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Hollywood Adaptation of *Thousand and One Nights*: A Critical Analysis based on Hutcheon's (2006) Theory

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ABSTRACT

Hollywood has been fascinated with the *Thousand and One Nights*. It has adapted it from the very outset of Cinema itself. Based on Linda Hutcheon's (2006) *A Theory of Adaptation*, this paper tries to examine Rawlins' *Arabian Nights* (1942) to see how Hollywood adapts from this Oriental work. Hutcheon argues that adapters adapt differently; some adapt to pay tribute and homage to the author, some adapt because they want to make money; some adapt to gain cultural authority and canonicity; others adapt to critique and subvert the ideology of the text. In this paper we will argue that Hollywood occupies the fourth category in adapting *Thousand and One Nights* in *Arabian Nights* directed by Rawlins, that is to say Hollywood seeks to subvert the ideology of the text and critique what it stands for and what the text stands for is the East and mostly Arabic culture. To do that, Hollywood does not indigenize the culture of the East and critiques the culture of the Arabs through the tropes of belly-dance, veil, and harem. The methodology of this article is wholly based on Edward Said's theory of Orientalism in his book *Orientalism*.

Keywords: *Hollywood, Adaptation, Thousand And One Nights, Ideology, Critique*

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1. Introduction

According to Linda Hutcheon (2006) everyone who has experienced adaptation has his/her own theory of adaptation. Her book *A Theory of Adaptations* tries to think through this ongoing status and the continuous critical condemnation of the over-all phenomenon of adaptation-in all its numerous media manifestations. She condemns those who consider adaptation as a minor and subsidiary and undoubtedly never as respectable as the original. Hutcheon shows a strong interest in what has come to be called "intertextuality" or the dialogic relations among texts, works in any medium are both created and received by people, and it is this human, experiential context that allows for the study of the politics of intertextuality.

Hutcheon (2006) maintains that an adaptation, similar to the source work, invariably spring from a context that is to say from a time and a place, a community and a culture; it does not exist in a void (p. 142). Context also encompasses components of presentation and reception, like the amount and type of publicity an

adaptation gets: its advertising, press attention, and evaluations. The prominence of the director or stars is also a central element of its reception background. *Here Without Me* (2013) adapted from *The Glass Menagerie* (1944) whose context is Iran owes its prominence to its stars Fatemeh Motamed Aria and Parsa Pirouzfard and Negar Javaherian. The context of conception of *The Glass Menagerie* is 1944 America while the context of reception is 2013 Iran. This adaptation of Tavakoli is an example of international or transcultural adaptation which moves beyond the borders of one geographical country while that of Bahman Farman Ara's *Shazdeh Ehtejab* (1975) adapting from Golshiri is a national adaptation. With that being said there are two types of adaptation: national and international or transcultural adaptation. Iranian have adapted from other countries. Mehrjooei adapted Ibsen's *A Doll House*. In other countries many directors have adapted from other countries. Akira Kurosawa's *Throne of Blood* (1957) is a well-known Japanese movie adaptation and main cultural transposition of *Macbeth*. All the film adaptations mentioned above have



different contexts and it is context which conditions meaning and determines significations, that is to logically say that time and place changes should bring about alterations in cultural relations. The context of reception of *Thousand and One Nights* is America and Hollywood in the case of this movie adaptation of *Thousand and One Nights*.

Hutcheon believes that transculturation for Hollywood typically means Americanizing a work (p. 146). However, this seems wide of the mark in the case of *Arabian Nights* movie. If Hollywood Americanizes and hence indigenizes the culture of the source movies why there are still a lot of paraphernalia about the East in its movie adaptations of the *Thousand and One Nights*. The movies adapted from the *Thousand and One Nights* still have Oriental names with Western stars. The movies' settings are still the East.

Hutcheon argues very well concerning the indigenization of Hollywood: 'because Hollywood films are increasingly being made for international audiences, the adaptation might end up not only altering characters' nationalities, but on the contrary, actually deemphasizing any national, regional, or historical specificities' (p. 147). This has not been the case with the movie adapted from *Thousand and One Nights* which not only emphasizes Arab details but also the characters' names are all Arabic like Ahmad, Cassim, Ja'far and Haroun.

