politically) and the religious problems and compromises that would entail is potentially fascinating, but beyond the scope of this paper.

### ***Challenges and Changes: Old, New and Re-occurring***

[60] Although controversy over *The King of Kings* raged long and hard, in the end, significant changes were made to the film because of intense negotiations between DeMille, the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America and the B'nai B'rith. (7) According to DeMille, this powerful Jewish organisation had initially demanded that his film "be corrected so as not to give the impression that the Jews had anything to do with the crucifixion of Jesus" (Maltby, 1990, 209). However, because of the abundant Christian scriptural evidence to the contrary, DeMille refused to absolve the Jewish authorities of harmful intent, even if they did not physically crucify Jesus themselves (Matt. 27:26-36; Mark 15:13-37; John 19:1-30).

[61] As indicated previously, DeMille's cinematic compromise resulted in the High Priest Caiaphas being deemed solely responsible for the execution of Jesus. Besides, according to the Christian Bible, Pontius Pilate "knew that the chief priests had delivered him [Jesus] for envy" (Mark 15:10). Secondly, the Jewish Establishment had deliberately rigged the crowds'

response to free Barabbas (Mark 15:11), to Jesus' obvious and intended detriment, which DeMille also depicted on-screen. Thirdly, and most importantly, DeMille depicted *no* Jews who actually tried to kill Jesus in *The King of Kings*. He portrayed only power politics by a plotting Jewish Establishment who had harmful intent against a potential usurper, and so they desired Jesus dead because Caiaphas was "driven by the fury of religious hatred" (according to DeMille's intertitle). One suspects that this on-screen claim irked many Jews who did not like to see themselves portrayed as plotting, hated-fuelled aggressors; especially given their historically repeated innocent-victim status, and their understandable sensitivities about being portrayed as screen "bad-guys." After all, historically speaking, no one seriously accuses the Italians of being Christ-killers. Yet, according to the Gospels, the Romans kept Jesus prisoner, they treated him harshly and degradingly, they nailed him to the cross, put a spear in his side, and they made sure he was dead, buried and stayed buried.

[62] By making Caiaphas-the-scapegoat the *sole* repository of ethnic guilt, DeMille could be accused of exhibiting a muted form of classic Christian anti-Semitism towards Caiaphas (which was overt and not below the surface). However, it also had the narrative effect of absolving the *rest* of Jewry from this sin/error/crime/guilt. That is, those Jews in the crowd manipulated by the Jewish Establishment, and all other Jews not physically present on the day are absolved and/or are innocent. DeMille had made *one* man (Caiaphas) at a unique moment in history *personally* responsible for the anti-Jesus deeds, but *not* a nation/race/people/ethnic group/religion *collectively* responsible for all time and history. Apparently, Jewish critics missed this essential point and probably identified Caiaphas with the nation of the Jews and themselves; thus they were outraged at the supposed racism towards them. They had ignored the proverbial buck stopping with Caiaphas, DeMille's political compromise with the B'nai B'rith and the MPPDA (Maltby, 1990).

[63] DeMille's Jesus film is still popular with both lay and academic audiences today, but just as significantly, it is still viewed with intense suspicion by contemporary Jews. For example, the Simon Wiesenthal Center's Harold Brackman (2000, 4) claimed that *The King of Kings*: "still ranks as the most blatant film rendition ever made of the Jews-killed-Christ myth ... DeMille raided the New York Yiddish theater for Rudolph and Joseph Schildkraut to play the chief villains, Caiaphas and Judas, and cast as extras in the mob scenes Orthodox Jews from the Boyle Heights of Los Angeles." However, instead of assessing DeMille's act of ethnic verisimilitude positively (i.e., using real Jews to play screen Jews), Brackman engages in his own mythmaking, claiming that DeMille was: "A devout Episcopalian who harboured grudges against his Jewish former partners both in the movie business and in the Julian Oil Scandal of the 1920s, DeMille was delighted rather than dismayed by the hackles his film raised in the Jewish community" (2000, 4). However, temporarily overlooking the fact that Brackman plays the man and not the ball here (i.e., the *ad hominem* fallacy), he offers little evidence to support his claim.

