

Griffith College Dublin

Faculty of Journalism and Media Communications

**The Role of Films in promoting Islamophobia
Content Analysis**

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for MA in Journalism and Media
Communications (QQI)**

By

Felicia Adibi

Supervised by

Dr Conor Kostick

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DECLARATION

I, declare that this body of work that I am now putting forward for assessment; is founded on my study and research and that I have acknowledged all the resources and references included in its the thesis.

I further certify that the research has not already been submitted for review nor have I copied the research of anybody else, in part or in full or otherwise plagiarized.

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F. Adibi

30/07/2020

Abstract

Said (1979) explains that the media over time has been populated with negative stereotypes that seek to create a link between Islam and acts of terrorism as well as all forms of violence (p. 347). Given this, the film industry, which is regarded as a media tool, has been criticised for its role in enforcing negative stereotypes which result in anti-Islamic sentiments.

For this reason, this research work seeks to analyse seven films that cut across different groups, to understand the prevailing stereotypes, how they are used as well as the non-verbal cues used in the films to pass across a message.

Quantitative content analysis was employed to carry out the research, and the films were examined based on context, stereotypes, mis-en-scene and the Riz test proposed by Ahmed Riz.

In an attempt to avoid a myopic and bias conclusion, the films selected were based on the link to Islam and Muslims rather than the theme of terrorism.

The findings of this research conclude that while there is the prevalence of these negative stereotypes in the films examined, the concept in which they are used gives a clear understanding on the motive of the director which very quite often are used to raise awareness and educate viewers.

**This thesis is dedicated the God almighty and to my most exceptional
support system;
My family**

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Films and screenplays are one of the most effective tools of the mass media, possessing the ability to communicate through silence, gestures, facial expression, sound effects, lighting and angles to depict certain mood or effect. With their ability to inform, educate and at the same time entertain depending on the genre chosen by the viewers, films can influence our opinions, decisions as well as our world views.

The use of stereotypes and representation has been a tradition in use by the film industry. With the provision of gender stereotypes, racial, religious and individual stereotypes, people can presume they understand how and why people of a particular group behave and act in a certain way. Many scholars have over a long period observed the use of stereotypes and its effect on people, while some stereotypes are sometimes accurate and positive some tend to create a negative perception of the group represented in the mind of others.

Fiske (1996) explains the vital role the media plays in "social circulation" of information which in turn helps in influencing socio-political change. The media, it can transmit its agenda in different forms, and the case of cinema, the agenda is transmitted in the form of what is known as edutainment (p. 10).

The agenda-setting theory of McCombs and Shaw (1972) explains the connection between the emphasis the media places on a particular issue and the reactions of the audience to that issue and that is why it is observed there is the about the ability of medias agenda often becoming the public agenda. Because the media through a process of selection and framing tend to place more attention on certain news content, and this indirectly dictates what people talk about, and how they perceive things and people. Just the same way the news media selects and frames the content transmitted, film and cinema have in a way create the use of stereotypes by paying more

attention to specific characteristics and enabling people to form perceptions and assumptions based on what is transmitted on screen.

Through news content, the cinematic industry can derive and attribute roles that fit into the description often projected through the other forms of communication. This is because when a specific type of news and event is covered frequently about a group, it adversely affects the way they are perceived and gradually becomes what they are attributed to by the consumers of the content. For example, a study carried out by the University of Michigan cited in Phys.org (2019) shows how minorities most especially Muslims Americans are projected negatively by the mainstream media and the impact it has on their acceptance in the society.

This form of portrayal, as observed in the mainstream media, has also significantly impacted the way this religion is perceived on screen today. So, because of the ability of cinematic content to engage, and capture the attention of the audience, while delivering a message, it has over time influenced the perception of the religion.

Hollywood is regarded as the largest film industry in the world. In 2019, global box office revenue was recorded at \$42.5 billion. As reflected in the success and constant progression of the film industry, the impact and role film plays in everyday life cannot be overemphasized.

According to a survey carried out by L.G. Electronics, it was suggested that the average adult would watch 3,639 films at home and 31,507 scenes of T.V. during their life expectancy. Statistica (2018) reports that 19 per cent of Americans go out to see the films about once per month, 8% watch movies in the cinema a few times each month, and 54% of American grown-ups lean towards watching films at home.

Film has always been regarded as merely a source of entertainment, education and communication, but according to (Barber, 2015) because film offers a spectacular glimpse into the past through documentary, photographic and feature film footage and purposely constructed

to create a link between historical and present-day setting (p.16) the role of films in the society now goes beyond its primary function, and this is why it can be referred to as a powerful medium of communication.

Mirhosseini & Rouzbeh (2015) suggests that because the media have a preconceived and limited perception about Muslims, which are often negative, there exists a consensus that they play a vital role in promoting Islamophobia. In Said (1987, p 286) view, Arabs on screen are always seen on groups with aggression in their eyes and treacherous. Because images can capture attention as opposed to texts, the representation and labelling of this group as predominantly "terrorists" have a way of instigating fear and promoting violence which is caused by Islamophobia (P. 242).

Allen, (2001) described the way the media, newspapers and television had shaped the representation of Muslims by making use of specific images like Muslim men burning American flags while brandishing weapons, angry young men screaming outside a mosque in north London. Allen confirms that although the media cannot be solely blamed for the general perception of the religion around the world, instead, are contributing to the construction of Islamophobia as it is the most available and effect "disseminator of such ideas in our global environment". Terrorism often attracts media attention which is often more exaggerated, over reported and explored, Mirhosseini & Rouzbeh (2015).

Many scholars like Shaheen (2003) over the last decade have created a link between the growth of Islamophobia and the cinematic industry. Many have worked on the premise that due to the negative perceptions and roles given to Muslims on screen, there has been a surge in Islamophobia.

This thesis seeks to examine the extent of Islamic stereotypes in cinematic content and highlight if the overall tone of films with Muslim and Arabs characters are often Islamophobic in nature.

The research would be working to identify the pre-existing stereotypes used in representing Muslims and Arabs on-screen and examine if the context, tone and manner in which the stereotypes are used can be regarded as Islamophobic in nature.

For clarity, it is essential to point out that there is a clear distinction between Arabs and Muslims; this is because although a vast majority of Arabs are Muslims, not all Muslims are Arabs. Muslim people are believers of the Islamic faith, while Arabs are an ethnolinguistic group of people, most of whom are Muslims. However, despite this distinctive difference in the religion and the ethnic group, the words Muslims and Arabs have been used interchangeably over time. For this reason, because all Muslims on-screen are represented as Arabs, it is impossible to separate both terms and that is why the terms would be used interchangeably in the course of this thesis by the researcher.

The research question to be answered:

1. How are Muslims and Arabs represented on screen:
2. Can the tone based on this representation be referred to as Islamophobic in nature?

The researcher believes that just as observed by Shaheen (2008) if 60% of the entire U.S. population would admit to having little or no knowledge about Islam and their negative sentiments about the religion is derived from continuous "hate speech" as well as the negative representation by Hollywood. It would be right to admit that Hollywood has been a contributor to anti-Islamic and Islamophobic sentiments (p.6-10). Because the use of these negative stereotypes about Muslims helps support the notion that the religion promotes violence.

This observation by Shaheen was as a result of the conclusion drawn after he examined 900 films, and only 5% positively represented Muslims.

The gap in literature this research would be answering will be to examine if the use of these stereotypes is Islamophobic. The reason for this is because although the researcher is aware that

other works have existed to identify Islamophobic stereotypes on screen, many have failed to look at the context in which the stereotypes are used.

Thompson (1999, p 10-11) explains the concept of a narrative in film production as a chain of activates taking place within time and space linked with cause and effect. Every story has a beginning, middle and a climax which helps to understand the story better. For example, in one of the movies analyzed in this research, the first scene opens up on angry-looking Arabs, from a general point of view, that can be linked to one of the stereotypes attributed to the Arabs (aggression) but when the context of how the image is used it cannot be regarded as Islamophobic in nature. As it would be observed that although he is Arab and looks aggressive, he is seen trying to struggle to convey himself to work, hence the reason for the aggressive look.

Schweintiz (2011) proposes the impossibility to make a complete generalization about film stereotypes; he addresses the fact that sometimes the stereotypes used adds to the build-up of the story, through the sounds used, effects plot, character and images which then is used to create a link between the character and the story (p.5).

Not only is the concept and reason to which a stereotype is essential, as earlier said, but a film can also be used to raise awareness and influence a socio-political change, the use of stereotypes in film again as explained by Schweintiz (2011) addresses its role in painting the issue of a distorted image of the "other" and try to reinvent and create a more accurate representation and improve the general perception (p. 9-10). He furthers explains that with the use of stereotypes, films were able to address and expose negative stereotypes and corrected distorted images.

In 2010, the movie "my name is Khan" directed by Hindu director Karan Johar which according to the producers of the movie, was used to tell the story about Islam and the way the world viewed the religion before the 911 attack. In the movie, Rizwan Khan, a Muslim who comes from a middle-class family in the Borivali section of Mumbai embarks on a journey to clear his name as

he believed he had been labelled as a terrorist as a result of the representation given to him based on his look as well as his religious beliefs following the 911 attack.

The movie paints a clear picture of how the current form of religious and racial profiling endured by the group and how their Image has been reshaped following the 911 attacks and misrepresentation by the media coverage.

The movie "My name is Khan", several movies have been created to paint a clear picture of the way the world perceived the religion and the form of discrimination, racism and profiling endured by this group. This movie makes use of the stereotypes of the ideal Muslim man, fully bearded, and a non-English name not to create a negative perception but to raise awareness on Islamophobia. The question that then arises, would be despite the use of Islamic stereotypes in the movies can the movies translated as Islamophobic?

Seven movies have been selected to carry out this research and answer the research questions. In order to avoid any form of selection bias, they were selected based on the criteria:

IMDB Website

Filtered based in Muslim and Islamic movies and audiences votes, odd number selection from the 1st, 3rd, 5th, 11th and 13th this was done to avoid random selection by the researcher as well as enable a timeline spread across of the movies to be analyzed.

Two movies from the *Aladdin* series was also selected based on the success of the movies in the year released. These were selected to examine if there has been a change in the form and how the religion and Arabs are represented in the sequels.

The movies include:

The kingdom of Heaven (2005)

| | |
|--------------------------|--------|
| <i>Gandhi</i> | (1982) |
| <i>Syriana</i> | (2005) |
| <i>The kite runner</i> | (2007) |
| <i>A most wanted man</i> | (2014) |

According to ECRI, cited in Petley, (2013) defines racism as 'the belief that a group such as race, colour, language, religion, nationality or national or ethnic origin justifies contempt for a person or a group of persons or the notion of the superiority of a person or group of persons'. Regarding the link between Islamophobia and the racism; in going in line with the definition by the ECRI as well as the Runnymede Islamophobia report for 2018, it would be justifiable to attempt to draw an assumption that the ideology of Islamophobia goes beyond the fear of the religion but instead a more subtle and deliberate attempt at racism.

Siddiqui (2006) explains that followers of the religion of Islam originate from different races, ethnicity, and culture and speak different languages. Even within the religion, there still exist different sub-sects. Nevertheless, it is impossible to argue with the fact that on-screen Muslims are often categorized as resembling Arabs. This resemblance often comprises of men with beard, veiled women, turbans and a look which can be linked to hostility; there is no surprise when people think about the religion terrorism comes to mind. This trend mirrors the current media-led stereotype.

Lippmann (1961) described stereotyping as "pictures in our heads". Before we see and understand the universe, we take from culture predefined representations of the environment in the form of assumptions. In agreeing with Lippmann, the general assumption and representation of Arabs and Muslims on screen was developed not from actual interaction with the group, but rather from the faulty and simplistic assumption passed across in the form of stereotypes. Moreover, this has led this religion and this group to be feared and stared up the whole basis of Islamophobia.

Said (1997) asserts that as a result of the representation or labels given of the religion, a single mention of the word Islam in the West ignites unpleasant reactions (p 10).

The Guardian (2019) released a study report and found the Mail on Sunday had the most negative coverage of Islam, with 78% of its stories featuring Muslims with negative themes—above a 59% already strong industry average (Waterson, 2019).

Although hostility against Islam and Muslims has been a characteristic in European cultures since the 8th century, it has recently gained more grounds and following the 9/11 attack as well as other subsequent attacks in many countries. The media since the attack has used this as a tool to encourage their agenda that fear and distrust towards Muslims (Sheehi, 2011).