Hutcheon (2006) argues that adapters adapt differently; some adapt to pay tribute and homage to the author, some adapt because they want to make money; some adapt to gain cultural authority and canonicity; others adapt to critique and subvert the ideology of the text (p. 20). In this paper I will argue that in adapting *Thousand and One Nights* in *Arabian Nights*, Rawlins (director) seeks to subvert the ideology of the text and critique the Orient. To do so, Hollywood does not indigenize the culture of the East and critiques the culture of the Arabs through the tropes of belly-dance, veil, and harem. Despite the fact that transcultural adaptations often mean changes in racial and gender politics and that adapters purge an earlier text of elements that their particular cultures in time or place might find difficult or controversial, in the movie adaptations of *Thousand and One Nights*, the adapters do not purge elements that Arab audience will find controversial and

insulting. As an example in the movie adaptation of *Thousand and One Nights* entitled *The Thief of Bagdad* the hero Fairbanks overtly says "Allah is a myth". This is an example of Oriental misrepresentation in the movie adaptation of *Thousand and One Nights* which overtly stereotype the culture of Arabs.

According to Edward Said (1983), stories that are adapted transculturally bring together 'processes of representation and institutionalization' (p. 226). He believes ideas or theories that move beyond borders include four fundamentals: a set of preliminary conditions, a distance navigated, a set of circumstances of acceptance (or opposition), and a change of the idea in its new setting and context (pp. 226–27). When stories of *Thousand and One Nights* travelled to West, they were not accepted and were rejected unless Burton and Galland, two famous translators, justified themselves. The French translator, Galland justified himself through the following words:

'Without suffering the fatigue of going to look for these people in their countries, the reader will have the pleasure here, of seeing them act and hearing them speak. We have taken care in keeping their characters, and not wandering from their expressions and their feelings' (cited in Yamanaka, and Nishio, 2006, p. 239).

In England, when Burton was criticized over the translation of the indecent materials of *Thousand and One Nights* for the respectable British society, he justified himself in the light of West's need for knowing the orient so that to rule it effectively (cited in Kennedy, 2000, p. 328). Burton and Galland make their translations political. This makes their translations as a repository of oriental lore. They immediately make their translation related with power relations of the self and the other dichotomy. Their translations establish the Orient as a foreign *Other* to be manipulated as an inferior. What Galland and Burton do is to make the 'pen' as an imperial weapon by which to define the *Other*. Now that Burton and Galland used the pen as a weapon to define the Orient, I wanted to know whether adapters of the *Nights* used camera as a weapon too to define the Orient.

According to Hutcheon adapters across cultures probably cannot avoid thinking about power (2006, p. 152). All the adapters of *Thousand and One Nights* have freely translated characters and customs as

well as language (dialects) into Western contexts. This work is a deliberate and deliberately selective borrowing from the East, an Oriental work least indigenized into Western culture. Hutcheon (2006) argues a diverse 'power differential between colonized and colonizer often plays a role in the adapting process' (p. 152). The colonizer will represent the colonized according to his own wishes and light. When a western director adapts for screen some oriental work they may recognize the possibility of unconscious colonization via vocabulary, since the action of translating Oriental words translates adaptor's relationship to an entire civilization. To say that the adapter could find an equivalent for every Eastern word implies that Western culture can in a word appropriate the most profoundly reflected notions of eastern thought. With indigenizing comes accusations of a failure of political nerve or even of less "correctly" changing the politics of adapted works.

Besides adaption theory, this paper also relies on theories of postcolonialism, poststructuralism, and postmodernism. Julie Sanders (2007) has argued in her book *Adaptation and Appropriation* that adaptation studies have been influenced by academic schools, like structuralism, post-structuralism, post-colonialism, postmodernism, feminism and gender studies (p. 5). Therefore, this makes benefit from Orientalism. One theoretician influential in this regard is Edward Said who is well-known for the explanation and examination of Orientalism as the basis and foundation of the imprecise and erroneous cultural and intellectual representations that are the source and basis of Western thinking about and towards the East, of how the West recognizes, distinguishes, and characterizes the orient. Orientalism articulates and characterizes that section traditionally and even socio-politically as a manner of discourse with auxiliary organizations, terminology, scholarship, descriptions, principles, even colonial red tape and colonial styles. What is more, the massively prolonged American political and economic part in the Middle East requires understanding of that Orient.

