

## EXPLOITATION AND NEW ORIENTALISM IN SAM KADI'S *THE CITIZEN*

HANAN ALAKLOOK, JAMALUDDIN AZIZ & FAUZIAH AHMAD

UNIVERSITI KEBANGSAAN MALAYSIA

### Abstract

September 9 /2011 (henceforth 9/11) is a global cultural moment as it redefines the way America interprets the world and the way the world interprets the US. This is especially true in the representation of Arabs in Hollywood films as the Arabs were seen as the culprit of the momentous event. It inevitably cements the idea that the Arab as the other, this has become a fundamental structure of the American psyche. Pre 9/11, Hollywood has produced a significant amount of films covering Arab characters in a variety of Arab stereotypes, which were limited to what was known from the stories of the orientalist European and their legends about the mysterious East. We argue that while the negative stereotype continues in post 9/11 films, the ideological workings, however, are different. We have observed that Hollywood post 9/11 are keener to hire Arab actors to play Arab characters, which usually were played by Pakistani or non-Arab actors. Therefore, this paper examines the exploitation of Arab characters played by Arab actors in Hollywood films post 9/11 by focusing on *The Citizen* (2012) directed by Sam Kadi. Employing New Orientalism theory, this paper uses textual analysis as the method, focusing on how the Arab Characters are being exploited in this film.

*Keywords:* 9/11, *The Citizen*, exploitation, Arab character, New Orientalism

## EKSPLOITASI DAN ORIENTALISME BAHARU DALAM FILEM *THE CITIZEN* ARAHAN SAM KADI

### Abstrak

9 September 2001 (ringkasnya 9/11) merupakan saat penting bagi kebudayaan yang bersifat global kerana ia mentakrifkan semula cara Amerika Syarikat menafsir dunia dan cara dunia menafsir Amerika Syarikat. Hal ini dapat dilihat pada representasi Arab dalam filem-filem Hollywood di mana Arab sering dipaparkan sebagai pesalah dalam situasi-situasi penting. Ia sekaligus mengukuhkan idea bahawa Arab itu adalah “yang lain-lain”, dan akhirnya ia menjadi struktur asas bagi pemikiran rakyat Amerika. Sebelum 9/11, Hollywood telah banyak menghasilkan filem yang memaparkan watak Arab dalam pelbagai stereotaip, dengan hanya berpandukan kepada filem-filem orientalis Eropah dan lagenda-lagenda mistik ketimuran. Kami berhujah bahawa, sungguhpun stereotaip negatif masih berterusan dalam filem-filem pasca 9/11, namun pada masa yang sama gerak kerja ideologinya adalah berbeza. Kami mendapati bahawa filem pasca 9/11 lebih cenderung mengambil pelakon Arab bagi melakonkan watak Arab, yang selama ini sering dilakonkan oleh pelakon-pelakon Pakistan ataupun pelakon yang bukan Arab. Oleh yang demikian, makalah ini menganalisis eksploitasi watak Arab oleh pelakon-pelakon Arab dalam filem

Hollywood pasca 9/11 dan menjadikan *The Citizen* (2012) arahan Sam Kadi sebagai fokus. Dengan mengaplikasikan teori Orientalisme Baharu, makalah ini menggunakan analisis tekstual sebagai metodologinya, dengan memfokuskan bagaimana watak-watak Arab dieksploitasi dalam filem ini.

**Kata kunci:** 9/11, *The Citizen*, Eksploitasi, Watak Arab, Orientalisme Baharu

## INTRODUCTION

In the immediate weeks following 9/11 attacks, President George W. Bush gave several speeches to his nation in mourning; these speeches ostensibly mark the beginning of “the other” discourse in postmodern America. However, as argued by Salazar, that “[h]is (Bush) speech was constructed on stereotypical words and images that are already recognized in more than 20 years of media and popular culture depictions of Arabs as evil, bloodthirsty, animalistic terrorists” (2004:15). Certainly, according to Merksin (2004), the political speech of George W. Bush following 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Centre and Pentagon further intensified ubiquitous words and expressions such as “us”, “them”, “they”, “evil”, “those people”, “demons”, and “wanted dead or alive” to describe Arabs (Ibid: 36). In short, Bush has reinvigorated a long-rooted binary system that consigns the Arabs into “the other” category.