Because the media plays a crucial role in educating us about Islam and in shaping how we react to the news reported on this topic, the media's coverage and news function have often contributed to the ideology of Islam is mistaken and it is adversely reflected on screen today.

In reflecting on the role the media plays in encouraging stereotypes and representation, the media content are filled with increasingly biased and misrepresentation as because people of nearly all ages are encouraged to access and interact with these outlets daily, there is the strong possibility of developed assumptions and these assumptions becoming the perception that is assumed in the minds of those being exposed to the content. Irrespective of the effect, whether negative or positive the content exposed to daily, become a part of everyday life and influence the way people interact with specific groups of people.

In a nutshell, this thesis will examine if the film content is a contributing factor to Islamophobia.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

As at the time of writing this thesis, there has been a considerable increase in Islamophobic attacks and anti-Islamic policies. In 2019, the Guardian reported that hate crimes against Muslims had risen by 593% following the attack of two mosques in New Zealand. In the same report, it was observed that Muslims in the U.K. have reported gun or firearms attacks directed at them. These attacks have come in various forms: Physical, verbal and more recently cyber attack.

CAIR data shows attacks on Muslims in the U.S. declined by more than half in 2018. Although this data released might infer that the Muslim community has begun to receive some sense of acceptance within their society, but the reverse is the case. While physical attacks might have subsided, the attacks now tend to be more verbal and online. As indicated by Tell Mama, for instance, the hashtag in 2015 *#KillAllMuslims* was an Islamophobic trend on twitter (Tell Mama 2016).

In the same way, the president of the United States of American has also been criticized for enabling anti-Islamic sentiments through his policies as well as opinion shared on social media. For example, the Muslim Advocates in 2020 condemned the actions of the Trump as offensive, and dangerous for making use "anti-Muslim stereotypes to attack American political leaders" in a tweet.

Despite the attitude of Trump to promote Islamophobia through his social media and policies, Alsultany (2020) explains that these anti-Islamic sentiments although highly promoted by Trump was always in existence, following World War II and the Holocaust, the United Nations recommended that Palestine be apportioned to make the province of Israel. Most Palestinians dismissed the U.N.'s. proposition, considering it to be an exchange from British to Israeli rule. They addressed why they would relinquish their territory to make up for the slaughter submitted by Nazi Germany.

With the target of recuperating their territory and focusing on their predicament, Palestinian gatherings completed a progression of plane hijackings.

When the U.S. news media reported these hijackings, concentration was on a "Middle Easterner enemy representation and this set in motion the way the religion and group are perceived in the present day.

This enemy representations captured by the news media has become the unofficial imagery of Arabs and Muslims in the film industry. Similar to the representation given to all minority groups, the skewed portrayals of Islam was adopted.

While the news media, through its agenda-setting function, has constructed these perspectives about the religion, its adoption by Hollywood over time has been regarded as contributing to the growth of Islamophobia the world over.

Chris Allen cited in the inquiry by all Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims, 2018 to give a working definition to the term, explained Islamophobia as an absolute misunderstanding of Islam, which can be translated as fear towards Muslims. The verbal and physical forms of Islamophobia are aimed towards Muslim or non-Muslim persons or their belongings, towards Muslim community structures and religious institutions (All-Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims 2018).

Acknowledging Bleich, (2011) there has always been an existence of Islamophobia, and this is why he described it as a new word for an old concept this is because the association of Islam with negative stereotypes as always been in existence as published by Edward Said in 1979.

DEFINING ISLAMOPHOBIA

Islamophobia was initially developed as a concept in the late 1990s by political activists to draw attention to rhetoric and actions directed at Islam and Muslims in Western liberal democracies. In recent years, Islamophobia has evolved from a primarily political concept toward one increasingly deployed for analytical purposes. Researchers have begun using the term to identify the history, presence, dimensions, intensity, causes, and consequences of anti-Islamic and anti-Muslim sentiments.

In 1997 the term Islamophobia was defined as an unfounded hostility and unfair discrimination towards Muslims. This definition was initially proposed in the Runnymede report where the term was adopted to explain the concept of Islamophobia and because although there was the existence of anti-Islamic sentiment, it was not as profound as what exists in the present day.

Since the term, Islamophobia was first mentioned in the early 1980's several scholars have shared convincing argument regarding how appropriate the term was, in describing the entire idea and concept of anti-Muslim prejudice.

ENR (2020) explains Islamophobia as a particular form of racism that refers to acts of violence and discrimination and hates speech fuelled by historical abuses and terrible stereotyping and misrepresentation of Muslims, and all those perceived as such. Islam is often perceived beyond being classified as a religion; it is regarded as a social, political movement and with the permanent link of Arabs to represent Islam is it regarded as a race. This is why as a result of the social building of the religion as a race and to which specificities and stereotypes are attributed, which has led to mixed reactions; Islamophobia is classified as a form of racism. Consequently, even those who do not practice Islam but who are perceived as Muslim - because of their ethnicity, migration background or physical features are subjected to discrimination. This is why Waikar (2018) admits that the idea of Islamophobia is one of the most intense forms of racism and discrimination.

In considering the term Islamophobia which is coined from two words Islam and phobia, a literal translation would mean "the fear of Islam", but the term is used to refer to any form of prejudice

towards Muslims or anyone who is perceived to be linked to the religion. Holliday cited in Massoumi et al. (2017) explains that the idea behind the use of the term is to point out the hatred, violence and discrimination against Muslims in the society. For that reason, the term Islamophobia was inadequate to describe this form of prejudice. He, therefore, proposes the use of the word anti-Muslimism.

Although this research is not aimed at pointing out the adequacy of the word, the researcher believes that the constant representation on screen has resulted in heightened fear of the religion, which is the Islamophobia. This simply goes to say that the reactions to this prejudice are as a result of Islamophobia.

In 2017, in a follow-up report by Runnymede, a more detail definition was adopted;

" Islamophobia is any distinction, exclusion, or restriction towards, or preference against, Muslims (or those perceived to be Muslims) that has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life".

Islamophobia is formed as a result of exaggerated stereotypes which is a way of representing and evaluating different human beings in continuous, unyielding words. It is the segmentation and grouping of a class, category and gender to specific attributes, characteristics, and features and classifying them as a group rather than as individuals.

As communication is a continuous process of representations, perception and interpretation with the use of symbols and images and meaning deduced by receivers depending on the feedback mechanism, the media through its agenda-setting function forces attention to specific topics. They build up public images of political figures. They are continually presenting objects suggesting what the audience would think about, know and how they perceive things (Mccombs and Shaw, 1972).

ISLAMOPHOBIA IN HISTORY

Before the term Islamophobia was coined in the late 1980s, there had always been the prevalence of anti-Islamic views in Europe. Many scholars have linked these anti-Muslim sentiments to the Christian crusade or rather the medieval Christian portrayal of Islam, between 1098-1291. It was believed that the early Christian had formed perceptions about Muslims, and these perceptions were formulated based on little or no interactions with Muslims.

Said (1997) confirms this notion that during the medieval times, Islam was regarded as a "demonic religion of apostasy, blasphemy and obscurity", with the prophet Mohammed regarded as a false prophet (p.5). This goes to say that the current image been accorded to Muslims has always been in existence.

Islamophobia is the modern form of Orientalism Beydoun (2018).

Murad Qureshi cited in a report by the Commission on British Muslims, and Islamophobia published in 2012 described Muslims as the "new political black", which was a term used to refer to all the people who are likely to experience social discrimination based on skin colour.

The reason for this comparison arises from the current state of Islamophobia in the world, as Muslims are continually seeking for ways to be accepted and perceived as individuals rather than been characterized as a group which forms the basis for significant stereotypes experienced.

Initially, the term was brought to light following a report published in 1997 by the Runnymede Trust on Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us All. However, after the report published the framing and categorizing of Muslims in line with terrorism and dominant religious stereotypes has primarily been increased following the 9/11 and 7/7. These attacks made Islam receive more attention from not only the media but the world in general as regards terrorism and economic risk.

Most prevalent in the 1997 report was the detailed media analysis, which proved the extent of Islamophobia in the press. The report also emphasizes that the cynical and continuous distrust towards Muslims, in general, extends from the misleading or incorrect stories and headlines, which are often driven by poorly constructed reports and inaccurate news reports.

In a follow up on the 1997 report published in 2017 by Runnymede, as a result of the negative image and inaccuracy of the reports by the news media, the media have a vital role in correcting the representation of Muslims in the public eye.

As suggested by the report, although the media have a role to play in the representation of Muslims, there is a common and underlying effect these reports have on the movies and how this group are represented.

FILM AS MEDIA TOOL FOR PROMOTION ISLAMIC STEREOTYPES

Just the same way we watch romantic movies and they give us a sense of belief in ever after; films have over the years have influenced our opinions about religions, gender, race and the world in general.

The media, in this case, motion pictures, in the form of films, series and animations, have a way of giving life to what is seen and this in turn influence and acts as a guide to sharpen how people see the world.

Strikingly, films can permit crowds to create considerations, perspectives, and assessments dependent on what they see. In this way, plots, characters, and specific qualities might be rehearsed and depicted in numerous movies, thus forming the basis for generalization attributed to race, religion and how people are received. Regardless of whether esteemed positive or negative, motion pictures can keep going forever, and with them, they hold pictures and visuals that cannot be changed.

Laughey (2007) considers the media to have the ability to indirectly or directly affect how people think and feel. Indirectly in the sense that these people being influenced by the media are unlikely to admit to being affected by what they watch, read or hear when asked. As explained by Laughey, this means that we are all affected to some degree by what we see, listen, browse, play, and read through the media. This is based on the belief of omnipresent nature of the media, having the ability to be anywhere and everywhere at the same time, people believe and rely on the content being transmitted to them to be factual. This representation and influence of the media over time has shaped the way we see the world, as explained by Laughey.

The ability of films, animations and series to have this effect on in the people is as a result of the prevailing stereotypes present in them. A black man in movies is often seen as aggressive, uneducated and likely to either end up in prison or an ex-convict, a Mexican in the United States is most likely an illegal immigrant with the name "Jose", and American a hero or the victim of an attack and a Muslim a terrorist.

These prevailing stereotypes present in movies have formed the ways these genders, races and religions are viewed and perceived even without physical interaction.

The media in its various forms, newspaper, magazines and news content on broadcast media to the media in the form of film, animations, music and even sports have contributed to the formulations of these stereotypes.

Because the media plays a crucial role in educating us about Islam and in shaping how we react to the news reported on this topic, the media's coverage and news function have often contributed to the ideology of Islam is mistaken and it is adversely reflected on screen today.

DEPICTION OF ARABS AND MUSLIM IN FILM

The negative representation of the Arabs and Muslims in cinema has always been in existence with the beginning. Although Hollywood had demonized, humiliated and eroticized Muslims

through the use of negative stereotypes since its inception, but these representations were not developed by Hollywood but instead built upon and modified from the pre-existing European Arab stereotypes.

During the era of silent films which occurred between the mid-1890s to the late 1920s, Arabs and Muslims have always been associated with one form of representation or the other. In movies like *One Arabian Night* (1920), *The Gift girl* (1917), *the thief of Baghdad* (1924) and *the lady of Harem* (1926), the dominant representation during this era as suggested by Alsumtany (2010) was Arabs representation as belly dancers, veiled and oppressed women, wealthy oil sheikhs and aggressors. At this time, Arabs were seen as exotic, mystical and deserts populated with genies that have the power to grant wishes and transport them with flying carpets (P. 39).

Bliss (2005) carried out research and analyzed 60 movies to understand how Muslim women were portrayed in Hollywood during this era. He observed that in movies like *Fatima* (1897), the main character was as a veiled bosomy belly dancer, in the *Sheik* (1921) they were adorned in translucent veils to depict their exotic character and the level of oppression faced by a Muslim woman. This representation, as observed by Bliss, is one which still exists to date in both modern and classic Hollywood cinema.

For example, in 2010 Hollywood blockbuster *Sex and the city 2*, Samantha is to plan a P.R. campaign for an Arab sheikh's business who flies her and her friends on an all-expenses-paid luxury vacation to Abu Dhabi upon exploring the country they discovered veiled Muslim women, who are depicted as veiled women and troubled, desperate to unshackle themselves from the veil and full body covering. In one scene, Carrie, stares at a veiled girl in pity, implying that this girl has no free alternative as she was forced to wear the garment. Carrie in disapproval states that the veil across the mouth from her perspective, signified the oppression and lack of freedom and identity of the women. From this movie, two dominant depictions of the Arabs was used, "the wealthy sheikh" and "the oppressed and veiled women" through these depictions from the movie, people are left with the concept that Muslim women who cover their faces do not do this

out of their free will but rather it was an approach to show the oppression and superiority of men who practice Islam, a religion which is thought to be a sexist faith.

