

The popularity of hollywood movies media essay



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It is believed that Hollywood is the greatest national source of entertainment for many people of all ages, races, sexes, and ethnicities. Hollywood movie industry depicts numerous images of a variety of races throughout its films for more than nine and a half billion dollars in 2002 (U. S. Census Abstracts, 2002). Despite the wide variety of shows, movies and images produced by Hollywood, audience of various backgrounds are allowed to generate thoughts, views, and opinions that go a long with their own perceptions. Therefore, many films appear to be non-redundant and convenient though they implicitly include wide variety of repeated plots, characters, and specific characteristics. Regardless of the quality level of movies, they last for long times as they are hard to be imitated or changed.

Plato states, in the “ Republic”, “ those who tell the stories also rule society” (Shaheen, 2001, p. 5). The most effective images are those left behind contributing in shaping audience’s beliefs, opinions and attitudes toward certain events and nations. Arab and Muslim culture was a main target and content for Hollywood movie industry. Savage (2002) believes that “ Hollywood films have a major influence on the American public, and millions of people have grown up believing that they know Arab and Muslim culture through what they view on the big screen” (Savage, 2002, p. 8).

Hollywood movie industry has strongly established its popularity in the United States and worldwide. According to Shaheen (2001), “ Hollywood’s motion pictures reach nearly everyone. Cinematic illusions are created, nurtured, and distributed world-wide, reaching more than 100 countries...No sooner do contemporary features leave the movie theaters than they are available in video stores...” (Shaheen, 2001, p. 5). Teenagers and children

were one of the most affected audiences by the sustained popularity of Hollywood movies. Shaheen (2001) remarks that “...teenagers are avid moviegoers and nowadays purchase four out of ten movie tickets” (Shaheen, 2001, p. 5). It is also noted that Hollywood movies and American media are consumed by 150 nations worldwide (Shaheen, 2002). However, the meanings of images conveyed by Hollywood movies to audiences play a crucial role in shaping various stereotypes of peoples. Paul (1998) comments on research findings saying laterally, “ Studies indicate that stereotypes are automatically or unconsciously generated in the mind, and that categorizing is an important part of the mental process of evaluating the world” (Paul, 1998, p. 52).

Hollywood filmmakers employ various stereotypes as an effective tool that establishes protagonists and antagonists; however, frequent appearance of Arabs in antagonistic roles affects audience to believe that such shows are real and true. The stereotypical myths about Arabs reach beyond ordinary audience to become self-perpetuating when more films adopt the same premises. El-Farra (1996) states, “ it is the myths about Arabs which often inspire directors, producers and screenwriters to develop a product which is then based on stereotypes” (El-Farra, 1996, pp. 4-5).

Stereotype’s Existence and Harm

According to Paul (1998), the stereotypes explain why things are the way they are. Other scholars believe that “ A person develops stereotypes about a group...from information and disinformation, distortions, and/or opinions made available through family, friends, and the media” (Abreu, Ramirez, Kim, & Haddy, 2003, p. 693). Generally speaking, stereotypes can negatively

affect any race, ethnicity, or a group of people if the negative implications about such groups are synonymous with their members. Abreu et al (2003) say that "...when one perceives an individual as a member of a particular stereotyped group, the perceiver's mind activates the group-relevant cognitive structure and processes...judgments and attitudes within the framework of that particular stereotype" (Abreu et al., p. 693). Crocker and Major (cited in Pitner, Astor, Benbenishty, Haj-Yahia, & Zeira, 2003) report, "holding negative beliefs about other groups is functional in that it could bolster the image and esteem of one's own group."

Therefore, Hollywood movie makers can portray some races as favorable for audience whereas others' cultures are placed in the negative side of audience's awareness. " Several of Hollywood's most blatant patterns of bias fall within the categories of race, ethnicity and/or national origin included in this group are negative and/or stereotypical portrayals of Arabs and Arab-Americans..." (Cones, 1998). All races may be shown as negative groups at certain times; however, some races such as Arabs and Arab-Americans are featured negatively all the time.

