

**From Orientalism to Islamophobia: Media"  
representation of Arabs and Muslims on the  
pre- and post-9/11 Hollywood on-screen and  
Egyptian Cinema**

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## الملخص

الهدف الأساسي من هذه الرسالة هو البحث عن التصورات السلبية للعرب والمسلمين من خلال تحليل أفلام هوليوود التي صدرت قبل وبعد 11 سبتمبر في سياق النظريات والمفاهيم المعاصرة، مثل الاستشراق الجديد وما بعد الاستعمار وكرهية الإسلام أو ما يسمى بالإسلاموفوبيا. يتم تحليل أفلام هوليوود قبل وبعد 11 سبتمبر من حيث السياق الاجتماعي والتاريخي والحجة القائلة بأن الإسلاموفوبيا يمكن أن تنشأ من التحول الأخير للاستشراق أو كرد فعل على التعددية الثقافية والعبارة للقوميات.

يستخدم المنهج طرقات نصية لدراسة استخدام اللغة والقوة في شكل ممارسات اجتماعية، وهذا يشمل استخدام السياق، والخطابة النقدية، والمنهجيات الموضوعية والسينمائية، بالإضافة إلى الاستشهاد بالخطابة حول الأساليب النظرية في إجراء تحليل ثقافي للأفلام المختارة. علاوة على ذلك، يتم تفسير هذا التحليل من خلال إطار نظري نقدي ضمن سياق اجتماعي وتاريخي.

من خلال مراجعة أوراق بحثية سابقة، حددت الباحثة عدة جوانب لأفلام معينة كان لها تأثير كبير على تقديم العرب والمسلمين في هوليوود بما في ذلك ظهور خطابات جديدة حول الهوية الذاتية والتمثيلات السلبية للعرب والمسلمين، إضافة إلى عودة ظهور الاستشراق وتصوير الأصولية الإسلامية في السينما المصرية. كما حددت الباحثة أن هذه الأفلام تربط المسلمين بالإرهاب وتصورهم بشكل سلبي خاصة في الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية وأوروبا والشرق الأوسط. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، تبحث الدراسة في كيفية الترويج للإسلاموفوبيا في هوليوود والسينما المصرية، كذلك البحث عن الخطابات المتعلقة بالنظريات الاجتماعية الأوسع. تحلل الدراسة مجموعة مختارة من الأفلام المصرية التي تمثل العرب والمسلمين من حيث السينما والتركيب والفلسفة والإطار المفاهيمي.

الكلمات الافتتاحية:

هوليوود، الاستشراق، الإسلاموفوبيا، الاستشراق الجديد، الشرق الأوسط، المسلمون، العرب، التصورات، الأفلام المصرية، الخطابة، النظريات.

## **From Orientalism to Islamophobia: Media'' representation of Arabs and Muslims on the pre- and post-9/11 Hollywood on-screen and Egyptian Cinema**

### **Abstract**

The primary aim of this thesis is to explore negative representations of Arabs and Muslims through an analysis of Hollywood films released pre- and post-9/11 in the context of contemporary theories and concepts, such as neo-Orientalism, postcolonialism and Islamophobia. Pre- and post- 9/11 Hollywood films are analysed in relation to their socio-historical contexts and the argument that Islamophobia could be generated from the latest transformation of Orientalism or as a response to multiculturalism and transnationalism.

The approach employs textual methods to study the use of language and power in the form of social practice. This includes employing context, critical discourse, and thematic and semiotic methodologies. This thesis is guided by a discourse on theoretical approaches in performing a cultural analysis of the films selected. Moreover, this analysis is interpreted through a critical theoretical framework within a sociological and historical context.

Through an examination of past research papers, the researcher identified several aspects of specific films that had a major effect on the presentation of Arabs and Muslims in Hollywood, including the emergence of new discourses about self-identity and negative representations of Arabs and Muslims, the re-emergence of Orientalism and the portrayal of Islamic fundamentalism in Egyptian cinema. Furthermore, the researcher identified that these films link Muslims to the issue of terrorism and portray them in a negative light, especially in U.S., Europe and the Middle East.

Additionally, the study investigates how Islamophobia said to be promoted in Hollywood and Egyptian cinema and explores discourses related to broader social processes. The study analyses a selection of films that represent Arabs and Muslims in terms of their cinematic, structure, philosophy, and conceptual framework.

#### **Keywords:**

**Hollywood, Orientalism, Islamophobia, Neo-Orientalism, Middle East, Muslims, Arabs, Representations, Egyptian Films, Discourse, Theories**

## Theorising Orientalism

### 1.Introduction:

The concept of Orientalism is a keystone of this study. It forms the foundation of a conceptual framework as explored by cultural theorists such as Edward Said, alongside other contemporary concepts, such as Islamophobia. These provide an extensive conceptual framework for analysing the power of the discourse that configures the Orient as being in a binary conflict with the Occident. Stereotypes of Islam and Arabs are an annex of this Orientalist discourse, which sketched the Orient as uncivilised, and inferior compared with the civilised West. Orientalist and colonial discourse since WWII have continued to create negative and/or misleading representations of Islam and Arab Muslims in the Western world.

Islam is at the core of any attempt to define Orientalism. Bin Nabi (1980) defines Orientalism as “the literary practice of Western writers who write about Islamic thought and the Islamic civilization” (Bin Nabi, p. 130). Thus, Orientalism is, at least in part, the study of the Arab Middle East as perceived through Western eyes. This chapter explores Orientalism and the Orientalist discourse in accordance with the theoretical ideas of Edward Said and other concepts developed by important Arab and non-Arab writers.

Edward Said listened to the voices of a variety of people in order to piece together the reality about the connection between the West and the Muslim world that he had created. Based on literary theory, his analytic technique was to reread the major Western cultural products, looking for recurring themes that revealed a way of thinking and doing. Orientalism was given to this newly discovered framework. According to Said, Orientalism is first and foremost a set of dreams, images, and languages available to anyone attempting to discuss what forms the dividing line between the East and the West. As a result, it is a representational system meant to promote colonial dominance, and it is considerably more concerned with Western culture than with Eastern culture (Sensoy, 2016).

The paper provides a detailed description of representations of Muslims in Orientalism by Said and the way concepts such as Islamophobia have been shaped

over time. The paper also discusses the concepts of classical Orientalism in relation to Islamism and neo-Orientalism.