This dichotomy has been influencing the contents of the mass media in the United States, which have produced and continued the stereotypes of the Arab as evil. One consequence of this, that is, more latent than other forms of stereotype, is that these stereotypes propagate a new parallelism that all Muslims are Arabs and all Arabs are terrorists. Laden with religious undertone, this new parallelism reveals that the media have such powerful influence on public consciousness, and importantly there seems to be a concerted effort to valorize the image of the Arab as evil. This consequently reaffirms the binary opposition that consigns the Arab to the negative stereotype.

This paper focuses on Sam Kadi’s film *The Citizen* that exemplifies Hollywood’s change of tactics after 9/11. Post 9/11, we argue, has seen the increment in amiable depictions of Arabs in Hollywood films. A new pattern has emerged, that is, regardless whether Hollywood

portrayed Muslim Arabs as terrorists or not, the films' plot is typically incorporated with a "positive" depiction. This depiction is in contrast to the ones in many pre-9/11 Hollywood films such as *Black Sunday* (1977), *Executive Decision* (1996), and *The Siege* (1998) in which there is no room for positive stereotyping of the Arab characters. In this paper, we argue that Hollywood uses real Arab actors to play the Arab character to restructure the stereotypical depiction of the Arabs, yet with a new image that is relatively positive.

*The Citizen* is a Hollywood film of the drama genre; it is directed by Sam Kadi in 2012. The film makes a direct reference to the 9/11 event, which took nearly three years to be produced. Kadi, Chris Wyatt and Alan Noel Vega formed 3K Pictures Company, financed by private American speculators (Lee, 2013). *The Citizen* was released in cinemas after receiving awards and honors from a few noticeable film festivals including: the Best Ensemble Cast and Mass Impact grants at the Boston Film Festival, Best Feature Drama at the International Family Film Festival in Hollywood, Best Actor Award (for Agnes Bruckner) and Directors' Choice Award for Best Film at Colorado's Tri Media Film Festival. In addition, it also received approval at the Shanghai and Abu Dhabi Film Festivals.

The increasing number of Arab actors being hired in Hollywood films post 9/11, generally, and the use of Arabs to represent themselves on screen, specially, are indeed a curious phenomenon. On the surface, the employment of AaA can be seen as a practical strategy of adding reality and credibility to their depiction with more space to show the real identity and image of Arabs. However, further scrutiny of this trend reveals a more complicated ideology at work. AaA reflects the real Arabs image in Hollywood films post 9/11. So far, no much studies have been carried out on Hollywood films post 9/11 that scrutinize the use of Arab actors to play Arab characters and to understand the ideology behind this employment. Current theories such as orientalism often employed to analyze the portrayal of the Arabs in Hollywood films of this nature such as the studies done by Bryan S. Turner (1994), and Elizabeth Ezra (2006) are insufficient to help understand this new strategy. Therefore, this new global phenomenon becomes a problem that needs to be addressed in the area of film studies. This paper identifies

this as a problem that needs to be tackled by analyzing the Sam Kadi's *The Citizen* that is produced post 9/11 textually, using the lens of New-Orientalism.

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Over the past two decades, Hollywood has produced a significant number of films addressing the Arab character, the Middle East, and Muslim-related issues; but there is no sign that this interest is dwindling. Events such as 9/11 in the United States (henceforth the US) have intensified Hollywood's spotlight on Muslim Arabs. Pre 9/11, many films such as *True Lies* (1994) and *The Siege* (1998) offer the American audience with limited Arab stereotypes such as the Muslim terrorist, the martyrdom, the victimized veiled woman, and the religious fanatics; but these Arab characters are not played by Arabs.

