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www.the-criterion.com

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Ethnic Othering in *True Lies*

Md. Abu Shahid Abdullah

European Joint Master's Degree in English and American Studies
Otto-Friedrich University Bamberg, Germany

Abstract:

In the film *True Lies*, the Arabs are shown not only as terrorists but also as mad, murdering machines, and blundering dullards, and the depiction arises from America's desire of social, cultural, and political domination over the East. The Arab terrorists are put in stark contrasts with the American hero Harry, who represents America, and are outplayed by him in all the possible ways. The contrast between Harry, who is cool, calm, humorous and crafty, and the whole terrorist group led by Aziz, who is presented as uncultured and lunatic, revives the social and cultural clash between the East and the West, and shows the East as the West's "Other"

Keywords: Othering, Orientalism, Stereotyping.

1. Introduction

The Hollywood "action-comedy" film *True Lies*, which is a 1994 blockbuster starring Arnold Schwarzenegger and Jamie Lee Curtis, was nominated for an Academy Award for "Best Visual Effects" and Curtis received a Golden Globe for her comic and humorous role as Helen Tasker. Arnold, who is a spy but disguised as a boring salesman, is also praised for his dual role and the ease, humor, and confidence with which he destroys the terrorist organization. But very few articles or reviews have shed light on the comic, debased, vilifying, and derogatory portrayal of Arabs as terrorists. The terrorists are not individualized, rather are presented as a mass, and are portrayed in a clumsy and offensive manner. They are terrorists but they seem very much inept in their task; their activities arouse laughter rather than terror. The terrorist group is a big one but except their leader Aziz, and couple of other terrorists, no one is even given a name.

My interest lies on how Arabs are portrayed in *True Lies*. In my paper, I will show that in this film the Arab terrorists are constructed as emblems of a threatening and ethnicized east, contrasted with a law-abiding western protagonist. In the film, the Arabs are depicted in a humiliating manner; they are shown as mad, murdering machines, and blundering dullards. The depiction arises from America's desire of social, cultural, and political domination over the East. I will show that the differences between Harry and the whole terrorist group actually refer to America's desire to dominate the East and that this desire is deep rooted in American mentality. The media portrays the Arabs negatively and shapes people's perception of them.

The film *True Lies*, directed by James Cameron, is a slick film perpetuating sick images of the Arabs as dirty, demonic, and despicable people and the reel portraits are so remote from reality as to give normal viewers uneasy feelings. Stalking America, the Arabs plant nuclear bombs, detonating an atomic bomb in the Florida Keys. Cameron labels his terrorist group, "Crimson Jihad". Crimson, meaning red, implies blood and Cameron misuses the word, "Jihad", wrongly implying that jihad means violence. Arabs in the film are shown not only as dangerous but also as clumsy and funny in their activities. They lack depth and seriousness. They are shown

as irrational and having intense hatred for everything American. Most of them cannot speak English and use traditional Arabic headscarf. Their leader Aziz, who is presented as uncultured and lunatic, is contrasted with the western hero Harry who appears cool, calm, humorous and crafty, and by doing this the director actually revives the social and cultural clash between the East and the West and shows the East as the West's "Other". The camera action tells a lot about the negative portrayal of the Arabs. Except Aziz, none of the terrorists are shown closely; they are shown in long-distance shot so that the camera can cover everyone without paying any particular attention to any of them.

2. The Terrorists: A Group of Clowns

US special agent Harry (Schwarzenegger) receives the responsibility to prevent the "dirty" Crimson Jihad from blowing up American cities. Jihad, which smuggles nuclear weapons "out of a former Soviet country" Kazakhstan, issues a warning: unless the US government withdraws its troops from Arab nations, they will detonate six nuclear weapons over American cities. In the film, Arabs are shown as funny and clumsy, and are depicted in an offensive manner. Trying to launch a missile, two Arabs kill one of their own and a truck driver mistakenly runs over a fellow Arab. When Harry and another agent identify Arab assassin in Washington DC, they make fun by saying "Beavis and Butt-head". Trying to kill Harry, two Arabs shoot each other. In order to save his daughter from the terrorist leader Aziz, Harry flies off in a jet, attaches the villain to a missile and sends the missile to destroy a helicopter carrying some other terrorists. The director leaves no stone unturned to insult the Arab Muslims and the portrayal has been extremely vindictive, detrimental and purposeful.

