# Portrayal of the Global South: An Analysis of Orientalist Representations in Western Films

Hasib Shah Aman[1]
Nusrat Jahan[2]

**Abstract**

Western films have a longstanding history of portraying non-Western cultures in a prescribed and stereotypical manner. This research article aims to show how Western films represent the Global South, specifically the films 'Extraction' and 'Slumdog Millionaire' as case studies. The analysis centers on the representation of Bangladesh and India in these films. Utilizing Orientalism as the theoretical framework, Roland Barthes's semiotics as its analytical method. By examining the connotative meanings embedded in the films, the article reveals how these interpretations align with and perpetuate Orientalist perspectives about these countries. The findings indicate that both films depict the regions as impoverished, rife with crime, and primitive. Furthermore, the linguistic and cultural representations were exoticized, often appearing more imagined than reflective of reality. The process of 'othering' reinforces the notion of Western supremacy over the Global South.

**Keywords**: Representation, West, Film, Orientalism, Global South.

## Introduction

It is thought that we live in a time of unprecedented media exposure, with the majority of what we know, understand, and absorb originating from it (Hall, 2003; Kellner, 2003). Media and education are the primary drivers of social trends and behaviors, and people are increasingly using mass media to learn about anything new as well as things that are near them (Spencer, 2006). The media serves several purposes, but one of the most important is to communicate concerns related to race and stereotypes. Our understanding of other cultures and nations around the world is often colored by our memory of these places that we have received through mediated visual information (Mitra, 1999). With the lack

[1] Assistant Professor, Department of Management, Bangladesh University of Business and Technology (BUBT), email: mafruha_h@yahoo.com
[2] Senior Manager, Human Resources, Clarke Energy Bangladesh Limited, email: mujahid17s@gmail.com

of in-person encounters with these communities, films are particularly influential in forming national and ethnic identities.

Audiences unintentionally and frequently instinctively begin gathering these fragments of information about the social group through repeated exposure to the same or similar stereotyped representation across films and narratives in various media sites, so much so that they develop a schema or a quick reference for the social group. Hartmann and Husband (1974) discovered that individuals' perceptions of ethnic minorities were shaped by what they saw in the media, even in youngsters. This research focused on the relationship between mass media and racism. It's also becoming more widely acknowledged that the mass media are spaces where ideas of gender, race, and class are contested in the identity battle (Louw, 2001)

The present content research endeavors to examine the types of portrayals of the global south and its population seen in Western feature films. Analyzing this kind not only aids in tracking the route that these depictions have taken over time, but it also initiates the process of determining the series of events that lead from media stereotype exposure to viewers' attitudes and behaviors when interacting with members of these groups.

**Synopsis of Extraction**

A schoolboy, Ovi, the son of an infamous Indian drug lord, gets kidnapped by an infamous Bangladeshi drug lord over their business disputes. Saju Rav, Ovi's protector, visits Ovi's father in prison and informs him that the kidnappers are demanding ransom. However, being a drug lord himself, Ovi’s father refuses to pay as it hurts his ego and orders Saju to retrieve his son.

Tyler Rake (protagonist), a black-market mercenary, is recruited by his handler, Nik Khan, to save Ovi from Dhaka, Bangladesh. Rake and Khan's team prepare to extract Ovi, and his father's men are set to pay them once Ovi recovers. Rake saves Ovi, kills his captors, and takes him to the extraction point, but his father's men intentionally fail to transfer the funds. Instead, Saju kills Rake's teammates and tries to kill Rake so he can save Ovi himself. Upon this incident, Asif, the Bangladeshi drug lord, uses his power to influence Colonel Rashid, the head of Police, to block every road in Dhaka so that Ovi cannot escape.

However, as soon as Rake’s handlers learn that Ovi’s father does not wish to pay ransom money, the contract gets nullified, and he sends a helicopter for Rake to extract and leave Ovi behind. But Rake refuses as his own dead son’s memory haunts him. After much fighting between the parties, Rake, Colonel, Asif, and

Handler Khan all get shot, but Ovi manages to run to the helicopter. In the last scene, Ovi is seen practicing to keep breath under a water pool just like Rake did at the beginning of the film. From underwater, Ovi sees a blurred vision of a man resembling Rake watching him.