Stereotypes of Arabs in the US have been presented in different forms by the mass media in the US, and these stereotypes are overwhelmingly manifested in the society's media, theatre, literature, and other inventive expressions. For instance, Shaheen (2012) classifies Arabs into three categories: The first category is the luxurious Sheiks wearing head skull and shirts and showing signs of luxury, extravagance and excessive obesity. The second category is the terrorists without conscience, who are presented as men with long beards, bomb launchers, killers and who do not hesitate to kill innocent people (Shaheen, 2003). The third is category the deceptive traders who are idiots and stupid, who are criminals who are trigger happy (Ibid). Shaheen's idea is an echo of Kamalipour's (2000), who stated that there were several harmful portrayals of Arabs in radio, television, and films. This in effect proves that stereotypes of Arabs are ubiquitous in popular culture of the US.

Pre 9/11, an Arab as a villain character has been played by actors of a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds such as Indians and Pakistanis. Therewith, post 9/11, more native Arab actors are being hired in Hollywood films. We argue that the increase in Arab actors in Hollywood films post 9/11 and the use of Arabs to represent themselves is a strategy informed by the New Orientalist. Many scholars such as Sulaiman Arti (2007) and Lina Khatib (2006)

point out that this new depiction is a reflection of the American administration policy that aims to achieve its new imperialist expansions in the Middle East. A different research by Evelyn Alsultany (2012:45) highlighted the representation of Arabs in a new way and called it “Simplified Complex Representation”. She addressed another pattern in American TV series, that is, if a storyline incorporates terrorist exercises executed by Arabs or Muslims, the director will likewise include a "positive" Arab character to the story, typically "an energetic U.S. resident" or "blameless casualty of contempt law violations” (Ibid: 43) to strike a balance. This "positive" character is expected to subvert the stereotype of the Arab or Muslim as "terrorist" (Ibid: 56). We argue that this novel way of expanding US’s power is embedded in this new strategy of new orientalism.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **Exploitation and New Orientalism**

Karl Marx, who is the influential theorist of exploitation, did not define the term specifically. As a critic of Capitalist, Marx's theory “expressly rejects the ethical characteristic for the idea of exploitation, and confines the idea to the field of worker relations” (Fairlamb, 1996:23). Marx’s idea centers on the need to revamp the notion of welfare under communism and socialism. What this reformulation of welfare does is that new standards of values are being reinforced; each person is rewarded based on their work and needs. According to Marxism, exploitation “happens when two standards are not met, when the agents are not accepting as indicated by their work or needs” (Ibid: 45). Meanwhile, Edward Said has a different application of the concept of exploitation; he links it to colonialism. He explains exploitation as a form of institution applied to rule “the other” (2010:46.) Basing his argument on Foucauldian theorization of knowledge/power, Said makes connection between power and knowledge to explain the way Europeans absolve themselves in defending their exploitation of the powerless. In short, Said’s exploitation provides an understanding of the power struggle between the have and the have-not of power, the West and the East, respectively.

Bernard Lewis (1996) uses the term of exploitation as a reaction to Said's central concern. He described this term when he comments on the publication of *Orientalism* in 1978: "world political connections and political interests changed significantly, and this change should be exploited to bring the modernity to the Arab world" (in Merskin 2004:88). Indeed, Lewis argues that "the 9/11 assaults have been a worldwide typical occasion stamped by American countering acts, evolving East-West relationship, and world politics exploit this event to help the Arab world" (in Merskin 2004 :32). Focusing on the exploitation of the Arab world, Lewis argues that the Arabs and Arab Americans have, as the time progresses or passes by, become more hesitant to provide oppositional political perspectives. There is an internal turmoil and distrust even within the group, which to a great extent, panders to the common discourse of the enemy within.