Throughout the film, Arab Muslims are shown with evil intention but clumsy in their activities. Instead of showing the Arabs as skilled, confident and orderly, the director depicts them as comic, and instead of evoking terror and fear the depiction arouses laughter. By using humor the director might have wanted to make the depiction less gruesome and less offensive; he might have wanted to say that there is nothing serious in the depiction, everything is done only for fun, and that he has no intention to belittle any one or has no grudge against people from any particular nation or culture. In this regard, I will say that humor is a very strong instrument to insult someone or someone's culture without revealing own ideology and it is much more useful in achieving the desired effect without directly hurting and evoking controversy. In *True Lies*, underneath the layer of humor and fun there is a serious story of disparagement and otherness. Although the movie is basically an "action-comedy", which contains heavy elements of both action and comedy and plays them equally well, there has been protest against the stereotypical depiction of Arabs.

While light signifies goodness, virtue and salvation; darkness signifies evil, sin and doom. The Arabs are seen working mostly at night in dim light which clearly contrasts Harry's activities mostly either in day light or in powerful light. Except Aziz and couple of other terrorists, this huge group is voiceless. No one speaks rather only obeys the command of Aziz. Most of the time the camera captures the Arabs from long shot so that it can cover everyone without focusing any of them. They are portrayed as mass and are emotion and expressionless. They look more like workers and labors than terrorists. The director does not focus on their psychology rather is happy with their physical description where they appear as dirty, clumsy and unskilled. What is more insulting for the Arabs in the film is that they are not only depicted as terrorists but also as funny and inept type of terrorists who are "good for nothing". One of the

terrorists is seen making a video tape of Harry's speech to send it to the US authorities as a token of their power. Later, during recording Aziz's speech, the camcorder runs out of battery and thus the serious scene turns into a comic one. One might support it by saying that since the movie is a comedy the empty camera makes sense but I think that by showing the empty camera the movie actually tells us that the Arab terrorists are very much unorganized, and I also think that it is purposeful; it is done to belittle the Arabs. The director is not satisfied to portray the Arabs as merely wicked; he even ridicules them and makes them appear foolish. We find the similar kind of scene in the movie *Paradise Now* directed by Hany Abu-Assad where during creating a "martyr video" of a Palestinian terrorist the camera runs out of battery although this is a serious type movie and the setting is completely different from that of *True Lies*.

Harry is shown as a protector of his country, and in order to serve his purpose he kills Arabs without considering anything else. Now, if Arabs are criminals and terrorists, how we can label Harry who just might be working in a carnival, knocking off stuff with a gun and slaughtering multitudes for a laugh. The whole movie is full of unnecessary violence and is disgusting, vulgar and immoral. Some critics believe that the way Arab Muslims are depicted in the film is nothing but sheer racism. Troubled with *True Lies* stereotypical images, radio personality Casey Kasem wrote a letter to key individuals associated with the film, mainly to James Cameron and Arnold Schwarzenegger, but no one responded to him. He wrote,

In the future, I hope you'll aim for balance your depictions...I presume it was inadvertent or unintended racism, but believe it: that's what it was-racism. *True Lies* was an insult to anyone's intelligence. We're trying to make people more sensitive to the fact that when you vilify one group, you vilify all groups. (Shaheen, 503)

3. The Arabs vs. the White Hero: Social, Political, and Cultural Domination

Although the film is an action-comedy, there is a serious story line where Arab terrorists are shown as evil and maniac. The leader of the terrorist organization "Crimson Jihad" demands that America pull all military forces out of the gulf area or he will kill thousands of Americans. Now, where does Hollywood get such an absurd idea and ploy? What might be the reasons behind this vilifying depiction? To answer all these questions, I will say that it is all about the West's desire of social, cultural, and political domination over the East, and by belittling Eastern, especially, Muslim countries, culture, and tradition the West likes to get brutal pleasure. Mark Gallagher in his book *Action Figures: Men, Action Films, and Contemporary Adventure Narratives* writes,

Since the film (*True Lies*) does not allow viewers to grapple with the political conditions that motivate international terrorism, the villains' malevolence never to be questioned. The decorative and pejorative application of Middle-eastern politics and ethnicity clarifies the films moral dimension but obscures the real-world significance of politics and ethnic identity. (Gallagher, 75)

The movie turns the story into a clash between two cultures- that of the hero's and the villain's.

