

Islam through Western Eyes after September 2001

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Abstract:

Hollywood's continuous portrayal of Muslims in its films from a long time to the present means that the Western citizen, especially the average American, can only hate and hostile them, and what Hollywood is doing against them can only be described as scandal films, as a distortion of facts and false fabrications. American films, especially if it is known that most of the production companies are controlled by the anti-Islamic Zionist lobby and because of the accuracy of Hollywood films and the ability of technically superior production and filming ... played a big role in providing a negative image of Muslims when it was not there is another source of information about them and about their culture, as they are seen by a wide variety of people around the world. American films have helped to spread these negative stereotypes of Muslims; the Arab Muslim image on the silver screen of Hollywood will not depart from one of these stereotypes: nomadic Bedouin and next to him camel, tent, and granted him the barren desert, or the image of the Arab indulged in amusement, insane pleasures, and alcohol abuse, or the image of the stripped Arab of civilization and etiquette in the public way, in the treatment of others and not follow the etiquette of food and cleanliness, or the image of a radical Muslim who drives behind him a clique of harem in black, or the image of the idiot Arab who is always surprised or dazzled by Western civilization. The most common form is the image of a Muslim terrorist.

Key Words:

Islam, West, conflict, Arab, hatred, Muslim, Terrorist.

1. Introduction:

The West transformed the theory of international conflict after the collapse of the Soviet Union from a conflict between America and Russia to a conflict between the West and Islam, even one NATO official said that Islam became the new enemy after communism. As a mirror of reality, Hollywood has turned its main subject from a conflict with Russian intelligence agents and international terrorists from Eastern Europe into a conflict with Arab and Muslim terrorists, and the new – or seemingly new – reality in a series of films. It seems that the events of September increased this quality in Hollywood movies, with talk about the possession of Arab Muslim terrorists nuclear, chemical or biological weapons aimed at destroying the civilization of the West!

The war by the Western and American media against Islam and Muslims, has used various all aspects whether cinema, theatre or even cartoons, that portrayed Muslims as either racist or backward illiterate, terrorists, and Islam is presented as a source of violence and extremism. Films of this period (after the events of 11th September, 2001) are full with hatred and falsification in order to make an image regarding Muslim, as a film product of cultural and social contents. (1) We will explore the various elements, connotations and meanings of Muslim in American films, using the methodology of psychological analysis, which is the most appropriate method for such descriptive studies, where the aim of this study is to show the various themes which related to Muslims and Arabs in American cinema and know how American films dealt with the character of the Muslim and Arab. We also attempted to uncover the underlying motives and opinions to present this image of Muslims and Arabs, and to achieve this (we selected a deliberate intentional sample that serves the objectives of the study in four American films).

2. Cards of the Films:

Each of the films that are reviewed, in terms of script, output and card met in several points in the Middle East were the most important: oil industries, terrorism, intellectual and civilizational interactions, in addition to many arguments, some of which were raised more deeply, and others superficially, according to the model previously drawn before 9/11 and 2001 elaborate on a comparative critical view of *Kingdom*, *Rendition*, *Body of Lies* and *Syriana*...

2.1. *Kingdom*

It tells the story of an FBI team coming to Saudi Arabia to investigate the al Rahma bombing in Riyadh, a compound where American families work in the kingdom's oil fields. The team is initially prevented from doing their job and taking evidence as it should, but with the help of a Saudi police officer they start their work to arrest the perpetrators of the bombings. At the end, the research team inferred from a group of members, but it turns out to be just a small cell composed of a group of young adolescents. Then they quickly tracked down the cell's main location and filtered it through a series of emotional-controlled events and scenes, symbolic indications and suggestive signs, which show more than the film shows. (2)

2.2. *Rendition*

It is the story of an Egyptian engineer: Anwar Brahimi, who lives in United States twenty years ago, he holds a green card, married to an American woman. He has a six-year-old son and his wife Isabella is nine months pregnant. The CIA suspects Anwar's relationship to a terrorist group that has carried out multiple bombings target Americans wherever they are. CIA operates through agents' terrorist cells and interrogation of Anwar Brahimi in the basements of intelligence of an Arab country. (3)