**Synopsis of Slumdog Millionaire**

Jamal Malik, a slum dweller, was on the hot seat of the famous game show "Who Wants to be a Millionaire". While he was mocked for his background throughout the show by the anchor and producer of the game show, he became worried when Jamal, an assistant at a call center, a 'chai-wala' to be specific, was only one question away from winning the grand prize of 20 million rupees.

The game stopped for the day and immediately after that, he was detained by the police on suspicion of cheating in the game. In police custody, Jamal starts explaining how he was able to answer the questions, where he revisits his upbringing.

Jamal and his elder brother Salim became orphans at a very young age due to a religious riot. Eventually, they meet Latika, another orphan, making them the three Musketeers. Soon, they are lured by gangster Maman, who forces the children to beg. While Jamal and Salim can escape, Latika remains Maman's captive.

After the escape, the brothers make their living on the streets. But it appears Jamal did not forget Latika and traced her, leading them to Maman again. Salim killed Maman while rescuing Latika. However, Salim keeps Latika for himself and threatens his brother to leave.

A few years later, Jamal found his brother Salim through his call center connection. After meeting Salim, Jamal learned that his brother was working for Javed Khan, the crime lord of the slum where they once lived. Jamal also found out that Javed kept Latika. After contacting Latika, she refused Jamal because of concern for his safety. Although later she expressed her affection for Jamal, they could not reunite because of Salim and other goons of Javed.

Fast forward to the present, only to come to Latika's attention, Jamal makes his way to the gameshow. After the police released him, he went back to the hot seat to answer the final question. He was asked the name of the third musketeer from Alexandre Dumas' classic story, The Three Musketeers. Jamal admitted that he did not know the answer and used the 'phone a friend' option to call his brother. But to Jamal's surprise, Latika picks up the phone and says she does not know the answer. However, she replied that she was safe with Salim's aid.

Jamal speculates an answer, choosing the option Aramis wins the jackpot. Then they meet, and the film shows a happy ending by saying that all these happened in Jamal's life because 'it was written' in his fate.

## Literature Review

The American films mirrored the dominant, sometimes stereotyped, and discriminatory portrayals of people of color. History was changed to fit the public's whimsical and fancy conception of the country, with little authenticity. Mexicans were seen sleeping on sidewalks in sombreros and serapes, and they were only known to eat the three main components of a Mexican diet: tacos, booze, and chili (Bermen, 1995). "Desperate Housewives" is a highly successful television program in the US; occasionally, US television programs enjoy more incredible popularity and influence than their foreign counterparts. Eva Longoria portrays Gabrielle Solis, a Latina, in a character that seems to be a breakthrough for media portrayal. The clichéd depiction of Longoria's persona fulfills the preconceptions of Latinas as outlined by G. D. Keller (1994).

Orientalism aimed to establish Western cultures and values as the dominant ones in the East, giving the West authority over it. As Said notes in his book Orientalism (1979), the East was perceived as an uncivilized society. A significant portion of Hollywood's history's films have reflected Orientalist ideals because the production is located outside of nations with a majority of Asian people (Marchetti, 1993). Certain misconceptions that are present in movies demonstrate prejudice against Asians and Asian Americans. Such prejudices support an ideology that justifies specific treatment of racial minorities.

Gina Marchetti (1991) stated in Ethnicity, the Cinema and Cultural Studies that Hollywood had the ability to establish differences, preserve boundaries, and replicate an ideology that upholds a particular status quo. To dismantle racism in our culture, we need to look at the different forms that prejudice has taken. Eugene Franklin Wong (1978) criticizes the media for propagating racialized perceptions of minority groups in society. Wong challenged the historically inaccurate and superficial ways that Asian themes and people are portrayed in American cinema. Such stereotypes have been used repeatedly in movies over the years, which has strengthened viewers' perceptions of their legitimacy. As a result, future decades are more likely to be filled with demeaning imagery (Wong 1978).

Caucasian actors and actresses portrayed Asians in the early days of cinema. While real Asians were restricted to small supporting parts, a large number of other white actors performed prominent Asian characters. Benshoff and Griffin

(2004) describe the process of "Orientalizing" white people as "yellowface," which involves highly complex measures.

Marchetti (1993) notes that Asian males have encountered representational challenges in The Slanted Screen, a documentary that explores these issues. Frequently, they have been portrayed as asexual, effeminate, or as dreadful barbarians. Marchetti (1993) also examined how white women's relationships with other races have been exploited in several films throughout the years to perpetuate white supremacy.