Following this was the Era of Technicolor and sound as well as the colonization of the Middle East by the European empire, and the depiction of Arabs was shifted at this point to be more focused addressing the Europeans as heroes. The representation here was in line with the notion of Orientalism as proposed by Said (1979) where the orientals (Arabs and Muslims) are portrayed as gullible, unintelligent, aggressive and in need of the support of the Europeans (P. 38).

Alsuntany (2010) further demonstrates in line with the ideology of Orientalism; the colonizers began to paint the picture of being the saviours in an effort for established colonialism. The already accepted image of the Arabs was still depicted but with white men freeing Arabs from slavery, saving good Arabs from extremists as well as white women from aggressive Arab rapists (P. 40).

Said (1979) explains the concept of Orientalism in line with the forms of a misrepresentation given to Arabs and Muslims in general. He opines that this form of representation portrayed on screen could be seen as a deliberate attempt to control the Orientals (East). Just like Said, on the ideology of Orientalism, Sheehan discovered that the portrayal of this group was constructed in a way to elevate the civilization and humanity of the West and promote the current perception of the East (Orientals) as uncivilized.

Gradually, Hollywood has modified the portrayals of the Arabs or Muslims from the time of mythic Arabia where bearded Arabs rode camels in the desert, waved swords, killed each other and coveted Western heroines. Women had been kept in harems and belly danced in revealing clothing. These old stereotypes have been replaced with new ones. The Sheik and lusty despot have slowly disappeared, leaving hijackers, kidnappers and terrorists. Muslim women have disappeared in the back of the chador and burqa (Picherit-Duthler and Yunis 2011).

When it comes to the topic of how terrorism gradually became the new face of Islam, many scholars would in arguable go with the assumption that the link between Islam and terrorism was brought to the limelight following the 911 attack in the U.S. Shaheen (2007) suggests that the representation of Arabs as terrorist began to intensity around 1948 following the inauguration of the state of Israel in the Palestinian land. This inauguration of the Israeli state was followed by the "Arab-Israeli wars between 1948, 1967 1973, the hijacking of planes, the disruptive 1973 Arab oil embargo, along with the rise of Libya's Qaddafi and Irans Ayatollah Khomeini" (p. 23).

All these instances assisted in sharpening the Image of Islam to what it is today and referred to as "Public Enemy No 1" as observed by Shaheen (2007). Mirhosseini & Rouzbeh (2015), demonstrates that just the same way the Irish were labelled as "Irish terrorists" during the troubled time, the Muslims in the more contemporary context have now been tagged as "Islamic terrorists", he admits that what differentiates both would be while Irish were labelled based on their ethnicity and identity, the Muslims suffer from a more homogenous form of labelling as it is the religion here been labelled, which allows the labelling to cut across many races link to the religion (p. 56).

This representation of Arabs as terrorist became primarily accepted as the new norm, which was not only accepted and presented in Hollywood but evident in the news media in the U.S. According to Alsuntany (2010) the news media played a crucial role painting a picture in the site of Americans and the West in general about the Middle East and the religion of Islam being a place represented by terrorism (p.46). Said (1979) in the same vein confirms that there that been a constant reinforcement with the use of stereotypes been presented by the media; television, films and news media, and this has narrowed how the Orientals are viewed (p. 26).

Omidvar and Richards (2014) point out that Hollywood did not instantly adopt this form of representation of Arabs and Muslims as terrorists, films about the 911 attack began to be released in the mid-2000s, movies like Fahrenheit (2005), the flight that fought back (2005,

United 93 (2006), world trade centre (2006) and a host of others. These movies released then were created in an attempt to give reasons for the attack as linked to Islamic terrorism.

Gerges (2003) points out that because the media have successfully created a link between Islam and terrorism due constant reports and overemphasis, this has led to this representation being stored in the minds of Americans, and this is why Said (1997) points out that "to speak of Islam in the west today is to mean the unpleasant things" (p. 10).

Undoubtedly, fear and anxiety towards Muslims had heightened following the 911 attack, because when any form of attack takes place an increased level of public concern comes to play. Although the role of the 911 attack in promoting prejudice and discrimination between Muslims and the western world cannot be eliminated, the function of the media in selecting and emphasizing these events to the public has in a way pointed out what and who should be seen as a threat.

"My concentration was reluctantly extracted from a world of mountain chalets alpine views to the sound of a strange language, yet somehow recognizable. As I unconsciously turned towards the sound, I saw a dark, bearded man, unmistakably Muslim speaking what must have been Arabic into his cell phone. I heard words like "Alhamdulillah" (praise be to Allah) and "Inshallah" (If Allah is willing). As I became aware of a creeping fear beginning to squeeze my chest, I found myself consciously wishing this man was not on my flight" (Slocum 2019 p. 12).

Just like Slocum, this form of anxiety is often experienced by many when they come in contact with Muslims, fear creeps through their mind, and this leads for continuous surveillance of anyone that can be identified as Muslim on a plane or in a public space. In 2006, six Imams were disembarked from a U.S. Airways when a passenger on the flight had passed a note to a flight crew member to address the "6 suspicious Arabs" on the flight because they had mentioned the word, Allah, a few times, hence making their move suspicious. Again in 2016, an Arab Muslim family was removed off a US Flight because of "safety recursions" mostly because the woman

was wearing the Hijab. This and many more are incidences that have been experienced by Muslims on flights as they are often seen as a threat to security. (Selod 2018 p. 2, 3).

Hollywood for over a century has one depicted the Image of Islam and the portrayal of Muslims in different ways but mostly in a negative light as observed by many scholars. It has used this Image to assemble sentiment, to give a boost to attachment, and to promote replication, and it has reproduced its relationship to the Orient in an ever-changing development (Miles 1996: 10).

It has espoused the cultural assumptions on which Orientalism is founded.

The Arab Muslim male is portrayed as a backward and undeveloped heathen.

American Film, in its projection of Arabs, persistently friends "Arab" with "Islam", for that reason all Arabs are Muslims, and all Muslims are Arabs. American cinema has created homogeneous thinking of what a Muslim is, and what a Muslim extremist is – he is an Arab (Shaheen 2001).

Following the 9/11 attack, many Hollywood films were created as a re-enactment of this incident, and this understanding of the religion and how they are portrayed on screen was uprooted from news content and media reports. Perhaps this is why most Hollywood movies based on terrorism are often regarded as real-life stories but more often than not criticized for exaggerated content.

The Islamic chance narrative has grown to be a constant imagination of impending terrorism on the Hollywood silver screen. Mirhosseini & Rouzbeh (2015) citing Pantazis and Pemberton (2005) explains that there is no denying the threats from terrorism, but the categorizing of a group as a suspect community and this leads to what Perry (2001 p,179) refers to as permission to hate.

Currently, the depiction of Muslims and Arabs in Hollywood cinema had gone beyond the conscious use of stereotypes in movies to the deliberate use of these stereotypes simply to point out these existing forms of representation.

Italian Novelist Umberto Eco cited in Riegler (2010) explains that 70% of the knowledge people have about the world around them is derived from American Cinema, and the perception of Islam being a symbol of terrorism has been shaped through these cinematic content (p. 35)

Sheehan (2006) in his *Cinematic stereotypes, embody common biases, and how they are formed*. Depictions Asians as nerdy, black men as dangerous and Arabs as aggressive can influence perceptions, and this is why Hollywood overtime has been accused of providing many examples of racist caricatures with minority groups being heavily targeted.

Shaheen, in his *Reel Poor Arabs and Guilty: Hollywood's Verdict on Arabs after 9/11*, addresses the cruel depiction of Arabs on Hollywood television thoroughly. He notes that a large number of Hollywood films have promulgated a derogatory image of Arabs as well as Muslims, which has contributed to many cultural misunderstandings about them.

According to ISPU, although there has been considerable improvement in the reception and attitudes of people towards Muslims since 2014, there still exists some form of resistance to their acceptance in society. In elaborating on this, ISPU suggests that the reason for this form of hostility towards people of this religious beliefs can be linked to the negative representation given to them by the media, this is because a vast majority of people are exposed to Muslims through the media rather than physical interaction, and these contents they are exposed to through cable news, newspapers, television, and movies, and videogames tends to portray Muslims as terrorists, violent, and aggressive (Saleem, 2017).

Said (1997) attests that although there is no denying the attacks by Muslims on the Israelis and westerners, the news content focused on the aggression of Islam being over-reported and overemphasized has now defined what "Islam is". This is why Islam as a word, religion, according to Said, has become a form of attack which often motivates hostility between the followers of the religion and the western world (p. xvi). Furthermore Said goes to point out that not only has the religion been a symbol of hostility as represented by the media, he also refers to Islam being a political scapegoat used to represent anything not desirable in the political, social and economic

standpoint. For the right-wing, it represents barbarism, for the left, theocracy and for the middle and unappealing exotic component.

Paul (1998), states that generalizations are concocted to clarify why things are how they are. "An individual creates generalizations about a gathering... from data and disinformation, mutilations, or potentially suppositions made accessible through family, companions, and the media" (Abreu, Ramirez, Kim, and Haddy, 2003, p. 693) unfortunately, while a few races might be delineated in a progressively ideal light, others may then be depicted in a contrarily one-sided way. "A few of Hollywood's most barefaced examples of inclination fall inside the classes of race, ethnicity as well as religion. Remembered for this gathering are negative as well as cliché depictions of Arabs and Muslim-Americans"(Cones, 1998).

By observation, all races might be depicted contrarily at once or another; it appears that a few races, explicitly Arabs and Arab-Americans, might be perceived as being related with a dominant part of negative qualities.

Hollywood for over a century has one depicted the Image of Islam and the portrayal of Muslims in different ways but mostly in a negative light. It has used these images to assemble sentiment, to give a boost to attachment, and to promote replication, and it has reproduced its relationship to the Orient in an ever-changing development (Miles 1996: 10). It has espoused the cultural assumptions on which Orientalism is founded. In early films, such as *The Unfaithful Odalisque* (1900), *The Palace of Arabian Nights* (1905), *The Arab* (1915), *The Sheikh* (1921), *The Desert Song* (1929) and *Thief of Damascus* (1952), the world of Islam was once depicted as mysterious and exotic and extravagant, yet, veiled girls in harems, bearded sheikhs and dark-skinned villains dwelling in locations in the desolate tract landscapes surrounded by way of palm trees and camels. Nevertheless, the mysterious and uncommon do not always promote a positive image (Ramji 2005).

ISLAM AND VIOLENCE

The religion of Islam is often referred to by many as the religion of peace as justified by the Quran. However, Seyyed and Hossein, (2015) point out the same Quran, contradicts the portrayal of the religion as peaceful because a critical look into this verse of the Quran warns the followers of this religion against creating a good relationship with their oppressors.

"Allah does not forbid you from being kind and acting justly towards those who did not fight over faith with you, nor expelled you from your homes. Allah indeed loves those who are just. He only forbids you from making friends with those who fought over faith with you and banished you from your homes and aided in your exile. Whoever makes friends with them is a transgressor".

There is no denying the underlying evidence of the fact in the stereotypes promoted by the media, but the dominance of these stereotypes on-screen has impacted how the entirety of the religion is seen.

Hollywood has propagated and fortified the suppositions and account of "orientalism." Muslim character and the worries of Muslims are progressively being characterized as far as an oppositional rationalization that sets Islam and Muslims in opposition to the remainder of the world (Noor, 2007).

As observed by scholars, Hollywood film has slandered Muslims as perilous, pre-present day and ignoble individuals which is educated by specific predispositions and is adding to prejudgments and generalizations towards the Muslims and Islam. The portrayal of Muslims in Hollywood movies coordinates the orientalist talks about Muslim Eisele (2002) follows the early history of Hollywood film and finds the portrayals of East as a position of kidnapping and subjugation, abuse and compulsion, desire and avarice, dread and recovery for sins. From the earliest starting point of American Film in 1896, the picture of the Arab (who is Muslim) has consistently been cliché, the social "other," which is frequently anticipated along racial also, strict subjects (Ramji, 2005).