### *In Defence of DeMille*

[64] Although DeMille had artistic and business differences with his Jewish bosses at Paramount (Adolph Zukor and Jesse L. Lasky) after the formation of their production company in 1913, this was nothing new, unexpected or exceptional. Many directors experienced such conflict and parted from their studios for numerous reasons, including DeMille who left in 1925 to start his own film production company (which subsequently floundered). When C.B. eventually returned to Paramount (with the support of Jesse L. Lasky and Ben P. Schulberg) after a directorial interlude with MGM and Louis B. Mayer (1928-1932), such "differences" still occurred. However, DeMille endured them all and remained Paramount's preeminent moneymaking director until his death in 1959 (Winters, 1996). It is true that DeMille had "unwisely invested in the floundering Julian Petroleum Corporation"

(DeMille and Hayne, 1960, 262). Yet, the evoking of that infamous oil swindle by Brackman as a supposedly valid reason for DeMille's alleged delight over the Jewish outrage over *The King of Kings* is highly dubious. Besides, DeMille had beaten a government accusation of usury levelled at him because he "never loaned it any money, not to mention never collecting 20 per cent interest from it as charged" (DeMille and Hayne, 1960, 262).

[65] One film critic, Guy Finney, had doubted "the sincerity of Mr. Cecil B. DeMille's "*King of Kings*," with its heroic figure of Christ driving the money changers (they may have been usurers) from the Temple" (Tygiel, 1994, 231). However, according to Jules Tygiel's analysis of the great Los Angeles oil swindle, DeMille actually made a considerable amount of money at one point. This was due to a three-point bonus agreement, namely:

If the stock did not rise within a fixed period of time, Bennett promised to buy it back for three dollars a share above the purchase price. When the arrangements came due, Bennett would either pay the bonus and extend the contract or, if necessary, redeem the stock in full. The most prominent beneficiary of these dealings was director Cecil B. DeMille, whose investment company purchased \$62,000 worth of stock on June 30 and redeemed it for \$12,000 profit after forty-five days (Tygiel, 1994, 176).

[66] It is also hard to believe that DeMille wanted to tempt box office disaster for his own fledgling DeMille Studio production company after he separated from Paramount to make *The King of Kings*, especially considering the lacklustre success of his production company's first two films: *The Road to Yesterday* (a reincarnation fantasy) and *The Volga Boatman* (a Russophile story). Not only was DeMille in a delicate financial state while making *The King of Kings*, he was without the financial, legal or political clout of a Paramount studio to support him if he really wanted to make "Jewish" trouble. This would also amount to poor attack planning, assuming that DeMille could get his Jewish bosses to do it. DeMille may not have always been wise, but he was certainly no fool.

[67] As a "half-Jew" (Herman, 2000, 18), it seems less plausible to believe that DeMille wanted to deliberately cause ethnic/religious trouble for himself in the proverbial tradition of people in glass houses throwing stones, especially "during a decade in which anti-Semitism and social ostracism of Jews in Los Angeles had greatly increased" (Tygiel, 1994, 233). Nor would DeMille-as-a-pop-culture-professional with his finger on the public pulse be unaware of the disturbing milieu of the 1920s, notably, the rise of the Ku Klux Klan, the Red scare (under a young J. Edgar Hoover), and the fear of World War I immigrants. In addition, there was the dissemination of the racist *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, and the spectre of Jewish political radicalism haunting Hollywood. DeMille was certainly no anti-Jewish revolutionary or cultural saboteur, only a pop culture professional who wanted to make movies, and keep on making them.

[68] Besides, such film-induced interreligious discord is not the exclusive property of Cecil B. DeMille. It is part-and-parcel of the territory for *any* filmmaker who wants to film the Jesus story. There is always someone to offend, annoy or disappoint, whether Christian, Jew or atheist! Just think of the negative reaction to *Monty Python's Life of Brian*, the Papal condemnation of *Hail Mary*, and the violent reactions prompted by *The Last Temptation of Christ*. Director Mel Gibson is currently experiencing similar troubles over his Jesus film *The Passion*, (8) which has angered the Jewish-run Anti-Defamation League and the US Conference of Catholic Bishops *before* its public release (McKenna, 2003)! Nor are such problems limited to Jews and Christians. Arabs and Muslims have frequently been vilified by Hollywood (Shaheen, 2001) as have Mormons (Nelson, 1984), plus sacred servants of all persuasions (Kozlovic, 2002c), and no doubt many other religious groups if one went looking for them. So, what of Joseph Schildkraut and his other DeMille roles? How did DeMille

deploy his deep focus philosophy and continue Joseph's betrayer roles beyond *The King of Kings*?

