# MUSLIMS IN THE AMERICAN CINEMA : MEDIA CONTESTATION AND POLITICS OF REPRESENTATION[1]

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## Abstract

Muslims have been existed in America since the pre-colonial period and increased along the Nation and formed the America as today. They came from many different places namely South Asia, Africa and Middle East. However, being minority among the other two of Abrahamic religions, Muslims have not been fully accepted , especially in media. Not only because of its small amount of the community and thus have less power among Christianity and Jews, but the discrimination and labeling toward this religion has led to phobia, a threat that do not only have a negative influence on certain ethnicity (Arabic) of Muslims in America but Islam as a whole. As Shaheen (2000:23) mentions, up to the year of 2000, there are more than 800 feature films and hundreds of television newscasts, documentaries, entertainment shows, ranging from animated cartoon to soap opera to movies of the week which construct Muslim and Arab in an hostile, negative, and militant way. This number was even multiply after the tragedy of 11 September 2009.

The objective of this paper is to find out the cultural representation of Muslims in America, especially through the movie. How and why Hollywood depicts Muslims stereotypes on the screens which imply the negation of American society toward this religion as a whole. One of the interesting thing of those depictions is that the Islamic representation is mostly limited to Arabic ethnicity. As Israel and Palestine are conflicting and American interference in the Middle East are getting intense, the depiction of Islam in the movie is mostly related to 'alien', violent stranger and the terrorist of the world. The similar presentation from one film to another, which is indeed based on Western perception, has led to form certain ideology which is believed as a truth. In this sense, as a media of representation, film is no longer seen as narratives art per se which is supposed to be neutral, entertaining, and apolitical. Through this film ,it is seen an ideological system , an institution which compose conflicting **class** and interest which all competing for dominance. Ideological storage especially the Western perspective , cultural practice, historical perspectives or even such political interests are all mingled to contribute presenting Islam and Muslim in a different and limited way. When a particular construction of certain movies is followed by similar pattern of presentation , as the Hollywood intensively does toward the Muslims and any other minority groups, the impact is not only about the messages sent to the audience but also ideology and knowledge production .

Keywords : film, American Muslim, Representation, Contestation, Power relation

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## Abstrak

Bangsa Muslim Amerika telah menghuni negara itu sejak masa pra kemerdekaan, dan berkembang serta menjadi bagian dari Amerika hingga sekarang. Mereka datang dari berbagai penjuru dunia, seperti Asia selatan, Afrika hingga Timur Tengah, serta berkembang secara significant sejak abad ke 20, terutama di kalangan muslim African American. Namun demikian, menjadi minoritas di antara agama Ibrahim lainnya, utamanya Kristen dan Yahudi, keberadaan kaum Muslim di Amerika belum diterima sepenuhnya, khususnya di kalangan media. Tidak hanya karena secara jumlah dan pengaruh mereka kalah jauh dibandingkan dengan Kristen dan Yahudi, namun diskriminasi and labeling terhadap kaum Muslim di media, utamanya di film-film Amerika, telah mengarah pada Islamophobia, yang tidak hanya memiliki pengaruh yang negative bagi masyarakat muslim Amerika, tetapi juga Islam secara umum. Seperti yang diungkapkan oleh Jack Shaheen ( 2000:23) dalam risetnya, hingga tahun 2000 saja , jumlah film yang cenderung mendiskreditkan kaum muslim lebih dari 800 judul, inipun belum termasuk film documenter, talkshow, news, hingga acara variety show lainnya. Jumlah ini juga semakin meningkat baik di televisi maupun layar lebar, setelah peristiwa 11 September 2009. Meski konstruksi atau stereotype terhadap Islam Ini telah dimulai sejak awal industry film ini, namun perekembangannya semakin meningkat tiap dekadenya, seiring dengan keterlibatan Amerika di Timur Tengah dan memburuknya hubungan Israel –Palestina dalam beberapa decade terakhir