## 2. Contemporary Orientalist attitudes: the Orientalist:

Said was inspired to write *Orientalism* (1978) for two reasons. The first was related to the Arab-Israeli War of 1973. Following the war, the media showed Arabs and Muslims as weak and lacking resilience. However, when the Egyptians crossed the Suez Canal in early 1973, they proved that Arabs could fight; this apparent contradiction directly inspired Said to write about Orientalism. The second reason was associated with Said's background as an Arab American living in the United States and noticing the negative representations of Arabs drawn by many artists in novels and paintings. He decided to write *Orientalism* to answer and clarify the representations of Arabs and Muslims in the eyes of the West.

In *Orientalism*, "the Orientalist" is the interpreter, the exhibitor, the mediator, the representative (and represented) expert (Said, 1978, p. 284). The work of the Orientalist in society was formerly to interpret the Orient (ibid, p. 222) and transfer his knowledge to the West. For Said, *Orientalism* is a discourse that can last and regenerate itself for centuries. It has negative destructive effects for the sufferers: the Asians themselves:

Orientalism will always exist in one or another form as long as the West has hegemonic power. Orientalism is strongly inter-twined with the Western self- image to such an extent that if Orientalism goes, then Western world power or even West itself must also go (Hübinette, 2003, p. 80)

Said (1978) addressed the subject of the culture of the Middle East, such as in Syria or Egypt, to understand the history of a region that was constantly described as mysterious, corrupt, illogical, and backward. For example, Middle Eastern men were portrayed as monsters who would take advantage of women by any means (Said, 1987).

Furthermore, Said has suggested that the civilised/barbarian dichotomy is akin to the more general 'us/them'. Asians, Africans, and Native Americans were historically viewed by white Europeans as 'inferior races' because the so-called 'white race' was said to be superior in terms of knowledge and culture (cited in Heraclides and Dialla, 2017). Both supporters and critics of the civilising mission and imperialism used the term "civilization" to make their arguments. It distinguishes what "we" have, in contradistinction to "them" – the barbarians (Federici, 1995, p. 65).

Abdel-Malek (1963) indicated that under the name of improvement and civilisation, Orientalists think of Eastern people as objects that can easily be overpowered and dominated by Westerners.

This contrasting and dichotomous image has helped the West to define itself. In Orientalism, the West is posited as the major hub of the world and the East as the minor 'Other' to demonstrate the West's centrality and superiority (Bertens, 2001). In the nineteenth century, Western Europe, as the epicentre of the Western world, created a legalisation mechanism to distinguish civilised and non-civilised societies (Buzan, 2004). The 'standard of civilisation' originated from a culturally common image of 'civilised' versus 'barbarian'. Its modern European legal term was formed, and its political role was to protect the membership of the international society and to justify colonialism (Buzan, 2014).

Gong (1984) defines 'a standard of civilisation' as the premise, explicit and tacit, utilised to differentiate those who are from a unique society from the aliens. As per the definition, entities who meet the diagnostic criteria for civilisation are considered to be members of the 'civilised' circle, whereas those who do not meet the requirements are outsiders: "not civilised or possibly uncivilized" (Gong, 1984, p. 97). It is important to throw light on the European states of the nineteenth century, during which time Europe was considered the political and cultural hub of the world and thus its standard of 'civilisation' became an essential measure for the policies prevailing in international law. Policies that were shared between European states were known as the standard of civilisation. According to this standard, policy, states, peoples, and regions were distributed between the civilised and the savage (Peñas Esteban, 2019).

This discourse has been put into practice throughout history to find reasons to dominate and take advantage of those people identified as being on the 'outside' of civilised international society.

Under the 'standard of civilisation' notion, European society regarded itself as a highly civilised community (Linklater, 2016). It was an example of particular global interconnections and the management of specific power balances through which the established and stabilised groups proclaimed the right to control non-European societies, to express their strong disapproval of their 'barbarism' or lack of 'advancement', and to improve their governing structures. It was mainly formed by successive waves of colonisation. Walter Benjamin underlined this point when he wrote that there "is no document of civilisation which is not at the same time a document of barbarism" (cited in Bowden, 2019, p. 48).

Notably, Norbert Elias work on 'civilizing processes' first published in Germany 1939 and first translated to English in 1978 and become one of the great works in sociology in the Twentieth century. Elias's (1987) sociological analysis of *The Civilizing Process* the process by which modern European societies have become pacified over the last four centuries and emotional identification between the members of each society has increased (Linklater, 2016).

However, the ‘civilizing processes’, according to Elias, has not involved merely a linguistic change or using a variety of literary and pictorial sources (Dunning and Hughes, 2013, p. 88) as Said demonstrated, but primarily manners books intended at the secular upper classes, the knights, the courtiers, and the bourgeoisie, Elias determines the long term-term occurrence of a trend towards the increasing elaboration and refinement of manners and etiquette (ibid). Dunning and Hughes (2013) assert that “this process was full of short-term and medium-term discontinuities, ‘civilizing’ and ‘decivilising spurts’” (p. 89), and phases which were experienced at the time as stasis but in which the internal dynamics were leading in the long-term to change (ibid). Moreover, this went hand-in-hand with an escalation in the social pressure on people to exercise “stricter, more continuous, more even, more moderate and more nuanced self-control over a growing number of aspects of their feelings and behaviour in more and more social situations” (ibid, p. 89).

Additionally, he tries to explain Europeans came to think that they are more civilised than other societies especially the neighbour society (Lintekar and Mennel, 2010). However, the book also explores the processes by which Europeans had, by the nineteenth and early twentieth century, come to regard themselves as more civilised and superior to other contemporary societies and their societies of the past, and they view themselves as they are “civilised” while others were “barbaric” or languishing in a “savage” past (ibid).

The Civilizing Process analysis did not overview the self-images of Europeans mentioned before but rather to understand the process that guided to that sense of cultural superiority<sup>6</sup>.

6 One example of the structural regularities of established-outsider relationships may help readers to discover others for themselves as they go along. As the study of Wiston Parva indicates, an established group tends to attribute to its outsider group as a whole the “bad” characteristics of that group’s “worst” section-of its anomic minority (Dunning and Hughes, 2013, p. 60).

In this respect, Elias’s sociology approach shares some similarities in that established-outsider relations is what Said was demonstrating in his dichotomisation between West and East on stereotypes and cultural generalisations that depict the Orient as “irrational”, “uncivilised” and “backwards”. Nevertheless, Elias and Said have significantly different ways in which they see the world. Said’ Orientalism is based on postmodern/poststructuralist ideas around discourse, language, and power where Elias examines figurations of interdependent people.