### **B. Joseph Schildkraut Plays the Betrayer Herod in Cleopatra (1934)**

[69] After the theatrical release of *The King of Kings*, the elderly Rudolf Schildkraut died of a heart ailment in 1930. DeMille delivered his eulogy, thus powerfully indicating the continuing respect both DeMille and the Schildkrauts had for each other at this emotional moment (Davis, 1973, 81). Joseph continued with his acting career, prospered and was subsequently employed in DeMille's ancient world film *Cleopatra*. In a deep focus manner, DeMille continued Joseph's betrayer casting. This was possibly fuelled by the "traitor" accusations against Joseph for his Judas role, which had muted PR value for DeMille. Nevertheless, Joseph was assigned the cameo role of the biblically famous Jew "Herod" (according to DeMille's off-screen cast lists - Ringgold and Bodeen, 1969, 295) or "King Herod" (according to DeMille's on-screen verbal description). DeMille had Joseph's Herod slyly sowing seeds of discord between Marc Antony (Henry Wilcoxon) and Cleopatra (Claudette Colbert). The biblical Herod was known as Herod the Great, a lackey of the Roman Senate and "highly regarded by the Romans" (Hoehner, 1993, 282), but who was "unscrupulous, crafty, suspicious, immoral, cruel, and murderous" (*Watch Tower*, 1988, 1091). He became the defacto King of Judea and suppressed the local Jews after his excellent work as governor of Galilee.

[70] This vassal king was certainly no friend of the general Jewish population. His tyranny and cruelty outweighed his intermittent financial generosity, his Temple rebuilding program, and other politically inspired pacification tactics. More significantly, for DeMille, King Herod's wicked disposition was further enhanced by his negative reputation with Christians. He is portrayed as an enemy of Christ when he tasked the three wise men to track down the newly born King of the Jews, the baby Jesus, and report back to him (Matt. 3:8). He subsequently orders that all the boys in Bethlehem under the age of two be slaughtered to protect his position (Matt. 2:1-23). He is thus a man who separates children from Jesus, just like DeMille's Judas did in *The King of Kings*. (9) However, given the practical limits of screen time, the wickedness of DeMille's Herod was easily deduced by the knowing public from Joseph Schildkraut's previous Judas performance because, semiotically speaking, Joseph Schildkraut=Herod=Judas Iscariot=anti-Jesus=anti-Christianity=bad-guy. Nor did this association stop here, for Joseph's betrayer typecasting came to the fore again in another DeMille film - *The Crusades*.

### **C. Joseph Schildkraut Plays the Betrayer Conrad of Monferrat in The Crusades (1935)**

[71] Having cultivated a treacherous religious screen lineage for Joseph twice before, DeMille perpetuated it a third time in his medieval fantasy about the crusaders and their holy wars against the Moors. This time, Joseph Schildkraut played the dastardly Conrad of Monferrat who, historically, was an unsavoury character. For example, while a "resident of Constantinople, he had been involved in a murder there and hurriedly escaped as a 'pilgrim' to Jerusalem" (Armstrong, 1988, 183). DeMille had his Conrad secretly visiting the Saracen enemy stronghold to interest the Muslim leader Saladin (Ian Keith) in a plot to assassinate Richard the Lion-Hearted (Henry Wilcoxon). That is, the putatively Christian Conrad-the-betrayer was negotiating with the antithesis of Christianity (i.e., Islam) to kill Christianity's contemporary earthly champion (i.e., Richard).

[72] Structurally speaking, Conrad's surreptitious behaviour parallels that of Judas in *The King of Kings*, especially when Judas secretly visits the Sanhedrin to interest Caiaphas in the plot against Jesus. That is, Judas negotiated with the religious antithesis of fledgling Christianity

(i.e., Establishment Judaism) to betray Christianity's ultimate holy champion currently on Earth (i.e., Jesus, the Christ). However, Conrad's evil plan in *The Crusades* backfires on him. DeMille's Saladin is not interested in his duplicity and says: "I have no traffic with assassins" and "Away with this dog." Saladin's reaction dialogically reinforces the treacherous, murderous and contemptible deeds of Conrad, the *covert* Judas-figure, DeMille's *overt* Judas in *The King of Kings*.

