

Revisiting Cultural and Ethnic Stereotypes: The Representation of Arabs and Muslims in Fox's Prime-time Animated Sitcom *American Dad*

Revisiter les stéréotypes culturels et ethniques : La représentation des Arabes et des Musulmans dans la sitcom animée en prime time de Fox, « *American Dad* »

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Abstract:

This paper seeks to revisit the polemical and controversial representation of Arabs and Muslims in Fox's prime-time animated sitcom *American Dad*, focusing on how humour, dark humour, absurdism and puns perpetuate cultural and ethnic stereotypes. Leaning upon postcolonialism, particularly Edward Said's concept of "Orientalism," and Jack Shaheen's cinematic investigations, the paper delves into the sitcom's problematic portrayals and their implications for societal attitudes in a post-9/11 context. Through a close examination of five key episodes — "*Stan of Arabia*," "*Homeland Insecurity*," "*Rough Trade*", "*The One That Got Away*" and "*The Unbrave One*"—. The findings reveal how the animated sitcom never challenges harmful biases but rather reflects and reinforces them. Ultimately, it calls for more nuanced representations of Arab and Muslim communities in media to foster empathy and understanding.

Keywords:

Arabs and Muslims; Cultural and Ethnic Stereotypes; *American Dad*; Postcolonialism; 9/11.

Resumé:

Cet article vise à revisiter la représentation polémique et controversée des arabes et des musulmans dans la sitcom animée en prime time de Fox, *American Dad*, en se concentrant sur la manière dont l'humour, l'humour noir, l'absurdisme et les jeux de mots perpétuent des stéréotypes culturels et ethniques. S'appuyant sur le postcolonialisme, en particulier le concept d'« orientalisme » d'Edward Said, et les enquêtes cinématographiques de Jack Shaheen, l'article explore les représentations problématiques de la sitcom et leurs implications pour les attitudes sociétales dans un contexte post-11 septembre. À travers une analyse approfondie de cinq épisodes clés : « *Stan of Arabia* », « *Homeland Insecurity* », « *Rough Trade* », « *The One That Got Away* » and « *The Unbrave One* » — les résultats révèlent que la sitcom animée ne remet jamais en question les biais nuisibles, mais les reflète et les renforce plutôt. En fin de compte, l'article appelle à des représentations plus nuancées des communautés arabes et musulmanes dans les médias afin de favoriser l'empathie et la compréhension.

Mots clés:

Arabes et Musulmans ; Stéréotypes Culturels et Ethniques ; *American Dad*, Postcolonialisme ; 11 septembre.

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1. INTRODUCTION:

In the wake of the recent decades characterised by significant social, technological, economic and political mutations; tragic terrorist attacks and apathy toward Middle Eastern citizens — especially Arab and Muslim communities —, have increasingly contributed to a rapid deterioration of global understanding between the West and the East ushering in an irrational wave of Islamophobia nourished by biased media and aggressive political discourse. Popular culture as an important pillar in media becomes an excellent avenue for reflecting, defining and reconstructing images of the “Other” through comedy, irony and satire. One medium, the animated sitcom, imposed itself as the propeller which enables the depiction of cultural and ethnic commonalities and human social experience through humour, dark humour, absurdism and puns. Humour of some animated

sitcoms functions by exploiting and reinforcing amplified cultural and ethnic fabricated stereotypes. However, these stereotypes also exist in reality and are latent. When they are explicitly visible, the boundary between humour and offence, and right and wrong, is blurred and easily overcome. (Alshhre, 2025)

American Dad, which premiered on Fox Television in 2005, is probably one of the most successful animated sitcoms aired on television today that is contributing to shaping and reshaping the opinion of viewers worldwide. Drawing upon the satiric and ironic models of *The Simpsons* and *Family Guy* the series is best known for the outrageous and extreme behaviours of its main characters, especially the pompous and aggressive Stan Smith, who enjoys foolish inventions and takes pleasure in spying on his neighbours, the Hayley. *American Dad*, in many ways, serves as a satirical examination of contemporary American life through the Smith family's eyes, and has become a successful franchise in the world of TV prime-time shows due to the unlimited and sheer amount of Fox's programming. It entered its twentieth season in 2025, making it the second-longest-running animated sitcom on Fox after the iconic and controversial animated sitcom *The Simpsons*. (Callens and Vogt, 2024)