Tulisan ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui representasi cultural kaum Muslim Amerika lewat media khususnya film. Bagaimana dan mengapa Hollywood mengambarkan stereotype kaum Muslim Amerika di layar lebar yang mengindikasikan penolakan masyarakat Amerika terhadap agama Islam secara keseluruhan. Salah satu hal yang menarik adalah bahwa, di hampir semua film-film Hollywood yang merepresentasikan Muslim, Islam selalu identik dengan Arab dan begitu sebaliknya. Ketika konflik Israel-Palestina semakin merebak dan interfensi Amerika di kawasan Timur Tengah semakin intense, representasi Islam di film dan televise selalu identik dengan kekerasan dan terorisme Dengan demikian selalu terdapat generalisasi dan stereotype yang cenderung menyesatkan. Terkait ini, film-film tersebut seperti media kontestasi dari berbagai kepentingan kekuasaan dan industri. Kemampuan film dalam menvisualisasikan imaginasi orang-orang di balik layar, telah menciptakan ideology tersendiri bagi pemirsanya dengan melihat Islam atau Muslim dari perspektif yang bias, sepotong-sepotong dan sempit. Sabagai bagian dari agama Ibrahim, identitas kaum Muslim juga selalu dilihat sebagai 'pihak lain' oleh Barat, bahkan sebagai ancaman bagi agama lain dan kemanusiaan. Dalam hal ini, sebagai produk seni dan industry, film tidak lagi dilihat sebagai suatu karya narrative yang menghibur, netral ataupun apolitik, tetapi lebih pada media kontestasi produksi ideology ataupun pengetahuan sesuai dengan kepentingan pihak-pihak tertentu.

**Kata kunci** : Film, Muslim Amerika, representasi, kontestasi,relasi kuasa

## A. Introduction

History of American people is a history of various immigrants, including Muslims. As a multicultural nation, each ethnic and religion has brought its own identity and characteristic which need to be recognized as part of American identity and culture. Some ethnics are necessary to melt or at least adapt their identities with American mainstream in order to be socially and politically accepted, but the others are still seen as outsiders, even negated.

Among this multiple races and religions, the phenomenon of Muslims in America is kind of interesting. Being minority among the other two of Abrahamic religions, Muslims have not been fully accepted, especially in media. Not only because of its small amount of the community and thus have less power among Christianity and Jews, but the discrimination and labeling toward this religion has led to phobia, a threat that do not only have a negative influence on certain ethnicity (Arabic) of Muslims in America but Islam as a whole .

Since the mid-90s, the portray of Muslim villains in various characters and themes has steadily increased. A report titled "100 Years of Anti-Arab and Anti-Muslim stereotyping" by Mazin B. Qumsiyeh, director of media relations for the "American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, specifies what some in the Arab American community call "the three B syndrome": "Arabs in TV and movies are portrayed as either 'bombers', 'belly dancers', or 'billionaires' in reference to being portrayed as terrorists, as sex objects, or as wealthy oilmen. The report also explains that these stereotypes don't only cause psychological harm (culture, insult) but also helps feed into actions that are physically harmful by dehumanizing a group first before attacking it.[3]

Kinds of negative stereotypes on Muslim in America are not only portrayed in the American cinema like *The True Lies* ( 1991), *Three King*(1999)*, the Exorcist* ( 1973), *Not without My Daughter ( 1991)* or the controversial *'innocent Muslim'* ( 2012), but also in some cartoons and animation movie like the *Aladin* and its sequel, *Bart Simpson*, and TV serial *24*. These movies indeed have a massive impact on the American society, especially in strengthening the negative stereotypes of Muslims and Islam in the Western society.

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[3] http://www.ibiblio.org/prism/jan98/anti_arab.html

The objective of this paper is to find out the cultural representation of Muslims in America, especially through the movie. How and why Hollywood depicts Muslims stereotypes on the screens which imply the negation of American society toward this religion as a whole.