According to Said (1983), we can examine and scrutinize Orientalism as the organized tradition for coping with the Orient—examining and coping with it by making declarations about it, authorizing interpretations of it, unfolding it, by training it, solving it, governing it: in a nutshell, Orientalism as a Western manner and

procedure for controlling, rearranging, and having power over the Orient (p. 4). Said, influenced by Foucault, uses Orientalism as a discourse. His argument is that without probing Orientalism as a discourse one is unable to presumably comprehend the immensely organized discipline by which European culture was able to accomplish and even create the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period (Ashcroft, 1989, p. 11). Furthermore, so commanding a situation did Orientalism have that Said believes no one putting pen to paper, contemplating, or focusing on the Orient could do so without taking into consideration the boundaries and restrictions on thought and action enforced by Orientalism. Said likewise demonstrates that European culture enlarged in power and distinctiveness by placing itself against the Orient as a kind of replacement and even secretive self.

Said (1983) quoting Disraeli in his novel *Tancred* that the East is considered as a career, believes that Disraeli meant that to be absorbed in the East was something optimistic young Westerners would discover to be an all-overwhelming desire; Disraeli does not mean, Said shows, that the East was only a vocation for Westerners (p. 6). Said also refers to Denys Hay's notion of Europe set against all "those" non-Europeans. Thus, a binary opposition of Europe and Non-Europe comes into being with the first term given priority over the second and thus dark human qualities, such as corruption and brutality, are attributed from the Westerners themselves, to the Non-Westerners (Barry 192); these qualities are consequently taken from "the archive of 'the self'" of the Westerners (Ashcroft et al. p. 103), and have, therefore, "helped to define Europe" by describing what it is *not* deemed Western.

Accordingly, it is the Westerner who deals with the orient. He is to represent the orient in every media: books, paintings, travelogues, diaries, and poetry books. Why should such a representation exist in the first place? The question of representation gives the presenter a position of power. This representation will have a sort of subjectivity with it. It makes the presenters very subjective and biased. The presenters become interested in their objects of study and try to have a sort of mastery over it.

Said (1983) asserts that due to the west's interest in the Orient, many figures like William Beckford, Byron, Goethe, and



Hugo rearranged ‘the Orient by their art and made its colors, lights, and people visible through their images, rhythms, and motifs’ (p. 23). These personalities were provoked to their insights and wrote about the orient helped by their figment of their own imagination.

To write about, talk about, involve oneself with, and deal with the Orient signified being conscious, though indistinctly, that one is superior to the object he deals with. The western man is proud of dealing with the Orient because he thinks he is about to know all about it from a position of power and supremacy. Since he belongs to a culture wholly different from the Orient, he feels a sense of belonging, a sense of belonging to a superior culture, race, region and mentality. Thus, he feels he belongs to a part of the earth with a better history. This was the case with European figures who were curious about, and dealt with the Orient.

According to Said (1983), Orientalism is a circulation of geopolitical consciousness into artistic, academic, financial, sociological, historical, and philological writings. Thus, Orientalism is examined here as a vigorous discussion between individual adapters and the large political anxieties fashioned by great countries in whose intellectual and imaginative region the films were produced. What is fascinating on my part is not the unpolished political truth but the overwhelmingly worked over and tempered evidence of directors and filmmakers’ detailed work within the very extensive space opened up by that truth.

Taking a look at the majority of works written about the Orientals, it will be noticed that intellectual, aesthetic, scholarly, and cultural energies have gone into the making of imperialist Orientalism. Philology, lexicography, history, biology, political and economic theory, novel-writing, and lyric poetry came to the service of Orientalism's broadly imperialist view of the world. It is not military at all as demonstrated earlier, the whole culture was involved in the making of the process of orientalism. It is a soft war where the dominant country makes uses of a lot of agents or apparatuses in order to enforce and implement its ideas. The same is true about the West making the East its inferior not through force and military action but through the power of intellect as Foucault would like to put it through discursive formations. A philologist, a lexicographer,

a historian, a biologist, a politician, an economic theoretician, a novelist, a lyric poet came to the help of imperialist orientalism to make it as it has been known and now we have to add a filmmaker and a director to the list of helpers.