I am interested in the longer history of this so-called clash of civilizations because it underwrites the representation of Muslim and Arab characters in contemporary film, and because it helps us understand the dynamic of Hollywood morality and hero aesthetic when it

involves characters of Middle Eastern origin often perceived as distasteful and on whom projections of evil and fear can easily be imposed. Western media reports contain a continuous distorted image of Arabs and Muslims; false stereotype of Muslims and Islam is very much common in the western media by every possible way. The origins of this defamation were described by Edward Said in his book *Orientalism* (1978) where he pointed out how “Orientalism contributed to the creation of the dichotomy between the West and the East, whereby the first dominates the second, and where the East was depicted or identified as the West's ‘Other’ and the source of its identity” (Arti, 2). Said also argues that, the representation of Muslims was tangled with military, economic and political strategies of Western countries. He summarizes by saying, “My contention is that Orientalism is fundamentally a political doctrine willed over the Orient, because the Orient was weaker than the West, which elided the Orient’s difference with its weakness” (Said, 204). In *True Lies* we find the same domination and authority over the Arab terrorists by Harry and his team who represent America; the movie is an ideal example of western supremacy over different eastern aspects.

The term “Other” describes the method of rationalizing the domination of individuals or groups in the margin to facilitate subordination. It justifies the moral responsibility of the stronger self to educate, convert, or civilize the weaker self. “The term names the quality or state of existence of being other or different from established norms and social groups, the distinction that one makes between one’s self and others, particularly in terms of sexual, ethnic, and relational senses of difference” (Wolfreys, Robbins, Womack, 74) . In *True Lies*, the Arabs appear as uncivilized, uncultured, and the “Other” who are defeated in every single confrontation with Harry who seems to have taken the responsibility to educate and civilize them.

If we analyze the scene where Harry and Helen are kidnapped by the terrorists and are taken to their hideout, we can clearly understand the contrast between the confident, playful and “superman” like Harry, and the lousy and clown like terrorists. Harry is shown as having tremendous self-confidence and wonderful ability to make fun even when his life is at stake. When Harry, wearing formal cloths, is taken to the hideout of the Arab terrorists, he confronts a bunch of terrorists in shabby clothes and appearance led by their leader Salim Abu Aziz, who appears inferior before Harry. The terrorists have smuggled nuclear weapons to the USA by the help of an Asian looking antique dealer, Juno, who does not care for the causes of the terrorists and is happy with the huge sum of money she gets for her service. At the very outset of his interrogation, Harry takes an upper hand on the terrorists. He appears very cool and playful and seems to be paying no importance to any of the terrorists. Harry knows that he may be killed by the terrorists at any time but he seems to have taken everything light-heartedly; he starts to make fun with the terrorists and decides to continue it. The genre convention might give the director ultimate liberty to make fun with the Arabs but we should not forget that Harry is not only playful but also snobbish toward the Arabs. By making fun with the Arabs and by being arrogant, Harry actually asserts his superiority and psychological dominance over the terrorists, which can also be interpreted as America’s superiority over the Arabs; it also re-asserts Hollywood’s sneering portrayal of the easterners. Showing the nuclear weapon, Aziz asks Harry if he knows what it is:

Aziz: Do you know what this is?

Harry: I know what this is...This is an espresso machine...No, no, no--it's a snow-cone maker, that what it is...Is it a water heater?

After making fun with Aziz, Harry identifies the nuclear weapon and starts to show his knowledge by telling all the details of it. While speaking everything in English, he includes an Arabic sentence meaning "now release her (Helen) and I will cooperate". Apparently he seems to have shown his multilingualism, but, I think, he actually mocks the Arabs for their English language incompetency. Harry is not done with his fun-fest. When he is taken to Sameer, one of the terrorists and a torturer, to be injected drugs so that they can interrogate him, Harry, far from being afraid or showing anxiety, makes fun by asking whether the syringe is hygienic or not otherwise he might be infected. Harry is so bold and confident that he does not even take the terrorists into consideration. Here is a hero who represents America and the only person who can save his motherland from the onslaught of the block-headed Arabs who have their own logic behind their demand and subsequent plan to attack. Harry's attitude towards and treatment of the Arabs quite explicitly demonstrates the perception of them by America. It's all about the sense and show of superiority of Harry as well as America as he represents America.