It is common to see Asian and Asian American males portrayed as either vicious sexual threats to white women or as unattractive guys who lack sexuality. During the mid-1950s, there was an anti-Asian mentality that portrayed Asians as inferior, disgusting, promiscuous, and cunning (Ghymn 2000). According to Marchetti (1993), the risk of a white woman being raped by an Asian man may be associated with the threat that Asian men offer to Western civilization and thus serves as justification for European-American imperialist endeavors in Asia. As stated by Hoppenstand (1992) Asian males were compared to wolves, rats, or vultures around the middle of the 1880s. Asians were also perceived as cunning, vicious, and devilish.

Hollywood cinema has made notable strides in adopting alternative narratives when depicting Asians, with a particular focus on Chinese women. For instance, Crazy Rich Asians (2018) boasted an entirely Asian cast. Mulan (2020) featured a Chinese warrior woman as the lead character, effectively challenging traditional stereotypes that had previously objectified Chinese women and denied their agency.

It is unusual to see portrayals of Asians and Asian Americans as regular individuals. It's unfortunate when specific Asians are left out of movies. Tajima (1989) asserts that invisibility arises when distinct identities and unique personalities blend. She specifically discussed the Vietnamese people rushing away in Apocalypse Now (1979) and the "Asian masses" escaping in Krakatoa: East of Java (1969) (Tajima 1989). An identical scenario may be found in China Gate (1957).

Nadel (1997) provided evidence of the existence of Orientalism in modern cinema, arguing that Disney's Aladdin (1992) attempts to hide its Middle Eastern clichés by projecting an image of a traditional Western romance. In addition, Nadel contends that practically every character in the film is bipolar in nature and employs the narrative device of "disguise" at least once. Nadel claims that this kind of uncertainty is characteristic of Orientalist discourse. This is consistent with Said's (1979) original claim that one of the main ways that Asian people are

made to appear frightening, cunning, and strange is by dichotomizing and obscuring them.

Previous studies on how India is portrayed show patterns of oppression and subjugation within the broader Third World setting. The narrative that centered on portraying Indians as barbaric and uncivilized simple people during colonial control in India is partly responsible for the history of stereotypes about the country (Merchant, 1998; Narayan, 1997). In such narratives throughout history, Europeans have been seen as symbols of freedom, justice, development, change, and dynamism. Conversely, India was portrayed as outdated and trapped in traditions, stagnant, or undergoing a decline. Post-colonial narratives of India developed not just in Europe but also in North America. They follow similar themes of White, Caucasian, and Western superiority long after India gained its independence from Europe (Mitra, 1999; Shome, 1996).

The representations that centered on portraying India in a demeaning way addressed "clashes of civilizations," in which Western characters "saved" India from social injustices like sati and hunger, as well as natural disasters like floods and pandemics and ancient spiritual beliefs like witchcraft (Mitra, 1999; Shome, 1996). Contrasting Western and non-Western actors is the primary driving force behind the stereotyping of Indian characters in Western cinema, asserts Mitra (1999). Hence, the contrast is created by emphasizing physical attributes, clothing, and skin tone when depicting Indian people.

The examination of Western media's portrayals of Bangladesh may be approached through the lens of how these countries are generally portrayed as "third world" nations. As Shohat (1991) noted, when third-world places are included in Hollywood storylines, these areas usually serve as a background for the primary story, emphasizing showcasing the region's exaggerated socio-religious customs as symbols. While orienting the audience to the scene's location was one reason for using such cultural emblems, these representations also supported the claims made by European military rulers and Christian missionaries to "civilize" third-world countries like India and Africa (Ukadike, 1990).

## Objective

This research article aims to investigate how Western films portray the countries in the Global South. To specify the scope of the objective, this study analyzed Extraction and Slumdog Millionaire, two movies in neighboring countries Bangladesh and India from South Asia.

To achieve the objective, this research asked the following research question:

How did Western films represent the Global South?

**Theoretical Framework**

For the nature of this study, the researchers found orientalism to be the best-suited theory to investigate the research question.

Geopolitically, the Orient signifies the Middle East, Asia, and the Far East, territories that were once a part of one or another European Empire, now known as the Global East. Orientalism is a post-colonial study that refers to the construction of the Orient by European colonial powers in the 19th Century and onward as a Western means of dominating and gaining authority over the Orient (Said, 1978). Orientalism can be defined as a distribution of geopolitical awareness into the study of the aesthetic, scholarly, economic, sociological, historical, and philological texts of the orients. Orientalism is also defined as a style of domination, dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, teaching it, settling it, and ruling over it.