2. Critical Analysis of the Adaption

2.1 Representations of the Orient

The movie’s setting is Bagdad. Scheherazade is an Arab girl. The movie offers stereotypical images of the East. Nearly all male characters wear beards suggesting Arab culture and life. Men all wear turbans and Arabic clothes. One of the concerns of the present author is that why does this cinematic adaptation only pay attention to the Arabs while the text of the *Thousand and One Nights* encompasses a lot of nationalities and ethnic groups like Persians, Chinese, Indians, and many other group? Here Scheherazade has changed to an Arab woman while in the text, she is a Persian woman. The answer to this question can be found in the ideas of Foucault’s discursive circulation of stereotype about the East. To do so, a system defines itself against others. In this case, Western hemisphere of the World gives negative images of the East in order to define itself. The East is erotic and sexual while the West is the other way round, that is to say the West is rational and pure. In this movie adaptation, the East is represented as sexual, erotic, misogynist, and violent.

Every Eastern man is shown to have a defining interest in female bodies. They become happy as they see woman flesh. In one sequence of the movie the buyers of the slaves ask the seller of the slaves to make her bare so that they can see her body in order to decide to buy her or not. The mere sight of the body of a woman when shown in an auction stirs Arabs, the movie suggests. For this reason women are represented as sexual objects only. The Arabs are misrepresented as having a defining interest in sex and female bodies only. They are lazy spending their times either buying slaves or having fun looking at the dance of Scheherazade. This representation of the Arab people is flawed and defective. We don’t see any individual qualities on the part of the Arabs represented in the movie, they are represented to fight for power and fight for sexual gratification.

To see how the movie represents the Orient, I have sought to consider the graphic images and related symbolic meanings. The picture below is an image taken from the

movie *Arabian Night* (1942) which tends to represent the Arab people who are there to watch the belly-dancer Scheherazade.

Figure 1: Arabs have gathered to watch the dancing girl Scheherazade



The movies *Arabian Nights* (1942) stereotypes Arabs here as sexually oriented and full of corporeal whims. They have gathered here to watch the dance of Scheherazade. They just want to see her dance and they enjoy her dancing. They are all tanned and wearing turbans and are impatient to see her dance. Taking a look at the faces of all these men, we see them as young and old together. Some have white beards and have come to watch the dancing of the girl Scheherazade. What the image implies is that all the Arabs including young and old are sexually oriented.

This picture represents the Arab people as feeling-oriented and emotion-oriented. They are displayed as mindless creatures whose only drives are fulfilment of their corporeal desires. When the picture shows a lot of Arabs, this is meant for the whole of a group of community otherwise it should account for his choosing a group of people. Old people who are at the door's death are shown to be sexually potent and this is misrepresentation. At another sequence, the movie shows an Arab or Arabs who are gathering to buy slave-women to satisfy their sexual desires. What is of interest is that among those wealthy Arab-Sheikhs are too old ones who cannot even walk and are willing to pay a lot of money to have a lot of slaves for the purposes of coitus, one such person is shown to pay the highest price for the woman he buys and when he stands to fetch the woman, he can't even stand up and he stands up with the help of his attendant and when he is about to walk, he falls and this brings about the laughter of the rest of the group and also raises the laughter of the Western audience when they see such a thing. This is by all odds a stereotypical picture of the Arab society and community.

The audience too will ridicule the Arabs and laugh at them.

Figure 2: Picture of Old Shaikh being helped.