Since the late 1980s, many popular animated sitcoms have employed humour that heavily relies on irreverent ethnic and cultural stereotypes. *American Dad* is no exception, as it often engages with and satirises various ethnicities, including Arabs and Muslims, across multiple episodes. The plight of Arabs, Muslims, and Middle Eastern citizens post 9/11 impacts on cultural commons and states' foreign policies. Consequently, Arab and Muslim humour is almost always "non-existent" in American cultures, whereas humour based on other

cultures/countries is often complex, vivid, edible, relatable, and appreciated. (Leonard and Robbins, 2021).

Through a postcolonial and postmodernist lens, the present paper seeks to examine how *American Dad*, as a prime-time animated sitcom using “stereotypical characters”, engages with and mirrors intricate cultural and ethnic dynamics related to Arabs and Muslims, exploring the wider social backdrop that shapes the stereotypical depiction. Moreover, this paper also seeks to critically analyse the textual and visual elements in five representative episodes to reveal the relationship between humour and cultural and ethnic stereotypes, thereby enhancing the comprehension of animated sitcoms’ influence on societal views. Concepts related to the core of the subject are dealt with separately to provide a ground for a nuanced understanding of how these portrayals can reinforce or challenge existing biases. By dissecting the interplay between humour and stereotype, the paper aims to illuminate the broader implications for representation in television and its impact on public perception of Arabs and Muslims as “Stereotypical Character”.

2. Theoretical Framework:

“Stereotypical characters”, which are used frequently in *American Dad*, are conventional personalities in a story that are instantly recognisable. Indeed, “type characters” with stereotypical features are common in films. The very basis of stereotyping is that the rules of the type are common. All stock characters, it is important to underline, are symbolically insignificant. Certainly, they serve as vehicles for the structuring of the narrative, yet they would never accommodate the considerations of an artist. Stereotypical figures belong to a simplified world,

which is, though fraught with conflict, without depth. The narrative and verbal art in stock characterisation pertain to the purity of the humour only, with no ambiguity attached. For all that they are grotesque, a stock character is someone who is thus. Despite the considerable “unrefinement” in emotionality or behaviour, stock figures are nevertheless unproblematic. The technical term “type character” covers both stereotype and stock character. With regard to characters, the terms stereotype and type character are synonymous. Up to that point, the definition of the two processes is widely accepted: Stereotyping is a non-artistic cartoonist picture of a type character. Nevertheless, the difference is somewhat broader in technical terms. (Moya-Guijarro 2022)

As a standard or expected figure in a certain social frame, the type character is tasked with a certain invariant function. As far as the action is concerned, the type must stand for this invariant function and may not deviate from its own type rules. Take, for instance, the “patriarch facteur” of exaggerated authority or “the villain” supposed to be penalised on just punishment grounds. Burlesque humour is “funny” or “strange” by virtue of the conflict between the cue and the type character’s deduction. The comic effect derives merely from the surprised response; no distinctive narratives or moralities on wars, religions, and cultures can be perceived in the comical interpretation of stereotypical characters. Critics often dismiss depicting the stereotyping by terming it as caricature or ridicule. (Hamby et al., 2024)

3. Understanding Stereotypes:

The most distinguishable feature of how humans comprehend the world is the creation of stereotypes about people, groups, or circumstances (Kheshaifaty,