2.3. *Body of Lies*

The film tells the story of a special agent for popular operations from the CIA. His mission is to track down suspected terrorists and involvement in US CIA operations. A bombing is claimed by al-Qaeda in Iraq. Roger Ferris of Washington supports the client Hoffman through satellite, emails and mobile phones, and from Iraq he is supported by an Iraqi citizen who is fluent in English and is loyal in his work with Ferris. A number of bombings located in Manchester and Amsterdam declares Al-Salim - one of the men of Al-Qaeda is responsible for it. He defines Ferris' mission to reach Al-Salim in cooperation with the intelligence services. Al-Salim is arrested in the midst of a number of dramatic scenes and events. (4)

2.4. *Syriana*

The story is based on US oil exploration companies, and they lost control of prospecting rights in one of the Gulf emirates, where its prince, the second son of King Sabah, is granted the rights of a Chinese company make a better offer of natural gas extraction, causing great alarm in the United States at the corporate level, and at the government level, leading to a merger Connex-Killen companies to compensate for low production capacity. The Defense and Justice ministries also take the lead and Bennett Holdy was appointed to ease tensions and demonstrate a keen monopoly and mitigate allegations of corruption. While Prince Nasser wants the independence of the decision of his state to grant prospecting rights for the best offers of companies whatever their nationality to invest oil profits and returns productivity to improve his country's situation. He uses an energy expert for a Consulting American company. The CIA uses agent Bob Barnes, who works on missions to stop arms trade in Middle East. He also sent a mission to assassinate two arms dealers in Tehran, Iran is named Mousavi. At the same time, it promotes the mandate of his younger brother, who only cares luxury and entertainment. It turns out that Mousavi is an Iranian intelligence agent, who kidnapped Bob Barnes in Lebanon cooperates with Hezbollah and tortures him to obtain information about the mission and the involved names to publicly expose the matter to the account of Iran. Mousavi finally intended to slaughter Barnes with the knife, except Hezbollah's leader prevents this and gives him a safe passage to return to the United States. As for the American intelligence protects itself by presenting Barnes as a scapegoat and that he is solely responsible for the operation, as it realizes that the assassination of the prince by drone is the best solution. That's actually been where it was the assassination of Prince Nasser, and Connex-Killen celebrates its acquisition of exploration rights in Kazakhstan and the coronation of the young prince Meshaal as king.

Elsewhere, there is a story of Pakistani workers who came to work at the Connex-Killen refinery which cuts off its workers because operating rights are now owned by a Chinese company. Wassem Ahmed Khan went to an Islamic school to learn Arabic to increase his chance of getting a job. Here he gets acquainted with an Egyptian preacher, earning his friendliness and attention while the school secures him the safe place, good food and drink. He ends up with a suicide bombing that detonates a natural gas tanker owned by US company Connex-Killen. (5)

3. Critical vision of films

This was a reading of the script for a number of films, which met for being Hollywood first and then history of its production followed September 11, 2001, and each film has met the requirement which deals with the Arab in the diversity of the presentation and the difference in visions, and the methodology of analytical vision has been an interpretation of the viewer in the way it presented the image of the Arab in the film.

Throughout the first scene, *The Kingdom* reviews US relations that depends on the oil industry since the establishment of the Kingdom, through the oil crisis and the Gulf War ended with the events of September 2001, and the two meet to fight terrorism, while dealing with a component of the tale in the film, as well as other side insights related to the nature of the Arab: his beliefs, customs, traditions, and other inspirations draw the pre-September 2001 model. *The Kingdom* highlights oil as an American national security priority, and then another requirement lies in the fight against terrorism in all its strongholds, where the film asked about fifteen young Saudis who blew themselves up in an attack September 11, 2001, why do they pay for this work? Are the strongholds of terrorism in the kingdom? Are foreigners safe in the Kingdom? Third, intellectual and cultural debates are presented during the film which has to do with the ideas that the young man feeds before he detonates. It represents their auras relation to the bombing of the body as well as equipment and manual mechanisms through which this work. Speech of Islamic groups, reactions, review of possible intellectual aberrations in the organization's visions of Al-Qaeda - as the film puts it. The film presents the contrasting aspect of the Arab from a cinematic point of view.