Said (1997) opines that these false representations of the religion by the media has formed a deliberate link between the religion and fundamentalism and the consumption of those news or media content by a reader would lead to the conclusion by the reader or viewer that both Islam and fundamentalism are synonymous (p.xvi).

In line with the standing point of Said regarding the misrepresentation of the religion being a deliberate effort, it can be argued that these distorted representation and portrayal of the religion through the stereotypes and generalizations, perception of the founders and all followers are a constant reinforcement of all the contrary fact linked to Islam. Perhaps this is why when an account of an event is given in the form of the screenplay; particular contents are often emphasized to pass across a certain point of view.

Shaheen (2008) proposes that when a group is categorized as the "other" and in the case of Islam, the villain, they are often victimized and harassed as well as taken as natural suspect irrespective of their actions. Shaheen cites the examples of the Imams who were apprehended at the airport while praying as their actions were taken as a part of a planned terrorist act.

Shaheen studied movies produced between 1896 and 2001. His extensive research process crossed two decades, and he came to find that "Hollywood has anticipated Arabs as scoundrels over 900 motion pictures. By far most of the representations are famous sheikhs, ladies, Egyptians, and Palestinians" Shaheen expressed that since 1896 Hollywood has discharged more than 100 motion pictures portraying Arabs in a bad light.

Wijsen, (2013) cited in Seyyed and Hossein, (2015) confirmed that this method of over-reporting Islam in lousy light has brought the religion to be categorized with extremist Islam and thus forming the basis of Islamophobia.

The Guardian (2019) also released a study report and found the Mail on Sunday had the most negative coverage of Islam, with 78% of its stories featuring Muslims with negative themes—above a 59% already strong industry average (Waterson, 2019).

Although hostility against Islam and Muslims has been a characteristic in European cultures since the 8th century, it has recently gained more grounds and following the 911 attack as well as other subsequent attacks in many countries. The media since the attack has used this as a tool to encourage their agenda that fear and distrust towards Muslims (Sheehi, 2011).

Chomsky & Herman, (1998) cited in Al Mannan and Shamir Al-Af in (2017) affirms that the media often becomes biased and even untrue to sell their agendas to the audience and transform them from the media agenda to the public agenda.

For Islam, certain features that have been used to describe and categories the religion over time, and this has made the religion to be perceived as violent and threatening.

In 2006 a documentary film was written by Jack Shaheen and titled "Reel Bad Arabs". The documentary which was in an enactment form the book 'reel bad Arabs' also written by Shaheen was intended to shed more lights on the way Hollywood had manipulated and framed the Image of Arabs.

In 2014, John Bennett described religion as a political system rather than just a religion because he believed the religion used a god to promote the world domination project. He opined that Islam was not a religious faith but rather shared the same agenda as the sect known as ISIS (Branch 2014).

There are several scholarly publications on film productions and how they depict Muslims in a stereotypical way which has adversely form part of the basis of Islamophobia.

Ramji, Rubina (2016) published a journal to examine the role Hollywood Plays in Sustaining the Muslim Terrorist Image ever since the 9/11 attack. He demonstrates that Hollywood has over the years, evolved in way representation of the Islam and the depiction of Muslims, but a vast majority of these representations have been negative.

Roaa Ali in (2017) Cited from Edward Said's Orientalism where careful analysis of several writings on Arab and Muslim problems shows the prevalence of derogatory Arab perceptions of Western structures of information and representation. Roaa further explained this to be as a result of Stereotyping which occurs in "underlying and subtle racism" at the group, which expresses itself directly and indirectly through the formulation of perceptions and behaviours towards the stereotyping community.

Veldhausz (2017) is undoubtedly right to suggest that the continuous use of these stereotypes in news and movies would reinforce the issue of anti-Muslim behaviours and form more basis to promote Islamophobia. However, when the issue of selection bias is considered in the selective process of the movies analyzed by Veldhausz (2017), it is impossible not to get the expected results and form the notion that Hollywood contributes to Islamophobia. The movies selected here were chosen based on the link to the 911 attack, hostile circumstance and the hunt for Osama bin Laden. As a result of these forms of criteria for the selection, there exists some form of selection bias or what can also be referred to as a "selection effect". Hammersley (2000) explains selection bias as a systematic deviation would result in a valid route to achieve a goal. With this in mind using this form of selection to determine the role of Hollywood cinema in promoting Islamophobia would more than likely result in the expected result of the researcher.

As earlier stated, to avoid this form of selection bias just the theory, concept and build-up of the story would be considered, and this is why it becomes essential to understand the concept of film theory.

To consider the idea of film theory means to think like the director, producers, writers and actors of production and understand the development process in the creation of the content. It requires the ability to analyze and translate the meaning behind every shot, edit, angle, costume, and interprets the production choice to be able to understand the general idea of the film.

"If all we are interested in is the story and information, why not just read a novel, newspaper or a film script".

Slander (2009) from the above statement tries to explain that the audiences consume far more than just the story or the content, and this because the vibrancy, authenticity of the story being re-enacted or performed creates a different form of atmosphere, which not only captures the audience attention at the time it is being consumed but carries on being replayed and stored to memory.

Other scholars have considered the concept of film theory, just like Shaheen (2008) and Veldhausz (2017), but the research would be considering the context and how these concepts are used.

Siddiqui (2001) observed the attention of the media is often concentrated on Islamic terrorism acts and instances, but little or no attention is given to explain the reason behind the rage expressed by some Islamic groups (p. 27). He proposes some of the rage expressed by Muslims can be linked to their economic woes because, despite two-thirds of the world's oil and gas being found in Muslims land, their entire GDP is less than 9% of the world economy as of 2016. Also, as a result of the poverty rate, a significant percentage of the world refugees are Muslims (p. 31).

With this put into consideration, it is essential to remember the words of Martin Luther King (1967) where he suggests that riots do not just suddenly come into existence; it is the cry out of the unheard.

Siddiqui (2001) continues to explain that as a result of the economic situation of these Muslim countries, the Muslims find solace in their religion and feel the need to react anything they feel their religion is being mocked and sometimes this can result in irrational behaviours such as violence (p. 32). In addition, to the explanation, as proposed by Siddiqui (2001) he suggests the aggression which has been registered as a label for people of this religion also comes from their method of praying because they often see the need to shout when praying together in a mosque which leads to their way and tone of voice being picked up as angry and aggressive.

Therefore for example, if in the movie *Syriana*, which tries to point the rate of exploitation of Arab or Muslim populated countries by the U.S., an "aggressive" Muslim is seen working as a labourer in an oil plant and knowing well the financial implication and benefit of the plant but is paid an amount that can barely feed him and his family. Can this scene of an aggressive Muslim in the movie be referred to as Islamophobic?

Besides, not only can the use of stereotypes be subject to the context and tone it used Omidvar and Richards (2014), observed that the use of stereotypes in comedy had been adopted by comics to raise awareness and try to redefine the Muslim Image in order to address the negative stereotypes directed towards them. (p. 4). This perception of the way stereotype has been used to redefine Islamic Image is further considered by Omidvar and Richards (2014) in their analysis of Pop culture in terms of music and cinema. For example the T.V. series "Little Mosque on the prairie" produced in 2007 Omidvar and Richards (2014) observed that the series works around the use of Islamic stereotypes to create a sympathetic Muslim Character for the audience, by making use of the ideal depiction of a Muslim with moderate dressing and head coverings. This has always been the representation of the Muslim woman, often presumed to be suppressed by the "sexist" society they belong to. Despite the use of these stereotypes, the series tries to present the Muslim woman beyond her stereotypes, covered up yet educated a feminist and stylish despite coverings (p. 98).

Just like Omidvar and Richards (2014), the researcher believes that the link between the concept and tone needs to be considered before a conclusion that a scene or the use of a stereotype in a movie promotes Islamophobia.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Every research work is based on an assumption which is put to the test through either a qualitative or a quantitative approach to research to investigate a hypothesis and either prove or disprove the initial hypothesis. In this case, the research is carried out to examine the function of films in the construction of Islamophobia in society through its use of stereotypes. This would be done not only by highlighting the stereotypes in films but rather the context in which they are used alongside the mise-en-scene used to depict specific effects, moods and scenes.

Hypothesis I:

There is a prevalence of the use of stereotypes about Muslims in Film.

Hypothesis II:

The use of these stereotypes has contributed to the rise of Islamophobia.

Hypothesis III:

The effect of the stereotypes is subjective to the context in which they are used.

QUALITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS

According to Flick et al. (2004) content analysis is aimed at providing a detailed study of the mass media, which must be in a physical form (recorded) (p. 266)

Similarly, Wilier and Wiener cited in Wimmer (2014) explained content analysis to be any organized process developed to observe the content of documented data.

Content analysis gained ground before World War II due to growing concerns about the influence and impact of the new mass media industry. It was because of the belief that the users of these materials were more vulnerable to media manipulation, that systematic material research was adopted to assess the existence of political propaganda." Deacon et al. (2017).

Owing to this factor, within the last few decades, media content, in terms of symbols and messages, has begun to draw more attention to form the basis for research.

It is based on this common factor, that the researcher here would be making use of content analysis to determine the role film plays in promoting Islamophobia. So, because they are vital to the setting of agendas and focusing public interest on subjects, the media – television, the press and online – play a vital role in communicating to the public what happens in the world?

Wimmer (2014) stated that "content analysis is often reality checks in which the portrayal of a certain group, phenomenon, trait or characteristics are examined against a standard taken from real life" (Pg. 152).

Some studies that have been conducted over the last few years to examine media content against reality using content analysis include; Davis 1951 researched to determine the relationship between the coverage of crime in Colorado Newspaper and the rate of crime in the state.

That is why DowneWambolt (1992) points out that content analysis is more than a counting process because the goal is to link the results to their meaning or the environment in which they were produced: he argued that content analysis is a research methodology that offers a

systematic and objective means of drawing valid inferences from verbal, visual or written data to clarify and quantify particular hypotheses." (p. 314).

As the films selected for this research work cut across various timelines and were selected based on their link to Islam and their ratings on IMDB, the researcher believes a content analysis would be more applicable and unbiased as the research would be done based on documented fact, rather than mere assumption.

For content analysis to be practical, the following questions need to be answered:

• **What data is being examined?**

The data to be examined in this regards would be films.

• **Where is the data taken from?**

The data here is taken from a search filter on the IMDB website.

• **How is the information classified?**

The data are to be categorized based on semiotics, stereotypes and mise en scene.

• **What is the context of the information?**

The context of the information would be defined by the topic, which is to identify the role films play in promoting Islamophobia.

• **Are there research limitations?**

Just like all research work, this work will have its limitation, one which would include the selection process of the movies in an attempt to alienate a sense of bias from the researchers.

• **What is being inferred from the data?**

With the current rise in the topic of Islamophobia, it is essential to determine how the movies produced influence perception and if the portrayal of Muslims based on stereotypes in these films are Islamophobic in nature.

SAMPLING AND COLLECTION OF DATA

To investigate the role of the media in the creation of the theory and culture of Islamophobia, focusing on how Muslims and Arabs are represented and portrayed in a manner that sometimes contributes not just to an aware, but also a subconscious, manner of discrimination, data would be collected using the purposive sampling method.

Purposeful or judgmental sampling should be used to evaluate and analyze for this research, seven movies would be analyzed all bearing similarities based on the ways Muslims are portrayed and the number of time the religion is depicted in line with terrorism thus its role in promoting Islamophobia.

Some of the movies selected for this research include but not limited to;
The day shall come, Homeland, silenced, American sniper, Equalizer and Eye in the sky.

These movies were selected based on the themes been attributed to terrorism and war and the portrayal of "Islamic terrorist".

CODING THE CONTENT

Inductive research "involves the search for pattern from observation and the development of explanations – theories – for those patterns through a series of hypothesis. This research hypothesizes that the media plays a dominant role in the establishment of stereotypes of the Islamic religion due to media coverage and emphasis on the reports, which over time has formed the basis for generalization in the movies.

Gibbs, (2007) explains that in qualitative research, coding is a process of identifying a passage in the text or other data items (photograph, Image), searching and identifying concepts and finding relations between them. It is the linking of data to the research idea and concluding the discovery.