The contrasts between the "All American" hero Harry Tasker and the messy, uncultured, woman-slapping and labor-like villain Aziz target to reflect the social, cultural, and moral supremacy of American culture over Arabic culture. Harry is loving and caring to his wife and daughter, and even polite to the female accomplice to Aziz. Aziz, on the other hand, treats the same accomplice brutally. Thus, the accusation and stereotype of Arabs as brutal and oppressive to women is reinforced. Harry appears cool, calm, self-controlled and confident. He often makes fun with the villains and thus makes Aziz appear foolish. Aziz, on the other hand, appears brutish and cruel with his long, uncombed hair. He always seems angry and crazy with a wild-eyed lunatic look. He is presented as an obsessive, hostage-taking maniac who is on a mission to destroy the West. He threatens America by saying that, Crimson Jihad will rain fire on one major US city each week, until their demands are met. He is beaten by Harry in every direct confrontation including one where Harry chases him by riding a horse, who rides a motorbike. Here we find the reversal of conventional modes of transport- the horse and the motorcycle. The direct and contrasting portrayal highlights the ethnocentric characterization in American film. At the climax of the film, Aziz, who has seized Harry's teenage daughter, wants to kill Harry but is again outwitted by him. He is thrown around and genitally damaged. Harry says to Aziz "You're fired!" and lets him fly on a missile launched from the Harrier jet he is piloting as the final punishment for daring to challenge his authority. Harry shows his typical "American Smartness" and uses the missile to destroy a helicopter carrying some other terrorists, and thus kills more than two birds in one shot. The American hero is shown to have a comprehensive victory over the Arab villains.

I have already mentioned that the film portrays the Arabs not only as terrorists but also as funny, useless and inefficient; it makes fun with them and uses all the possible ways to insult them. Harry is presented as enormously powerful who kills the terrorists as if he was killing ants. He is shown as highly intelligent and very much expert in fighting and using weapons which is quiet plausible as he is a trained and experienced spy but the Arabs never look like trained and skilled although they are shown as terrorists. I strongly assume that the motive behind this imbalanced portrayal is to insult the Arabs and to show the US supremacy over them. The ease, comfort, and confidence with which Harry kills the terrorists, one after another, show his power

and superiority over the terrorists and America's dominance over the East in general. In the article "Hollywood and the Spectacle of Terrorism", Boggs and Pollard mentioned,

In *True Lies*, Schwarzenegger adopts the persona of a killer robot who cherishes family values and displays a twisted sense of humor, while the Arabs end up as cold, rootless, and barbaric. In its clever mixture of film genres and staunch defense of patriarchal and military virtues, in its extreme demonizing of Arabs, *True Lies* stands as quintessential 1990s Hollywood counterterrorism fare. (340)

Again, regarding the priceless Persian sculpture named "Four horse-men" we also find the contrast between Harry and the terrorists. Whereas Harry shows his expertise for art and sculpture, the Arabs prove themselves ruthless and uncultured by partially destroying one of the sculptures they have been using for hiding and carrying their nuclear weapons.

4. The Arabs: Scapegoating and Stereotyping

In the article "The Effect of American Perception of Arabs on Middle East Issues", Suleiman asserts that Hollywood's stereotype of Arabs purposefully persists with the concept of "Otherness" in order to segregate them as primitive, backward and dangerous people that need, and will continue to need, American help; if they go against America, they will be treated and controlled brutally. He believes that "the US has used propaganda to facilitate its political objectives inquiring why Hollywood for more than a century has been perpetuating a hostile relationship with most of the Middle Eastern world" (Suleiman, 34). He concludes that there has been high motivation behind this perception especially when it comes to the Arab-Israeli conflict. In addition, he traces the origin of American stereotypes of the Middle East to a time when the US superpower and oil interests clashed with Arab Nationalism and collided with the Iranian revolution and Islamic influence.