The narrative of wealthy Shaikh has always been used to stereotype the Arab people. As the picture shows, there are many old sheikhs who are much of a muchness. We can see a form of homogeneity in depicting the Arab people like the previous image shown above. The Arabs in this image and those who are not shown in this picture but are shown in the movie are all homogenous and are here to pay as much as they can to buy slaves. The narrative of slave-buying is another, say, motif which is to depict and stereotype the Arabs as lustful and licentious. They buy slaves to satisfy their lustful desires. This is shown numerous times in the movie. They sit on a small carpet or rug to avoid dust, where they meet new slaves and buy them. In the movie Scheherazade herself is sold into slavery and is sold at the price of one thousand dinar.

What is of significant is that when the women are about to be sold, the slaveholders or owners use sexual phrases in order to arouse the feeling of sex in the men so as to sell women, even they make women have transparent clothes and they make them almost naked. Phrases like 'so sublime a slave', 'young, beautiful damsel', 'ravishing vision of loveliness', 'tempting and tantalizing morsel', 'the exquisite flower of the Nile', 'an exquisite creature', 'What poise, what grace' are few examples to tantalize Arab men to buy women-slaves to satisfy their sexual desires. These phrases further stereotype the Arab-Orientals, representing them as interested in the bodies of the women. The movie misrepresents them. The women are shown to be considered, as the movie shows, by Arabs as juicy flesh out of whom they get only a kick. Sensuality, the movie suggests, is one characteristic of the Arabs. In the movie the Arabs are ready to compete to have a slave by offering higher prices and higher rates of the dinars. The more beautiful the woman, the higher the price an Arab should pay to possess her. In this very movie, the rhetoric



of 'possess' is used for a slave. The seller overtly says "Think that she can be yours or yours or yours to possess for all time" while pointing to the Arabs (00:42:52). The movie presents Scheherazade as the most beautiful slave, and when she is sold into slavery, her price is the highest price. When she is presented as the most beautiful woman to be sold to the buyers, she is priced one thousand dinar and is immediately sold.

2.2 Representation of Scheherazade

The movie *Arabian Nights* (1942) represents Scheherazade differently from the text. In this section, I will critically analyse her character as represented by the movie through her depiction as a lover of power and also as an object of desire, and her depiction as a fatal woman for whose sake many kick the bucket.

She is represented "as avid of power and riches as a shipwrecked mariner of water"(00:03:02). She loves power very much. This arrogant Oriental woman has promised jokingly to marry Kamar only if he can be the Caliph of Baghdad. She will not marry anybody except those who are either kings or princes, crown princes because it is her destiny to be the queen. It is interesting that the movie works to the same course her destiny to be the queen at the end as she desired to be a powerful woman. Even though she marries Haroun Al-Rashid because of love, the movie, in actual fact, shows her destiny to come true as a lover of power. The movie after all represents her a lover of power.

Universal Pictures represents Scheherazade as an object of desire that everyone wishes to have, from Kamar, to Haroun and Nadan, the Vizier. A brother is willing to kill his brother for the sake of her. Even the people of Baghdad are represented to have her dance for them. To be represented as an object of desire, she should be very beautiful and lovely. For this reason, Universal Picture made use of Maria Montez who acted the female leading roles in the genre of *Thousand and One Nights* movies. Everybody is attracted to her when they see her for the first time.

Scheherazade is also represented a fatal woman for whose sake Nadan and Kamar die. She is represented as a seductive woman whose attractions entangle her lovers, often leading them into bargaining, hazardous, and fatal circumstances. Scheherazade's beauty makes Kamar rebel against his own brother and brings about his imprisonment. At the end, Kamar is dead and his death fell upon him because of his

love for the fatal Scheherazade. Scheherazade's beauty entangles Nadan who is about to kill three people to achieve her which finally led to his own death. When Haroun Al-Rashid sees her for the first time, he is attracted to her and somehow justifies his own brother's rebellion against him.