As has been mentioned, there is a corresponding approach with Elias, who asserted he did not use the idea of a civilising process in a negative manner to denote the superiority of Western civilisation. However, members of the English School understand European states in the 19th century used ‘the standard of civilisation’ to

explain excluding non-Western peoples from the society of states and to describe the changes they had to undertake to become equal members (Gong, 1984). Certainly, their interest in the nature of Europe's professed civilisational identity and in the influence, it had on other societies can be usefully linked with Elias's analysis of how Europeans understood their civilising scheme to include a global civilising mission (Linklater, 2016, p. 6).

In this manner, Said's Orientalism theory of how the West distinguished between civilised and the barbaric and savage East is similar to Elias's reflections on how distinctions between 'established' social groups and 'outsiders' have been constructed and amended in the course of the civilising process (Elias and Scotson, 1994). However, exploring the similarities and differences between Elias and Said is not a focus of my thesis, although I am using the aspects of Elias's approach to established-outsider relations to build on Said's Orientalism.

Members of the English School<sup>7</sup> have argued that the idea of civilisation was part of the self-understanding of states involved in the creation of an international society that excluded 'uncivilised' peoples (Linklater, 2016). They have also argued that the development of a global civilising process that defends the virtues of civility (Jackson, 2000) has made it conceivable for culturally diverse European and non-

<sup>7</sup> English School references to civility and civilizing processes emphasize that international order cannot be reduced to the fact that the balance of power places external constraints on state behaviour. They stress that order depends on internalized constraints, including a common desire to place restraints on violence, a shared willingness not to exploit the weaknesses of others, an ability to empathize with others' fears and interests and a moral outlook that prefers compromise and accommodation to egotism, self-righteousness and mutual recrimination. Exactly the same stress on the importance of internalized constraints on violence and self-control is central to Elias's account of the civilizing process. (Linklater, 2004, p. 7)

European political communities to come together as at least notional equals in the first universal society of states (ibid).

Orientalism functions as a structure of knowledge that generates and spreads subjective representations of the 'Other' from the Orient (Abdel-Malek, 1963). The concept of Orientalism has many sub-concepts and theories embedded within it. According to both the contemporary standard of civilisation and the European standard of civilisation, Europe is civilised, and European civilisation has a distinctive historical advantage that promotes its permanent superiority over all other cultures (San Juan, 1998). As Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778) wrote, "everywhere the strong [are] armed against the weak with the formidable power of the law," and thus, "justice and truth must be bent to serve the most powerful: that is the rule" (cited in Adams, 2016, p. 26).

Orientalism as a style of thought also depends on an ontological and epistemological difference made between the Orient and the Occident (Said, 1978, p. 1). It distinguishes between 'the (allegedly inferior) Orient' and 'the (allegedly superior) Occident'. Said divided Orientalism into two main stages: the early Orientalist stage in which the Orient was depicted by Western literature as inferior and mysterious, and a second stage pertaining to contemporary Orientalism. These Western representations created or posited the Orient as the Other while making stereotypical images about it (Said, 1978).

Western states occupied and dominated much of the rest of the world during the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This power imbalance was central to conceptualisations of inferior Others. The cultural contrast between Europeans and non-Europeans, and between 'civilised' and 'non-civilised' peoples, was extended by international lawyers throughout the nineteenth century. It was argued that "international law is a product of the special civilisation of Europe...and could not be supposed to be understood or recognised by countries differently civilised" (Hall, 1884,p. 115). The division between 'civilised' and 'barbarous' humanity was intended to acknowledge that states had different levels of legal rights according to the division to which they belonged (Wheaton, 1836; Lorimer, 1880, cited in Stivachtis, 2010). In this context, 'civilisation' does not make sense without its 'Other' and 'barbarism'- with which it is contrasted (Salter, 2002, p. 18, cited in Stivachtis, 2010). It is important to note that these 'civilisational discourses and practices have been historically used to create global hierarchies' (Stivachtis, 2010, p. 7).

The purity and naivety of the Orientals made them inferior to the civilised West, and the simplicity of the East paved the road for Western states to control it. Portraits show the East as containing nations in need of Western intervention to come and guide or rescue them. The Occident portrays the Orient as irrational and possessing nothing of cultural worth. Said (1987) states that "The modern Orientalist was, in his view, a hero rescuing the Orient from the obscurity, alienation, and strangeness which he himself had properly distinguished" (p. 121). This notion, according to Said, had paved the way for the political and cultural occupation of non-Western regions by the West. For instance, the views of the Western powers intervening in the Middle East were grounded in Orientalist conceptions of the East. These views affected the people of the Middle East, in that some accepted the belief that they were somehow 'inferior' or 'uncivilised'.

Said stressed that these representations of Arabs did not reflect reality. He argued that Western experts who studied the Arab world and read about the Middle East had invented these representations. Among the scholars Said cites in this argument is Edward William Lane, who published a book called *An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* in the 1830s; Lane is also known for his translation of *One Thousand and One Nights*. A few years later, in 1843, the French poet Gerard

De Nerval published an account of a one-year trip he'd taken to Cairo, Egypt, and other locations in the Ottoman Empire in *The Women of Cairo* Volume 2. Said criticises Nerval's book for unconsciously coding Lane's representations of Egyptians based on a theory that all Orientals are the same; Nerval did not differentiate where they came from; people from India were the same as people from Syria or Egypt. Said highlighted that the images of Arabs are static and not urbanised and remain the same in these works; unlike in the West, where the representation of people has much more differentiation. Given the static and unrealistic nature of the Orientalist image, Said found that Orientalism was a creation of an ideal Other for Europe and the US's designs throughout the history of empire.

Orientalism is never far from what Denys Hay has called the idea of Europe, a collective notion identifying "us" Europeans as against all "those" non-Europeans, and indeed it can be argued that the major component in European culture is precisely what made that culture hegemonic both in and outside Europe: the idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures (Said, 1978 p. 15). However, Chomsky argues for a discussion of cultural domination, which, he says, in order to be continued:

new forms of domination will have to be devised to ensure that privileged segments of Western industrial society maintain substantial control over global resources, human and material, and benefit disproportionately from this control... it is an absolute requirement for the Western system of ideology that a vast gulf be established between the civilized West, with its traditional commitment to human dignity, liberty, and self-determination, and the barbaric brutality of those who for some reason... fail to appreciate the depth of this historic commitment (1982, p. 85).

There are many differentiations between people in the West and the East. They have many differences, including their thinking patterns, values, views, consciousness, and consciousness of law (Luo, 2008). There are also many ways to differentiate between different people in the West. For example, if we explore British culture through the lens of Hofstede's insights, we can gain an overview of the deep drivers of British culture relative to other world cultures, including American culture (Hoey, 2013).