[73] Many viewers would have caught this filmic association via the following semiotic linkage train: Joseph Schildkraut=Conrad of Monferrat=Herod=Judas Iscariot=anti-Jesus=anti-Christianity=bad-guy. Indeed, the dastardly plan of the scriptural Judas backfires on him when the chief priests and elders (led by Caiaphas) are not interested in redeeming Judas' duplicitous behaviour towards Jesus. They refuse to accept the returned thirty pieces of silver and contemptuously abandon Judas to his (suicidal) fate. However, when the Jesus blood money was abandoned by Judas, and since it was against the Jewish law to put it in the treasury, they subsequently bought a potter's field to bury strangers in - the field of blood (Matt. 27:3-9). DeMille was certainly deft in his multiple layering of character, actor, history, text and subtext (sacred or otherwise) with his deep focus typecasting of inter-film consistency.

[74] *The Crusades*, as a putatively pro-Christian film, also proved that DeMille could display pro-Muslim and anti-Christian themes if the binary logic of his story warranted it. As Arab film critic Jack G. Shaheen (2001, 143) noted: "Saladin appears as a compassionate Muslim leader," especially when DeMille has Saladin say: "I offer peace to you, foes of Islam." However, Richard responds to Saladin's peace offer by drawing out his huge sword and saying: "We're going to slaughter you" (144), and yet later, "Saladin's soldiers save Richard from doublecrossing European assassins" (144). Clearly, Shaheen was impressed enough by this to warrant quoting DeMille positively in a book about Arab vilification in Hollywood. Of course, ultrasensitive Christians could make anti-Christian, pro-Islam accusations against DeMille if they so desired. However, it is historically true that: "The crusades projected Islam as the evil, dark side of Europe. This stereotypic picture of Muslims as barbaric, licentious, depraved, fanatical, ignorant, stupid, unclean and inferior, became an integral part of European thought, literature and outlook" (Sardar and Malik, 1999, 140), but DeMille deliberately rejected that negative picture and reversed it in the 1930s. Any claim of DeMille's tendency to vilify non-Christians is not supported here.

[75] *The Crusades* was not as enthusiastically received in the West as C.B. would have hoped. One possible reason is that it showed the good and noble side of Islam, and the darker deeds of Christianity. After all, what Christian wants their proverbial nose rubbed into that old disgrace, especially considering their unavoidable culpability for this medieval Christian jihad. As Jack G. Shaheen (2001, 145) pointed out: "In 1095, Pope Urban II advanced the demonization process, calling Muslims "the wicked race...wholly separated from God." And, in 1095, the Pope also ordered Europe's Christians to seize the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem" - far from the loving acts expected of followers of the Prince of Peace.

[76] In contrast, *The Crusades* was a favourite film in Muslim countries. It profoundly affected Egyptian Prime Minister, Col. Gamal Abdal Nasser and his best friend General Abdel Hakin Amer. When DeMille and Henry Wilcoxon were introduced to them while in Egypt making the second *The Ten Commandments*, General Amer enthusiastically confessed:

"Mr DeMille, Mr. Wilcoxon, you will perhaps remember a movie you made called *The Crusades*?" "Oh, yes," Mr. DeMille said, as he at last felt his feet touch firm ground. "I made that one in 1935." "Quite right," Amer said, "and Mr. Wilcoxon here starred at Richard Coeur-de-Lion." We nodded. "Well, perhaps you did not know that *The Crusades* was a very popular film in our Muslim country - due to its fair presentation of both sides and its portrayal of Saladin as a great and holy

leader of his people. So popular, in fact, that it ran for three years in the same theater. And during those three years, when Colonel Nasser and I were first in military academy, we saw *The Crusades* perhaps as many as twenty times. It was our favorite picture. "That's very gratifying," Mr. DeMille said, thinking the speech was over. "It's always been my favorite as well." "Just a moment please," Amer said gently. "Colonel Nasser was so taken with the character of the Lionheart in your movie that he told everyone in the military academy that when he grew up he was going to be just like that, and that's how the other boys came to call him Henry Wilcoxon!" (Wilcoxon and Orrison, 1991, 274-275).

DeMille was nonplussed.