Edward Said wrote Orientalism in 1978 as a critique of Western scholarship's representation of "the Orient." The impact of representation goes far beyond the academy and provides the rationale for Western European and Anglo-American colonial domination of the Global South. In its most general application, "the Orient" represents everything that "the Occident" is not. Orientalists institutionalized the "us versus them" colonial mentality.

According to Edward Said (1978, pp. 9-10), "The Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience. Yet none of this Orient is merely imaginative. The Orient is an integral part of European material civilization and culture. It connotes the high-handed executive attitude of nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century European colonialism."

Orientalism stresses the existing hegemony and ever-changing relation of domination of the West over the East. Said, in a Foucauldian framework of analysis, argued that the Western discursive system of dominance and authority in the unequal relationship between the Orient and the Occident can be understood as a regime of knowledge, a disciplined system of power, that not only describes, teaches, and rules, but also produces the Orient (Koefoed & Haldrup, 2020). Said argued that the complex of ideas, images, representations, and academic writings about the Orient actually "creates" rather than describes. Said suggested that the Orient was "Orientalized" and "made" oriental (Koefoed & Haldrup, 2020). The Western texts, theories, practices, and knowledge

produced about the Orient impose a power relationship with political implications. Oriental discourses have three main themes:

1. Exotic East.
2. East is East, and West Is West, and they shall never meet.
3. White Man's Burden.

Conceptually, Orientalism helps make sense of certain types of knowledge construction associated with cultural competence, negative perceptions, and sentiments against the East, speech, and practices (Beck & Wahab, 2015). Western scholarship on Asia projected the notion of an inferior 'other' of Europe. It thus reflected the new relationships of power generated by imperialism, which has had a seminal influence on the historical work on South Asia even though Said's primary point of reference was the Middle East (Raychaudhuri, 2015).

This framework provides a powerful tool to analyze how Western media portrays cultures of the global South. Concerning Bangladesh and India in particular, this study shed light on how Extraction and Slumdog Millionaire could contribute to current Western conceptions of the global South by using these fundamental orientalist components as a theoretical framework. The analysis through the oriental lens explored how the film used stereotypes, upheld the dichotomies, and contributed to the sense of "otherness."

**Sampling and Methodology**

The research is qualitative in nature. Two films, Extraction and Slumdog Millionaire, were used as primary data for the research. The films were chosen because they were Western-made and used Bangladesh and India, the neighboring South Asian countries, in their context. Extraction, the Hollywood-made film, showed Bangladesh and India in its context. The British drama film Slumdog Millionaire was based on India.

The study used semiotic analysis to investigate how orientalist perspectives were employed in the mentioned films. Semiotics is the theory that studies the structure of signs and their meanings. A sign can be any image, word, text, sound, etc. Arthur Asa Berger states, "Semiotics and semiology focus on how people generate meaning...in creative texts of all kinds" (Berger, 1995, p. 100). According to Ferdinand de Saussure, two distinct parts convey the meaning of a sign, in which the signifier is the substantial image or text, and the signified represents the interpretation or cultural meanings of the sign (O'Neill, 2008, p. 67).

Expanding Saussure's semiology, Roland Barthes proposed three orders to interpret any sign or media message. For the first order, Barthes used the term linguistic message, which includes any text displayed in visual media. In the second category, the term denotation was used, which means the literal meaning of the sign, and the third order is called connotation, which means the additional cultural meaning (Barthes, 1977). Barthes argued in semiotics that the connotative cultural meaning often reinforces power structures and ideologies, which he termed myth. And the messages of myth remain parasitic within the (Calimbo, 2016).

Adopting Barthes' semiotic way of deconstructing visual media messages, this study will analyze only the dialogues and scenes in which the research found elements of reinforcing orientalist perspectives. The study considered dialogues using linguistic messages. The visuals shown in the films were considered denotation. Their connotation meaning was analyzed, and then how those connotative messages parasitically strengthened the orientalist perspectives was discussed in this study.