Orientalism is an analysis of reports of the real historical and institutional context that creates it. According to Quinn (2017), Said locates the construction of Orientalism within a history of imperial conquest. Said identified Napoleon's conquest of Egypt in 1798 as marking a new kind of imperialism and colonial conquest that triggered the project of Orientalism. Orientalism delivered a major network through which Europeans in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries justified their imperial project.

For Said, Orientalist learning, art, and travel stories were an important part of the arrangements of European imperial power. It is noted that the British and French empires were the most important forces and dominated the East using their military force. Their ideology was spread in the Middle East and interpreted as a 'civilising

offensive'. As Robert Van Krieken notes, the spread of civilisational standards "is accompanied by aggression and violence towards those who remain uncivilised, largely because of the threat they pose to the fragility of the achievements of civilisation..." Equally, "it is this aggression which then underlies the associated civilizing offensives" (Krieken, 1999 p. 220).

Elias model<sup>8</sup> and Said's Orientalism have different ideas of what power is. Yet, I can develop some of what Said claimed using Elias and a process-sociological approach. Postcolonial theorists, at best, see power as forms of domination, and at worst as something almost undefinable or reified. For Elias, power is intrinsic to all human relationships, but does not imply domination, so even babies have power chances in relation to their parents, even though parents have greater power chances (Linklater, 2006).

According to Elias, the key factor that determines the roles between the established and the outsider is that the established have a greater power chances than outsiders<sup>9</sup>. According to Elias "people make up webs of interdependence or figurations of many kinds ... They are characterised by power balances of many sorts ..." (Elias, 1994, p. 20; cited in Dunning and Hughes, 2013, p. 53). It is a key factor, as Groups with greater power chances tend to be better able to get stigmatising labels to stick than outsider groups (Elias, 1994).

However, stigmatisation is usually associated with explicit characteristics such as ethnicity or religious differences, he argues that at the base of the established-outsider's relation is the power imbalance (Elias, 1994). Differences such as race are then used by the established group to underline the otherness, but are, according to Elias, not the reason for the othering (1994). The outsider group, which is the group inferior in the power relation, can create a stigma against the established group, however it will have very little to no influence on the power relations. (ibid). They can only start fighting back and have an impact when the power relations start to change.

Building on from the idea of power relations, Said' Orientalism is an example of a shift in power chances between the former colonisers and the formerly colonised, as one of the theoretical keys prominent in Orientalism is: ideology and culture (1978). The Orientalist ideology had been used to exercise dominance over the Orient. The culture and history could not be investigated without studying its force ideology's

<sup>8</sup> Elias central point was that all societies have to socialize their members into shared understandings about the importance of observing constraints on violence; and all need to equip them with skills in adapting behaviour to the legitimate needs of others. Elias makes this point most forcefully in a crucial claim for the argument, namely that all societies confront 'the problem of how people can manage to satisfy their elementary animalic needs in their life together, without reciprocally destroying,

frustrating, demeaning or in other ways harming each other time and time again in their search for this satisfaction — in other words, without fulfilment of the elementary needs of one person or group of people being achieved at the cost of those of another person or group' (Elias, 1996, 31 cited in Linklater, 2004, p. 8).

9 It is noteworthy that our discussion above of Elias on power commenced in relation to an exposition of some of his other key ideas and continued via an empirical analysis of established–outsider relationships, before moving on to a consideration of some of the long-term social processes involved in 'functional democratisation'. (Dunning and Hughes, 2013. P. 67).

configuration of power (Said, 1978). To believe that the relation of the West and the Orient was a relationship of power and of dominance.

An established group tends to attribute to its outsider group as a whole the “bad” characteristics of that group’s “worst” section-of its anomic minority. In contrast. Self-image of the established group tend to be modelled on its exemplary, most “nomic” or norm-setting section, on the minority of its “best members there is always some evidence to show that one’s group is “good” and the other is “bad”. (Elias and Scotson, 1994, p. xix)

The British and French empires had the same views of Elias’s established and outsiders and other concepts in terms of colonialism, in which they both undertook their conquests in the name of ‘civilisation’ – Napoleon, on setting off for Egypt, indicated that the conquest was “for France and for civilisation” (Linklater, 2016). The peoples they colonised were seen as barbaric or savage because they did not obey the behavioural standards of European elites. However, elites in many of the colonised societies did eventually adopt some of these behavioural standards. (Linklater and Mennel, 2010, p. 55).

Elias and Scotson’s provide additional description in details of the creation of social stereotypes, and they illustrate that the ‘negative stereotypes are one side of a coin, which has an insider group’s own positive self-stereotype on the other’ (Sutton and Vertigens, 2002, p. 66). However, this argument of the established and the outsider is that the negative stereotyping cannot be excluded without some movement on the part of the established and thus an aspect often neglected in normative political accounts (ibid).

The long-term civilising process involved the gradual internalisation of external social constraints. The long-term civilising process was mainly pursued by the use of violence monopolised by the state. According to John Stuart Mill (1806–1873), such conquests were justified because barbarous nations have not developed “beyond the period during which it is likely to be for their benefit that they should be conquered and held in subjection by foreigners” (cited in Bowden, 2019, p. 221). Many terrible acts including violence have been devoted in the name of civilisation, such as war,

conquest, and colonialism, “manipulated by powerful political and cultural figures” (Bowden, 2019, p. 126).

The conquest and colonisation of the non-European world was dependent to a great extent on the use of civilisational language. The French mission of civilisation, which it called its ‘civilising mission’, combined elements of Eurocentrism and scientism to justify its actions. Science provided the ‘rational’ basis for hierarchies between civilisations and supported contempt for non-European cultures (Petitjean, 2005). Through this period, ‘civilised’ nations employed power and violence to instruct and foster the ‘uncivilised’ barbarians. The standard practice in the colonies was to perpetrate acts of “violence, exploitation, and cultural dislocation” (Adams, 2016, p. 86).

### 3.The application of Orientalism to on-screen analysis:

The previous chapter of the study was tracing the evolution of Hollywood’s representation of the Middle East from its inception to the twenty-first century when the stereotypical picture is predominantly negative. The origins of this defamation are instructive, as recounted by Edward Said in his book *Orientalism* (1987). Gonçalves (2015) claims that Said’s approach to the Orient was limited to the Middle East; Said made some general statements on the places he knew and lived in and left the affairs of the far East unmentioned, as if they were not important.