Seen through Hollywood's distorted lenses, Arabs look different and threatening. Projected along racial and religious lines, the stereotypes are deeply ingrained in American cinema. From 1896 until today, filmmakers have collectively indicted all Arabs as Public Enemy #1- brutal, heartless, uncivilized religious fanatics and money-mad cultural " others" bent on terrorizing civilized Westerners, especially Christians and Jews. (Shaheen, 2001, p. 2)

Several terroristic events which took place before September 11 had been exploited by media and Hollywood movie makers to show Arabs as terrorists in spite that Arabs were not involved in those events. For example, Arabs were blame for the bombings of Oklahoma City and World Trade Center even before investigations launched, and all Arabs were blamed for the invasion of Kuwait by only one Arab country (Iraq). These events were used to convey a message to public saying that Arabs cannot be trusted since they support crimes and mass destruction against humanity as a whole.

Popular culture of any people is formed in part through their knowledge and experiences which are mostly acquired by mass media. Shaheen (2001) believes that individuals are influenced by a continuous flow of “ seen one, seen ‘em all” headlines (Shaheen, 2001, p. 28). Therefore, Hollywood movie industry depends upon current evets and headlines to influence their desired perception for purposeful goals when producing new movies. According to Goodstein (1998), “ Each set of villains reflected headlines and anxieties of its era...with Soviet pretensions shattered and aliens from outer space passé, the new cinematic enemy is the Muslim extremist”.

Stereotypes and Myths About Muslims, Arabs and Arab-Americans

El-Farra (1996) defines a stereotype as “ the creation of a biased opinion or view- an individual will take the behavior of one person and state that all people belonging to that particular group, be it an ethnic, religious or social group, behave in the same manner” (El-Farra, 1996, p. 1). In this sense, Hollywood portrays target groups’ stereotypes as absolute truths ignoring the fact that there is only some truth born by these stereotypes. However,

focusing on and encouraging positive portrays of certain stereotypes make audience view all related members positively.

It is believed that in spite of many procedures have been taken to improve stereotypes of certain racial and ethnic stereotypes, Shaheen (2001) thinks that Hollywood's stereotype of Arabs remained the same. " Over the last three decades stereotypical portraits have actually increased in number and virulence" (Shaheen, 2001, p. 28). Portraying Arabs in negative roles all the time even through fictitious stories rather than factual ones whether in movies or TV shows leaves audience more likely to view Arabs as if they really act the roles portrayed in movies and shows and thus public think that all Arabs can only behave accordingly. Therefore, such negative portrayals of Arabs enhance the public's biased judgments, views or attitudes toward Arabs' nation and culture. " After years of virtual invisibility, Arab-Americans are finally finding prominence in Hollywood movies- as terrorists and villains. They are only the latest in a long line of ethnic groups and nationalities cast in stereotypical bad-guy roles..." (Goodstein, 1998).

According to Shaheen (2001), there are four types of myths that pertain to the Arabs' and Arab-Americans' stereotypes: " They are all fabulously wealthy, they are barbarians and uncultured, they are sex maniacs with a penchant for white slavery, and they revel in acts of terrorism" (El-Farra, 1996, p. 2). Such myths about intentionally imagined Arabs' stereotype encourage all participants of Hollywood movie industry including directors, producers, and screenwriters to make their films and TV shows accordingly. In fact, scholars find it hard to explain these representations of Arabs. For example, Shaheen admits such dilemma stating, "...I can't say the celluloid

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Arab has changed. That is the problem. He is what he has always been-the cultural “ other.”

In fact Arabs are not the only group that is exposed to negative portrayals of Hollywood. Some critics remark that other minorities’ stereotypes such as African-Americans’ and Latinos’ have been characterized as offensive.