## Data Analysis

### Extraction

Table 1: Linguistic messages, denotations, and connotations in the film Extraction

| Sl | Linguistic Message | Denotation | Connotation |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Greeted with the words "Welcome to Dhaka." | The White man getting kidnapped | Representation of Bangladesh and a reality check on what may happen to them when they travel here. Shown as a sanctuary for criminals. |
| 2 | | A young boy holding an assault rifle | The country's people are involved in serious crimes regardless of their age. |
| 3 | | The White savior killed a whole lot of police and military. | Only a White man can save a hostage, be the savior, and, in the process, he can defeat even elite forces of law enforcement agencies. In sum, the superiority of Whites over the colored people. |
| 4 | | The masked procession | A misrepresentation of |

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| | | | culture, specifically the misrepresentation of the Bengali New Year celebration. |
| 5 | "Close the city. Bridges, trains, airports, everything, close everything… Make it possible, Colonel, or you will lose more than one finger." | Amir Asif threatening the Colonel of the elite force | The corrupt law-enforcement agencies and lawlessness. |
| 6 | | Amir Asif was having dinner with his four wives, all wearing heavy jewelry. | Representation of a Muslim man. |

The commercial action film incorporated Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh, as one of the prime locations. In the movie, Dhaka's color tone is yellowish, representing the warm, hot, dry, and dusty. Dhaka is nowhere near deserts, and the color tone does not justify it. On top of that, this color palette is used to demonstrate the countries with higher crime and poverty rates. So, when used for Bangladesh for the first time, naturally, the first idea the film gives to its audience is that Bangladesh is a country of crime and drowned in poverty.




*Photo 1: Dhaka in yellowish color-tone*

This film shows Dhaka as a city flooded with crime and a safe haven for criminals. The White mercenary, all the way from Australia, entered the South Asian region to fight crime and be the savior. The protagonist, with his Superman-esque skill, fought against the elite forces of police and army and yet

survived and deported the kidnapped boy safely. Ironically, the biggest drug lord in India does not have an appropriate person to save his son, so they need to hire someone from so far away. The film starts with the notion that this is a white man's mission.



*Photo 2: A young boy holding a gun*

While fighting the gangs alongside adults, the protagonist found himself against Bangladeshi boys as young as 10-12 years old, withholding big guns. The criminals were seen using Kalashnikov assault rifles frequently.

The geographical locations shown in the film were far from reality. It showed a dense forest by the side of the Buriganga River, where there is no such jungle. The streets of Dhaka were shown as filthy and densely populated, with cheap Hindi songs in high volume all over the streets. On one hand, they were fighting in the most impoverished neighborhoods; on the other hand, expensive cars like Mercedes and BMW were roaming around. It cannot be distinguished whether they were showing any streets in Dhaka or Africa, as consistently shown in Hollywood.

The linguistic and cultural representation showed no relevance to those of Bengali. The film showed a procession of people with masks who tried to resemble Pahela Boishak. But the procession took place at night, while people celebrated the event in the daytime. The language was confusing to understand. Every Bengali word uttered by the characters had neither any accents used in Bangladesh nor any Indian Bengali accents, making it impossible to relate to which part of the world Bengali is being told like that.



*Photo 3: Bengali people celebrate a cultural program, Pahela Boishakh.*

The writings on the walls and vehicles were also highlighting the misspellings, such as, Ei Dokan Bikrir Hobe (এই দোকান বিক্রির হবে), Allah Sorvoshoktiman (আল্লাহ সর্ভশক্তিমান). The portrayed 'imagined culture' of Bangladesh was nothing but the repetition of producing a stereotypical culture of any other cities of the East.

*..."Close the city. Bridges, trains, airports, everything, close everything"... "Impossible, Amir"... "Make it possible, Colonel or you will lose more than just a finger"...*

The conversation between the antagonist Amir Asif and the Colonel of special force showed the police and Bangladeshi military were also portrayed as homogenous sketches of Orientals to the worldwide audience that they were shaky, bribed, controlled, and could be used by the drug lords even in their personal wars. For a criminal like Asif, the law enforcement of Dhaka can even shut down the entire city to prevent a white one-person army.



*Photo 4: Asif having dinner with his four wives*

Even as a person, Asif was shown as a Muslim who typically keeps four wives, and the wives are always covered with gold pieces of jewelry like some fairytale princesses.