Some researchers, such as Robert Irwin (2017) and Daniel Martin Varisco (2017), have pointed to weaknesses in Said’s research and isolated understanding. According to Prasad (2016), on the other hand, the Orientalist approach proposed by Said is still alive and has become more active and widely recognised. According to Prasad (2016), Said’s main contribution to Orientalism revolves around his ability to review and criticise knowledge which was previously considered indestructible. Thus, it can be stated that Said’s work was not written back for the West but written forward for the establishment of a new homeland. A suitable response to Said’s work involves an essential positive shift in research in order to set a new outlook for Oriental studies.

Orientalism’s beginnings, like in Thierry Hentsch’s myths, dates back to Greek and Roman antiquities. The Council of Vienna’s 1312 decision to establish universities of the Arabic, Greek, Hebrew, and Syriac languages throughout Europe marked the beginning of the formal existence of Orientalism in the Christian West, according to Said, who sought to identify institutionalised representations of Muslims (Newlon, 2016).

As Said pointed out, the decision was made to make these languages a research object, artificially produced and named the Orient, a geographical, cultural, linguistic, and ethnic unity (Stubbs, 2017). The Renaissance hastened the accumulation of information that began at the end of the Middle Ages; at the period, the quest for knowledge included the growth of various branches of study, including Orientalism.

Until the middle of the eighteenth century, the Orientalists of this time were mostly biblical specialists, Oriental language academics, or Islam specialists (Hossain, 2017). Eclectic information was gathered in an orderly manner and with a steadfastly positivist attitude. As a result, encyclopaedias of the East, such as the one housed in the Heberlot Library, became popular. Similarly, early Orientalists travelled to the nations they studied but were only concerned with establishing the validity of their theories by applying them to the indigenous, who were seen as different and so unintelligible (Loshitzky, 2016).

The 'truths' were passed down to them via Hentsch's fables. With each repetition, this knowledge grew, duplicating an interpretation of history learned from previous centuries while becoming a more 'truthful' personality (Loshitzky, 2016). Second-class information, which was hidden in places like the Eastern narrative, the mythology of the mysterious Orient, and so on, was also growing at the time, in addition to this 'exact' knowledge (Bakali, 2016).

An imagined difference became very apparent from that moment forward: the emergence of a separate East moulded the formation of a unified and cohesive West. Islam became the very essence of the outer world as the West's image of the East got more refined (Izharuddin, 2017). As a result, the West has always erected imaginary borders: the East is defined as a cultural, intellectual, and spiritual entity existing outside of the Western world (Beydoun, 2018).

However, the East and West of the Mediterranean were separated by an 'Atlantic' rather than a 'Mediterranean' divide. When Europe bravely embarked on the route that would lead to modernity in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, it set itself apart from the Orient and everyone else (ibid). By turning its nose towards the Atlantic and the Americas, the West must turn its back on the East. Europe became aware of its uniqueness when voyages of discovery began, giving birth to the belief that it had been assigned a divine mission. From this moment forward, the exterior look, as well as the direction of the voyage, were totally reversed (Eijaz, 2018).

Neo-Orientalism is a monolithic discourse built on a binary distinction between American values and the richer and better Arab culture. Neo-Orientalism is more closely associated with societal developments in the United States following September 11th, 2001, and the counter-revolution that followed. The 9/11 attacks and the so-called 'War on Terror' brought the Central East and traditional Orientalist rhetoric, with its twofold separation of 'us' and 'them', back into the spotlight. After 9/11, various not all images of Arab Muslims became increasingly frequent in politics, and the term 'terrorism' was used to describe this group.

Ashcroft & al. note the significant shift in the idea of Orientalism in the postcolonial era in *The Empire Writes Back* (Ashcroft et al., 2002). In the preface to his book *Orientalism*, Said wrote in 2003 that neo-Orientalism demonstrates a barbarism defined as the representation of political violence that ignores economic and political

interests, as well as the context while describing violence that is primarily caused by traits embedded in local cultures (ibid). It has also been stated that there is a necessary strategy to evaluate and comprehend terrorism and violence in the Muslim world while ignoring the region's imperial and colonial influences.

When compared to traditional Orientalism, Shahid Alam's challenging the New Orientalism (2006) argues that neo-Orientalism does not occupy a major position for Islam. Rather, neo-Orientalism is seen as a repackaging of old Orientalism, with the goal of reinforcing imperial control over Middle Eastern countries.

The neo-Orientalist discourse is believed to be a component of the media's unfavourable and traditional portrayals of Muslims, as well as the American management's existing political statements in support of the War on Terror (Westwell, 2014). When the building of an enemy depiction helps to legitimise ongoing foreign financial or party-political goals, such as in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, new barbarism, and neo-Orientalist imaginary can serve as hegemonic strategies (Tuastad, 2013).

The Said reader reminds out that in historical times, Orientalism grew into a cultural behemoth. After the 9/11 attacks, Said claimed that Muslims faced intolerance, stigmatisation, exclusion, and discrimination (2003). However, anti-Muslim rhetoric and policies have become more acute under the presidency of Donald Trump who went on to declare that Muslims should not be allowed to enter the nation. Trump said that the current immigration screening system in the United States was insufficient to safeguard the country from "Radical Islamic Terrorism", and that "extreme vetting"

was necessary (Norton, 2017). According to Norton (2017), "rather than threatening, bullying, separating, and deceiving for self-interested objectives, the government's wartime language threatens, bullies, separates, and deceives for self-interested purposes, with sometimes crushingly terrible effects" (Norton, 2017, p. 563).

According to Volait (2014), Said's Orientalism hypothesis is more important than neo-Orientalism. The apparent distance between the West and the East appears to have expanded in the aftermath of 9/11, as indicated by the news, media, films, and television programmes. Anti-Islam political parties have also increased in popularity in Europe, and recent ISIS-inspired atrocities may have supplied political ammunition for these organisations.

In the critique of Said Orientalism in this study, complication occurred regarding Said's discussion of Orientalism about the idea that the West writes while the Orient is written about. First, this view implies that Western colonialism is unique, and therefore disregards how colonialism may be exercised by the East as well, for example, the Ottoman Empire. (Landow 2002; cited in khatib, 2006).

Colonialism is now generally used in a negative sense and is linked with crude exploitation. It is associated with oppression, economic exploitation, and indifference

to human and civil rights (Hodder-Williams, 2001; Keskinen et al., 2016). It has been made evident how European powers historically used their resources and technological strength to exploit the globe and gain power and territory. Said makes a distinction between imperialism and colonialism by stating that “imperialism involved “the practice, the theory and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan centre ruling a distant territory”, while colonialism refers to the “implanting of settlements on a distant territory” (Gilmartin, 2009, p. 8). Kerss (2002) and Orwell (2017) have argued that colonialism and imperialism are not morally defensible and affect society badly. With powerful countries exploiting those with fewer resources and less power, injustice is created in society that further leads to complications and barriers for world peace. Orwell (2017) argued that colonialism must be avoided, and that other approaches could be used to strengthen economies.