## B.    Who are the American Muslims?

Unlike other religions such as Christianity and Jews, the arrival and the growth of Muslims in America were growing fast in the twentieth or twenty first century. Mostly, they are from Arabic descent, South Asia, India who came to America since the mass migration. The reason of arrival were mostly because of political upheavals, poverty, wars and social changes which happened in their countries. However, the early Muslims who lived on American soil were mostly Muslim African who were enslaved and brought to America in 1788. Even, The records show that between ten and twenty percent of slaves brought into America since the 1520s were Muslims.

From the 1840s to the 1920s, the first small-scale of Muslim immigrants from Arabic and Turkish cities landed in America. Then, the post World War II era sent a few more, but the third and biggest influx started in the 1960s. The 1965 congress laws of immigration opened the door to more than one hundred thousand Middle Eastern, South Asian, and African Muslim immigrants. Eventually, The Muslim population steadily grew due to high fertility rates and conversions.

Islam today is the world's and America's fastest growing religion. According to the 2009 American religious identification survey, Muslims count for 0.6 percent of the American population. Yet, other statistics show that up to seven million Muslims live in America. Even though they live all over the United States, they are concentrated in four major areas:the New York/Boston/Washington area; California, the Chicago/Cleveland/Detroit Midwest area; and the Texas cities like Houston and Dallas/Fort Worth.

However, American Muslims are diverse in their ethnicities, religious practices , as well as cultures. In America, their ethnic backgrounds are mostly from South Asian, Arab, and African-

American, yet many come from Iranian, Turkish, white, Latino and Native American origins. They are highly educated professionals. In fact, they are more educated and affluent than the national average. They are mostly professionals like engineers, doctors and computer professionals among other professions.

Though, they are good in economic and professional life, the image of Islam or Muslim in media, especially in American movies in the late 21th century is intensively worse, or not even better. Likewise, Muslim community is hardly accepted as full citizens of America until today. While the Jews happened the anti-semites in almost a century before, Muslim in America still experience Islamphobia these days. Islamophobia refers to the irrational fear that connotes a social anxiety, discrimination, and prejudice against Muslims and Islam. This anti-Muslim racism leads to the exclusion of Muslim citizens from mainstream of social and political America, the marginalization of their communities and institutions, and the presumption of their guilt by association which fuels hate crimes. The roots of Islamophobia in America date back to the 1960s and the 1970s, when Hollywood and television shows depicted offensive images of Arabs and Muslims.

As stated by Dina Malki in *Religion in America*, Pejorative language using terms like "camel jockey" reflected a progressive contempt towards this minority group. [4]


## C. Muslim and Politics of Representation

The best presentation of the movie , compared with pictorial and literary, is on its capability to 're-create' of almost the whole elements of art such as narrative, picture, music as well as technology into a new one (Monaco, 2009 : 24). Thus, the effect and criticism of this work are also more complex and wider, not only on its art, appraisal or the industrial revolution which grow up time by time but also on its popularity in which the audience response is the main intention of the production.

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[4] (http/www.lifeintheusa.com/religion/islamphobia.htm)

Concerning of this popularity , film is indeed about the industry. It is more perceived as a mass culture in which the audience's pleasure is the dominant consideration. Along with the industrial senses, the aesthetic analysis of the movie usually becomes the dominant focus to determine a film success. Though the presented idea is derived from specific culture, and mostly about cultural artifact, the discussion of the movie among its complex elements rarely focuses on how and why a certain culture is depicted but more frequently on how successful a film as art is.

Moreover, the ability of film in producing or 'realizing' people's imagination into a wide screen, has strengthened an opinion that film is merely about fiction. What is presented in that widescreen is assumed 'only seen a movie' and has no serious impact on the real life nor challenge values of society. In this sense, film is merely seen as an entertainment, a pleasure moment which relieves people from their daily.