2019). A stereotype may be conceived as an overstatement where a particular category is inappropriately generalised. Stereotypes about Arabs and Muslims specifically are countless and varied, often not based on fact. American cinema, particularly, is imbued with stereotypical representations of various ethnic and racial groups, but of the many stereotypes and misrepresentations that plague Hollywood, those of the Muslim world and its inhabitants have ostensibly been the most damaging and resilient. Ever since the camera began to crank, Hollywood has propagated Arabs and Muslims in exotic terms. The Arab/Muslim appears as an unkempt, uncivilised, and violent terrorist character in over a thousand movies. (Mecheri 2023) While it is natural and common for all humans, along with animals, to create a simplified image of a particular group to make comprehension easier, it is fear and misinformation of that group that, in extreme cases, transform stereotypes into contempt for those stigmas that are irrelevant. Some stimuli, such as media, literature, and history, serve to promote misconceptions, subversively creating a hostile environment for the wilier of that group. Misrepresentations regarding Arabs and Muslims persistently recurrent in popular media are an indispensable and often neglected aspect of post-9/11 worldwide, in general, American-based Islamophobia. During the exploration of the depiction of Arabs and Muslims it focuses on the provocative, comical animated series *American Dad* and how its stereotypes relate to the portrayal of Arabs and Muslims. (Pepiak 2025)

The question of why *American Dad*, as well as the larger popular culture, is interested in the characters of Arabs and Muslims is attempted to be at least partly answered. In addition to the present analysis, a missing perspective is provided on how Arabs and Muslims, or the hyperrealism in that matter, on popular media as

well as cyberspace are studied by using film, webisodes, or video games. Unlike the politically motivated analysis of Arabs and Muslims in popular media, the focus here is precisely on what could be a truly entertaining piece with interesting parameters. To achieve this aim, *American Dad* is viewed as a carnivalesque work and the entertaining qualities and narratives of the sitcom are illuminated. Finally, with the acknowledgement of the audience's willingness to comprehend, the aim in this instance is to create deeper comprehension through the addressee of the *American Dad*-like material; in addition to this, a mass audience and imaginative literacy are required. (Elsayed, 2021)

4. Humour and Cultural Representation:

Humour and comedy affect people of distinct cultural beliefs differently in media, television programmes, and caricature magazines; the difference between cultural perceptions of humour has been a consistent theme of scholarly examination. Many television shows represent circumscribed ideas or photographs of foreign communities or ethnic groups they address to gratify public cultural curiosity and, in some cases, draw viewers' focus away from their realities, particularly Muslims or peoples around the Islamic world. Humour involving ethnicities or major world religious groups is anticipated to be rechecked for critical cultural representations. Viewing a comedy from any country's television will reveal that even non-political comedies contain comic caricatures that affect cultural reductive discourse and misrepresent animus (Kheshaifaty, 2019) when coupled with Arabic or Islamic paradigms, by accident or sanction.

Some shows resort to character and hyper-specific location design to create situational humour, including the Middle East and its customs or Arabic-

speaking communities, which transform a family or city's status quo to a ridiculous situation. The need for humour in the Western television industry is portrayed by gossipmonger Wallace Shawn or branded TV icon, *Fuller House*. Similarly, after referencing rap music in the pilot, some TV shows mention it. Such burlesque devices seem misdirected in the shows, even though they are designed and intended to show the dignity of Arab characters in the contemporary standard of humour. Even years later, the dispersed version seems ridiculous as *America Fat* moved to the Paris-Middle East region and its presupposed stereotyping. Historical social errors and their repositing in present short-comedy glitches, stand-up volleys, and social criticism. Formerly produced as slot films for the annual Satire Week prestige previewing, then transformed into weekly televised blockbusters. Almost every identity's caricature is exaggerated, so initially exaggerated horror transformed into displeased satire or even sturdy comic transcendence, magnifying fears of newly emergent identities through their past portraits. Such portraying ethics seems to be rapidly transgressed as characters lose their fixed cultural grasp and descendants' humour. (Crowther, 2021)

5. Overview of *American Dad's* Arabs and Muslims:

First of all, the term Arab World may be misleading because there is no complete conformity and homogeneity among the twenty-two countries that form the so-called Arab world. This is not to deny that these twenty-two countries share a common language, culture, and common history, and that more than ninety per cent of their populations practice Islam as a religion. (Kirat, 1989) Islam, unfortunately, has been stigmatised in the last decades as a religion of terrorism.