Quinn (2017) studied the impact of colonialism argues that Said, in terms of studying the Other that is Middle Eastern culture, enables him to understand the Middle East, as Said was both insider and outsider. Said’s background in the Middle East was wide-ranging as he lived in both Palestine and Egypt, enabling him to better understand

the two cultures in addition to the long time (1963–2003) he spent at Colombia University in order to better understand the West (Quinn, 2017).

Imperialism and its legacies gave rise to a highly negative image of the West and Europe in the minds of colonised individuals (Stuchtey, 2011). Conflicts have flared up in many areas that were once colonised or controlled by Western Europeans. While Europe enjoyed increased wealth through colonisation, many families and individuals in the East suffered and faced much societal hardship (Abbinnett, 2006). Therefore, it has been argued by Abbinnett that many movements formed as a result of the dominance and power of the West over other countries and the negative effects of past imperialist policies that continued to be found in these places. The colonising states required internal structures and institutions to form good governance systems. Therefore, repressive and restrictive regimes were generated in the colonised countries. New strategic and economic competition then heightened tensions in the late 1850s.

It was stated at a UN World Conference (2001) that enormous human suffering has been produced by colonialism and its adversities. Today, although these unjust activities have been recognised, few apologies or reparations have been made by the countries involved (Butt, 2013). There has been endless debate about the positive and negative aspects of colonialism, but such discussion is somewhat futile. For example, Gilley (2017) believes that non-Western countries are unable to be modern states without Western ‘guidance’. Others have argued at various instances that people eventually gained a net benefit from the treatment of their ancestors (Ferguson and Gupta, 2002). This claim is not meant to be in defence of historic colonialism,

however, stating that colonialism has not led to an overall benefit to individuals and that, even if there have been certain associated benefits, they would not be sufficient to justify the adversities caused by colonisation in the past. The uneven power of colonialism has complicated the relationship between Western states and their colonised societies. Postcolonialism not only seeks to define what happened after decolonisation, but also critically defines the ongoing problems related to it (Hamadi, 2014).

Said (2001) argued that Europeans separated and divided the world into two parts, East and West: in other words, the Orient and the Occident. As we have seen, this division was further viewed as that between the civilised and uncivilised. This artificial boundary was created and developed based on the concept of 'ours' and 'theirs', leading to a wide gap between the two and differences that could never be resolved. Europeans considered themselves Occidental, with certain defining and associated certain traits

(Said, 2001). Having stated this, Said also argued that Europeans identified themselves as being a superior race in comparison with the Orientals and took on the responsibility of civilising the uncivilised portion of the world:

On the one hand there are Westerners, and on the other hand there are Arab-Orientals; the former is (in no particular order) rational, peaceful, liberal, logical, capable of holding real values, without natural suspicion; the latter are none of these things (Said, 1978, p. 49).

By developing a self-created need to civilise the world, the West maintained itself as being superior to the rest. This mindset and view were reiterated in the West's literary works, scientific reports, and media sources (Iskandar and Rustom, 2010), helping Orientalism become deep-rooted in society.

One of the strongest critiques of Edward Said was delivered by Aijaz Ahmed (1992), who referred to the unified identity of Europe from its origin up to the twentieth century (Ahmed, 2008). He further argued that these beliefs were immanent in the books of the Western canon and have not altered. According to Ahmed, in Orientalism, Said was unsuccessful in deciding whether Orientalism was generated as a product of a structure of representations, in the postmodernist sense derived from Derrida and Foucault, or a system of misrepresentation created by the West. He also criticises Said's way of presenting imperialism, such as his use of understatement when the aesthetic develops a significant feature in Said's analysis.

One of the major focuses of Said's (1978) book is on "a way of coming to terms with the Orient that is based on the Orient in the European Western experience" (p.46). In a study conducted by Fatima (2016), the term Orient was found to be used most often to refer to the people living in the East. She also emphasises that for most Occidental people in the West, Oriental people are Other. The term Other is also referred to in a

study conducted by Aretov (2014), in which the perception of people is different when the term Other is used.

Prior to the publication of *Orientalism* (1978), the word Orient usually referred to the Orientalists and their work, specifically on the East (Macfie, 2014). In contrast, the typical conception of Occidentalism is related to the perspective of the Eastern world towards the West (Nutkani, n.d.). In research conducted by Nutkani (n.d.), Occidentalism is defined as the domain of study that considers the perspective and

notions of Orientals (Eastern people) of non-Western culture regarding the people of the West. According to Furumizo (2005), the stereotype in the Eastern world (Orient) regarding the Occident is that the people of the West are soulless and work like machines. Stereotyping and caricature are common on both sides of the world. Occidentalism is considered the counter-domain of Orientalism. However, Nutkani (n.d.) states that it is difficult and problematic to explain the two terms (Orient and Occident) precisely due to their subjective natures.

As referred to earlier, the term Orientalism has been used by art and cultural studies scholars to imitate or depict the culture of Middle Eastern, South Asian, and East Asian countries. The concept of Orientalism as commonly used in academic discourse today.

In social science, the East-West polarity is the apparent distinction between the Eastern and Western universes. The differences are based on culture, rather than geography. The borders of the East and West are not fixed but vary according to the principles implemented by individuals using the term. In the past, Asia was considered the East, and Europe the West. Currently, the 'West' is usually used to refer to Australia, Europe, and the Americas. The peoples of the Orient are, according to this East-West dichotomy, classified as the Other, positioning the West as the superior in an uneven power relation to validate its imperialism and colonialism.

Orientalist insights stem from the idea of being superior in relation to the Other, an idea strengthened by demonstrating that the Other is inferior. This theme converts Said's work from the hypothetical and scholastic to the political (Lary, 2006).

According to Said (2001), Orientalism has undergone a long period of development and has been critically discussed and examined by academic disciplines in many Western universities. However, Occidentalism is becoming much more problematic and difficult to analyse due to changes in social and cultural trends (Ning, 1997). For example, according to Zebiri (2008), Orientalist writing mostly reflects the irrationality, barbarity, backwardness, and obscurantism of the people living in the Orient region. The Orientalists define themselves in their writing using the words 'Us' and 'Them', in which 'Us' means superior Westerners and 'Them' refers to inferior Orientals (Said, 1991). The West acts as a universal indicator, in that it undertakes the enforcing of the superiority of European cultural values over those of

non-European cultures. This kind of unjustified thinking of a binary discourse of East-West is deep-rooted in a 'them/us' division that is unreasonable and ethnocentric.