The continuous negative portrayal of Muslims and Arabs in the media has led many Muslims to regard the media as the enemy for stereotyping them. The media has thus become "the new state religion" whereby the values and ideas of religion are now controlled and manifested by the media. The stereotypes against Muslims had been in-built in the US media and it is impossible to refute it. Furthermore, American media covers terrorism in a way that ignores what "we" do and focuses on the behavior of "them". "Muslims hate the West, and particularly the 'Great Satan' America, it would seem, partly because we insist on telling stories about how 'we' hate 'them' and why 'they' will never change: For every benign us, we can nominate a malignant them...and for every distant they, a blessed and neighboring we" (Saunders, 183). People's attitudes towards or impressions of national or international issues are biased by the media representation of those issues. People do not really care about the truth rather are satisfied with the media representation. Western media takes this opportunity, fabricates the activities of Arabs and Muslims, and links them directly to terrorism. In the book *Covering Islam*, Said points out that "the American media and its experts have failed to understand and explain the Arab and the Muslim worlds to the American people" (Said, 26). Although many of the terrorist attacks where Muslims had been suspected were, later, found to be committed by Christian and Zionist fundamentalists, American media simply ignores the truth. "This negative coverage was not

simply the result of different choices on the part of the news media, but also a reflection of the behavior of political leaders and other influential figures in the United States” (Amiri, 7).

Unlike Said, Jack Shaheen investigated the Arab stereotype as shown in 900 films in his voluminous documentary book *Reel Bad Arabs*. Shaheen examined the disparaging history dating from the cinema’s earliest days to the year 2001 and remarked, “Hollywood rendered the Middle East in exotic terms that stoked ill feeling, distrust and loathing, and that Hollywood’s presentation of Arabs as a pestilential threat was wildly alienating” (Shaheen, 2). He explains the ways in which Hollywood has vilified the Arab community by representing them as money thirsty, dangerous men or wicked and eroticized women. He points out that these stereotypes dangerously create Arabs in limited roles that are politically motivated. As Hollywood movies have worldwide distribution and appeal, this becomes especially problematic. Shaheen elucidates that in Hollywood movies Arabs have rarely been depicted as normal and simple people with ordinary and conventional vocations. He also suggests that Arabs are depicted as different, xenophobic, and less superior in movies in order to construct the superior self of US culture and US people. In *True Lies*, we find the same issues where the Arabs are shown as different from and inferior to US hero Harry in every single way; they are presented in a stark contrast with Harry in terms of appearance, mentality and action. Shaheen believes that this depiction is directly related to the evolution of world politics. Hollywood, he says, finds it perfectly acceptable to vilify and demonize whatever and whoever is Arab and Muslim. Most movies dealing with terrorism look at the subject from the perspective of America; the depiction of Muslims and Arabs in cinema is influenced and guided by the structure of power relations between the Middle East and the United States. In the article, “From *Navy Seals* to *The Siege*: Getting to Know the Muslim Terrorist, Hollywood Style”, Rubina Ramji says,

The image of the Arab as a dangerous threat in the Western world has been accentuated by the recent historical conflicts between the West and the Islamic Middle East, such as the Gulf War, the Salman Rushdie Affair, the bombing of New York City’s World Trade Center and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the conflict reaches its peak after the terrible attack on the Twin Towers and the pentagon on September 11, 2001 and the subsequent war on Afghanistan and Iraq against terrorism.

Some viewers recognize that movies help shape attitude. In the fall of 1993, hate crimes were on the rise against Arab and Muslim Americans (Shaheen, 504). This might happen because of the terrorist attack on World Trade Center in 1993 and alleged relationship of Muslim terrorists with the attack. The way Hollywood films depict Muslims and Arabs as terrorists and bad guys who are always anti-American, it is not unusual that American people will consider their Arab and Muslim neighbors as bad guys and anti-American. Although there is a disclaimer at the end of the film *True Lies*: *This film is a work of fiction and does not represent the actions or beliefs of a particular culture or religion*, this kind of negative and derogatory portrayal of Muslims and Arabs sometimes put them in danger and under suspicion in their real lives, and we all are aware of the hate crimes against them. Because of this kind of intentional and/or unintentional negative portrayal, they have suffered long and are still suffering.

Actually, most of the plot of the film *True Lies* is based on the 1991 French film *La Totale* which also proves the fact that Hollywood is not the only place that views Arabs as evil.

However, it might also be possible that writer and director James Cameron was inspired to write the story based on a real event that shook the USA: the 1993 World Trade Center bombing. The film is not about an ordinary Arab in America who suddenly decides to be a terrorist, rather about an extremist, a maniac who is ready to kill as many people and to destroy as much property as he needs in order to achieve his target. He also seems to justify his action by accusing America. Although Americans have never considered themselves villain, Aziz seems to say that it is America which is the main culprit and the Arabs are merely defending themselves and making the counterattack. He says, "You have murdered our women and our children, and bombed our cities from afar like cowards, and you dare to call us terrorists" although I do not think that his argument is convincing.