With regard to Arab relationship with the foreigner, where the eyes seem spiteful in the mirror of the foreigner who seems dominant and is coming to steal Arab resources, confines the look of the infidel who must be killed wherever he finds, and other looks aim to bring security and peace to whatever this partner also aspiring for experiences and take advantage of this foreigner, also consider him as a friend someone with a wife and children wants to return to them at the end of the day without any problems, and it is his responsibility to ensure the protection and preservation, because this is his duty, he is under his charge and is covered by his hospitality, this Arab vision of the West "from a Western perspective," As for the Western view of the Arab from "Western perspective" emerged from time to time, director Peter Berg comments on some of the criticism that highlighted the lack of skill and experience of Saudi Intelligence, he actually felt a number of problems, the US Intelligence is more skilled and experienced. (6)

The Kingdom brings forward the problem of torture in repeated cases, to no avail for the Americans, and the repeated return of the Arabs to question him, but also to no avail, critic A. O. Scott had told *New York* that "*The Kingdom* was no more than Rambo in Vietnam, or over again to do there, a pure imagination no more as that did not give a more optimistic picture of the optimistic American response on terrorism fundamentalist groups" (7), in contrast to the Australian critic Evan Williams, who saw it as an excellent film, is one of the first films to focus on Saudi participation to fight terrorism, *New York Post* critic Lou Lumenick stated that "Hollywood provides the Islamic world another reason to hate America with *The Kingdom*," calling it "xenophobic" and

"pandering." (8) *The A.V. Club's* Scott Tobias criticizes the movie's "queasy brand of escapism" by offering the audience the pleasure of "winning imaginary wars" and giving an idealized portrayal of the efficiency of American intelligence. He says the film appeals to the audience's "basest instincts" and that, despite one sympathetic Arab character, the film could be tarred as racist. (9) In fact, Jack Shaheen categorizes *The Kingdom* in the Hollywood films that promote racist stereotyping. He states that, "Hollywood's most violent movie since 9/11 is *The Kingdom* (2007). In this Rambo-in-Arabia shoot 'em-up, viewers applaud the heroics of four FBI agents who fly off to Saudi Arabia and kill Arabs." (10)

The film *Syriana* looks at the image of terrorists, the CIA, the oil companies, the US government, a complex film in its plot and in its political message, needs some mental effort to tie its interwoven threads, also creates the desire to finally watch it again. *Syriana* used multiple, parallel, and much-seen storylines in Texas, Washington DC., Switzerland, Spain, and the Middle East, where it could be called the hyperlinked film. (11) The storyline of the film overlaps to produce a scene for the eastern oil, its major parts of the major oil companies, US security interventions under the pretext of protecting American national security (protecting the flow of oil and the interests of big companies), princes battling for power in undemocratic oil states, a modernization project based on palace, marginalized people, fundamentalism that produces terrorism and fueled by resentment, American individuals seek their happiness and individual interests with no political agenda or social consciousness to become mere spare parts of the great machine that makes up the political economy of oil. On the margins, these individual tragedies live as special cases. The film deals with the major oil companies in the United States and criticizes both the Department of Defense and Justice, which covered companies in their policies to control the oil fields in the Middle East.

The film's infrastructure begins with a liberal call for a deeper cultural understanding between East and West. The film went beyond the image of the American good hero to the fact that the American priority in securing its oil resources for years to come, whatever the means, even though Stephen Gaghan has reluctance to criticize the system in an open manner. George Clooney won the Oscar as the best actor, he rated the script as the best adapted script for 2005, and *Syriana* was also considered the best film of the year.

Syriana was thought-provoking; it requires an effort of mind to understand and grasp its relationships, while the critics have said that Gaghan went on the complexity beyond persuasion, as it concealed the explicit expression of the need for political corrections. In his review for *The Guardian*, Peter Bradshaw wrote, "But what complicates the plot is writer-director Stephen Gaghan's reluctance to criticize America too much. Instead of complexity, there is a blank, un compelling tangle, which conceals a kind of complacent political correctness." (12)

The recovered model of pre-September 2001 and beyond was included in each of the films except for *Syriana* and the form of the model that appeared, it is related to the form and image of the Arab, customs, traditions and understanding of religion, the general form of the environment, each of the films *Body of lies* and *Kingdom* and *Rendition* view scenes of desert and camels, but were frequent scenes to demonstrate that the scene in an Arab dress method, spotless white men dress, the woman's burqa covers her from her head and face to the toe, general laziness and lack of work, naive and sometimes stupid, which necessitates seeking help from Americans in conducting investigations, how to use tools as in the film *Kingdom*, as there are many attitudes repeated in the film *Body of Lies*, *Kingdom* and *Rendition* in reference to the misconception of religion and the interpretation of the verses of the Koran.