In "Occidentalism: Modernity and Subjectivity", Venn (2000) asserts that the West of Europe has concentrated on developing its world to be modern, privileged, and ambitious. The purpose of Orientalism is to focus on creating and producing the West's superiority in its culture and technology through the thinking of colonists, whereas the purpose of Occidentalism is to examine the texts of the Orient to determine its ethical and cultural transparency. The appearance of Orientalism led to the development of West and Middle East relations. According to Singh (2004), Orientalism has contributed to the Western world's politics, culture, and economy, whereas Harrak (2008) states that it has been characterised by racial stereotypes and culture that are reflected in the arts, music, and literature.

Studies have also been made of the links between Islamophobia and Orientalism, finding that the nexus between the terminologies is ambiguous. A study conducted by Fatima (2016) found that a lot of the misinterpretation and distorted images of the East by the West arose from Islamophobia. It has also been argued that originally, Eastern people were the influencers, and that only more recently the West has influenced the East with its culture, media, entertainment industry, and language (Fatima, 2016).

It is apparent that the concepts of Orientalism and Occidentalism are not similar and there exist clear differences between them. The viewpoints of Orientalism and Occidentalism are that Orientalism helps Westerners better perceive the Middle East, whereas Occidentalism helps Orientals in investigating the West. It has also been argued that both concepts are uncertain and, therefore, more investigation might be needed to reach a clearer conclusion. However, it can be said with some certainty that the most prominent factor in both Orientalism and Occidentalism is the use of caricature – misconceptions and stereotyping by both the East and the West of the Other appear to be typical, an area for investigation in future studies. The two concepts are different but might overlap at some point in time; this too is an area for potential future study.

Said (1978) investigated the different kinds of Orientalism based on colonialism, recognising a distinction between British, French, and American colonialism. The British and French had colonies in the East and dominated many of their colonies for a long time. Thus, they established long-standing relationships. For example, the British ruled India for several hundred years, and the French did the same in North Africa, such as in Algeria, Morocco, Egypt, and Tunisia (Said, 2014, p. 34).

Said (2014) shows that these empires had different policies concerning the ruling of their colonies.

US colonialism on the other hand was characterised as having less experience and less information regarding the Middle East because it did not control or occupy any of these countries directly. In contrast, Britain and France directly occupied parts of the Middle East (Said, 1978).

Quinn (2017) claims that Said thought the objectives of European colonialism and American occupation were to take economic advantage of the colonised. They wanted to exploit the people for labour as well as their economic resources. Quinn (2017) formulates an idea of the differences between European and American colonialism and argues that the ideas behind them are most controversial due to the concept of modernisation as a saviour of the Middle East (ibid). However, Said maintained that the Orientalism debate helped to change the understanding of colonialism in a different sense, which is an Arab-Palestinian American's perception. For all that, Said's Orientalism is an analysis of European colonialism and the way the West depicts the culture of the Middle East.

According to Said (2014), the second major difference between European colonialism and the US experience of Orientalism lies in the different relationships with Israel; the US is the main ally of Israel (Said, 2014, p. 318). Said (1978) had previously demonstrated that the creation of the Jewish state in the middle of the Islamic Oriental world served US economic and political interests in the Middle East. The US defends Israel to maintain its own presence in the Middle East and to serve US interests in other countries, such as Iran and Saudi Arabia (Said, 2006, p. 323) and maintain access to or control over oil; during the Cold War, public and confidential sources revealed that the primary interests of the US in Saudi Arabia were fundamentally anti-communism and oil (Bowman, 2005).

Quinn (2017), meanwhile, argues that colonialism and Orientalism differ for the Americans and Europeans in that European colonialism in the Middle East led to increased knowledge and the forming of multiculturalist nations. In contrast, US colonialism, stated as an occupation, was based on the use of power to control the economy and the military forces of the Middle East. Israel is the base from which the US controls the Middle East (Quinn, 2017, p. 46).

Here it is imperative to mention the findings and views of Gandhi (2011), who examined the relationship between postcolonial theory and the decolonisation process

and the emergence of anti-colonial and independent nation states after colonialism. She further mentions that colonial archives contain versions of knowledge developed in response to the pressures of the colonial encounter. Gandhi (2011) also refers to how the Europeans established themselves as superior and spread the idea that the whole society had developed a certain bias against the rest. Western dominance has therefore affected the East and allowed it to develop a different stance. Her findings also mention how the policies of the Occident have been made visible and dominant over the Orient. After the construction of Western dominance was acknowledged, this

knowledge was transformed into a belief and transferred from generation to generation, in a seemingly never-ending cultural domination.

#### 4.From classical Orientalism to Islamism and neo-Orientalism:

The relationship between the West and Islam and the notion of West-and-Islam dualism have changed radically since Said presented his ideas in 1978 because the world has become more politically interrelated, triggered by globalisation (Tuastad, 2003).

The term neo-Orientalism indicates a change from classical Orientalism, but the two concepts are similar. For example, neo-Orientalism is similar to Orientalism in that it is criticised as being monolithic and dependent on an assumption of proper and cultural superiority over the Oriental Other (Williams et al., 2012). The term is largely found in academic literature and used for explaining Western attitudes towards Islam and the Islamic world post-9/11.

Neo-Orientalism originated as less territorialised and operating within a new paradigm. It holds a new ideologically motivated agenda, constructs new objects, and feeds the social phenomenon called Islamophobia (Kerboua, 2016). Christina Hellmich highlighted a major aspect of neo-Orientalism as focusing on showing a homogeneous Islamist terrorist enemy. For example, such disparate groups as al-Qaeda, Hamas, Hezbollah, Islamic Jihad, and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front have become conflated into a single entity, sharing the same distinguishing quality of being enemies of the civilised world (Samiei, 2010).