This hesitation may mark the recovery of Orientalism; it is then adjusted the structure of Orientalism to form a new structure called New-Orientalism (Kumar 2012). Kumar came up with a term called "Parallel Orientalism" (2012:45). The concept reflects the singularity between two groups - the "good" and "bad" Muslims (Ibid: 236). The consequence of this change is the development of the New Orientalist in which the Middle Easterners turn into the inside, while real great segments including India, Iran, and Turkey are avoided from the new-Orientalist map. Dag Tuastad (2003) has utilized the term New Orientalism to scrutinize the American neo-colonial and neo-liberal plan in the Middle East and the prevalence of the American values.

Asef Bayat (2013) made a clear understanding of New Orientalism. In his book entitled *How Ordinary People Change the Middle East*, he distinguishes between the main Orientalist protagonists in classical Orientalism and New Orientalism. He clarifies that classical Orientalist includes travellers, writers, novelists, philosophers, and colonial administrators. But in the new Orientalism, the protagonists comprise for the most part of research organization, officials, writers, and the Hollywood. The new orientalist from Asef Bayat's view is supported with specialists, money, media, and international venues for spreading the knowledge (Ibid).

We agree with Asef Bayat that the new orientalist comes from the Middle East and becomes the protagonists in Hollywood film. We argue that representing the New-Orient in the form of AaA post 9/11 is a repercussion of the political connection and culture sentiments. 9/11 attacks and "War on Terror" policy brought the Middle East especially via the Orientalist discourse, with its parallel division of "us" and "them" into focus; but the tool used is what we would call the new orientalists. In this research, the new orientalists are the Arab actors; this accentuated the idea that the new orients "have been living" with the West as if they were inseparable from them. In short, Hollywood uses the Arab actors - who are also usually famous in their motherland - to play the protagonist or a leading character in Hollywood films post 9/11 as new orientalists.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The representation of Arabs in Hollywood post 9/11 as a paper topic invites for a variety of research methods. A qualitative textual analysis of Hollywood films is chosen as the paper method, because it is the most appropriate method for our specific paper statement. The qualitative content analysis was preferred since it allows for a more thorough interpretation of the texts' content. Additionally, it provides a better chance of discovering not only what is openly stated in the article, but also "the latent content, the hidden material that is behind or between the words" (Johnson, 2006).

This study utilizes textual analysis for one film which is *The Citizen* (2012) to discover out the sorts of exploitation of Arab character in Hollywood films post 9/11. This paper attempts to propose a new portrayal of Arab Character in Hollywood films post 9/11. In our analysis, we link exploitation with Alsultany's idea of "Inserting a Patriotic Arab Character" (Alsultany, 2012) as a strategy of the new orientalist. In effect, exploitation, we argue, is the theme that we derived from New Orientalism theory that matches this strategy. We also adopt Karl Marx's definition of exploitation. In this paper exploitation means Hollywood directors post 9/11 strategically exploit the Arab actors to perform in Hollywood films to achieve their political

goals. This idea is in line with the labour concept in Marxism, which the exploited labour means the exploited Arab actors.

## ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Sam Kadi is an Arab American who was born and brought up in Syria, making his vision as an Arab convoluted one. He travelled to the U.S. in 2000 and *The Citizen* is Kadi's film debut. Kadi was recognized by the prestigious establishment, Cinema for Peace, for bringing human rights issues to films. Kadi has been highlighted at various international and national TV and radio projects including the Cable News Network (CNN), Arab Radio and Television Network (ART), and National Public Radio (NPR) (Ibid). Kadi stated that the attacks of 9/11 pushed him to make *The Citizen* (Powell, 2014). He tried to represent cases that matter to people and to instruct those who want to transfer a real issue to Hollywood (Ibid). He considers the film as a successful medium to irrigate stories about human rights and other social problems on the ground that it takes viewers on an excursion to see what others are experiencing. Kadi admits, "I believe in the power of the people [...] presenting these issues is essential, and it's important for people to be aware of what's going on in the world. If we don't care about others, no one will care about us" (Ibid 2014: 23).