Each of the movies would be reviewed would be analyzed in chapters and subdivided into;

Chapter 4

Sequels Aladdin 1992 and Aladdin 2019

Chapter 5

Islam in History

Chapter 6

Islam after 911

THE RIZ TEST

Riz Ahmed, in his address to the House of Commons on the misrepresentation of Muslims in Hollywood cinema, proposed the use of the Riz test to analyze and point out the representation given to Muslims. The test is a derivation from the Bechdel Test, which is a test of female film and television portrayal that uses three measures to determine the existence and prominence female characterizations and gender imbalance.

Three questions are brought under the Bechdel test regarding the portrayal of women:

-Are there at least two female characters?

-Are they speaking to each other?

-Is their conversation centred on a love interested (a male attraction), the context of the discussion?

Similar to the Bechdel test, the Riz test suggests five key elements can be used to determine if a movie is suggestive of a contrary representation for Muslims,

If the character is;

1. Talking about, the victim of, or the perpetrator of Islamist terrorism?
2. Presented as irrationally aggressive or angry?
3. Superstitious, culturally backwards or anti-modern?

4. Portrayed as a threat to a Westernization?

5. If the character is.

A) Male, is he presented as sexist? b) Female presented as oppressed

In line with these criteria for analysis, the movies selected by the researcher would be tested to examine if they pass or fail the Riz test.

SEMIOTICS

According to Silverana (1983), semiotics is the study of Signification. The concept of semiotics as explained by Saussure cited in Silverana (1983) exists in parts "signifier" which is referred to as a meaningful form and the "signified" being the concept or the idea the signifier evolves. For example, sound effects have often been used to give life to the film, fill up blank space and keep viewers in suspense (p.11).

The sound of a Muslim call to prayer at the beginning of a film can be translated by the viewer to mean the film is would be focused in Muslim (signifier), but through a close observation the sound effect after the film draws to a conclusion could be a terror attack or a state of disarray which involved Muslims making this the signified, which then becomes the actual message intended.

This goes to say that with every message, action, sound effect used in film production, there is an intended message which is being passed across through these signs. Silverana (1983) further explains that the fundamental understanding of the value signs is determined by the association of both the paradigmatic (set ideas or implied meaning) as well as the syntagmatic meaning. A syntagmatic relationship is a type of cognitive relationship between words co-occurring in the same phrase or text (surface meaning). A paradigmatic relationship is another type of semantic relationship between words that can be replaced in the same categories as another word (depth analysis).

Peirce cited further analyses the concept of signs to be subdivided into three multiple categories which include the signs (referring to the idea created in the mind of the viewer), the interpretant (which is the mental effect generated from the sign also known as the signified) and the object (which is what is being referred to in the sign).

Other than the mere use of signs for assimilation of meanings, Language and speech have also been referred to as an effective form of semiotics. While Language as a tool of semiotics exists as a collective form, speech cannot be individualized and is therefore categorized based on tone, accent and style. But as a language is a collection of speech Silverana (1983) suggests that both tools cannot occur independently and this is why Silverana (1983) goes in favour of Language over speech simply because

In light of the understanding of semiotics, the signs used in the films to pass across messages would be observed and used to draw part of the conclusion to the message.

MIS-EN-SCENE

There exist four essential components to the creation of a story; this includes costume, setting, action and lightening. The totality of this is what is referred to as mis-en-scene.

The word mis-en-scene comes from French origin, which means "placing on stage". Just as the derived meaning from the translation, it is the stage design, placement and arrangement of props, actors in a scene for a production process.

It determines where, when why and how an action takes place to convey a meaning and a visual style.

This concept was initially associated with the German expressionist film of the 1920s and the French style of the 1930s known as poetic realism. They were used here to create a world of fantasy and project real or at least create a sense of realism to imaginative work.

For example movies about Arabs are often shot on dessert land which means if a movie opening scene is a long wide shot of a dessert land the viewer can create a sense of understanding of the film and instantly link it to Arabs.

As this concept utilizes costume, action, settings and lightening, would be used in the analysis of the data (Film) to understand concept and idea the directors intend to pass across.

SETTING

What location is the movie set? Does the setting of the film go in line with the "ideal" stereotypes attributed to Muslims?

COSTUME

Very quite often, when Muslims appear on the screen, they appear to be dressing their religious regalia, is there the prevalence of his e form of stereotypes in the film? Does the costume also show clearly the class differentiation?

LIGHTING, ANGELS AND FRAMING

Is the lighting deemed or brightened when a Muslim character appears? What angle is the frame of the Muslim character shot?

ACTION

What character is dominantly played by the Muslim character in the Film: Aggressive, threatening, villain or heroic?

Similar to the research carried out by (Veldhausz, 2017) on the construction of Islamophobia in Hollywood, each movie analyzed would be given a title or a chapter for the findings of the movies to be explained and summarised in details.

VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY STUDY

The essence of reliability and validity of research work is to ensure that the findings can maintain neutral and factual when put to the test by other researchers (Golafshani, 2003).

The research would make use of texts, and content of pre-existing movies to analyze the dominance of Islamic stereotypes. This would be defined with how often the religion is mentioned and its association with the general stereotype attributed to it and how these stereotypes are used.

The researcher is confident that this research would be unbiased as the analysis would be based on existing content, so the research would have the possibility of being tested and producing if not the same but an immensely similar outcome.

The theoretical framework and methodology will be used to answer the research question and draw necessary conclusions to the findings. They will reveal how Muslims are represented, identify the ideological markers that trigger Islamophobia, and uncover the elements that shape Islamophobia.

LIMITATIONS AND CHALLENGES

As no research work is without limitations and challenges, the researcher believes that in carrying out this research, a significant challenge that would be experienced would be the accurate recording or the vital notes, symbols and details required to keep drawing conclusion to the research.

Another major challenge would be the actual selection of both the number of movies to analyze and well as how to select the movies, either based on box office success, reviews as well as year released.

CHAPTER 4

FILM WITH SEQUELS

ALADDIN

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Year released: | 1992 |
| Written by: | John Musker, Ron Clements |
| Directed by: | John Musker, Ron Clements |
| Box office: | No 1 with a total earning of \$504,050,219 |
| IMDB rating: | Top 250 as rated by IMDB users |

GENERAL OVERVIEW

"I come from a land,
From as far away place
Where the caravans and camels roam
Where it is flat and immense
And the heat is intense.

"It is barbaric, but hey, it is home".

"Hop on a carpet and fly to an Arabian night."

The above is the opening soundtrack used in this movie. It describes the general assumption of Arabian lands. The land is described as hot and flat, which is a clear identification of a desert land with camels used as the primary means of transportation. Not only does the song describe the Arabian lands as a desert, but the narrator of the movie is also seen riding on a camel at a desert.

Arabs come from the Middle East, which occupies an area of more than 5,0 million square miles and is characterized by vast deserts. As the Middle East is described as a desert, it is clear that there is the possibility of extreme heatwaves caused but lack of constant rain. With this in mind, the description cannot be questioned, but as he goes further, the land is described as barbaric.

To be barbaric means to be brutal, savage or vicious and uncivilized. The describing of the land as cruel has in a way set the general assumption which here would be the signifier. It creates the concept and sets the grounds for the assumption in the mind of the viewer on the direction of the film. "It is barbaric" would imply that the land and the people who made up the entire population are aggressive.

In the scene where Jasmine takes an apple and gives a hungry child, she is mistaken as a thief by the stall owner, and Aladdin saves her and informs her of the consequence of stealing in.

Agrabah would result in her losing her hands. The use of this statement can translate the barbaric nature of the land of Agrabah. The reference of the land of Agrabah as barbaric was criticized as racist and this led the rewriting of the line in the other sequels after the 1992 Aladdin version.

Frook (1993) explained that although the song was taken from the Arabian night song and restructured, this did not change the underlying bias and misrepresentation of the Arab.

By way of association when aggression and uncivilized acts are played in a film very quite often, these are performed by the minority groups. Perhaps it is as a result of this already existing stereotype that it was easy for the media to create a link between Arabs and Muslims.

STEREOTYPES PRESENTED

Aggressive Arab

Magic lamp

Magic carpet

Rich sheikh

Villain

LANGUAGE

Although the film is dominantly about Arabs, there exists some level of inconsistency in the accent, Jafar, Aladdin, Jasmine, Iago, the genie and the sultan all exhibit an American accent and the merchants in the village as well as the initial narrator of the film all speak in a Middle Eastern accent. However, when Jaffer finally gains control of the lamp, his accent is enhanced and leans towards a mid-eastern accent with more aggression in the tone of voice.

COSTUME STEREOTYPES

Turbans

Thobe: The thobe which is the long robe worn by Muslim men.

Ghutra and Egal: This is a square or rectangular shapes headscarf worn by men, along with a rope band often black to hold the scarf in place (learn. religion, 2018).

Boshers (2016) explained that when it comes to Middle East clothes, age, and location make a significant difference. Younger people prefer to wear western clothing and only use their traditional attires for special events, whereas older generations are more seen informal apparel.

When it comes to location and settings, people living in the cities are more receptive to the current fashion trend. At the same time, men and women in smaller towns and rural settlement still prefer traditional attires.

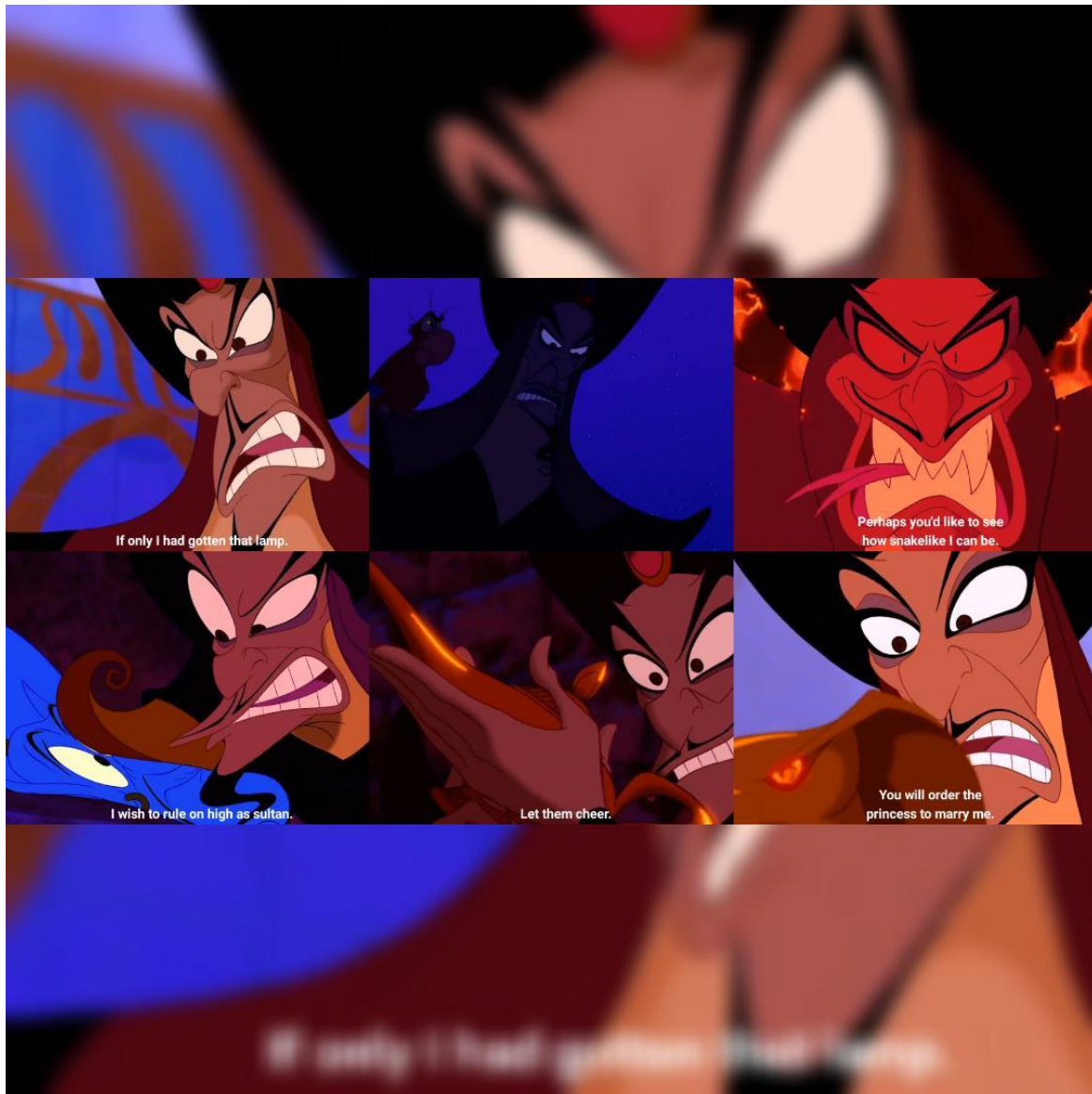
In light of the explanation given by Boshers (2016), it becomes questionable if the costume used in films involving Muslims can be regarded as a form of stereotypes. For example, the religion admonishes women to have their hair cover and which is quite similar to how catholic reverend sisters are expected to wear head coverings.