Shaheen (2001) stated that “ History reminds us that the cinema’s hateful Arab stereotypes are reminiscent of abuses in earlier times. Not so long ago- and sometimes still-Asians, American Indians, blacks, and Jews were vilified” (Shaheen, 2001, p. 4).

On the other hand, Cones (1998) believes that “ there is no such constraint on depicting Arabs as oily and oversexed or shifty-eyed and violent” (Cones, 1998). Therefore, it is noted that in spite of the sufferings Arabs and Arab-Americans face as a result of untrue images in the public eyes, Hollywood does nothing to improve or change the current situation of Arabs’ image in public eyes.

This view can be understood and interpreted appropriately if one considers how Hollywood plays a crucial role in directing hatred against Arabs and Arab-Americans. To achieve success in this regard, Hollywood has employed its pre-identified image of Arabs as evils and enemies of humanity in many related media productions (Savage, 2002, p. 7).

However, the frequent work of portraying certain stereotypes negatively may not achieve the expected profits for Hollywood movie industry since they would exclude those races’ and ethnicities’ members from lists of consumers. Those ethnicities would view such negative images of their

cultures as offensive which may reduce their interests in Hollywood productions. Therefore, Hollywood movie makers may think that audience of various backgrounds particularly Arabs would be open-minded enough to view such media campaigns against them as entertainment rather than vicious anti-Arab propaganda. In case that such audiences were not up to Hollywood expectations, Hollywood may have done serious and critical risks in that it would not only threaten its industry but would also contribute to the creation of national and international political struggles that are based on racism and religious discrimination.

(Cones, 1998).

A group of factors underlie the exposure of Arab stereotype to negative images in Hollywood. These factors include political reasons, profitable box offices, apathy, and the absence of Arab-Americans in the industry. However, Shaheen (2001) ironically says: “ the fact remains: “ You can hit an Arab free; they’re free enemies, free villains, where you couldn’t do it to a Jew or you can’t do it to a black anymore, affirms Sam Keen”(Shaheen, 2001, p. 6). The negative image of Arabs in Hollywood productions could also be attributed to what other minorities experienced along the course of forming their cultural awareness and experiences in that Hollywood aims at founding a “ bad-guy” whom exists as battle fuel in movie industry. This is certainly easier for movie makers than attempting to establish other stereotypes in the mentality of the mainstream society.

Hollywood audience especially American people have little knowledge about Arabs and Arab-Americans. The main sources of knowledge about Arabs’

multi-culture are represented for Americans through depictions provided by Hollywood movies and mass media. Convenience of audience's in what is portrayed for them regarding Arabs' images may be the most important factor that support the frequent negative productions of Arabs and Arab-Americans. Shaheen believes that convenient stereotypes make it easier for movie producers to create and recreate negative images of Arabs including making good joke of Arabs and inserting a stumbling and bumbling sheikh or an Arab terrorist. Levesque (2002) states, " We all know what they look like from watching movies and TV without any thought required". (Levesque, 2002).

Reviewing the state of art may reveal that there is a need to create a balance of stereotypes depicted by Hollywood; however, it is believed that such notion is not insistent or pressing since there is no real action to support or at least to reduce the impacts of what is going on in Hollywood movie industry. According to Cones (1998), " Hollywood movies involving Arab characters demonstrate that the U. S. film community portrays Arabs in a stereotypical manner and that little or no effort has been made by Hollywood filmmakers to balance portrayals of Arabs with positive portrayals..." (Cones, 1998).

Historical, Cultural, and Religious background of Muslims, Arabs and Arab-Americans

Hollywood industry may have misrepresented most information about Arabs' background. It is believed that " this industry associate Arabs' history with negative attributes such as terrorism and violence which contributes to the process of demonization and dehumanization (Savage, 2002, p. 4). In Fact

Hollywood defines the term “ Arab” differently. For example, the word Arab is used to describe any person who is originally from the Middle East countries regardless of their diverse cultures, beliefs and religions El-Farra (1996, p. 1). The term limits individuals and countries within a distinct target that is open to stereotypes and bias.