2.3 Representation of the Orient as Power-loving

The movie represents every Oriental character as loving and admiring power. Kamar and Haroun Al-Rashid as two brothers are represented to love power. Kamar tries to rebel against his brother only to win Scheherazade. He rebels and is captured and is sentenced to slow death by his brother Haroun Al-Rashid. He is released by the help of Haroun Al-Rashid's Vizier who betrays Haroun. Haroun escapes. He is later saved by Ali and Scheherazade. When he sees Scheherazade and asks her name, he says 'I now know why... why he risked so much'. It is interesting that the same thing happens to Haroun when he falls in love with Scheherazade. Now it is he who is represented as a person who loves Scheherazade and is willing to sacrifice everything for the sake of her. Almost all Eastern people want to possess Scheherazade as their source of sexual pleasure. Indeed the Oriental men are presented as competing for achieving her. Every oriental man is shown as having a great desire in her. From ordinary men who come to the show to highly powerful men they show a desire in having her.

Nadan the Vizier is also represented as sacrificing everything for the sake of power and for the sake of Scheherazade. Nadan is represented to betray Haroun Al-Rashid when he is condemning Kamar. When the subjects of Kamar come to save Kamar, Nadan helps Kamar rather than Haroun. He becomes a favorite of Kamar. Nadan tells the commander not to search for Scheherazade and let her go. Not to let Kamar understand what has happened to Scheherazade, Nadan kills the commander. He is shown as a sinister character who is about to do anything. Nadan is represented to even harbor the death of Kamar in mind. He plans to kill Kamar and marry Scheherazade. This seems to work when he finds out that Ameen and Scheherazade in fact love each other. Nadan is about to get Scheherazade at any cost killing Ameen and many others. He makes advantage of the weak point of Scheherazade when he

understands she loves Ameen. He promises not to kill Ameen if Scheherazade marries him and helps him to kill Kamar by poisoning the drink which Kamar will drink. He gives Scheherazade a ring with a hollow in which he has hidden some poison. Scheherazade promises to do what Nadan tells her. Nadan's plan does not work at the end and he is killed at the end.

2.4 Representation of East as a Misogynist

The movie represents the East as a misogynist. The Eastern people are represented as having no esteem for women. At the very beginning of the movie, Kamar is sentenced to slow death. When Haroun meets his brother, he says "a slow death for the love of a woman" meaning it is not worth it. The phrase slow death for the love of a woman is meant to stereotype women. Just for the sake of a woman is another way of telling that phrase. The phrase is made to belittle women. The movie shows that the women are downgraded by the Orient.

At another sequence, in order to cheat the guard, Ahmad and his group trick the guard simply by telling him there is a very beautiful woman in the house. What is of note here in this sequence is that women are shown as a tool to trick others. Because the guard is represented as a lustful man, he is made to be duped through a tool and that tool is the mere mention of the name of a woman. Since he is shown to be a lustful man, he is deceived by a man disguising as a woman. When the guard sees the man-disguised-as-woman he says "what a beautiful distribution of flesh" (01:11:21). The guard is represented to have a defining interest in the beautiful distribution of female flesh. This is true about not this guard but about any man in the film from the highest to the lowest. At another sequence when Kamar orders captain to find Scheherazade, the Vizier orders the captain not to find her so that the Caliph should not worry about a dancing girl. This situation also represents the misogyny of the Eastern people.

2.5 *Arabian Nights (1942) and Harem, Veil, and Belly-Dance Condemning the Discourse of East Patriarchy*

Harem:

The movie is a parody of the way a king or kings' ways of life is in the East. The harem of the king is represented as a place of sensuality. Though the king has a lot of women in the harem, as it is represented, he is searching for another one who is a dancing girl. From the very beginning Kamar is represented as sensual, lustful

person. When he usurps the caliphate, he is still in search of Scheherazade. His harem is shown when Ali is going to send a message to Scheherazade. The movie represents the women of the harem as having a passionate desire in sex and when they see Ali, they all run for him in order to touch him. Some run and catch him and some say bring him and let us see him. The movie suggests that as these women are so many and the king is one, they are deprived of sex so much so that when they see Ali they all run after him and want to touch him. They bring him among them and all touch him in a way which suggests a desire to satisfy their sexual desire. They are about to tear his clothes and make him naked till he implores them to let him go.