#### ***D. Joseph Schildkraut Plays the Betrayer Kenneth Paulton and the Betrayer Lord Strangevon in The Road to Yesterday (1925)***

[77] Linking Joseph Schildkraut with all these religious betrayer roles (i.e., Judas, Herod, Conrad of Monferrat) was a deep focus coup of *artistic* genius for DeMille. Why? Because the resonance of Schildkraut's "bad guy" characterisation was progressively reinforced from DeMille film to DeMille film thereby increasing its emotive potency. The only other DeMille-directed film that Joseph Schildkraut played in was *The Road to Yesterday*, a modern reincarnation fantasy - with an Elizabethan interlude - that preceded by one film the making of *The King of Kings*. *The Road to Yesterday's* reincarnation theme aptly relates to Joseph's repeated screen incarnations as the Judas-like betrayer. Its scenes of interpersonal treachery can be seen as a kind of cinematic thematic antecedent to Joseph's future Judas-like betrayer roles. In the modern portion of the film, Joseph Schildkraut plays Kenneth Paulton who has marital problems on his honeymoon with this distant (possibly frigid) wife Malena Paulton (Jetta Goudal). In an act of intimate betrayal, he forces himself upon her in a suggestive marital rape scene that significantly predates the infamous and equally suggestive marital rape scene between Rhett Butler (Clark Gable) and Scarlett O'Hara (Vivien Leigh) in *Gone with the Wind*.

[78] In the Elizabethan flashback portion, Kenneth Paulton (now the knight, Lord Strangevon) is in 17<sup>th</sup> century England, and his wife Malena Paulton (now a fiery Gypsy), is to be disposed of so that he can marry another woman. In an act of spousal betrayal, Lord Strangevon (Joseph Schildkraut) falsely accuses the Gypsy (Jetta Goudal) of being a sorceress, and she is subsequently burnt to death at the stake as her punishment. This happens in all its gory fieriness; just like Judas' false accusation that got Jesus killed on another sort of bloody stake. Indeed, DeMille had Joseph Schildkraut portrayed as a nasty, treacherous individual not once, but *twice* within the same film. The reincarnation theme implied that it was a trait that would reassert itself throughout time, place and history, including ancient Judea in DeMille's *The King of Kings* soon afterwards.

[79] There is even a religious negotiation scene in *The Road to Yesterday*. "Jack Moreland (William Boyd), the 'two-fisted' clergyman hero...is a...minister as salesman, making 'deals' with Ken Paulton ...over his talking 'to this Fellow I work for [God]'" (Maltby, 1990, 200-201). Semiotically speaking, DeMille's negative linkage train is Joseph Schildkraut=Kenneth Paulton=Lord Strangevon=bad-guy. However, it is only when Joseph's bad-guy role is subsequently re-enacted in DeMille's Jesus story as the iconic Judas, that C.B. elevates Schildkraut's betrayer typecasting into the archetypal realm that sustained its PR value thereafter.

#### ***Joseph Schildkraut's Betrayer Roles as Auteur Casting Consistency, not Rabid Racism***

[80] The assignment of DeMille's betrayer roles for Joseph Schildkraut is filmicly understandable given four of DeMille's professional penchants. First, he favours black-white binary oppositions for dramaturgical reasons (Kozlovic, 2002b). Second, he deliberately crafts multi-layered subtexts and other symbolism for auteur reasons (Kozlovic, 2002a). Third, there are obvious marketing advantages in maintaining character consistency between films. Fourth, there is the obvious dramaturgical need for a convincing "bad-guy" to contrast the "good-guy." This negative thematic is also a result of DeMille's production planning habits because he "always had three or four projects going at once, keeping his options open. If one broke down or ran into trouble, energies could be directed elsewhere" (Wilcoxon and Orrison, 1991, 45). DeMille the businessman demonstrated this habit throughout his filmmaking career (1913-1959).