All films – apart from *Syriana* – feature all that is best for everything that is American, social life, luxury, an optimal model of intelligence and military sectors, has often emerged. The spiritual auras of a quiet and tranquil life in the United States have appeared in cross-sectional scenes, a green aura, an energetic, lively, still environment, and many of the characters in the movies have expressed an interest in immigration to the United States as Aisha's sister in *Body of Lies* and Nizar – got PhDs in linguistics – who might do anything to move to the United States.

Military bases are also deployed in most Arab countries justifying their protection and security where liberalism is feasible in its war against terrorism; the US battle is going on outside its territory.

The films also put forward a dialectic of what was called in the films "by martyr": his life, his environment, his teachers, his motives, his way, and he has appeared in the films - apart from *Syriana* – a unified model of Mohamed Atta the leader of the 11 September 2001 operation, most of whom are highly educated, have high degrees in engineering and medicine, most of them also studied CE in America and Europe, addressed to them by their sheikhs in al Qaeda at all unified – except for the movie *Syriana* – the method of bombing its mechanisms are also standardized, where explosive belts are equipped with large quantities of nails and marble.

For larger detonation events and inflict heavy casualties, bombs are also equipped to add some manually Russian-made weapons, the man prepares himself and casts his will on a videotape, chooses more the busiest places and squeezed the bomb pressed echoing "Allah Akbar, Allah Akbar". Then the bombing followed Al-Qaeda cells claim responsibility for the operation through a video.

Each of the films raised the question of the constant pursuit of the alien to kidnap, torture and kill him in front of a video camera, a scene broadcast in the films shown, another value of torture that makes one cast anything under this torture.

The possibility of civilizational and cultural coexistence between Islam and the West becomes invasive shown when the Saudi policeman is a friend of an intelligence agent in the film *Kingdom*, as some reviews the scenes are poetic moments to show how harmonious Ghazi and his family members are, they read Quran praying and doing their homework together ... In this context Shaheen explains that Arabs have seldom been depicted as simple people with ordinary occupations and interests in Hollywood

films. He also implicitly suggests that the idea of depicting Arabs as different and inferior on screen is essential to the construction of the superior-self of Americans. However, Shaheen makes his main contention clear:

I am not saying that an Arab should never be portrayed as the villain. What I am saying is that almost *all* Hollywood depictions of Arabs are *bad* ones. This is a grave injustice. Repetitious and negative images of the reel Arab literally sustain adverse portraits across generations. (Shaheen, *Reel Bad Arabs: how Hollywood Vilifies a People*, p.11)

In the films, the torture case was presented on behalf of the United States (13), which included films *Rendition* means the extradition of one prisoner from one State to another, where the process is considered outside the framework which means extradition of the detainee from one state to another, the opposite is a word within the framework of the law and treaties governing the extradition of detainees, it is usually referred to as "extraordinary extradition," as defined by the American Civil Liberties Union, the extradition process means: "An illegal practice of kidnapping foreign nationals for arrest and interrogation" in US secret prisons overseas, which is known as "black sites", using torture where it is they have been questioned, such as Jordan, Egypt, Syria and Morocco by" (14). Film *Rendition* is a reference to the dangers committed by the war on terror. Roger Ebert wrote that the core value of the *Rendition* film was in the rendition process. It is a process that speaks of theory and practice of two things: torture and the personal responsibility of the state, and the film presented this value through a convincing drama (15). *Rendition* was the foundation that led to a number of aspects in anecdotal folk, then impression, repose, but it remains a movie that briefed us on a number of aspects. (16)