The positive reviews of the film and the main protagonist may be a sign of New Colonialist voice. *The Citizen* was internally praised in the U.S. The *Hollywood Reporter Magazine* (2013) published a detailed report on the film praising the performance of the Egyptian star, Khalid Nabawi, considering him as the best element in the film (Scheck 2013). The magazine reports that Nabawi played the character of Ibrahim very well. Moreover, the *World Press Magazine* commented that the confident performance of Nabawi gave the film an actual pulse (Hasan 2005), where he succeeded to accurately express the "real" situation of Arabs and Arab Americans who faced troubles after 9/11. Meanwhile the *Monetary Weekly* said that Nabawi added a great weight to the film since he is a star and well-known actor in the Middle East, and has a standard high performance with great spiritual strength that enhances the plot (Lee 2013).



The story of *The Citizen* is about Ibrahim, a new immigrant from Lebanon, who finds himself wrongly accused of being involved in terrorist attacks. Ibrahim has won the American Green Card Lottery and arrives in New York just a day before the 9/11 attacks in 2001. Before moving to the US, he was in Kuwait, after escaping from the ruthless Lebanese Civil war. Ibrahim goes to the US to chase the American dream, something he has been dreaming of since his youth. Seeking an opportunity without any boundaries that exist in his own country Lebanon and succeeding without the restrictions of political obstacles are his ideal American dream. Not only that, Americans ethos of progress through hard work appeals to him. Ibrahim looks for the privilege to settle on individual freedom without the limitations of social class, religion, race, or ethnicity as practiced in his homeland. Therefore, from the outset of the film, this American dream comes crashing point blank towards him; the film uses this technique to ironically build his stature.

The conflict of the story starts when his cousin, Ziad Al Jarrah, forgets to pick him up from the airport, and he ends up renting a room in a modest motel. He feels left alone after his cousin abandons him. By chance, he meets Diana (Anes Bruckner) at the motel who is attempting to escape from being battered by her boyfriend. Ibrahim finds her accidentally stowing away in his motel room. He treats her kindly, which makes her wonder why he is willing to help. She compensates his kindness with a trip to the city, purchasing an American flag and a T-shirt. She also manages to help him to secure a job as a mechanical engineer in a car shop.

Ibrahim comes to the US to achieve his dream. He thinks that in the US he will have a perfect life and a good job, but this dream turns into a nightmare. The American dream disillusioned him after being arrested for six months without committing any crime. He gets confused when the FBI agents grab him in front of the motel. Ibrahim was arrested due to one reason; his surname that matches one of the 9/11 airplane hijackers. There is no crime being committed by Ibrahim, but his ordeal is heightened by the fact that he has been denied a fair trial. Indeed, the investigator, upon Ibrahim's request for a lawyer, punitively declares "Terrorists

don't get lawyers". This shocks Ibrahim because he thinks that the US is a country built on its freedom of speech and individual liberty.

Ibrahim does not give up as he has to struggle until he finds a job. A cute American girl named, Diane, whom he assists at the beginning of the film completes his dream. She becomes his refuge and guardian. In *The Citizen*, Diane is portrayed as the symbol of his American dream. She helps him by looking for him in the police stations when he disappears for six months. Indeed, she keeps his stuff and belongings at her house in the meanwhile and after his release, she invites him to stay in her house for free until he finds a job. We can see here how the director paints the perfect life of Ibrahim with Diane's character, the innocent girl who trusts Ibrahim and wants to give him a chance to live as a human being.