[81] Therefore, it is likely that DeMille retrospectively massaged Joseph Schildkraut's Paulton/Strangevon role for *The Road to Yesterday* with the pre-production planning of Judas for *The King of Kings*. Thus, Judas' classical attributes were crafted into the Paulton/Strangevon role *in situ*, especially since the factual elements of the Christ story are hard to change given its fixed textual certitudes, unlike DeMille's more malleable reincarnation fantasy. Consequently, DeMille's seamless narrative style (i.e., the classical Hollywood style) applied *within* his films during the reincarnation flashback scenes. It also applied *between* his films with his thematic character continuity, of which the Schildkraut betrayer typecasting was especially pronounced and resonant thereafter. Consistency between films is a hallmark of the auteur director, and as Sumiko Higashi (1994, 5) noted: "DeMille left enormous traces of his authorship long before Francois Truffaut and Andrew Sarris made the term *auteur* fashionable in cinema studies."

[82] Was this treacherous nature the real Joseph Schildkraut? Of course not! He was a consummate professional actor who played his "bad-guy" parts convincingly, and today he is "best remembered for his suave villainy" (Maltin, 1994, 788). Indeed, as Critt Davis (1973, 71) noted: "Joseph Schildkraut never played a screen character truly representative of the kind of man he was." It would also be false to assume that DeMille considered Joseph's father Rudolf to be "bad" or that DeMille only used this father/son team in treacherous film roles, as if he had a vendetta against the actors.

[83] In fact, DeMille employed the Schildkrauts in other productions. For example, they appeared in the comedy-drama *Young April* where Joseph played a romantic playboy prince and Rudolf, his king-father. Joseph also starred in *Meet the Prince* about an impoverished exiled Russian prince who hoped to marry an American heiress and find a rich suitor for his sister. Joseph then worked for DeMille's writer-director brother William Churchill DeMille in *Forbidden Women*, playing a sensitive violinist who was forced into the Foreign Legion, and again in *Tenth Avenue* playing an underworld pickpocket (Davis, 1973, 79). No doubt, if not for Rudolf's death in 1930, C.B. would have repeatedly used the father-and-son team, especially considering that DeMille "had a reputation for being loyal to his coworkers" (McCallum, 1960, 84), if not his trouble-making extras and prima donna stars.

[84] Overall, Joseph Schildkraut had a long and illustrious career. He played Jewish figures such as the Oscar-winning Captain Alfred Dreyfus in *The Life of Emile Zola*, and the reminiscing father Otto Frank in *The Diary of Anne Frank*. However, his Christian biblical rehabilitation only occurred in another Jesus movie, *The Greatest Story Ever Told*, which turned out to be his swan song. Here, Joseph is cast as the Jewish, pro-Jesus Nicodemus. This Pharisee secretly meets Jesus, acknowledges his holiness, and discusses theology with him (John 3:1-21); later he is allowed to help wrap Jesus' crucified body (John 19:38-40). Joseph's typecasting ended on a biblical high note three months before his own death in 1964. (10)

### *Conclusion*

[85] DeMille expended much effort in crafting his feature films, but regrettably, this fact is unappreciated today. Critics have been all too quick to ignore, dismiss or devalue C.B.'s contributions to cinematic art because he was allegedly inauthentic and disingenuous, or as critic Norman Bel Geddes unfairly claimed:

Inspirationally and imaginatively, CB was sterile. His stories, situations and characters were, almost without exception, unintelligent, unintuitive, and psychologically adolescent. CB was a foreman in a movie factory; he fitted the parts together and demanded that they move as he thought they should. It was an early form of automation (quoted in Green, 1997, 191-192).

[86] Some film scholars even claim that: "It is no longer fashionable to admire De Mille" (Giannetti and Eyman, 1996, 40). This is a serious mistake, and one that is only slowly being corrected. As DeMille's directorial peer George Cukor recently confessed:

A long time ago I thought what he [DeMille] did was a big joke, just preposterous, and I couldn't understand why the audience went for it in such a big way. There were always all sorts of orgies with belly dancers, veils and all the trappings. The eroticism was a joke. Then I saw *The Ten Commandments* ... it was preposterous from the word go but I suddenly saw something new there, something which had escaped me before: the story telling was wonderful. The way that man could tell a story was fascinating - you were riveted to your seat. That's exactly what he was: a great, great story teller. It was often ridiculous with all those excesses and froth but the man did *tell a story*. That was De Mille's great talent and the secret behind his popular success (Long, 2001, 27).

[87] Of course, a significant part of that great storytelling ability was his deep focus casting philosophy/typecasting praxis. This is a strategy grossly under-appreciated today, but a trade secret indicative of a master director worthy of the tag "*auteur* of *auteurs*" (Vidal, 1995, 303). This casting tactic added depth and authentic resonance to his movies that made them unique, popular and successful enough to propel DeMille far above his directorial peers into the realms of Hollywood legend.