However, cinema or film is also a media representation. What we see in film is not the reality, but someone's version of it. Film tells long story with a wealth of detail from the perspective of a narrator or the team behind the scene and each has his/ her own interpretation toward the images, sounds or words presented . Hence, what being represented, has never been neutral nor free from interest. The concept and how the things are represented become more essential since people behind the scene determines and constructs the messages and the objectives of the movie. This indicates that film representation itself is not an art per se, but eventually a complicated product. It is indeed connected to the constructed models by dominant power which is in some ways interrelated with particular ideology, interest, generalization, stereotyping and even power relation. As Shohat (2010:5) argued, all film are political- or more accurately have a political dimension

Representation here is connected with how to give meaning, to describe or to depict something . According to *Oxford English Dictionary*, to represent also means to symbolize, stand for, to be a specimen or to substitute for the things which are depicted through the images, sounds or words what we are talking about. Here, the representation has never been a complete or a totally reflection of things, but much more than a combination of ideas of various elements. Referring to Barker ( 2003 :4), in any representations there is a mixture of thing itself, such as

the opinion of the people doing the representation,  the reaction of the individual to the representation and also the context of the society in which the representation is taking place. In this sense, the designs, messages ,the power behind the  scene or  how  and why things are represented  are  kind of the primary discourse  in which the dimension of its impact is particularly  intensive and  broad.

Here,   film  is  such like a media of contestation among different  powers that  have  a chance  to construct a  certain kind of issues. The industry possibly makes any constructions to happen, weather the represented one might agree or not. In this term, film has been more seen as a social practice   which in Fairclough (1995:74) argument, has a dialectical  relationship with other social  dimension. As Fairclough more insists,  this  form of social practice both constitutes the social world and is constituted by other social practices. In this sense, as being perceived in the movie, film offers a kind  of concept  whose ideas are derived from the social life which in the same way inspire or affect  society as well. Thus, the primary focus of this discourse is on the way its structures enact, confirm, legitimate, reproduce or challenge relations of power and dominance in society. Thus , the dimension of this course is multidisciplinary in which  the social problem is the focus of its concern

Furthermore, Fairclough  also emphasizes that discourse is just  one among  many aspects of any  social practice. It is a way of  the dominant power legitimate  its interest toward a certain things in any fields of background.  It both reproduces and changes knowledge, identities and social relations including power relations, and at the same time is also shaped by other social practices and structures. ( Jorgensen, 2002 :61)**.**

Here, related to the film, whatever presented in the movie  is possibly  comprehended in a different way by different people. Though  the industry often assumes that movie has no effect on the viewers other than an entertainment, the construction of meaning is formed through a regular presentation . Since movies are  played over and over,  a constructed model  which's represented will become knowledge which  people  believe, though it might not be true.

Concerning of Muslims' representation  in the American cinema, it is interesting to find out that  during the last four decades, as Shaheen  ( 2000 : 23) reveals,  there are  more than 800

feature films and hundreds of television newscasts, documentaries, entertainment shows, ranging from animated cartoon to soap opera to movies of the week which construct Muslim and Arab in an hostile, negative, and militant way. The similar presentation from one film to another, which is indeed based on Western perception, has led to form certain ideology which is believed as a truth.

Interestingly, the image of Muslims on these screens are limited to the Arabic ethnicity. In some movies, sometimes there is no a difference between Islam and Arab. Arab means Islam, and vice versa. There is no a difference between Arabic cultures and Islamic law. Likewise, there is kind of generalization and stereotyping in depicting Islam and Arabs in many ways. In 1982, James Baerg, Director of Program Practice for CBS-TV in New York city remarks, ' the Arab stereotype is attractive to a number of people. It is an easy thing to do. It is the thing that is going to be the most readily accepted by a large number of audience'.

However, in reality Muslims are an integral part of the American mainstream people who contribute to their respective communities as teachers, doctors, lawyers, artists, etc. As Shaheen ( 2000: 25) explains, the community of American Muslims is generally a peace loving quilt of culture : 25 percents are South Asian descent, Arab represents another 12 percent, and early half are converts mainly African-American. Likewise, they are mix of ethnic, racial, and cultural background which offers a broad range of Muslim viewpoint.