However, Shaheen thinks that the term refers to the “ 265 million people who reside in, and the many more millions around the world who are from the 22 Arab states” (Shaheen, 2001, p. 2). Historically speaking, a mixed ethnicity have existed in the Arab world which from 5000 BC to the present. According to Shaheen (2001), “ The Scots, Greeks, British, French, Romans, English, and others have occupied the area” (p. 3).

In fact, Arabs have crucially contributed to the development of human civilizations. For example, Shaheen (2001) says that Arabs have developed essential sciences that are considered bases of modern technologies including algebra and the concept of zero, for instance. He adds that many English such as algebra, chemistry and coffee are of Arab roots. Arabs proved to be pioneers in several sciences in the middle age. For example, they created and used astrolabes for navigation, star maps and celestial globes in astronomy. In addition they are the first who used the concept of the center of gravity. Moreover, the water clock is one of their conventions; besides inspired the European Gothic style in architecture. In Agriculture, the Arabs were the first nation to introduced oranges, dates, sugar and cotton and to use water irrigation nets.

According to Shaheen (2001), “ 70 percent of the population is under the age of 30” (p. 3) who are mostly share common language, cultural heritage, and religion (Islam). That does not mean that there is non-Muslims in the Arab world as it has been thought by some. Shaheen states that “ Though the vast majority of them are Muslims, about 15 million Arab Christians reside there as well” (Shaheen, 2001, p. 3). The same can be claimed regarding the Arab-Americans who reside in the United States. Shaheen claims that “ the majority of the United States’ Arab-American population is also Christians; about 40 percent are Muslim” (Shaheen, 2001, p. 3).

In spite that mass media keeps attempting to show Islam as a religion of terrorism, “ Muslims are America’s fastest growing religious group, and they include immigrants from more than 60 nations, as well as African-Americans”(Shaheen, 2001, p. 4). Hollywood movie industry and other American media prefer to show all Arabs as Muslims. Shaheen thinks that “ A majority of the world’s 1. 1 billion Muslims are Indonesian, Indian, and Malaysian, but only 12 percent of the world’s Muslims are Arabs. Shaheen indicates that “... Moviemakers ignore this reality... Repeatedly, they falsely project all Arabs as Muslims and all Muslims as Arabs. As a result viewers tend to link the same attributes to both peoples” (Shaheen, 2001, p. 4).

On the other hand, the religion of Islam does not go untarnished. As a result of the representations of stereotypically fanatic Arabs that are bent on destruction, Islam is assumed to be linked with acts of mass destruction and violence. “ Today’s image makers regularly link the Islamic faith with male supremacy, holy war, and acts of terror, depicting Arab Muslims as hostile alien intruders, and as lecherous, oily sheikhs intent on using nuclear

weapons” (Shaheen, 2001, p. 9). It is noted that portraying Arabs and Arab-Americans by using such negative characteristics has, similarly, led to presenting Islam to most movie viewers. Shaheen (cited in El-Farra, 1996) says, “ In an attempt to place Islam in a category that Americans can understand, the media portrays images of Muslims as belonging to a faith of 800 million people, consisting of strange, bearded men,... in robes and turbans...”.

According to El-Farra, the distortion of Islam leads audience to think that it is a mysterious religion prone that encourages acts of terrorism, violence, and fanaticism. These themes are maintained by movies industry (El-Farra, —). On the other hand, the majority of Hollywood movie makers and other mass media ignore basic facts about Islam including its message that calls for equality and peace.