Inserting a Patriotic Arab Character (IPAC) in the analysis of Ibrahim's character reveals the idea of exploitation. The exploitation of Ibrahim's character is prolonged until the end of the film. As an Arab character is usually stereotyped in Hollywood films, Ibrahim's character has been exploited to change the stereotype of Arabs, especially in a way that serves the American agenda. This portrayal, "while doubtless positive," "enhances conceptions of patriotism and American identity" (Alsultany 2012:56). Ibrahim's character represents a "good guy," who is considered "good" as long as he panders to the US requirements. This essentially means that he is a willing defender of the values of the American constitution. This point is made obvious particularly in the court scene, where a conversation takes place between the government representative, Mr. Winston, Ibrahim, and his lawyer, Mr. Miller, in which Ibrahim defends the American constitution. The scene with the three characters goes as follows:-

- Mr Winston : Ibrahim must be sent back to his country of origin without delay because he is a threat to the American security.
- Mr. Miller : By seeking to deport Mr. Ibrahim, we are saying to him you are not welcome here. If this man is being deported, it will be a violation of human rights, it will be inconsistent with our values of fairness, equality, and justice ... the abundant thing about America is we have a rich history of reversing mistakes.
- Ibrahim : Even after the government wants to deport me, I still want to stay here and become a citizen. I thought to myself this country is going

through crises and one day I will have my freedom like everyone else because of the justice of the American constitution.

This dialogue reveals the idea of how to be a “good Arab Muslim” from the American’s point of view. It is an example that if one defends the American constitution and values, one is considered a “good Arab Muslim”. Ibrahim, after all the hardships he faces in the US, starting from his arrest until the desire of the American government to deport him back to Lebanon, insists on being an American citizen. His insistence comes from his beliefs that arise since his childhood.

In a conversation with his immigration officer, Ibrahim says:

This bit of good prosperity is uncharacteristic for me, given how the Lebanese civil war, Syrian economy, and Iraqi invasion of Kuwait have forced me from country to country. America is a country for immigrants who want nothing more than a modest, non-threatening, thoroughly patriotic variant of the American dream (*The Citizen* 2012).

The exploitation of Ibrahim’s character is expository, which is the purpose of differentiating between the “good and bad” stereotypes of Arabs, Muslims and Arab Americans and the principles to be a good Arab post 9/11. This is about saying, “If you help the US, you are a part of the American society.”

This point is made clear in the conversation that takes place between Ibrahim and his Indian Muslim friend who owns a gas station. Directly after 9/11, Ibrahim’s friend Moh, is so scared of the expected consequences of 9/11 attack from the US government on the Muslim:

Moh : How long have you been in this country?  
Ibrahim : One day. Why you want to hide? You are an American.  
Moh : How dare you said this? For many years I always face a very dirty look from “them” because the way that I look and what happens these days will make it worse.  
Ibrahim : I cannot hide. I have not done anything wrong.  
Moh : You think you live in a fancy world? You are dreaming.  
Ibrahim : I can’t believe what you are saying. You are an American but you don’t act like an American citizen

Moh : How does an American citizen act?  
Ibrahim : You are a part of this country. You should help, not hide.

The exploitation of Ibrahim's character lies in his opinion of how Americans should react to the 9/11 attack. Before 9/11, the opportunity to an Arab character to argue and defend himself in an American film was rather rare. For example, *The Siege* (1998) and *True Lies* (1994) depict a series of terrorist bombings by Arabs who are tactless - and voiceless. In *The Citizen*, however, Ibrahim defends himself and the US, and his argument receives significant interest from the American people who go to the courtyard demanding justice for Ibrahim. In some ways, this expands the field of depictions of Arab in Hollywood films post 9/11 but in a new form that we call AaA portrayal. The portrayal becomes conventional since 9/11 attempts to equate a negative portrayal with a positive one. Another mode of exploiting the Arab character in *The Citizen* (2012) is seen in Ibrahim's eventual success. This exploitation is usually embodied in the vision of American itself as Mike Chopra says (2006: 47):

Another pillar of American sense of national identity that features in a large number of films: a vision of America as a land of opportunity, in which any person can achieve success in their chosen occupation through determination and individual effort.

In this film, his success is exemplified by the solution of the narrative conflict. In his struggle, Ibrahim succeeds in being an American citizen and builds his career in a country that provides the opportunity to people who want to be like "them". Ibrahim achieved a success in his battle without entering into any conflict or antagonism with the Americans. This is a technique in the New Orientalism theory that America can achieve any goal without getting into an indirect conflict with the enemy.