The early 1980s witnessed a resurgence of expertise regarding the Islamic world (Vertigens, 2005). In response to the oil crisis of the late 1970s, the intensification of Palestinian resistance, and especially the Iranian Revolution of 1979, the West became

interested in the Islamic world once again (Bald, 2015). Neo-Orientalism preserves Said's original Orientalism but restructured for the twentieth century. Said had been worried about the clichés he had described in Orientalism (1978). He acknowledged that the then-current neo-Orientalist themes present in Hollywood resembled and originated from the same themes of the history of Orientalism. Said shows how eighteenth-century British officials embraced Orientalism as a self-serving view of Asians, Africans, Arabs, and Muslims in terms of their perceived insufficiencies, deficiencies, and inferiority. This allowed the imperialists to rationalise and justify their activity in the East. For the British Orientalist,

Ottoman despotism, Islamic obscurantism and Arab racial inferiority had combined to produce a backward culture that was badly in need of Anglo-Saxon tutelage. With the waning of Britain's power and the waxing of America's after 1945, something very like Said's orientalism seems subconsciously shaped the

U.S. popular attitudes and foreign policies towards the Middle East (Little, 2004, p. 10)

After 9/11, a new form of Orientalism appeared to legitimise America's 'War on Terror' (Khalid, 2015). This neo-Orientalist discourse is evident in the political rhetoric of the George W. Bush administration and the justifications it gave for the War on Terror. The US projected itself as the head of the 'civilised world', thus making it responsible for liberating the Middle East from its apparent oppressors (van Wijngaarden, 2015).

The discourse of neo-Orientalism is characterised by negative and stereotypical depictions of Muslims and showing Islam to be against modernism and democracy. This idea is reflected in the work of many contemporary Western scholars who follow the neo-Orientalist example of Bernard Lewis (2002) and his book "The Clash Between Islam and Modernity in the Middle East". Lewis had been accused by Said of being intentionally biased towards helping Israel's expansion (Adiong, 2014), and then-US Vice President Dick Cheney remarked: "In this new century, his wisdom is sought daily by policymakers, diplomats, fellow academics, and the news media" (cited in Adiong, 2014, p. 75); while Chomsky (2002) stated that "Bernard Lewis [is]...just a vulgar propagandist and not a scholar".

Bernard Lewis (2002) viewed the conflict in the following light:

We are facing a mood and a movement far transcending the level of issues and policies and the governments that pursue them. This is no less than a Clash of Civilisations—perhaps irrational but surely historic reaction of an ancient rival against our Judeo-Christian heritage, our secular present, and the worldwide expansion of both (p. 60).

Muslims have been represented in some of Western scholarship as the exotic Other, the enemy, and as repressive, anti-democratic and terroristic (el-Aswad, 2013). The extensive conception of classical Orientalism has been broadly changed over time into an irrational fear and anxiety about Islam and Arabs.

Hollywood was one of the media tools that focused on the post-9/11 foreign policy as an icon of a power for good used against terrorism. Said's objective in Orientalism was not only to study the content of Orientalism, but also to analyse the historical, cultural, and institutional background in which it was created. Orientalism indicates that the Orient is an unsafe place that should be controlled, which is an idea presented clearly in Hollywood films. Orientalism also creates a systematic variance that differentiates the civilised West from the backward East. Thus, some Hollywood films continues to represent Middle Easterners not only as villains, but also as lacking ethics and honour.

(Shahin, 1995) mentioned that American cinema's vision of the Arab world is a racist vision with political goals, as films misleadingly document the negative image of Muslims and Arabs, which indicates that these films are made in particular to

implement indicators that indicate how to present the Arab world in a faded manner. And distorted and unreal instead of being presented in a more realistic way

The insertion of the word Orientalism into academic and activist language, alongside the prevalence of Islamophobia, has become a symbol of discrimination for people living in Arab countries, as well as for Muslims in Britain and the US (Schmidt, 2011). Meanwhile, Bernard Lewis is hesitant over whether Orientalism should be regarded as indicative of academic endeavour or prejudice (Love, 2017). Another study contributes the finding that Orientalism is not accepted when we understand the impact of stereotyping and bigotry on Arab Americans, who need to be placed in a specific culture where they have been a partial inheritor in very different ways from their brothers in the Arab world (Labidi, 2019).

Neo-Orientalism emerged as a new ideology that motivated a new agenda, constructed new objects, and fed the phenomenon known as Islamophobia. According to Said's theory, this reflected and presented a lens for analysing the twentieth-century 'American Orientalism', along with its sources. The recent transformation in Orientalism can today arguably be traced to the post-9/11 neo-Orientalism towards the Arab-Muslim and Islamic world.

The idea of requiring a continuous competitive force to remain the most powerful has led to the mocking of other groups in terms of economy, culture, and ethnicity (Letizia, 2016). The same has been found in the case of Orientalism, where the Arab and Muslim construction has been critically symbolised as an 'uncivilised nation' (Mufti, 2019, p. 37). Raj (2016) states that a critical colour-blindness effect is present in a society that targets ethnic and moral beliefs. This is why the concept of Islam in the majority of Western regions is of a fundamentalist and sectarian religion that oppresses women and supports violence (Bleich, 2011).

Based on these observations, the new conception of Islamophobia is one intended to justify humiliating or torturing Muslims across the globe. Lauwers (2019) argues that the current Islamophobic political discourse in Europe is mainly racist. Hence, Islamophobia is a specific form of racism that must be tackled, and the colour-blindness effect has to be eliminated in international relations (ibid).

In the persistent association of conservatism with Islam, the religion is considered to be in opposition to change (Viotti and Kauppi, 2019). Accordingly, the conservative perspective denotes the effect of colour-blindness, i.e., the belief that Islam is not going to upgrade its practices in line with the modernization of the world and no new adaptations will take place (ibid). In contrast, the Arab world is heading towards the practice of "progressive Islam" (Letizia, 2016, p. 46). Briefly, this is a political philosophy that associates ethnic beliefs with social reforms (Cordesman, 2017). This practice of the Muslim regions indicates liberalism; the opposing force from the Western world is a hunt to find evidence for claiming Islam as a conservative ethnic

group (ibid). Therefore, it is argued that the neo-conservatism paradigm was established in order to regulate international relations (Kerboua, 2016).

## 5.Conclusion

This can be taken as a unique way to dominate, make new structures, and gain authority above the Orient. Furthermore, the utilisation of ideological hegemony is a crucial role in exploring the political and economic American interests concerning the way they portray the Arabs and Muslims in the Hollywood information which justifies this presence.

Based on analysis of the films work in my thesis that Hollywood creates, helps to show the company's challenges as it struggles in the new existing world in American society. It also gives an insight into the economic, political, social, and religious differences. Regarding Wilkins (2009, p.9), racial and ethnic-based groups of people have mediated characteristics that show their level positions in the broad social structure. These ways enhance hegemonic justifications to those who get privilege over those who become prejudiced.

Kellner (1991) stress that studying the films in a theoretical dimension can give insight into how the film explores the current social struggles in the contemporary US and can give an insight into the political and social dynamics (Kellner, 1991, p.8). However, when such a big institution like Hollywood provides such representations, it is challenging to avoid influence and the spread of distorted pictures.

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