### D. Muslim and Politics of "Otherness"

Discussing about Muslim among the Abrahamic religions, especially the Christianity, it is widely understood that this community is mostly seen as 'the other', against which Europeans define themselves. Along with Jews, As Parfitt ( 2004 : 1) mentions, contemporary European and Western perceptions of Jews and Arab, Israelis and Muslim are deeply rooted in much older representations which in turn are embedded in the collective Western *imaginaire*. The Medieval also constructed a Semite which refers to ethnicities of the Middle East, including Jews and Arab. Parfitt (2004:2) also explains that the creation of a European identity was to a substantial degree in opposition to these ' other'. Identity is a much as a question of

exclusion as inclusion and it was on the boundaries of this collectivities that a European sense of self was forged.

Though the three religions have a lot in common, namely the descent of Abraham, but the history of Western perception toward Muslims, Jews and Arabs is a long and complex. The crusade, occupation, since the beginning of Islam has generated the religious prejudices and military confrontation among the three in which current Western construct their images and perceptions. As Parfitt more explain, this kind of perception has been strengthening the anti-Semitism toward the Jews and spreading Islamophobia to be found throughout Europe and the other today .

At the turn of century, as most of European Jews migrated to America, and did assimilation and social changes in the New World, Jews were soon to be accepted and mingled into American culture. Through some decades, the Jews were successfully eliminated the major stereotypes of Anti-Semitism which previously directed to this religion for centuries. As Corbett ( 1997 : 97) says, Jews had love affairs with America. In the United Stated, they had found a country where they lived as full citizens with all the right and privileges pertaining thereunto. Jews felt more completely at home than they had in the hands from where they had home. Arriving with no money and few skills, beginning as workers and tradesmen, they have achieved remarkable economic success. In a few decades after their mass migration in the early 19th century, this race appeared to be the most prominent and wealthiest community in America. In this New Land, they could breathe the air of religious freedom and optimistic life that they didn't get in 'the old world of heritage'. As Glazer & Moynihan (1963 :173) said, paradoxically, while the non-Jews in the New York's bohemia felt uprooted, alienated, and alone, the Jews were by contrast rooted and at home. Here, some aspects in Judaism gave much opportunity for its people to expand their life. They accomodated themselves to American society and learned to live with various religions and races.

However, Islamophobia still remains especially on media and intensively worse when the terrorist attacks on American cities on September 11, 2001. As Israel and Palestine are conflicting in which Palestine are perceived as the Muslim representation, among the Abrahamic religions, Islam was not only related to 'alien', violent stranger but also the

terrorist of the world. As an impact, in his research *The Muslim Arab- American Neighbor as Terrorist,* Shaheen states that over all the presentation of Arab and Islam in media, almost half of all Americans are reluctant to have Arabs and Muslims as their neighbor (Shaheen, 2008 : 49)

Why Muslim became a target of media stereotype? There are a lot of explanation for this. But the best way in explaining film representation is that there is no natural nor coincidently thing in film production. The film maker make decisions about how to depict or present a certain object including what and how to film it. Even, during the process, editing ( montage) provides means to get and cut the wanted shots. As Sergei Eisentein argues, quoted by Stamp (1988: 180), even the most 'realistic' film like documentaries do not simply set up a camera in front of the event. They involves choices that are designed to elicit responses in the viewers.

Seeing of this representational choices, the politics of representation is becoming essential to explain the film messages. Film is indeed a collaborative effort and each crew including producer and the artist has his/her own preferences toward a certain thing and translate them in frame work of the movie. The politics of representation will explain why and how a certain object is (un)necessary to be represented.