In our view, the display of Ibrahim's practices of his Islamic values in America is in itself an exploitation. *The Citizen* shows that the US is able to give freedom to everyone. Ibrahim behaves in America as he does in Lebanon, Egypt or any other Arab and Muslim countries without any harassment. For example, the scene that shows Ibrahim's praying and reading the Qur'an gives an impression to the audience that Americans are not scared of Muslims, and that

one should differentiate between two types of Muslims the “good” Muslim and the “bad” Muslim. Kadi has succeeded in clarifying the identity of the “good Muslim” by depicting Ibrahim practising his Islamic values in America. Besides, Kadi is showing that a Muslim or an Arab who helps the American people and government is the good Muslim, who deserves to be an American citizen.

Kadi has also succeeded in constructing the identity of the “good Muslim” by Ibrahim’s aversion to alcohol. Indeed, Ibrahim is never shown drinking alcohol or in a sexual scene with his American girlfriend whom he married at the end of the film. This is against the classical stereotypes of the Arab. On the contrary, he appears several times while praying or reading the Qur’an. Therefore, Ibrahim’s role as a patriotic American Muslim is not a typical manifestation; but it fits into the “inserting Patriotic Arab or Muslim Americans” strategy as proposed by Alsultany (2012) for two reasons. First, Ibrahim has dark skin and he does not look like an Arab to the other characters in the film. This point is highlighted when Baha, the Iraqi girl at the English Language centre, tells him that he looks different compared to other Arab people she met, and that he looks and dresses up in an American style. This means the new portrayal of the Arab character is recognized from an Arab eye in the film; Baha recognizes that Ibrahim is different in the way he looks and talks too. This difference is significant because, the way Ibrahim is portrayed is against the Arab stereotype.

Second, his behavior and his open mindedness show to the audience that he is not stereotypically an Arab in image. For example, when Ibrahim wants to invite the Iraqi girl, Baha, for a dinner, she tells him that dating is an American style, not an Arab one. She wonders how he is an Arab and yet tries to date her. He tells her that he is looking for a good wife. Another example that confirms Alsultany’s idea that is when Ibrahim helps Diana without exploiting her situation. His ethics precede his behavior with her; where he never harasses her. This contradicts the stereotypical images the audience always see of Arab men who are shown as aggressive and sex maniac. In sum, “Inserting a Patriotic Arab Character” in *The Citizen* is a way of exploiting Arab actors in Hollywood films post 9/11.

There is a kind of symbolism in *The Citizen* that is a form of exploitation of his culture. When Ibrahim arrives at the airport in New York, he puts his hand into his pocket to bring out a piece of Lebanese sweets, as he calls it, along with the Holy Qur'an that have been his companion. He does not leave them throughout the horrendous events of the film. In the end, when he achieves both his personal and moral victory, the sweets are still his loyal company. He eats them every time he wants to relax. The sweets is a symbol of the good deed that he has and it does not mean that when he becomes an American he should abandon all his cultural habits. This is in accordance with Paul James' observation: "symbols work to integrate societies and express the meaning of social relation" (2006: 182). He explained the idea of symbolism in film saying "a society sense of community whether tribble, traditional, modern, or postmodern, becomes knowable in part through the representation made by symbols" (Ibid: 183). It is the same value about believing in the truth, when the American investigator threatens with accusations that will incriminate him, he sticks to his version of truth. Unless he sticks to his gun, he will not taste that candy again. Ibrahim's reaction to the investigator is fast as he refuses to succumb to his threat; thus achieving victory at the end when he is released from the humiliating jail, to find Diana, who he has saved by his values from the madness of her American friend.