From this film Jasmine who was the main female character was seen not wearing head coverings in the palace but when she had a reason to go out she only wore it as a form of disguise without being mandated.

Very quite often when Muslim women are seen with these head coverings, they are represented as suppressed and dominated by their male counterparts, because this film can show this princess in both ways it shows the lack of oppression and how the wearing of the headgear can be as a matter of choice.

ANGLES AND FRAMING

Close up shots extreme close up sometimes called the Italian shot. Emphasizes a small area or detail of the subject, such as the eye(s) or mouth. The shot is often used to highlight certain features and details. In the movie close up, and extreme close up shots were commonly used for Jafar.



02:20 (scene 1). A close-up shot of the merchant who happens to be the narrator of the film is taken from different angles. Although trying to make a convincing argument for the lamp, he intends to sell. His facial expression and the angle in which the shot is taken to give a sense of deceit and mistrust.

03:00 (scene 2) another close-up shot of Jafar. A camera pan from the foot Jafar to the top of his turban (13:40 mins).

As regards the use of shadows, highlight, and colour, darker highlights and shadows are often cast in the scene, either leading to the introduction of Jafar or his vanishing the scene.

Answering the RIZ test

- Talking about, the victim of, or the perpetrator of Islamic terrorism?

It is important to note that the movie Aladdin was released in 1992, almost ten years before the 911 attack which opened the grounds for linking Islam with terrorism. Having said his researcher believes this question cannot be used indirectly to analyze if this movie passes the Riz test.

- Presented as irrationally aggressive or angry?

Yes

- Superstitious, culturally backwards or anti-modern?

Yes, this is evident in the merchants

- Portrayed as a threat to westernization?

Not applicable

- If the character is.

Jafar: "you will order the princess to marry me" (46: 07 mins)

Jafar in the film is represented as sexist as on several occasions, and he makes it clear to Jasmine what her place was being a woman and how she can be forced into marrying him by the sultan.

A) Male, is he presented as sexist? B) Female presented as oppressed

"I cannot stay here and have my life lived for me" (15:43mins) this statement was said by Jasmine when she tries to escape the palace to avoid marriage. By observation, this would imply that she was being oppressed and forced into marriage but a closer look at the statement (45:28 mins) "but jasmine hated all those suitors, how can I choose someone she hates" when the sultan makes this statement it implies that although the princess was required by the sultan to get married, she was not being forced into a marriage hence cannot be regarded as oppressed. Another way in which the sexist nature of Jafar is exposed is (01:01:59 mins) "you're speechless, I see. A fine quality in a wife".

ANALYSIS

In the animation, characters that the audience is expected to appreciate, and viewed as the heroes in the film are more westernized than the ideal Arab character. The character of Aladdin and Jasmine have western features, lighter skin, clean shaves and a western accent and soft-spoken. In contrast, evil or devastated characters like Jafar and retailers, for example, the retailer who seizes the hands of Jasmine for stealing at his stall (17: 29mins) have full facial hair, snared noses, and middle eastern pronunciations with the sound of their voice igniting a sense of fear in the recipient.

This film was criticized as it was seen as portraying Muslims and Arabs in a bad light, but Miller (2015) clarified that while the message of *Aladdin* is not unequivocally scornful or dreadful, it is one of the first movies where the millennial age would have been impacted to see the more extensive Muslim world as an unusual and alarming spot.

ALADDIN

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Year released: | 2019 |
| Produced by: | Dan Lin, Jonathan Eirich |
| Directed by: | Guy Ritchie |
| Box office: | No 9 with a total earning of \$1,050,693,953 |
| IMDB rating: | Top 250 as rated by IMDB users |

GENERAL OVERVIEW

This is the live-action remake of *Aladdin* (1992). It shares similar features with the 1992 animated version but tries to draw more attention to the idea of feminism and the fight against sexist figures like Jafar.

From the initial animated version, Jasmine is mostly interested in getting a reasonable suitor of her choice and her chosen suitor taking the position of the sultan of Agrabah. In this version, Jasmine expresses more interest in taking the place of her father as sultanate as she believes she was best suited to rule the kingdom. Also, another contrast to the animated version would be more inclusive of women in the remake.

Similar to the animation, the sexist nature of Jafar is expressed in the film as he believes in male taking control and women taking orders. The issue of male domination has always been expressed in films about Muslims and Arabs. This film was produced at the time the term feminism erupted to be used by the mainstream media as more women began to demand equality and inclusion in politics.

Just as all other sequels, which are an extension of an original story idea, this *Aladdin* remake tries to not only create the scenes with better choice of words but also to try to draw to the attention of its viewers, the idea of feminism and equality in the mid-eastern country.

As opined by Djelloul, (2018), the idea of Islamic feminism is a relatively new concept in Islam concerned with creating an acceptable comprehension of religious scriptures, such as the Qur'an and the Sunna, in order to pursue a mode of divine interpretation that would endorse their feminist perspective. Muslim men and women utilized Islamic reformist contentions to break the linkage of Islam with abusive practices. This made ready for changes in ladies' lives and the relations between genders.

Also, there was a noticeable difference in some of the lines in the opening Arabian night musical to introduce the film. At the initial version referred to the land of Agrabah as barbaric but in the remake, the word chaotic is used as a replacement.

Albadrawi (2019) criticizing the film affirms that it brings to life the exact depiction of the Middle East from the Western perspective, which was addressed in Said's Orientalism. He further explained that the use of a multi diversified culture of the Middle East and North Africa further reiterates the lack of understanding of the culture and the groups and thus sees it a form Orientalism. He proposes that the misrepresentation can be addressed by the film if there is the inclusion of diversified characters, story content and a better understanding of the Middle Eastern parts.

In specific term, although the 2019 sequel tries to restructure the film content and avoid being referred to as bias in their representation, they still failed to detach themselves from the use of negative stereotypes, and this is what has led to its criticism.

SETTINGS

The settings of this Aladdin remake remains the same as the 1992 version: in the desert land of Agrabah. The markets are populated and chaotic and the palace organized and quiet. In the scene where Aladdin shows Jasmine the view of the palace, a wide shot of the land of Agrabah is taken. This shot (15:00mins) helps to highlight the class differentiation in the land of Agrabah, and just like every other Arab land in films, Carmel's are seen on the street.



COSTUME

As the film is simply a remake of the original animated version, the same form of the costume is worn by the actors, the traditional Arabian regalia.

SEMIOTICS

Emotional contagion is an integral part of a viewer's emotional engagement. It shows that individuals in all Likelihood can be influenced by the way social interactions which eventually affect their actions and thoughts towards a particular idea or group of people.

In 1992, Hatfield, Cacioppo, and Rapson proposed that by using observing another's face, voice, posture, and instrumental conduct for the duration of conversation and social interaction, human beings unconsciously and mechanically begin mimicking the feelings expressed by the person they are conversing with (Coplan, 2006).

These facial expressions are regarded as the non-verbal signs used in film production. For example the Arab characters at the market exhibit a strong and threatening facial expression

and if going by the theory of emotional contagion, there is the possibility of this form of facial expressions to be exhibited by real Arabs or Muslims. In like manner, when fear and anxiety is expressed as a reaction to actions taken by Arabs or Muslims, the same mimicked reaction is expected by the viewers of the film, and this would lead to an adverse reaction and assumption about Arabs thus promoting Islamophobia.

From the image above, the facial construct of the Arabs can be translated as aggressive and threatening and translated in that direction by the viewers without considering the concept in which the shot was taken from.

ANALYSIS

To consider this film as Islamophobic, would not be judging, by the way, it portrays Muslims or Arabs in line with terrorism but rather from the sexist and dominating perspective. The film sheds light on oppression faced by women and the struggle for independence. As the film was released in 2019, it tries to bring to light the issue goes beyond the arranged marriage but rather a pointer into the struggle of feminism.

Although the aggressive and deceitful character of Jafar can be linked and regarded as prejudicial, this film cannot be said to be Islamophobic because the only character that can be linked to negative Muslim or Arab stereotypes would be Jafar. For this reason, suggesting that a film is Islamophobic based on a single character would be questionable.

CHAPTER 5

HISTORICAL FILMS ABOUT ISLAM

GANDHI

Producer: Richard Attenborough

Director: Richard Attenborough

Writer: John Briley

Release date: 1982

IMDB ranking: No 3 (number of votes)

Box office: No 14 on box office (\$52,767,889)

PLOT

In 1982, when he was 23, Gandhi migrates to South Africa from India. He also held a law degree because, degree or not, he was a victim of the ethnic apartheid scheme in South Africa, in which Indians, Hindus and Muslims made up marginalized communities and refused full citizenship. Gandhi's reaction to the system is seen as a threat to national security, and this leads to his arrest.

Following his release, Gandhi returns India to fight for self-rule and against the oppression of the British colonial rule.

Just the same way Muslims, Hindus are seen as the minority group in South Africa, the same still occurs in India. They are linked to poverty but seen to hold their religion close to heart. In the film, although they are attacked by the British, they try to promote their agendas and fight for self-rule through non-violent means.

STEREOTYPES

VIOLENT AND AGGRESSIVE

Contrary to the widespread assumption that when there is a mention of terrorism or acts of violence, these are linked to the Muslims, although there is the use of the word terrorism in the film, it is used to explain to the Muslim faithful that although they are oppressed a retaliation attack would be counted as an act of terrorism.

The Muslims here are seen as promoters of peace except in (27:32 mins) "I will kill the man who offers that insult to my home and my wife...I swear to Allah". This statement was made by an infuriated man when Gandhi addressed the crowd in South Africa on the injustice and oppression that would be subjected to the men and their wives.

This statement, although it can be regarded as aggressive cannot be used as a defining stereotype to Muslims in the film, when the context for how it is used, is put into consideration.

COSTUME

Although the film is shot in India and South Africa, there is a clear difference in the outfits worn by the minority and influential groups. The Muslims, Hindus are seen wearing the traditional attires and the other group in more modern clothing's.

"Mr Gandhi, have you refused to wear European clothes? I simply wanted to dress the way my comrades in prison dressed". (42:23 mins).

When minority groups are seen wearing their traditional attires, this act is seen as an act of rebellion and lack of civilization. However, when Gandhi addresses the reason for this choice in clothing, He expresses that he does that as an act of solidarity and not rebellion.

As earlier stated, classifying costumes as a form of stereotypes of symbolizing backwardness and lack of civilization cannot be seen as a standard of measure of stereotypes. Due to cultural and religious differences, people dress in different ways for different reasons.

LANGUAGE

This film also goes ahead to break the stereotypes that all Muslims speak in Arabic. This shows that the location and setting of a movie also determine the kind of language that would be expressed by the group. As the Muslims here are Indians, they speak in Hindi.

SEMOTICS

When signs and symbols are used in the film, they are used to emphasize certain features and characteristics in the movie. The non-verbal cue used in this film was used to paint a different perspective about Muslims. They are portrayed as organized and peaceful despite provocation.

A wide shot of a mosque is used in (01:23:00 mins) also in an earlier scene a wide shot of a congregation is taken when Gandhi addresses the crowd in South Africa. These shots taken show the Muslims and other minority groups seated in an orderly manner rather than chaotic and aggressive and uncivilized. In the same scene, close up shots are taken, and a sense of fear is depicted rather than aggression on the faces of the Muslims.

ANALYSIS

This film tries to give a glimpse into past events, and the struggle for self-rule, while shying away from Muslim stereotypes. There is no denying the fact that it can also be argued that part of the reason for this could be because since the film was produced before 9/11, the linking of Muslims with acts of terrorism was not evident.

Although this film is not primarily about Muslims, it sheds light on the struggle for acceptance into the society by minority groups which Muslims belong, the level of provocation endured, also goes to break the stereotype that all Arabs are Muslims and vis versa.