As mentioned before, the Islamophobia was began around the sixties though the first Muslim stereotype in American cinema has been started in 1922 in *Sheikh*. The sixties was a period in which the wars in the Arabic peninsula, one of them was the Six Day War, between Palestine and Zionist considered significant, and determined the Muslim- Western relationship in the next periods. Also, since then, this region always deals with such a never ending conflicts which attract the media attention and the world, including the US intervention in the Middle East.

Hollywood's response toward this political tension can be seen through the depiction of Palestinians in the film of *Exodus* ( 1960), *the Ambassador* ( 1984), *the Delta Force* (1986), *Wanted Dead or Alive* (1987) or *the Ministry of Vengeance* (1989) . As Shaheen ( 2009: 27) mentions, in those movies Palestinians are characterized by Hollywood as religious fanatics, threatening human freedom, economy and culture. The producers portray Palestinians as a demonic creature without compassion for men, women and children, and thus they equals to terrorist. The depiction of Palestinians here was not only in the form of villain characters as the

number one    enemy  but also the film tag   which mention them  as  " scumbag", "son of a bitch", the Gucci Terrorist",  "  a fly in a piece of shit", "animals", "bastard", " stateless savage" who massacre children", etc.

In this case,   the correlation between  representation and  power  is  indeed  established.  It is like a coin  with two sides supporting each other. In this sense,   film   is  like a medium to see whose power is dominant in a certain society  including   its influence in  directing cultural perspective. And this can be observed   through the way  how  and why things represented, including the messages  and how its impact on the society.  Thus, the intervention toward this  art has been commenced since the film concept is launched.

 In the case of *Not Without My Daughter* ( 1990) for example,  the film  claims, in the opening credits, to be a ' fact-based story', a true  experiences of Betty  Mahmoody  ( Sally Field), an American woman; her Iranian  husband Mahmoody ( Alfred Molina) and their daughter, Mahtob ( Sheila Rosenberg). But it definitely tries to depict  Muslim male  as a religious hypocrite.  Set in the mid- 1980s during the Iran-Iraq war, the film  begins in the United States,  in which Mahmoody  plans to come home ( Iran) for what she thought would merely a brief visit.  In  Iran, Betty  is battered and intimidated in the home of  Mahmoody's fundamentalist extended family, as he also becomes jealous and violent. Not only  does he imprison  and abuse his wife in Iran, he seems to do so  in the name of  Islam as when he slaps  her face, boasting " I'm Muslim". After braking an oath sworn on the al Quran he brags : " Islam is the greatest gift I can give my daughter"  when he departs the mosque followed by his relatives, the camera cuts to a poster of a grim Ayatullah Khomeini ( Shaheen, 2000 : 27)

In this sense,  as a media of  representation, film  is no longer seen as  narratives art per se which is supposed  to be  neutral,  entertaining,  and    apolitical.   Through  this film ,it  is  seen  an ideological system , an institution  which  compose conflicting  class and interest which  all competing    for dominance.  Ideological storage especially  the Western perspective , cultural practice, historical perspectives or even such political interests  are all mingled to    contribute presenting  Islam and Muslim  in a different and limited  way.  According to Miles ( 1996 : 71), *Not Without My Daughter* is an easy  film to consider as a cultural product, for shortly before the  film  entered  production,  the  Iran  Contra  crisis  and  the  Iranian  hostage  crisis  aroused

Americans' curiosity and anxiety about Islamic religion and culture. While it was being filmed in the summer of 1990, tensions in the Middle East were building.

Related to this, according to Spivak , in Landry ( 1996 : 6-7) there are two senses of representation which are being run together : representation as 'speaking for' as in politics and representation as 're-presentation' as in art or philosophy. However, though these two words has a similar reference : conscious and conscience, but the impact of them is possibly contradict each other. It is because 'speak for' in representation is only for the dominant culture.. In Shohat's term It is related whose stories are told, by whom, how are they manufactured, disseminated, received? What are the structural mechanisms of the film and media industry? Who controls production, distribution, exhibition ?. That's why, a full understanding of media representation therefore requires a comprehensive analysis of the institution that generate and distribute mass mediated texts as well as of the audience that receive them. (Shohat and Stamp , p 182-184)