In order to show respect and appreciation for Muslim religious leaders, arabs call them as. Shaheen defines the word “ sheikh’ literally as “ a wise elderly person, the head of the family...” (Shaheen, 2001, p. 19). However, it has completely misused by Hollywood and moviemakers. “...in the 1920s he was a swarthy sheikh, wiggling his eyebrows and chasing the Western heroine around a tiled courtyard. After the 1973 oil crisis producers revitalized the image of the fabulously wealthy and slothful sheikh...” (Shaheen, 2001, p. 19). instead of showing sheikhs as wise men or leaders of society, screenwriters often present them as “ stooges-in-sheets, slovenly, hook-nosed potentates intent on capturing pale-faced blondes for their harems” (Shaheen, 2001, p. 19). The negative image of the “ sheikh” appeared to shift, by time, to one of excessive violence. Shaheen (2001) says that “

earlier movies would depict indolent sheikhs lounging on thrones. But, contemporary films present oily, militant, ostentatious sheikhs reclining in Rolls Royces, aspiring to buy up chunks of America” (p. 21). Further, recent images have completely changed portrays of sheikh even from the Arab definition of the term.

According to (Shaheen, 2001, p. 21), current movies introduce anti-Christian and anti-Jewish Arabs armed with nuclear weapons, and plenty of oil and cash. In fact these views are always produced in the context of Islam which is showed to ‘ justify’ violence against the West, Israel, and fellow Arabs.

Movie makers have not drop arab women from their similar negative considerations. For example, shaheen (2002) notes that “ Arab women in the Middle East are portrayed mainly as bundles of black cloth, submissive harem maidens or carrying jugs on their heads. He adds that “ They have no identities whatsoever, and they’re always mute (Shaheen, 2002).

Shaheen(2001) believes that image makers can make personal and political statements depending on the costumes and steryptypes women are presented in. he adds that “ By covering the reel Arab woman in black and relegating her to silence, the costumer links her to oppression. But throughout the Arab world, women wear a variety of apparel.” (Shaheen, 2001, p. 23).

Shaheen (2001) states that Arab woman are usually portrayed with negative roles in Hollywood’s movies. For instance, they usually appear with no effective acts wearing black dresses all time. Shaheen (2001) also emphasizes that even they do not have speaking or working roles. Such

extreme negative portrays of Arab women in Hollywood images may lead audience to link Islam with negative message of oppression against women rights. The constant negative portrays of women and their ideology of Islam leave strong effect against the social and cultural life of Arabs and Muslims as a whole among audience. Therefore, Hollywood ignores the fact that Arab and Arab-American women can effectively be positive contributors to their society or humanity in general.

Economically, Hollywood images keep drawing Arabs as the only owners and suppliers of oil around the world. This results in making audience believe that arabs' life is based on only oil fortune without having other economic resource to live on. On the other hand, Hollywood and in large world audience think that OPEC is an Arab organization despite the fact that only seven of the thirteen OPEC members are Arab nations. Moreover, According to El-Farra, 1996), " of the five largest oil-producing countries, only one is an Arab nation, Saudi Arabia" (p. 2). However, one may not be sure whether people around the world really believe that. For example, an economic editor states that " the world's supplies of oil and price levels are manipulated and controlled by greedy Arabs" (El-Farra, p. 2). Such pre-identified ideas may only contribute to continuing negative attitudes toward Arabs and Arab-Americans.

Current Events Involving Muslims, Arabs/Arab-Americans

Large amounts of present worldwide events may also have contributed to drawing people's attitudes, perceptions and feelings toward Arabs and Arab-Americans. Such events may have also affected Arabs' image in Hollywood's eyes. For example, the Arab-Israeli conflict is considered one of the most

important factors that is used to feed audience's attitudes toward Arabs. This conflict which extended along more than half a century period and still going on may have provided the American media with a rich source to portray Arabs as extremely aggressive while Israeli's who are generally supported by west are innocent victims.