[88] No wonder Dominique Lebrun (1996, 11) claimed that "until his death he remained the embodiment of the supremacy of the American film industry." Or as Roy Pickard (1978, 80) enthusiastically stated: "No-one before or after his death could quite capture that special DeMille touch...[he] took his special kind of talent with him to the grave." DeMille's superiors appreciated his true worth. As movie mogul David O. Selznick confessed to fellow movie mogul Louis B. Mayer:

However much I may dislike some of his [DeMille's] pictures from an audience standpoint, it would be very silly of me, as a producer of commercial motion pictures, to demean for an instant his unparalleled skill as a maker of mass entertainment, or the knowing and sure hand with which he manufactures his successful assaults upon a world audience that is increasingly indifferent if not immune to the work of his inferiors. As both professionally and personally he has in many ways demonstrated himself to be a man of sensitivity and taste, it is impossible to believe that the blatancy of his style is due to anything but a most artful and deliberate and knowing technique of appeal to the common denominator of public taste. He must be saluted by any but hypocritical or envious members of the picture *business*. But there has appeared only one Cecil B. DeMille (Behlmer, 1972, 400).

[89] One can only agree with him wholeheartedly, and in doing so vindicate Henry Wilcoxon's (1970, 276) old but insightful prophecy: "True recognition for DeMille's greatness will come many years after his death." Further research into DeMille Studies and the pop culture construction of biblical, religious, historical and other characters is warranted, highly recommended and certainly long overdue.

### Notes

1. Many scholars have spelled C.B.'s surname as "De Mille" or "de Mille" or "deMille." However, the correct professional spelling (as opposed to personal spelling) is "DeMille" (DeMille and Hayne, 1960, 6), and so it will be used herein.
2. The Authorized King James Version of the Bible (KJV aka AV) will be used throughout. This edition was frequently employed by DeMille, especially in his early days because of audience familiarity with it (Higashi, 1994, 180). Bracketed scriptural references will also be employed throughout to reinforce the Bible-film parallels.
3. The firing of Agnes was so emotionally devastating and humiliating for her that she never truly forgave DeMille for the rest of her life. Much rumour, gossip and misinformation surrounding C.B. can be attributed to Agnes' desire for "revenge" mingled with admiration and her own PR proclivities.
4. Throughout the critical literature, "Rudolf" is also spelt as "Rudolph." The former will be used herein, except when accurately quoting the alternate spelling. There is also some discrepancy in the precise birth dates of Rudolf and Joseph Schildkraut. Darryl Lyman (1987, 184, 265) recorded them as "1865" and "1896" respectively.
5. Intriguingly, the first name of the historical biblical character Caiaphas is "Joseph" (Coogan, 1993, 97), just like Rudolf's son Joseph Schildkraut, thus providing even more intriguing intertextual linkages to ponder.
6. D.W. Griffith had encountered similar problems with the "B'Nai B'Rith over his Christ story in *Intolerance*. He was reported as having burned the negative of the scene and reshot the sequence, showing Roman soldiers carrying out the crucifixion" (Maltby, 1990, 211). In both *Ben-Hur* and *King of Kings*: "By omitting a visual presentation of Jesus' appearance before the high priest and by showing Jesus' trial before Pilate, both films suggest Roman responsibility for Jesus' crucifixion" (Tatum and Ingram, 1975, 473). As Peter Fraser (1998, 180) noted: "It is the common practice in the Jesus films to shift the antagonist role from the Jews to the Romans, to avoid charges of anti-Semitism. Typically, the Pharisees and Sadducees and court of the Sanhedrin are either entirely omitted from the films or introduced in crowd scenes where Jesus' ministry is momentarily opposed." Indeed, in director Mel Gibson's controversial Jesus story, *The Passion*, legitimate Christian scriptural events were also eliminated. In particular, "Peter J. Boyer, privy to both early and late edits of the film, revealed that the blood curse and Pilate's hand washing scene from Matthew 27 had been cut from the film" (E.W., 2003, 39).
7. One suspects that DeMille compromised in this fashion not because he saw himself as a racist, but because he did not want to become a marginalised or disenfranchised Hollywood film director. DeMille was not going to be crucified on the cross of religious intolerance if his own professional salvation could be secured by a minor act of narrative contrition, especially if the notion of harmful intent by the Jewish Establishment was preserved.
8. Gibson's film is alternatively referred to as *The Passion*, *The Passion of Christ* and *The Passion of the Christ* as it goes through its marketing cycle.