Some critics believe that such films were documentary and did not pay attention to some details that might help it be promoted as Russell Crowe explained one of the actors of the movie *The Body of Lies* (17), (unlike *Syriana*), approaching the eyes of the "other" Arab, closer way to his living and his environment, customs and reality, even if dealing with the same values, it was the core of Hollywood films, but it was a different vision has a lens look in many ways, as an Arab prince Nasser, the central figure in the film aspires for independence and exit from the case of dependency, looking for democracy, successful economic systems, a state of self-reliant institutions. Religious discourse also had a different image. It was aimed at reviving the politician Islam, where religion is capable of establishing a state - can be returned to the scenario to review this recital. The film criticized US policies in the Middle East, including the Justice and Defense Ministries, the owners of companies and capital are greedy, driven by whims and greed, and they are ready to do so any action towards the realization of their interests.

The important detail signifies that Hollywood's huge cinema productions are keenly consumed in Arab-Muslim countries and this is solidified by the fact that Hollywood's revenues from the Arab-Muslim world constitute ten percent of its total overseas profits. (Shaheen, *Guilty: Hollywood's Verdict on Arabs after 9/11*, p. 17).

It seems difficult to continue unifying the Arab model and consider it: a terrorist, an enemy, as outside the circle of civilization, to be a dark scene, speaking a different language, dressed differently, offering violence to peace, and does not appreciate the value of human life, where another value emerges confronting the discourse by reconsidering our will to the truth, re-characterizing the event's discourse and finally raising the sovereignty of the state, in the case of the publication of huge amounts of information that corresponds to the point of view, the emergence of a consciousness awakening awareness, which is also a sensitivity to reality precedes the action. In the case of sagging consciousness, the process of canning and exploitation of the power of the basis of human existence began. Hollywood is always keen to put the Arabs, especially the Muslim, in a constant mold of evil, violence, backwardness, betrayal, ignorance, and extremism, which we have seen through our analysis of *The Kingdom*, *Rendition*, *Body of Lies* and *Syriana*.

4. Conclusion

The study has reached a number of results, most notably that the films in the study embodied the Western view of the Muslim that he is a traitor and cannot be trusted and is characterized by treachery and deception, that the Muslim is lying, is ready to lie even in the most trivial situations, and that the Muslim is violent and loves bloodshed, keen to kill innocent people, especially if they are Americans. The character of a Muslim is built from a young age and is rooted in the values of violence and murder for revenge. Shaheen's main concern is the scarcity of likeable Arab characters in Hollywood cinema in general. He remarks:

Think about it. When was the last time you saw a movie depicting an Arab or an American of Arab heritage as a regular guy? Perhaps a man who works ten hours a day, comes home to a loving wife and family, plays soccer with his kids, and prays with family members at his respective mosque or church. He's the kind of guy you'd like to have as your next door neighbor, because—well, maybe because he's bit like you. (18)

The objective circumstances that may have caused the Arab to be wicked have been outlined in most Hollywood films, which have been related to the historic wars between the Muslim and Western world, oil, the Israeli-Arab conflict, and more events that increase the chances of Arabs being wicked. In Hollywood, one of the most important was the September 11, 2001 bombings, for which al-Qaeda claimed responsibility and the consequences (19) thereof, declaring war on Afghanistan and Iraq, and because Hollywood is an institution that expresses US interests, it is always ready to answer any question has to do with the letter of the institution where it appears that it is subject to laws, and they have been watching for a long time on his appearance and manifested on this image, as prepared for him a place above it would, as is able to disarm him anytime want it, and if he has the authority he draws it from them only.

Negative attitudes against Islam and Muslims should not be confronted with silence, burning, murder, sabotage, and other means and methods that contravene Sharia, logic, reason, values and humanitarian principles. This is what the enemies of Islam and its abusers seek; insulting Islam and presenting it to the world on the grounds that it is a danger and a religion of backwardness, violence, murder and eradication. We must face it by dialogue, discussion, explanation and clarification and to convey the true message of Islam to those who are ignorant about this great religion. Muslims failed to fight the other and let them see the truth of Islam. Do Muslims realize that Western public opinion is not all anti-Islamic? There are those who refuse to insult Islam. These are the wise people who must talk with them and work with them to cleanse the minds of the defeated people in Western countries and rid them of media, cultural and intellectual contamination, poisonous propaganda and psychological warfare. We are required to have locations in cinema, in sociology, and in all aspects of life.

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