**Slumdog Millionaire**

Table 2: Linguistic messages, denotations, and connotations in the film Slumdog Millionaire

| SL | Linguistic Message | Denotation | Connotation |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | Police tortured Jamal while interrogating them. | Police brutality and unethical means taken by law enforcement agencies which implies to lawlessness |
| 2 | | Children are forced to beg on the streets | The criminal way of livelihood of all the people |
| 3 | | Foreigners visiting the Taj Mahal, Dhobi-ghat | An exotic tourist spot |
| 4 | "You wanted to see a bit of real India, here it is." | Getting beaten up on accusation of involvement in stealing | The land of poverty, crime, and savagery |
| 5 | "Well, this is a bit of real America, son." | Handing over a 100-dollar note as compensation | The supremacy of culture of the West |
| 6 | "This is our Destiny" D. It was written (end note of the film) | Jamal tells Latika when they finally meet each other | Indians are fatalist |

The eighth Academy Awards winner British drama film starts with a tense situation where the protagonist, Jamal, is in police custody, being questioned about how he got all the answers right in the game show. The Western view of the orients is evident from the very first scene. The police brutality and savagery were shown from the beginning. As the story unfolds, the police are seen to be abducting Jamal on no particular charges, only on suspicion. The law enforcement agency was shown as the puppet of the influentials in the society, which, in essence, implies a sense of lawlessness as a whole.



*Photo 5: Jamal tortured in police custody*

As the story unfolds, Jamal narrates his past life in the slums where he was brought up. The portrayal of slums in India was exhibited as a place of constant struggle. It presented India as a place of extreme poverty and a dangerous place. All the characters were shown as involved in some criminal activity in one way or another. The people living there were beggars, thieves, and frauds. All the major characters, except the police officers and the game host, were from slums. And the characters had no difference in the core, considering their way of living. Even the game show host was seen throwing a wrong answer to Jamal without having any prior issues between them.



*Photo 6: Children are begging on the streets*

The religious riot in the slum, which left Jamal and his brother Salim as orphans, is the expression of considering India as a country driven by religious sentiments, if not directly labeling them as snake-charmers. Jamal and his family were living

in a Muslim majority living slum. Henceforth, the image of a Muslim man was presented in the film. Among the characters, only Salim, Jamal's brother, was seen performing prayers, making him apparently 'the most Muslim' of all. While he was shown to be asking forgiveness from God, he was still involved in killing and other criminal activities, including murder, making him a typical 'Muslim terrorist.'



*Photo 7: Salim holding a gun to kill his boss, Javed Khan*

The entire film shows Jamal describing how his real-life experiences helped him answer the questions correctly without having a formal education, helping him win the grand prize in the game show. Nevertheless, the dialogue of little Jamal, "the guidebook (of the Taj Mahal) was written by a bunch of lazy, good-for-nothing Indian beggars," clearly stated the Western view of India and overall subcontinental intellectual abilities. Ultimately, Jamal's win was 'written' in his fate, showing the Indians more reliant on destiny and believers than achievers.

The presence of white-skinned people was seen as tourists only, implying India was an exotic tourist spot. An American tourist couple hiring young Jamal wanted to see the 'real India.' Eventually, parts of their car got stolen, and their driver beat up Jamal. Jamal called it the honest India. He was paid 100 dollars in reply, and the American couple bragged about their attitude as 'real America.'

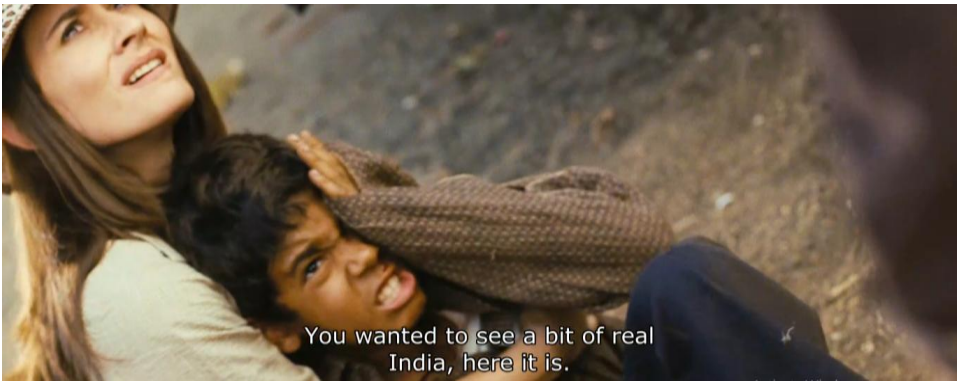



*Photo 8: Young Jamal claiming the accurate picture of India after being beaten up*

The story established the cultural and economic superiority of the West by representing Indians as savages, thieves, and impoverished and Americans as civil and sensitive.