9. Given the public's vagueness about historical-biblical facts, DeMille could have easily played upon this in a deliberately ambiguous fashion. His on-screen Herod/King Herod could have been confused with another closely related biblical character, Herod Antipas (the son and successor of King Herod the Great). If so, then DeMille's deep focus casting philosophy would have taken on an even deeper association. Why? Because Herod Antipas is equally infamous as the tetrarch of Galilee who had killed Jesus' prophetic supporter - John the Baptist (Matt. 14:3-12). Therefore, another obvious enemy of Christ whose evil deeds resonated with his father's previous killing of the innocent babies of Bethlehem (Matt. 2:16). Just as important for an anti-Christian "bad-guy," Herod Antipas is shown belittling Jesus in the Gospel of Luke (Luke 23:7-12). These incidents clearly place Antipas in the anti-Jesus, pro-Roman camp, which again strongly resonates with the theme of oppositional betrayal, the archetypal figure of Judas, and Schildkraut's repeated on-screen betrayer role.

10. Ironically, from the Jewish perspective, Nicodemus is a betrayer figure - the Judas of the Jewish Establishment. However, he only undergoes one cycle of belief changes (i.e., from disbelief to belief in Jesus), not multiple changes like Judas (i.e., from disbelief to belief to betrayal to repentance/judgment).

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### ***Filmography***

- Along Came Jones* (1945, dir. Stuart Heisler)
- Ben-Hur* (1959, dir. William Wyler)
- The Buccaneer* (1938, dir. Cecil B. DeMille)
- The Cheat* (1915, dir. Cecil B. DeMille)

*Cleopatra* (1934, dir. Cecil B. DeMille)  
*The Crusades* (1935, dir. Cecil B. DeMille)  
*The Diary of Anne Frank* (1959, dir. George Stevens)  
*Forbidden Women* (1927, dir. Paul Stein)  
*Frankenstein* (1931, dir. James Whale)  
*From the Manger to the Cross* (1912, dir. Sidney Olcott)  
*Gone with the Wind* (1939, dir. Victor Fleming)  
*The Gospel According to St. Matthew* (1966, dir. Pier Paolo Pasolini)  
*The Greatest Story Ever Told* (1965, dir. George Stevens)  
*Hail Mary* (1984, dir. Jean-Luc Godard)  
*Intolerance* (1916, dir. D. W. Griffith)  
*Joan the Woman* (1917, dir. Cecil B. DeMille)  
*The King of Kings* (1927, dir. Cecil B. DeMille)  
*King of Kings* (1961, dir. Nicholas Ray)  
*The Last Temptation of Christ* (1988, dir. Martin Scorsese)  
*The Life of Emile Zola* (1937, dir. William Dieterle)  
*Madame Satan* (1930, dir. Cecil B. DeMille)  
*Male and Female* (1919, dir. Cecil B. DeMille)  
*Masada* (1980, dir. Boris Sagal)  
*Meet the Prince* (1926, dir. Joseph Henaberry)  
*The Miracle Man* (1919, dir. George Loane Tucker)  
*Monty Python's Life of Brian* (1979, dir. Terry Jones)  
*The Plainsman* (1937, dir. Cecil B. DeMille)  
*Reap the Wild Wind* (1942, dir. Cecil B. DeMille)  
*The Road to Yesterday* (1925, dir. Cecil B. DeMille)  
*Samson and Delilah* (1949, dir. Cecil B. DeMille)  
*The Sign of the Cross* (1932, dir. Cecil B. DeMille)  
*The Ten Commandments* (1923, dir. Cecil B. DeMille)  
*The Ten Commandments* (1956, dir. Cecil B. DeMille)

*Tenth Avenue* (1928, dir. William DeMille)

*Unconquered* (1947, dir. Cecil B. DeMille)

*The Volga Boatman* (1926, dir. Cecil B. DeMille)

*Young April* (1926, dir. Donald Crisp)