Kressel (cited in El-Farra, 1996) believes that the American media which be considered the strongest around the world practiced unequal roles in covering the Arab Israeli conflict attempting to put Arab states as powerful ones depending on violence and aggressions in their conflict with Israel who, in turn, is portrayed as a small country found in the midst of aggressive large states. Arabs in this image are shown as those who attack Israel which tries its best to preserve democracy, freedom and its people lives.

In this sense, Mark Twain (cited in Shaheen, 2001) says, " We are all ignorant, just about different things. However, when it comes to the Middle East, many Americans are ignorant about the history and plight of the Palestinian people" (Shaheen, 2001, p. 26). Shaheen thinks the repeated negative images about Palestinians which portrayed by Hollywood movie makers and mass media left a myth among audience that all Palestinians are the enemy of humanity, violent and extremely terrorists.

Apart from Israeli-Palestinian movies supported by Hollywood, one notes that human dramas show Palestinians as a normal people who is characterized with universal humanistic attributes like all peoples. These incomparable art works with Hollywood's portray Palestinians as innocent victims whereas Israelis as non-merciful occupiers. One cannot find a Hollywood movie that

present reality about Israeli soldiers and settlers who frequently attack Palestinians' farms to uproot their olive orchards or threaten Palestinian's lives as it appears in some media news. Shaheen (2001) states that there American movies does not show the everyday actual struggle of Palestinian families under the highly pressing occupation, Palestinian refugee camps which are considered the largest in the world, or how Palestinians are exposed to most difficult circumstances in their pursuit to get back to their own home land (Shaheen, 2001, p. 26).

Research has indicated that showing Arabs as terrorists repeatedly directs American audience's attitudes to take them as enemies. According to Martin (cited in El-Farra, 1996), the word terrorism " was used by the press in describing events and individuals they disapproved of. Yet, when describing these same acts by individuals who are not Arabs, the media was careful to appear neutral and unbiased."

On the other hand, Shaheen states that " news reports selectively and relentlessly focus on a minority of Arabs, the radical fringe. " The seemingly indelible Arab-as-villain image wrongly conveys the message that the vast majority of the 265 million peace-loving Arabs are ' bad guys" (Shaheen, 2001, p. 28).

In the 1990s Arabs and Arab-Americans' images got worse in American audience's eyes. For example, the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, which led to the second Gulf War, and the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center " lead some Americans to believe that all Arabs are terrorists and that Arabs do not value human life" (Shaheen, 2001, p. 29). This, in turn, strengthens the

ideology that Arabs are aggressive and real enemies of America. Moreover, public opinion seems to be influenced directly by the way these events were covered in mass media. Therefore, both the intentional negative use of media against Arabs and the dominant prior stereotypical judgments were the main reasons of the continual Arab-bashing according to Shaheen (2001). Further, some movie makers found that such portrays of arabs provide them with rich opportunities to justify their productions. Shaheen remarks that “ the news programs which are used by some producers and directors deny that they are actually engaged in stereotyping. Shaheen reports their objection literally when they say, “ We’re not stereotyping, just look at your television set, those are real Arabs” (Shaheen, 2002, p. 29).

It is noted that the disappointing use of media has been occurred through a prejudicial way presented during the issue of Okalahoma City Bombing. According to El-Farra (1996), “ In 1995, within minutes of the event, news reporters were insinuating that the bombing was an act of terrorists. Raised with unpopular stereotypes of Arabs, the American public was quick to develop images of Arab terrorists destroying American property” (El-Farra, 1996, p. 1). Government officials were also quick to point an accusatory finger at Middle Eastern terrorists.

An Arab-American spokesman believes that the American people were so quick to blame Arabs for Oklahoma’s events as a result of Hollywood movies’ negative influence upon them. Cones (1998) states that most Americans, including politicians and media leaders, have been affected by Hollywood propaganda.