**Results**

The films Extraction and Slumdog Millionaire created the reality of Bangladesh and India from the orientalist point of the West. The depiction was closer to how the West sees and wants to see. The connotative meanings of the linguistic messages and the visuals in both films parasitically reinforced the orientalist 'myths' of the West about the Global South. In a study, Marchetti (1991) argued that the West replicates the ideologies to continue a particular status quo in visual media. Said (1978) argued that the Orient is created rather than described.

*The lands poverty and crime*

In Extraction, Bangladesh is shown as an overpopulated country where all the characters mostly indulge in crime. Most people living in Bangladesh were shown as living in low-income slum-like areas. People living there were portrayed to be roaming with guns, even the young kids. Most people were somehow involved in criminal activities and helping the drug lord. People showed no concern whenever any shooting or kidnapping was taking place, meaning that they were used to experiencing such incidents frequently.

Slumdog Millionaire had no difference in showing the poverty and crime activities. All the central characters were generalized as being involved in crime, begging, or fraud. The poor were dehumanized as if having no conscience of good or bad, except the protagonist. Nevertheless, the protagonist was also involved in fraud for livelihood.

Both films had the common themes of exhibiting 'poverty porn' of the third world countries and the monolithic characters of criminal activities rather than depicting the different aspects of the livelihood and developed aspects of Bangladesh or India.

**Exotic East**

The films portrayed Bangladeshi and Indian cultures as stranger than the West.

The linguistic representation of Bengali in Extraction was neither Bangladeshi nor Indian. The mixture of accents introduced a whole new linguistic pattern in the film. The cultural fest in the movie depicted the celebration of the first day of the Bengali New Year, completely missing the essence of the day. While the procession, namely Mongol-shobhajatra, takes place at dawn, the procession in the film takes place in the dark hours of the evening. In Slumdog Millionaire, the craze for Bollywood among Indians was a large part of their cultural identity. Bollywood is shown as a prototype of the Indian culture throughout the film, even finishing with a song where the protagonist and his love interest are dancing with other extra performers amid a railway station. Other than the 'Bollywoodification' of Indian culture, the people were labeled as lazy and good-for-nothing, reminiscing the colonial terminology used against the subcontinental people by the British.

The people in the Indian subcontinental region were depicted as savages.

In Extraction, both Bangladesh and India were termed as mythological lands of drugs and gangsters. Even the police and military were the pawns of the gangsters, on whose order they closed the whole country. The entire military force of Bangladesh, including the top officers, was shown to be corrupt, employing the idea that the people lack integrity and civility. Likewise, Extraction and Slumdog Millionaire portrayed the police force of India similarly. The influentials manipulated the police. Abduction and heavy torture were shown as their routine work.

Another essential aspect shown in both films is the influence of religion on the lives of people in Bangladesh and India.

Slumdog Millionaire showed a religious riot playing a significant role in developing the characters, normalizing the division among people in the subcontinental region based on religious differences. The representation of Muslims was again monolithic, providing the same recipe of terrorists and criminals. Although the antagonist in Extraction had nothing to do with religion, he was shown as a Surma-eyed Muslim man keeping four wives. On top of that, the wives wearing gold jewelry pieces exerted the exoticism of the foreign land.

## Superiority of the West

As Said (1978) argued, the West views the orients as their burden, and it comes as a colonial thought. The film Extraction depicted the similarity. As shown in the film, it came upon a man from far away to land on such ‘exotic’ land to operate the rescue mission. The whole country is working for the drug lord, and no single person or agency is on the good side. This point only broadens the dichotomy of ‘good vs. bad.’ In addition to that, all the “corrupted law-enforcement agencies” and the associates of a gang leader lost to one single White man, who appears as a guardian angel for the kidnapped kid. The White man here not only symbolizes a mere mercenary but also all the technological support he gets from his handler, which shows the superiority of the place where he comes from. The gangs, despite having a local workforce, lost to them because of a lack of proper communication and other technologies.