But why have the terrorists to be Arabs and why not from other background? Although *True Lies* director James Cameron announces, "I just needed some convenient villains. It could have been anybody. I could have picked Irish terrorists". Albert Mokhiber, President of the American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) accuses Cameron by saying "with the fall of the Soviet empire, Hollywood needs a new enemy; we've become a convenient scapegoat" (Broeske, Hajari, & Thompson). When the film was premiered, the Arabs reacted in an overwhelmingly hostile manner; "one placard said, 'Open your eyes and terminate the lies' and the holder of the placard was distressed because another production had failed to say anything positive about Arabs and Muslims" (Saunders, 183).

However, the problem is not that Aziz is chosen as villain but that he is treated and focused as an Arab and a villain. His race and origin is stressed and he speaks in a Middle-Eastern accent. The members of his group wear traditional Arabic headscarf and speak Arabic among them. The terrorist group is called "Crimson Jihad". Westerners often associate the term "Jihad" with violence, bloodshed, and terrorist activities whereas Jihad can be any kind of external or internal struggle Muslims have to come across in their daily lives. We all are well aware of the fact that the media help shaping public view or perception, and the way the film portrays the terrorist will certainly influence public perception of Arabs and Muslims in a negative way. Although the movie displays the beliefs and behaviors of a few extremists, nowhere in the movie does the director make it clear that these terrorists are the part of a minor group and that most Arabs are peace-loving people. *True Lies* establishes offensive stereotypes and, most importantly, uses these stereotypes to play on the prevalent anxieties of audiences. Aziz is also shown making a video tape of what he is going to do and why he is going to do so which is very much the same what real life extremist groups like Al Qaeda and Hamas do. By attempting to draw a parallel between the real life terrorism and a fictional terrorist group, Westerners, on the one hand, want the audience to be curious and excited, and on the other hand, run the risk of panic, discrimination and hate crimes against Arabs and Muslims in America. Regarding discrimination and hate crimes against Muslims in the pre-9/11 period, Hilal Elver, in his article "Racializing Islam Before and After 9/11: From Melting Pot to Islamophobia" said,

Following the February 1993 World Trade Center bombing in New York City, the New York Times published a series on 'Muslims in America.' A poll conducted by the American Muslim Council in the wake of the bombing found that 43 percent of Americans think that Muslims are religious fanatics, while only 24 percent disagree.... As the mainstream media agitated anti-Muslim sentiment, Muslim communities became subject to hate crimes and violent attacks on

mosques, including the bombing and burning of mosques in several states, such as Texas, Indiana, and California....The Oklahoma City bombing was an example of the scapegoating of Muslims, even though investigation proved it to be the work of American Christians. (Elver, 136-137)

As people often mix reel depiction with reality it is very much dangerous to portray Arabs, Muslims or any other minority group in films or novels in such a negative way which threatens their lives and status, tarnishes their reputation, and makes them victims of discrimination and hate crimes.

5. Conclusion

In my paper, I have shown that the portrayal of Arabs in the film *True Lies* is, on the one hand, comical, and on the other hand, insulting and disparaging. Under the veil of humor, the race and ethnicity of the Arabs are highlighted and they are mocked and humiliated. The depiction of Arabs and Muslims by the Hollywood movies is the expression of the America's desire to dominate the East, especially middle-east, socially, politically and culturally and this desire is deep rooted in US culture and mentality. People's ideas and perception in regards to Arabs, Muslims, and Islam are largely shaped by the western media; the media takes this opportunity and links them directly to terrorism and other evils although it should not be ignored that this representation reflects the attitude of the US political leaders and other important figures. Although very few derailed and fanatic Arabs and Muslims are involved in terrorism, the mass representation of them (Arabs and Muslims) as terrorists in films and in other media turn them villains in real life where they become the victim of discrimination. By depicting the Arabs in a belittling manner, showing their shabby appearances, emphasizing their uncultured behavior and clumsy actions, and, most importantly, contrasting them with Harry, who possesses all the positive qualities and defeats them in all the possible ways, *True Lies* refers to the US domination over them and shows them as the West's "Other".

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