### E. **Muslims and the Arena of Contestation**

In a visual description, the politics of representation is depicted in the role of character or characterization as being represented by the actor/actress. Usually it is related to race, religion, or nationality of particular character as being perceived in the movie. However, the more essential one lies on the theme or how the story and message are constructed and delivered to the audience. The story anchors the visual characteristic. It drives the characters performance and strengthens the stereotypes as well. For example, it is interesting to focus on how the film industry portrays the relation between the West and East in various box office movies like the serials of *James Bond 007* and *Rambo*. . Inspired by the Cold War, in many ways these films have been trying to demonstrate the Western ( England and US) hegemony toward the Eastern Europe ( Mostly Russia ). Creating a superhero like Bond and Rambo in the middle of wars , or in a danger situation of the world , is like presenting the similar type of point of views : the West are democratic, good, heroic, the world savior etc, and the East (Europe), represented by Russia and its allies like Vietnamese are the villain, evils, the world's threats, etc.

This bipolar presentation is then followed by the similar film like *The Red Head*, *the Platoon,* the other Vietnamese-war movie which mostly inspired the Hollywood during or after the *Cold War.* The similar also happen to the representation of Muslim or Arab in various movies. After the Cold War ended, this bipolar presentation then changes to Middle East- West. As the conflicts in the Middle East is getting worse, the idea of portraying the Islam and Arabic still interact the West.

As Hall (2003:232) suggested, like the photographs which gain meaning when they are read in context, against or in connection with one another, to understand the meaning of film message is particularly based on accumulated version of presentation . Here, image do not carry meaning or 'signify' on their own, but with variation from one text or site of representation to another, across different text or 'inter-textuality' . As being discussed in the film above, the similar type of Western's construction in numerous movies indicates its hegemony and media power. Among different text, the audience are seemingly driven to see from only one perspective : the Western point of view.

Referring to Marx concept of ideology, this is what he calls the ideology of the ruling class. The dominant culture or power articulates its class interest in sets of ideas which is not only on economic but also in ideology that legitimate the capitalist as the ruling class. Burton(2002 : 219) also defines Ideology as a set of beliefs and values that add up to a particular view of the world and of power relationships between people and group. In this term, people are driven to believe how thing is and how it should be. The dominant ideology would be a dominant view of the world in a given culture. This is the one that media offers us. We are influenced by the messages what should believe in or what should value as important.

Related to film representation, since Hollywood and European are the dominant power in film industry, the foremost point of view in perceiving the other races such as Black, Hispanic, Asian, or the native and its relation to the West is mostly based the Western perspectives. The controversial pictures of the White vs the Natives in some of Hollywood movies like the sequel of the *God Must be Crazy, the Last of the Mohican, the Dances with Wolves,* etc, indicates the white supremacy toward the native. These films even strengthen the point of barbaric, savage, uncivilized or innocent tribes of the native and the point of wisdom,

civilized, heroic, kindness of the white civilization at the same time. As Burton ( 2002:39) indicates, representations emphasize difference between a given group and the views and values of those in mainstream culture. Representations are bound up with the process of signification - the making of meanings through signs. Meaning is constructed into texts by producers and audience, in which the producer media expect the active audience to follow or even build something else from this design.

In the case of Muslims representation in the movies above, it is clearly seen how Islam perceived from Western perspective which is also based on their own preferences and interest only. As the Cold War ended for example, exploiting the Russians and communism threats are not interesting and relevant anymore. Thus, Hollywood need another villain to be a sparring partner of the Western hero/heroine. As quoted by Shaheen ( 2000: 23) , John Esposito says, 'fear of the Green Menace (green being the color of Islam) may well replace that of the Red Menace of Communism. As he further explains, Islam is often equated with holy war and hatred, fanatism and violence, intolerance and the oppression of women. Likewise, as Esposito asserts, narrative about Muslim world all too often assume that there is a 'monolithic Islam' out there, somewhere, as if Muslim believe, think, and feel like.