The situation of the girls and women of the harem is also represented in a way which depicts the Oriental harem girls as having no specific qualities just to sit, eat, in the harem. They are all half naked and enjoying themselves. The movie sees, and represents the harem as a space for pleasure only. It inculcates the idea of harem as nothing more than a locus for pleasure on the part of the men and women residing in the harem. There are nearly forty women in the harem as the movie shows the women when they are enjoying in the sun near a pool where some are swimming and some are loitering near the pool. Generally, they are represented as being passive and as objects of desire. While in real harems of the East, or Muslim monarchs, women had power and influence. Sex for the Caliph Kamar is represented to be purely pleasure. Though he has usurped the caliphate, he is represented to have a passionate desire in women of the harem whose prime is Scheherazade for whose sake he is to risk and even kill his own brother. His harem is full of voluptuous beautiful women whose features show that they are there for only one thing and one purpose. He is there to have access to any woman of the harem he desires. The movie represents harem of Kamar surrounded by many wives or concubines in a lavish, beautiful setting. The movie represents a recurring theme of the lazy, sumptuous harem women, weak except for their sexuality, having no occupation other than waiting to sexually serve their caliph. The movie also presents hints of lesbianism in the harem woman presumably because the women are too many and are not satisfied by the king.

Veil: The only woman in the movie who wears veil is Scheherazade and she does it just when she is sold into slavery and when



she is to be sold again. She wears a veil so that the slave traders shall not see her beautiful face in order not to buy her. The movie makes a parody of the veil. Women were supposed to wear veil. Scheherazade is a dancing girl. Where she is supposed to wear Veil, she does not wear it. For example, she should wear a veil everywhere among men. However, she wears when veil helps her. That is to say, she wears it subjectively and according to her wishes. The next time is when Ahmed disguises himself as a woman and wears a veil. This parody of veil in the character of Ahmed who we, as viewers, known as a man in disguise ridicules the East and on the account that this disguised man should wear veil while other women in the movie don't wear veil even if it is an obligation on the part of the women.

Another time when Scheherazade wears veil is when she is to dance for Kamar. She is brought in front of the Caliph where caliph watches her dance. She wears a veil and when she is about to dance she takes it off and starts dancing when all people and guards are present. Generally in the harem, no one was present to see the dance of a woman of harem except for the women and the caliph and no one else. But here women and men, the vizier and all are present and see the dance of Scheherazade who is going to dance for the caliph. This is misrepresentation of course. Even women of the harem are presented as not wearing veil. The reason Scheherazade did not wear veil until she is taken to harem signifies the fact that she is now not free in comparison to the time when she was a dancing girl. The implication of this process is that the caliph is a patriarch who makes it obligatory for Scheherazade to wear veil. It can be considered as Scheherazade's slavery from the point of view of Hollywood. In the case of Scheherazade, the movie tells us that, veil symbolizes Scheherazade's oppression and eroticism brought about by the tyrant Kamar.

Belly-Dance: The concept of belly-dance also finds expression in this movie like the other movies of *Arabian Nights* genre. Belly-dancer in the movie is Scheherazade. The movie represents her as a belly-dancer. What the belly-dance trope means in this movie is the sexual, erotic associations related to this trope. Scheherazade now becomes a voluptuous sex object for Kamar to watch, to gaze and to contain as Universal Picture represents her. She is now a lascivious, exotic, and sensual woman

representing Arab women of the East. Her belly-dancing at the last sequence is erotic, with her movement of her hips, and graceful body as if she has no bone in her body. The movements of her hands and the posture of her body and the movement of her legs represents her as nothing more than body in the dichotomy of body and mind.

3. Conclusion

The Hollywoodian movie *Arabian Nights* (1942) directed by Rawlins depicts Arab cultures according to the whims and wishes of Hollywood. Hollywood launches into a tirade against the culture of Arab people by showing them as lustful, illogical, erotic, sexual and misogynist. Adaptation which shows the crossroad of cultures, where a work influences another so that they influence each other. However, in the case of this movie, it is otherwise. That is to say, adaptation is at the disposable of Hollywood to stereotype the East and its culture. What is interesting is the adaptation targets the culture of Arab in spite of the fact that *Thousand and One Nights* is about different cultures of the East like Indian, Persian, Chinese and Mongolian. This shows that the Arabs are Moslem who should be represented differently according to the whims and wishes of Hollywood.

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