In the final scene, Diana, the cornerstone of Uncle Sam dream achievement, eats his Arabic candy. She likes it and keeps some of the sweets until he comes out of the prison to eat them with him. At the end, she becomes Ibrahim's wife, and gives birth to a beautiful baby. This marriage is not a matrimony between two persons, rather between two different and conflicting civilizations. Their marriage will not be futile but positive because it begets a new baby carrying the values of both cultures without falling into the trap of the political conflict. That leads me to highlight that the American dream is always completed by an American girl. She supports him from the beginning, and insists on helping him. She is surprised that he is an Arab, as she only knows about Arabs from the stereotype picture in the American society. This is evident during their first encounter, when the following dialogue goes between Diana and Ibrahim:

Diana : Where are you from?  
Ibrahim: From Lebanon.  
Diana : Oh ... Al-Qathafi?

Ibrahim: No... Al-Qathafi means Libya

Diana : So do you speak Persian?

Ibrahim: Persian means Iran I am not Iranian ... I am an Arab.

Diana's knowledge of Arabs comes from a stereotyped perspective; hence, she is surprised by the way Ibrahim treats and protects her when they first meet at the motel. Arab and Muslims are often stereotyped. The distinctions that Arabs are people who converse in Arabic as their native language and recognize themselves as Arabs while Muslims are those who practice the religion of Islam are not clear to Diana (and the audience).

Furthermore, the exploitation of Ibrahim's character can be seen in the film excessive showing of his generosity and gentleness. For example, Ibrahim also presented as a gentle and good-hearted man. When he meets an American beggar, Mikey, he shares his bread with him, invites him to his house and even looks for a job for him. Seeing an Arab protagonist in Hollywood film advising an American citizen on how to be a good man with hope is a rare sight indeed. This is heightened in the following conversation that takes place between Ibrahim and the American beggar, Mikey, when Ibrahim shares his food with him:-

Ibrahim : No problem. You know what? During the gulf war I was in Kuwait, to escape from violence I have to drive until the edge of the country. I lived in my car without food and drink for a while man.

Mikey : It is a competition of lame hunger. Ya, I got it man! You also get through the hunger too but at least you are out of this now and you didn't sleep in the streets. I don't care from which country you are. These streets take me apart.

Ibrahim : What I am trying to say is it is possible to change your life success everywhere man, but you have to decide.

This scene further accentuates the similarity in Ibrahim's value and the American dream. Finally, the film tries to please Hollywood film audience by advancing the American lifestyle and demonstrating that the Arab and Muslim cultures are a bundle of morals that can help to change the stereotype of Arab character in Hollywood post 9/11.

## CONCLUSION

The exploitation of the Arab actor in Hollywood films is done with a new strategy of inserting a patriotic Arab character as proposed by Alsultany. Our analysis reveals that by inserting a patriotic Arab character in *The Citizen*, Arab actors in Hollywood films post 9/11 are therefore exploited to pander to New Orientalism. Which means the exploitation of an Arab Actor or an Arab-American actor is one of the themes of the New Orientalism theory that emerged clearly post 9/11. New Orientalism calls for the use of native Arab Orientalist among “them,” instead of colonizing the physical regions. Therefore, the exploited Arab characters break the stereotypical images of Arabs that were portrayed in Hollywood films by creating a new form stereotype, linking them to Islam.

#### **ABOUT THE AUTHORS**

*Hanan Adnan* is a doctoral candidate at the School of Media and Communication Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. She obtains her doctoral scholarship from the Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia from 2014 to 2016. Her research centers on Hollywood films and ideology, especially on the war film genre. Hananalakloul@gmail.com; hananalaklook@yahoo.com

*Jamaluddin Aziz* is an Associate Professor in Media and Cultural Studies at the School of Media and Communication Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. His areas of research pivot around film studies, critical theories (gender) and the media. He was appointed as the first Gender Expert in Malaysia by the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development of Malaysia in 2015-2016. He can be contacted at jaywalker2uk@gmail.com; jaywalk@ukm.edu.my.

*Fauziah Ahmad* is an Associate Professor at the School of Media and Communication Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. zuhair@ukm.edu.my

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