With continuous references to the world “terrorism” and religiously inclined terrorist attacks that take place all over the planet, one major change that occurred in the depiction of Islam and the Muslim population is the rise of stereotyping Arabs and Muslims in the media. Together with *The Simpsons*, two other American television’s funniest and most beloved animated sitcoms, *Family Guy* and *American Dad*, have unfortunately become a part of the problem. By portraying Arab and Muslim individuals in excerpts from both programs in a hilarious light, the creators bluntly ridicule, mock, and stereotype the Muslim and/or Arab culture as a belief system. While it is safe to say that *Family Guy* has been a more prominent contributor to the problem, merely because of its longer run and higher audience approval, it would not be fair to negate the implications of the nudging humour shown in *American Dad* regarding Arabs and Muslims, either.

Thus, alongside commentary on *Family Guy*’s Jewish and gay humour, this paper aims to highlight the implications of *American Dad*’s metaphoric humour on Arabs and Muslims. To help mitigate confusion, the show must first be outlined in some detail. Much akin to other animated series, *American Dad* initially follows a cigar-smoking, flag-waving, missile-obsessed middle-aged man named Stan Smith, who works for the CIA and believes himself to be a devoted American. However, unlike other characters, Stan is depicted as a very capable individual who is also quite intelligent. Stan lives with his wife Francine, a teenage daughter Hayley, a college-bound son Steve, and Roger, an alien who coincidentally saves Stan’s life from a heart attack-inducing situation. Roger stays with the Smiths and grows to become an integral part of their family.

Having initiated the show as a concern to fight the supposed demographic changes following the terrorist attack, the show was quite humorous during its first

couple of seasons. Such humorous concerns included ongoing skits regarding the US being on the verge of a new age, Stan's jealousy of the affections enjoyed by Roger through his disguise as a married family man, and the family's attempts to adjust to Steve's physiological change into a masculine young adult. Unfortunately, however, as the seasons progressed, the family grew divisive and dysfunctional, becoming a family in name only. That is to say, the humorous depiction of the Smith family as a middle-class working American family became peripherally irrelevant to the humour generation. Such contempt is likely to encourage a halt to the well-intentioned yet slanderous humour that paints Arabic and Muslim societies in as poor a light as *American Dad* derides current American norms. While particularity attends to *American Dad's* derision of Arabs and Muslims through the examination of sample excerpts from the sitcom, thoughtful commentary will be given to the comprehension of the underlying cartoon frames based on flimsily researched demographic details intended for audiences unwary of the historical and social context of the events depicted. (Labidi, 2021)

6. Cultural Context of the Series:

The Fox Broadcasting Company (Fox) established Fox Television Studios in 1994, and in 1995, it began producing its first prime-time animated television series, *Family Guy*, created by Seth MacFarlane. In 2005, *American Dad*, a prime-time animated television series, followed in the wake of success and controversy. The program has won a total of 10 awards from 60 nominations and contributed to the turbulence in the Middle East with its representations of Arabs and Muslims. In general, it depicts Arabs and Muslims as obsessed with "sexual terrorism", strict and veiled women, sophisticated criminals, and tribesmen modernised through

petrodollars (Kheshaifaty, 2019). “Full-body-bag-and-note-Pad” humour entails all humour based on such representations, which gender and race the “other” in a humour-oriented manner. The characters’ time and Europe’s place are expanded to the Middle East for increased sophistication.

This portrayal contributes to the vapidness of Arab and Muslim cultures and applies to locals. To broaden comprehension, cultural boundaries are crossed and renamed, turning Western jokes into Arabic ones. The Arabs, who consider it a disgrace to have carpets in their luxury palaces, regard the cartoon’s libidinous imagination as crap and indifference. European cartoons regard torturing infidels with sexual humiliation as a duller version of Borat, devoid of a true Arab understanding. Nonetheless, they foolishly defame the prophet. Arabic text has also been used as comedic shorthand by the auto-translation feature. Such comedy leaves the audience perplexed about its meaning, aimed at mocking illiteracy.