According to El-Farra (1996), even experts of terrorism (e. g. Steven Emerson) do “ not believe Islamic groups when they denied involvement” (p. 1). Consequently, it was hard for the American public to attribute terrorism to Americans themselves that is why El-Farra (1996) states that terrorism appear in movies mostly points out unconsciously to Arab culture and people. El-Farra (cited in Bazzi, 1995) points to the 1995 report of American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee which indicates that “ 250% increase in hate crimes against Arabs were from the previous year” (pp. 1-2). According to (Cajee, 1995), The Oklahoma Hate and Harassment Report states that along the period taken to arrest the suspect Timothy McVeigh all people of middle eastern appearance have become suspects in bombing Alfred Murrah Federal Building. Therefore, Muslims and Arabs, in particular, were the most to suffer from the bombings’ effects. it was also found that manifestations of arabs and American arabs of suffers included “ widespread fear and intimidation, commonplace verbal harassment at school, in public and in the workplace, and a significant number of physical assaults and hate crimes” (Cajee, 1995). Cajee (1995) found out that reports of most serious events of hate crimes include:

Reports that associated Muslims to terror bombings of Oklahoma led some angry Americans to attack an Iraqi young refugee’s home in Oklahoma City on April 20th and cause loss of her baby.

The windows of a mosque and community center in Stillwater, Oklahoma were caused by drive-by shootings on April 19th and 20th.

Using knives to attack Arabs in an apartment parking lot or beating a student in a supermarket parking lot were only some examples of physical assaults reported by students.

It was reported by Local Islamic centers and some Arab or Arab-Americans that they were frequently exposed to an onslaught of hate calls.

Therefore, Arabs, Arab-Americans, and similar ethnicities were the core subject of unjust and violence in a very short period of time as a result of media's aggressive influence against them. Shaheen (2001) states that " Though no American of Arab descent was involved, they were instantly targeted as suspects". He adds that " Speculative reporting, combined with decades of harmful stereotyping, resulted in more than 300 hate crimes against them" (Shaheen, 2001, p. 7).

Negative stereotypes may impact the perceptions of the public particularly when they are related to their attitudes toward certain races. Moreover, such stereotypes may also affect the way some races feel about their heritage, culture, religion, and self-esteem.

Repeatedly over time, movie makers in Hollywood use some images of stock caricatures to focus on. For instance, American Arabs or Muslims are frequently shown as members of isolated communities until audience believe that Muslims are entirely different from other Americans (Shaheen, 2002). Therefore, movies which include true depiction of Arabs and Islamic culture seems to be nonexistent in Hollywood most of the time.

In fact, there is a big need for founding new positive images of Arabs and Muslims in American movies and mass media. However, most Arabs and American Arabs believe that they are a subject of embarrassment whenever they have to replace audience's negative attitudes towards them by more objective ones.

This sociological and psychological dilemma is strongly exist among Arabs and Muslims themselves who live in America. The most affected category in this regard in the children. In order to avoid embarrassments resulted from the wide influence of media and Hollywood movies upon Arabs, one can easily note how Arabs avoid introducing themselves as Arabs or Muslims. For example, it is noted that they deny their original identities saying literally, "I'm not Arab, I'm Spanish," or "I'm Italian." Therefore, the widespread of negative attitudes toward Arabs results in killing Arabic heritage and leaving feelings of shame among Arabs (Shaheen, 2002).

According to Monteith (cited in Paul, 1998), "by five years of age, many children have definite stereotypes about blacks, women, and other social groups". He adds, "Children do not have a choice about accepting or rejecting these conceptions, since they're acquired well before they have their own cognitive abilities or experiences to form their own beliefs... they must compete with all the forces that would promote and perpetuate these stereotypes: peer pressure, mass media..." (p. 58).

In the same sense, at a time Arab youth learn negative stereotypes of Hollywood movies, arab children would find it hard to go long with this image as long as they have their own Arabic heritage. According to Shaheen

(2001), the persistent images of Arabs in media and movies contributes, to great degree, in shaping their perceptions towards themselves and