In this sense, referring to Althusser concept of *Ideological State Apparatuses*, this kind of representation is produced in the domain of *the superstructures* in which one them is media or film institution. In the case of Muslim representation above, it is clearly perceived how the media or film constructs an' ideology' based on the dominant perspective. And the implication of it is not only on politics but also on social and cultural aspect which take a period of time. As Althusser mentions, consequently, what ideology does, through the various ideological apparatus, is to reproduce the social relations of production in this larger sense ( Hall,1985:98)

Besides, in a similar way, as quoted by Hall ( 2005:25), referring to Said ( 1978: 7-8) within the framework of Western hegemony over the Orient, there emerged a new object of knowledge . In line with Said, the most critical subject issued by Spivak , in Magio, J (2007 : 419-443) also relates to the manner that through academic thinking, western cultures investigate other cultures. Spivak holds that knowledge is never innocent and that it expresses the interest of its producers.

Knowledge is like any other commodity that is exported from the West to the third world for financial and other types of gain. In this sense, the representation of particular culture as being constructed by the West is truly not by coincidence. According to Spivak, 'knowledge' have served as a prime justification for the conquest of other cultures and their enslavement, as part of European colonial

Here, what we see in film, it is like providing such references or insight to the audience or the other production on a certain idea which is not always right and proper to the represented culture. Since the similar portrayal is regularly and widely represented in various movies, it then becomes knowledge and inscribed into all kind of social practice.

Related to the image and visual styles, it is interesting for example how most of Hollywood studios present certain characteristic in the movies : the maid, janitor, or a lower class of society are represented by the Black, Hispanic or sometimes Asian people. The terrorist or the villain ones are the Arabic or Russian; the mafias are Italian or Chinese, 'lower' criminal, uneducated ones are usually the Black; the uncivilized, stubborn, even sometimes barbaric and savage are ones usually the Indians or the native, etc. Whereas, the dominant hero or heroine is represented by the white. At a glance, it seems that there's nothing wrong about this, as film is only a fiction. People eventually understand it that what's being constructed is based on the white preference and culture and it does not reflect or even record reality. However, since this kind of portrayals have taken over the years and reproduced repeatedly, they become such dogmatic presentation. People consume this kind of portrayals as something natural, they are as the way people represented them in the movies.

**F. Conclusion**

Film is a media representation. Into a wide screen, this industry could portray and depict the object, events, or the reality which seems to be real and represent the society. However, film is also a constructed work. Behind the scene, there's a lot of people involved, and each brings his/her own interpretation toward a certain events, object or situation and translate them into film image

The construction and stereotypes of Muslim and Islam on the screen since the beginning of film industry and intensively increase during the decades are indeed related to the power relation and particular interest of movie industry. Refers to Fairclough (1995:74) film has a dialectical relationship with other social practice which constitutes the social world and is constituted by other social practices. In this sense, as being perceived in the movie, film offers a kind of concept whose ideas are derived from the social life which in the same way inspire or affect society as well. Here, related to the film, whatever presented in the movie is possibly comprehended in a different way by different people. Though the industry often assumes that movie has no effect on the viewers other than an entertainment, the construction of meaning is formed through a regular presentation has indeed a wide and intensive implication.

As being represented in film, media has capability to drive people opinion toward a particular idea. When a particular construction of certain movies is followed by similar pattern of presentation , as the Hollywood intensively does toward the Muslims and any other minority groups, the impact is not only about the messages sent to the audience but also ideology and knowledge production . Media representation has a capability to construct a new image or change the existing one.

Besides, film also like a media of contestation among different powers that have a chance to construct a certain kind of issues. The industry possibly makes any constructions to happen, weather the represented one might agree or not. As happened to Muslim and Arabic world, the images of Islam on the screen is much related to the power relation behind the screen, which is much connected to a political, an economic as well as a cultural interest.

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