Consistent with *Family Guy* and the Islamic Cultural Context, Arab and Muslim characters are only sporadically visible and comprise supporting characters without a voice. With a few exceptions, the main cast consists entirely of Anglos and Anglo-Saxons. The mockery of Arabs and Muslims comes from voices similar to theirs, which are more acceptable to the audience and considered sexy and witty. The Arab and Muslim characters were voiced by an Australian who had no prior Arab education, rendering the context alien to him. *American Dad* lost artistic perception and contextual understanding due to Arab figures’ non-readiness for jokes at the Hollywood level.

7. A Deep Dive into Arab and Muslim Cultural and Ethnic Themes in *American Dad*: Insights from Five Key Episodes:

7.1. *“Stan of Arabia”* (Parts 1 & 2) Season 1, episode 10, 2005:

In *“Stan of Arabia”*, which evokes *“Laurence of Arabia”*, Stan Smith is relocated to the country of Saudi Arabia as part of a mission with the CIA. The episodes’ part 1 and part 2 explore stan’s cultural shock and interactions with Arab culture. The portrayal includes exaggerated stereotypes, depicting Arabs primarily through the lens of wealth, oppression, and rigid gender roles. The following quotes from the episode express much about what has been asserted:

- Stan’s reaction to the wealth of Saudi Arabia is illustrated when he remarks, *“I thought they were all living in tents!”* This comment exemplifies a common stereotype of Arab poverty juxtaposed with the reality of oil-rich nations.
- The episode also features a scene where Stan’s perception of women is challenged, yet ultimately reinforces stereotypes: *“In America, women can do anything. Here, they can’t even drive!”* This line simplifies complex gender dynamics in Arab societies.

Snapshot 1: Stan Smith with a group of armed Arabian men



In snapshot 1, the absurdity of Stan's All-American worldview is emphasised throughout, as he deals with cultural differences while often adhering to his own prejudices.

7.2. *"Homeland Insecurity": Season 3, episode 1, 2006:*

This episode focuses on heightened security measures following a terrorist threat. Arab characters are portrayed as suspicious and dangerous, reinforcing fears and stereotypes commonly associated with Muslims in America.

The following quotes from the episode express much about what has been asserted:

- A notable line includes, *"If you see something, say something, especially if it's an Arab!"* This statement plays on post-9/11 paranoia, suggesting that Arab identity itself is inherently linked to danger.
- The depiction of a character being profiled at an airport with the line, *"I'm just a normal guy!"* highlights the absurdity of racial profiling but also risks normalising the stereotype of Arabs as threats.

Snapshot 2: Stan Smith suspects a Middle-Easterner to be "not a normal guy"



Snapshot 2 makes it clear that the comedic approach to such a serious topic reveals a troubling undercurrent, as humour often masks the genuine fears and biases present in society. Stan Smith is mistaking a Middle Eastern man to be a terrorist just because of his appearance.

7.3. *“Rough Trade”*: Season 6, episode 6, 2008:

In *“Rough Trade,”* Roger adopts the persona of an Arab character, further complicating the portrayal of Arab identity. The episode satirises cultural misunderstandings and the commodification of Arab culture, showcasing stereotypes in an aggressive manner. The following quotes from the episode express much about what has been asserted:

- Roger’s transformation includes statements like, *“I’m going to show you the real Arab world!”* This line ironically underscores the superficial understanding often held by outsiders while simultaneously engaging with stereotypes.

- The episode includes a scene where Roger, in his Arab persona, says, *"We love our camels and our oil!"* This exaggeration highlights the absurdity of reductive stereotypes while still reinforcing them.

7.4. *"The One That Got Away"* Season 6, Episode 3, 2006:

In this episode Stan's attempts to impress the CIA lead him to confront an Arab character, where cultural misunderstandings and stereotypes are used for comedic effect. The episode plays on the tension between American and Arab cultures. The following quotes from the episode express much about what has been asserted:

- *"You think all Arabs are terrorists? That's like saying all Americans are... well, you know."* (This line highlights the absurdity of making sweeping generalisations.
- *"I was just trying to befriend him, but he kept talking about jihad."* This line further emphasises the stereotype of Arabs being linked to extremism.