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

Producer: Ridley Scott

Director: Ridley Scott

Writer: William Monahan

Release date: 2005

IMDB ranking: no 1 (number of votes)

PLOT

Jerusalem at the onset of the film is a city where Christians and Saracens live in harmony under King Baldwin IV ruler Jerusalem from 1174-1185.

The knights' templar driven by the movies arch-villain, Guy de Lasagna is the essential villains and depicted by Scott as hired fighters, looking to benefit and assaulting Muslims since "God wills it." Saladin is a Muslim recorded figure that drove the Muslim army contrary to the crusaders and administered over Egypt, Syria, and Damascus. The knight's templar assaults a Muslim exchange band that protected by Saladin, the pioneer of the Muslim armed force.

The knight's templar attacks a Muslim trade caravan that is under the protection of Saladin, the leader of the Muslim army. Following the death of the king, Baldwin IV, Guy becomes king of Jerusalem and plans an attack on the Muslims. This attack sets into motion a course of events that closes with Saladin dealing with Jerusalem and taking control in the film's last scenes.

Shaheen (2003) cited in CINEJ cinema journal (2017) explains that because Hollywood movies often depict Muslims and Arabs in a negative light, this has led to the consensus developed by the audience to accept and work on the assumption that the Arabs are detestable, aggressive, unfriendly, and vulgar with sleek sheikh's utilizing atomic weapons.

Interestingly, A kingdom of heaven has not criticized and vilified Saladin, the leader of the Muslim group as what customary Hollywood movies had ordinarily done previously, regardless of it being shot after the portentous period. CINEJ cinema journal (2017).

The movie tries to move beyond the established stereotypes and addresses the reason for the retaliation attack on Jerusalem after the takeover of Guy. The film goes contrary to the way Muslims are frequently portrayed on screen, and the absence of this form of representation in this film according to CINEJ cinema journal (2017) led to the criticism of the film before it was released.

The film brings to the forefront of the distinct similarities that exist between the Muslims and the Christian. In a scene when Ballian hears the Muslim call to prayer, he points out the Muslims prayed similarly to the Christians.

SEMIOTICS

CLOSE UP SHOTS OF SALADIN

Close up shots were taken of Saladin in every scene he appears from the onset of the film. This facial construct, rather than aggressive is unemotional and detached. His frame is taken to exhibit a sense of power as a ruler. While close-ups shots are taken in many scenes to depict in a scene when he negotiates a truce (02:47:50 mins) a close-up shot is retaken, but this time a different personality of Saladin is drawn

from this.

"No one would be harmed I swear to Gods".

"The Christians butchered every Muslim within the walls when they took this city".

"I am not those men. I am Saladin".

A close-up shot and the sincerity follow the response of Saladin on his acceptance of a peace deal, and a less emotional Saladin is portrayed. It can be suggested from this that rather than to be seen as a group, he would like to be seen as an individual, and this perhaps is the same desire for all Arabs and Muslims.

CLOSE UP SHOTS OF THE CRUCIFIX

Furthermore, in the concluding part of the film, following Saladin's takeover of Jerusalem a crucifix is seen on the floor which He picks up and positions it appropriately. This can be translated to mean the desire for peace between both religions.

PRAYER BEFORE AN ATTACK

According to a report by NBC (2017), the phrase "Allahu akbar" over time has become synonymous with terror attacks by Muslims. This also comes to play in the film on two occasions when the Muslims attacked Jerusalem in a counter-attack. This appears in the scenes between 02:25:35mins and 02:43:00 mins on the two instances of a planned attack against Jerusalem.

While it is evident that this film tries to stay clear of dwelling with negative stereotypes of Muslims, the use of this phrase can be sensed as a trigger for Islamophobia as evident today.

SETTINGS AND COSTUME

The film is set in the medieval time before western civilization, and this explains the reason for the location and setting as well as the costume used in the film. Interesting the Muslims were located in the far drier and desert regions compared to the Christians.

The difference in the settings used explains the success of Saladin when Guy tries to attack his camp. The adaptive feature of living in the desert region is put to the test in the part of the film, and this shows why the costume worn by the Muslims was intended to shield them from the persistent adverse weather condition which eventually helps in the survival.

When the context, storyline of this film is considered a conclusion that the film tries to elate the stereotypes of the Muslims can be derived, the Muslims in this film are not presented as barbaric but rather an organized group.

THE RIZ TEST

In considering the factors to determine if this film passes or fails the Riz test

- No, Muslims are not represented as the perpetrator of terror.

The movie tries to explain how the Muslims took over Jerusalem during the crusade, as a result of a siege laid on Jerusalem by Saladin who did this in retaliation of the attack by Guy. Indeed, this can be regarded as an act of terror but due to the build of this story being put into consideration to determine the reason for the attack; this cannot be used as a determinant on how Muslims are linked to terror.

- Presented as irrationally angry? No

In a few scenes in the film, every time Saladin is shown, he carries an inexpressive and emotionless face. This facial construct is observed by all in rulers in the film, hence this facial expression of Saladin can be considered from the perspective of trying to portray a sense of power and not necessarily anger.

- Presented as superstitious, culturally backward and superstitious? No

The film is set in medieval times with everyone in huts, drinking from wells and not wearing western clothing's.

- Presented as a threat to western life? No

This is not applicable due to the settings and time in history the movie is depicting.

- Females oppressed by male counterparts?

This is also not applicable and not evident in the film. On the contrary, when a truce is reached, and Saladin takes over Jerusalem, he does this in an attempt to protect the women and children of the land.

Overall, this film passes the Riz test as it fails to work with the already established Hollywood negative stereotype.

ANALYSIS

This film tries to create and illustrate a sense of unity and understanding between Islam and Christianity. Making the viewers understand the background to the story and reason for the aggression attributed to Islam when the camp of Saladin is attacked, which leads to the provocation and the retaliation attack on Jerusalem.

It neither plays into the negative stereotypes nor attribution given to Muslims, which brings to the conclusion that this film cannot be taken as Islamophobic.

Very quite often Muslims are represented in films as barbaric and vile, but the film suggests the other and puts Christians on the receiving end of barbaric acts. For example, during the war between the Muslims and Christians in Jerusalem, the Muslims are seen to give a proper burial to the dead members in their camp. The opposite is seen when the dead Christians are burnt to avoid contamination.

SUMMARY

As these two films discussed share similar objective which is to serve as a form of enactments of past events, although there are Muslims characters both films try to avoid the Muslim stereotypes and represent the characters as individuals rather than as a group.

The tone, context and characters used in both films cannot be regarded as Islamophobic nor seen as a tool for promoting Islamophobia.

CHAPTER 6

FILMS AFTER 911

A MOST WANTED MAN

Release date: 2014
Produced by: Stephen Cornwell
Gail Egan,
Malte Grunert,
Simon Cornwell
Andrea Calderwood

Directed by: Anton Corbijn
Written by: Andrew Bovell
IMDB ratings: No 13

"Hamburg is one of the great parts of the world essentially it opens its arms to every foreigner who washed up its shores but now since 911 in the eyes of every dark-skinned man we see someone who wants to kill us" (34:10mins).

Lynch (2015) explains that since 9/11, Muslims have been exposed to a destructive generalization, specifically male youth, who have been overtime depicted as ready for radicalization, which has prompted in a degree of victimization on-screen and off-screen (p. 173)

As explained by Lynch (2015), it is impossible to mention terrorism and Islamic attack in a film without reference to 911. This film is about a young man Issah Karpov, a Chechen asylum seeker who was tortured by Russian security forces and entered Hamburg, Germany illegally. As soon as

Issah arrives Hamburg, Günther Bachmann's attention is drawn towards him, and he is immediately labelled a terrorist.

Günther Bachmann who leads a highly secretive German government team seeking to recruit local informants with ties to Islamic terrorist organizations.

Upon arrival, Issah is identified as a suspicious figure. Although he wears hooded clothing which makes it impossible to see his face, the team led by Günther Bachmann match his face and describe him as a fully bearded man, Muslim with the "potential of being violent".

Irna Frey, the right-hand partner to Günther, immediately calls for Issah's arrest and apprehension as he believes he is on a terrorist mission. However, Günther believes it is vital to keep an eye on him and watch his moves before his arrest.

"I want this kid to talk to whomever he is supposed to talk to, pray wherever he was told to and sleep where he was told to" (14:20) line said by Günther.

Irna responds to Günther by asking, "And if this kid lefts off a bomb". This response confirms the assumption by Mirhossani (2015), where he explains that an irrational killer image of Islam is often adopted by the western media (p 4). This leads to the conviction of the unknown, yet to be fully identified man as Muslim, on a terrorist mission.

Issah is followed, and it is later discovered that he was on a mission to deliver a letter which would lead to his claiming of an inheritance left for his by his father.

He meets up with a lawyer Annabel Richter who tries to connect with a banker who owned the bank. Focus at this point is then shifted from Issah to the lawyer as they who is referred to as a "social worker to terrorist "(1:03:00) because of her involvement with Issah. Issah find a financier looking for his dad's messy cash and he has the key to open a multimillion-euro legacy from his loathed father. The cash is in a bank, run by Tommy, whose activities are not carefully lawful.

Issah decides to give the polluted inheritance to a Muslim man who unknowingly transfers the money he gets from donors to a secret account which funds terrorist organizations.

In order to fit in, Issah shaves his beards, and this redefines his image for a limited time.

At the concluding part of the film, Issah is eventually arrested alongside the philanthropist when he attempts to defend him from getting arrested.

The film right from the onset had indicators which already presented Issah as guilty and was condemned due to the representative attribute given to him.

SETTINGS

The film shows the distinct difference between the rich and the poor or rather, the Muslims and western society. The Muslim community depicts a level of poverty and lack of civilization in compares to the western. They live in a more crowded and polluted neighbourhood.

The only Muslim in the film which is portrayed as well to do and influential is subject to suspicion.

Visual portrayals and representations in the form of settings, shape perspective that leave a more prominent effect on the viewers and create recognitions and a sense of attribution which helps in the classification of groups based on social class, race, and religion.

Because of this, the film can be termed as Islamophobic in nature as it makes use of stereotypes to mark Issah as a terrorist which eventually leads to his arrest at the end of the film.

SEMIOTIC

USE OF SOUND EFFECTS

Sound effects set the tone for events and occurrences in the film. They tell when an action about to take place and also define the type of event that follows. In (08:55 mins) when the scene opens

with Muslims praying at the mosque, a slightly suspicious and dramatic sound effect begins to play.

Because sound carries meaning and have the potential of being transmitted to the audience to give an interpretation to the effect used this same sound effect used every time Issah appears on the screen. By interpretation, according to Kracauer (1985) explains that the impact these sound effects in the film go beyond the verbal sentiment and have a higher mental interpretation with the audience.

ANALYSIS

First taking into account the title of this film, a sense of initial judgments is expected from the audience. The title, “a most wanted man”, as well as the opening tune which can be identified as a police siren already declares the main character (Issah) guilty. This film can be regarded as Islamophobic in nature because, by Issah’s appearance, sound effects used when a scene opens up to him, a sense of fear is instilled in the audience.

Furthermore, although towards the end of the film, Issah is found not guilty of any act of terrorism, he falls victim of an already well-thought plan which leads to his eventual arrest. The tone, suspicion and the need for Issah to change his look in order to escape being watched brings to light the plight of an average Muslim.

SYRIANA

Directed by: Stephen Gaghan
Produced by: Jennifer Fox
Micheal Nozik
Georgia Kancandes

Year released: 2006

Box office rating:

PLOT

The film starts with the Gulf States (Arab nations) marking an arrangement to flexibly its oil to China. This comes as a critical thrashing for Connex, a Texas-based oil organization. Simultaneously, a dark oil organization named Killen signs an arrangement to bore for oil in Kazakhstan.

Bryan woodman is an American vitality expert situated in Geneva; he is asked by his supervisor to go to a private gathering facilitated by the emir at his bequest in Spain, to offer his organization's administrations.

At the resort, no one notices that a crack in one of the swimming pool area's underwater lights has electrified the water and woodman's son jumps into the pool and eventually gets electrocuted.

Following the demise of his child, prince Nassir, the emir's more seasoned child, allows woodman's organization oil intrigues worth \$75 million, and woodman, however at first offended by the offer, step by step turns into his financial guide. Sovereign Nassir is devoted to the possibility of dynamic change and comprehends that oil reliance is not maintainable in the long haul; Nassir needs to use his country's oil benefits to expand the economy and present majority rule changes, in sharp difference to his dad's abusive government, which has been bolstered by American interests.