In Slumdog Millionaire, the boasting of ‘a bit of real America’ was depicted by compassion and economic superiority. Saving the young boy from getting beaten up and giving 100 dollars showed the difference between the two countries. It was a difference in moral values between ‘us vs. them.’ And the way the American couple resolved the situation was a representation of ‘humane solutions’ to the problem of third-world countries and a statement of the superiority of the West.

## Discussion

Said (1978) argued that the West views the orients as their burden, and it comes as a colonial thought. The research depicted the similarity of a lone white man, portrayed as a guardian angel for a kidnapped child, defeating corrupt law enforcement and a gang leader with the help of advanced technology, symbolizing the superiority of his origin. He embodies more than just a savior, representing dominance through skill and tech. Said (1978) argued that the Orient is constructed, while Marchetti (1991) showed how ideology can be replicated to maintain the status quo. In the early days, Wong (1978) criticized the inaccurate and shallow portrayal of Asian themes and people in American cinema, where stereotypes have been repeatedly reinforced over time.

In his research, Berman demonstrated how stereotypically poor Mexico was portrayed in Western films (Berman, 1995). The results of this study also indicated that both movies had the idea of displaying "poverty porn.” The film showed that most people living in Bangladesh and India lived in low-income, slum-like areas. Marchetti (1993) and Hoppenstand (1992) argued that in Western films, Asians were portrayed as dangerous and savage. Asians were

thought to be aggressive. The movie extraction showed that even the small children were portrayed as armed and walking around the neighborhood. Most people supported the drug lord and were in some way involved in criminal activity. Similarly, Merchant (1998) and Narayan (1997) argued that Indians were portrayed as barbaric and uncivilized simple people in Western movies.

According to Narayan (1997), westerners have historically been viewed as emblems of justice, freedom, growth, change, and energy in movies. The film Extraction depicted the similarity. A man from afar arrived to carry out a rescue mission, symbolizing western intervention. In Slumdog Millionaire, western superiority and intervention are highlighted through the American couple's resolution, representing Western humanitarian solutions to third-world problems.

This article's findings revealed how Western Western films stereotypically portrayed the global south's cultures and festivals. The film depicts a cultural festival meant to celebrate the first day of the Bengali New Year, specifically Mongol-shobhajatra, which traditionally occurs at dawn. However, in the film, it takes place during the evening hours. Similar misrepresentations were found in Bermen's (1995) study. His study found in western movies Mexicans were seen sleeping on sidewalks in ombreros and serapes, and they were only known to eat the three main components of a Mexican diet: tacos, booze, and chili (Bermen, 1995). Similarly, "Bollywoodification" is evident when portraying the stereotypical representation of the Slumdog Millionaire. The findings demonstrate how Bollywood was portrayed in the film as being a significant component of Indian culture.

Studies have shown that Western movies blend different identities into one (Tajima, 1989). In alignment with the findings of the previous studies, this study found that the film's use of Bengali, characterized by a blend of accents and imperfect grammar, created a unique linguistic pattern that was neither distinctly Bangladeshi nor Indian. Nadel (1997) demonstrated how modern cinema maintains Orientalism by portraying clichés from the Middle East as traditional Western romances. The finding of the study showed that The Slumdog Millionaire depicted Muslims uniformly as terrorists and criminals. At the same time, Extraction portrayed a non-religious antagonist as a Surma-eyed Muslim with four wives.

## Limitation of Research

This research acknowledged that some critics view films like Slumdog Millionaire and Extraction more as entertainment than as accurate representations of reality. In Western films portraying the Global South, the exoticized depictions examined in this research could be consistent with the larger trend of entertainment-focused portrayals. This research does not, therefore, claim to address every facet of audience reaction or the motives behind these orientalist depictions, which may have a variety of entertainment values.

## Conclusion

The West sees no difference among the Latin, Middle Eastern, African, and a South Asian nation. Whether Bangladesh, India, or any other country of the Global South, the representation was and would be following the same old recipe: poor, crime haven, savages, uncultured, and lastly, it is a white man's job to save them. The discrepancy shown in Extraction and Slum dog millionaire about Bangladesh and India were not merely poor-researched work. This idea aligns with the concept of Orientalism, in which Western industries tend to portray the Orient in a way that conforms to their stereotypes rather than showing the reality of their cultures. The films showed the dichotomy of 'us (the West)' versus 'them (everything but the West where the global south also included),' and the representation of 'them' does not necessarily have to do anything with reality. It established the post-colonial reality of domination and superiority of the West over the nations in the Global South.

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