Although this film showcases the Muslim stereotype of aggression and other sorts of misrepresentation, it tries to play it safe by presenting a double-sided representation of Muslims and Arabs. Those in the remote locations are seen as aggressive and uncivilized. At the same

time, the wealthy Arabs are civilized with Nassir being the hero trying to bring about development to the remote regions of the country.

Bob Barnes is assigned to assassinate Prince Nassir who endangers American interests in taking control of the resources in the gulf region. Bob is unable to do his duty, as the Iranian agent Mussawi tortures him but he is rescued by the leader Hezbollah before he is assassinated.

STEREOTYPES

Aggressive Muslim imagery

One popular attribute that is usually associated with the Muslims and Arabs is the look of aggression and hostility. This comes to play in almost all the scenes Muslims, most notably the poor appear.

SETTINGS

Syriana runs in a variety of settings and switches between Iran, the USA, Spain and Switzerland. Western locations are mainly green areas and highly developed while the gulf region is a barren desert and underdeveloped.

ANALYSIS

The Progressive Magazine, (2006) regards Hollywood as being humane, considerable with the depiction of Arabs and Muslims in films like; Syriana. It is observed that the use of certain representations point out that unabated energy and unconstrained violence serve to expedite terrorism.

Syriana" does no longer vilify the Muslim world, its people, religion or culture. Instead, the film warns us to be cautious of strength moguls, men who reflect on consideration on the deaths of innocent human beings acceptable.

In light of this, although these stereotypes are present in the film; the tone and context used cannot be regarded as Islamophobic but instead brings to the understanding of the viewers, the plight and exploitation of this group.

A KITE RUNNER

Directed by: Marc Forster
Produced by: William Horberg
Walter F. Parkes
Rebecca Yeldham
E. Bennett Walsh

Year released: 2007

PLOT

Set in 70's Afghanistan and tells the story of childhood friends – Hassan and Amir, experiencing serene pre-war adolescence in the modest yet tightly knitted community of Kabul.

The movie opens up in the city of Kabul with kites flying in the sky, laughter of children, and the busy market place in a desert land, a remote settlement and everyone dressed in their Islamic regalia.

Amir's father describes him as a boy "who will not stand up for himself" and believes something was missing in the young boy as he is often bullied yet never retaliates, on the other hand, is

Hassan a servant boy loved by Amir's father because compared to Amir, Hassan is courageous and often helps Amir fend off the bully's.

Hassan is a loyal and diligent friend who despite all odds, stands loyal to his friend Amir. Amir overhears his father criticising him and praising Hassan for his courage, and this soon creates a slight sense of jealousy.

Both Hassan and Amir are energetic kite flyers, and Amir longs for the day where he would win the yearly Kite flying rivalry in Kabul and receive an acknowledgement from his father.

Hassan continuously goes about as Amir's 'kite sprinter', running all over Kabul in whichever course to get Amir's kite for him when Amir's kite is brought down by an opponent flyer. This undertaking Hassan does with such steadfastness and commitment to Amir, and this leaves him venerable as he who is considered A 'Hazara' and tormented and maltreated by the town's different young men.

Amir finally wins one yearly kite flying rivalry in Kabul. After Amir's success, Hassan 'ran the kite' for Amir, and on this day an especially upsetting occasion happens including Hassan. Amir witnesses Hassan being raped by a bully rather than defends Hassan, Amir but turns the other way and ignores his friend's plight.

This puts a strain in the friendship between both boys and eventually leads to their separation before and after the Russian invasion.

Following the Russian invasion, Amir and his father escape to the United States in order to avoid being attacked by the Russians.

Hassan and family remain behind in Kabul.

As years pass and the grown-up Amir is settled in San Francisco with his dad. One day Amir gets a call from his friend Rahim Khan that will give him redemption for his cowardly behaviour and betrayal of Hassan during his childhood. He sets out on a journey back to Kabul save the son of Hassan from the Taliban's.

Upon returning to Kabul, Amir is unable to reconcile any similarities with the Kabul he knew growing up and what it was following his return.

This film takes a look at the Muslims from 2 perspectives: the regular Muslims and the Taliban's (Extremist). It shows the difference between these two groups in terms of appearance, behaviour and way of living. Despite the film bringing to light the differentiation, it was criticized and banned from Afghanistan as it was reported to paint the country in a negative light with the rape scene of Hassan (CBS Interactive Inc, 2008).

IDENTIFIED STEREOTYPES

NOT ALL ARABS HAVE FULL BEARDS

Predominantly, one of the most common features identified by the media when referring to believers of Islam; is the fully bearded face of a Muslim man. Muslims and Arabs for years have been linked up to this stereotype, but this film tries to create a glimpse into the reason for this feature. For example (01:27:01mins) after Amir's return to Kabul on his rescue mission to save Hassan's son, he appears to be wearing a bearded disguise in order to fit into the new "Norm" as dictated by the Taliban.



From this scene, a clear understanding can be deduced the Taliban's were associated with full beards, and the Muslims in an attempt to protect themselves from attacks grew out their beards to fit in.

This goes to say that when the image of Muslims on screen is populated with a fully bearded feature, there is a clear indication that the media has in a way generalised all Muslims as extremist thus helping the in promotion of anti-Islamic sentiments.

DESERT LAND

From the opening credit to the sig tune to introduce the film, a depiction of desert land is used. The colour, motion picture used already gives a clear indication of the settings of the film. In the scene where the land of Kabul is first seen a desert land is exposed where children are flying kites. This scene is distinctly different for the first scene where Amir receives the call and begins to reminisce into the past.

MAGIC LAMP

Arabs have always been identified with the myth of the magic lamp. This stereotype often cannot be avoided in films about Muslims or Arabs. Amir in the film who is portrayed as an imaginative and creative storyteller makes use of the myth of the magical lamp when he narrates the content of his newly written story to Hassan. The myth of the magic lamp is referred to as one of the most famous tales from 1,001 Nights, which was adopted Disney and used in the creation of the film Aladdin (Stanley, 2016).

Following this adoption of this by Disney, this set the pace for the representation of Arabian lands with mysterious and magical features.

USE OF SOUND EFFECTS

From the Era of the Arabian night films, the Arabs have become well known for their traditional music which is produced with the use of instruments such as Oud, Nay, Qanun and Rik. This music or sound effects in movies is often used to point out that either an Arab was in sight, depict a journey through the desert or only just as a means of liming the film with the Arab culture and Islamic tradition. In like manner, the movie is introduced with an Arabic themed sound effect, and this goes to am long way to paint a picture in the mind of the viewer .on the focus of the film.

Another instant when the Arabic sound effect is used is with the introduction of the 2nd scene, which is set in Afghanistan.

RIZ TEST

To consider the Riz test in line with the criticism this film received in Afghanistan, it would be right to affirm that this film failed the Riz test as it portrayed the people of this race and

ANALYSIS

Despite the criticism received by this film for the rape scene of Hassan, this act cannot be identified as Islamophobic in nature; it does not point directly that this action is linked directly to Islamic generalization.

The concept of the film seeks to identify the effects of the Russian invasion in Afghanistan, which led to the Taliban formation in an attempt to take back control of the country.

SUMMERY

The films analyzed in this group bring to play the representation of Islam with links to terrorism and 911. As these movies were produced after 911, they try to create an understanding of the aggression of Muslims. Syriana identifies the reason for the aggression is linked to the exploitation of the mid-eastern region, "a most wanted man" can be translated to seek to bring to the attention of the audience the plight of the Muslims after 911 a kite runner enables the audience to identify the reason for the formation of the Taliban.

Although there are negative stereotypes in these films, the concept in which they are used cannot be regarded as Islamophobic.

CHAPTER 7

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

The objective of this research work was to find the link between Islamic stereotypes and the context in which they are used to understand the role they play in the construction of Islamophobia. In order to achieve this, seven films were selected and analyzed based on semiotics, Mis-en-scene, context and the Riz test proposed by Ahmed Riz.

The films selected were divided into three groups; Films with sequels, Islam in Historic Films and Films after 911. The dividing of these films into different groups enables the researcher to analyze from 3 different perspectives.

1. Analyze if there has been a change in the representation of Muslims and Arabs with films that have remakes.
2. Analyze and understand the historical representation of Islam and how the religion was presented before 911. Also, when historical events are used in an analysis, the researcher believes that there is the possibility of understanding the reason why certain groups behave in a particular manner.
3. The third group was analyzed based on films created after 911.

From the first group, as it is impossible to separate Muslims from Arabs due to the generalization by the media, in light of this, all Arabs due to their names, costumes and appearance are regarded by the researcher as Muslims in order to fulfil the objective of this research. These two films try to point out the sexist nature of the Arabs through Jafar, the aggression through the merchants and the female oppression through Jasmine.

Screenshots of the close-up shots were taken from the films to explain better the signs used in the film to achieve the idea of the film creators.

Although the films are not linked to acts of terrorism but rather aggression and the selfish desire of Jafar to take over Agrabah acts of terrorism by Muslims over the years have been linked the desire of Muslims to take charge of the different world economy. With this point put into perspective, the criticism received for both Aladdin films is justified as they create a negative perspective in the minds of the viewers.

In the second group, films were analyzed based on historical events. From observation these films; The Kingdom of Heaven and Gandhi avoided the use of negative stereotypes of Muslims but instead explained the reason for the aggression of Muslims over time; Gandhi points out the struggle for self-rule and the oppression faced by minority during the colonial era. The kingdom of Heaven tells the story of the great crusade from a different perspective in favour of the Muslims.

These films cannot be categorized as Islamophobic due to the absence of negative stereotypes in them.

The third categories of films analyzed are films after 911, which paved the way for the negative representation of Islam with acts of terrorism. By considering the context, content and forms of stereotypes used in this films, the researcher can deduce that the selective process in sound effects, scenes and angles, content as well as appearance are carefully selected by the creators to pass across a message which is then translated from the perspective of the audience or relative to the point of view of the writer. When stereotypes are used, they are intended to pass across a specific message. For example the film "a most wanted man" makes uses of all negative stereotypes attributed to Muslims; from critical analysis, one can assume that this film was used to point out the plight of the average Muslim man and their struggle for acceptance in the society, but from a literal perspective, the use of this stereotypes can create a sense of misunderstanding of Islam and Muslims as a group.

One of the similarities between these three groups would be the costume and settings in the films. Also, the use of sound effects to create a more dramatic and religious scene is observed in all films analyzed as well as close up shots of individuals who seem more threatening.

Stereotypes tend to help create a better foundation for understanding between the viewer and the director but the translation given to them can be different depending on how the film is understood. John Bargh, cited in (Jhangiani and Tarry, 2014), describes stereotypes as "cognitive monsters" because their stimulation was so compelling and perceptions would have such pervasive effects on personality traits. However, despite this, stereotypes from positive perspectives according to Jussim, & McCauley, (1995) provide people with information about characteristics, behavioural pattern and beliefs of people who belong to specific groups.

From previous research done by other scholars, the notion that film can be found responsible for contributing to Islamophobia has been raised, and this is simply because these conclusions were drawn by observing films focused on terrorism rather than Islamic themes. As the films observed in this research were linked to Muslims and Islam, the researcher can observe that although these films make use of these generalizations a common feature of these films would be the fact that some of the generalizations were used to raise awareness on the plight of this religious and racial groups discussed rather than promote hate and prejudice.

While the researcher believes that the notion of generalization of people as a group rather than as individuals could be mineralized when used in films, it is impossible to suggest the exemption of these stereotypes in films because although individual characteristics are dominant in people, their background, religion and social interaction play an essential role in their development. So they sometimes tend to share similar features and characteristics, and this forms the idea behind stereotypes.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

As this research work was done through individual observation of actions, semiotics and story concept, the researcher believes that while this research can be tested to check the reliability and validity and produce similar results, there is need for further studies to be done on this subject.

For this reason, the researcher proposes that for further studies, as translation can be given to film context and content from a different perspective as individuals differ in their inductive and deductive reasoning, a focused group discussion of content analysis can be carried out to get a more broad perspective and translation on film content.

By considering this and observing the different reaction to the content, it would be easier to translate and identify the Islamic (mis)representation in the films and how they contribute to Islamophobia.

The researcher would suggest that the participants in the group be spread across different race and religion to get a more broad perspective and understand how different people would translate the idea and use of generalizations in films selected.

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