7.5. *"The Unbrave One"* Season 7, Episode 11, 2008:

In this episode, Stan faces his fears while interacting with a fictional Arab character who embodies common stereotypes. The plot revolves around themes of bravery and cowardice, using cultural tropes for humour. The following quotes from the episode express much about what has been asserted:

- *"I can't believe you're scared of an Arab! They're just like us but with more bombs!"* This line underscores the episode's reliance on stereotypes about Arabs and violence.

- “You know, in my country, we don’t have to worry about these things... we just blow stuff up!” This line plays into the stereotype of violence associated with Arab cultures.

8. Analysis of the Five Key Episodes:

In retrospect, *American Dad*, in the five key episodes, utilises humour to address and critique stereotypes surrounding Arabs and Muslims, but it often falls into the trap of reinforcing these very stereotypes. Each episode mentioned demonstrates a blend of satire and problematic depictions, reflecting broader societal attitudes while risking the perpetuation of harmful narratives. The exaggerated portrayals of Arab characters, whether through Stan’s naive misconceptions or Roger’s superficial impersonations, highlight a persistent cultural gap that frames Arab identity in reductive terms. For instance, in “*Stan of Arabia*” and “*Homeland Insecurity*,” the comedy arises from cultural misunderstandings but simultaneously risks normalising harmful narratives. By depicting Arabs primarily as either wealthy oppressors or suspicious individuals, the show reflects and perpetuates societal fears rooted in post-9/11 paranoia. Such representations can desensitise audiences to the complexities of Arab and Muslim lives, reducing rich cultures to mere punchlines.

Moreover, the animated sitcom’s reliance on stereotypes can obscure the nuanced realities of these communities. While some quotes offer a critical view of the absurdity of generalisations, such as the line about not equating all Arabs with terrorism, these moments are often overshadowed by the broader comedic context that leans heavily on stereotype-driven humour. Episodes like “*Rough Trade*” and “*The Unbrave One*” illustrate the commodification of cultural identity, where

humour often comes at the expense of genuine understanding. This duality poses a significant challenge: while satire can provoke thought and discussion about stereotypes, it must be approached with caution. The risk is that, rather than dismantling misconceptions, the series inadvertently reinforces them, leaving audiences with skewed perceptions of Arab and Muslim identities that can have real-world implications. Thus, while *American Dad* attempts to engage with important cultural themes, it necessitates a critical examination of how humour intersects with representation and societal attitudes. The below recapitulative table summarises the analysis provided above.

Table 1: Insights from the Five Key Episodes

Episode	Stereotypical Elements	Cultural Misunderstandings	Humour Style
<i>“Stan of Arabia”</i>	Wealthy, oppressive, gender roles	Stan’s ignorance of Arab culture	Absurdist, situational
<i>“Homeland Insecurity”</i>	Suspicious, dangerous	Generalised fear of Arabs	Dark humour, satire
<i>“Rough Trade”</i>	Commodification of culture	Misinterpretation of identity	Parody, self-reflective
<i>“The One That Got Away”</i>	Arabs and Muslims = Extremists	Tension between American and Arab cultures	Absurd sweeping generalisations
<i>“The Unbrave One”</i>	The brave West Vs. The Coward Orient	The Arabian “Other” is ruthless	Aimed misrepresentation

9. Critical Discussion in the Light of Postcolonial Perspectives:

Benefiting from Edward Said's postcolonial theory, particularly his seminal concept of "Orientalism," we can critically analyse how *American Dad* reinforces entrenched Western stereotypes of Arabs and Muslims. Said posits that the West constructs a fictional image of the East, often labelled as exotic, primitive, and fundamentally a different "other". (Said 1978) This framework not only shapes Western perceptions but also influences how Eastern societies are portrayed in popular media. In *American Dad*, Arab characters are frequently reduced to caricatures, embodying exaggerated traits that align with these stereotypes rather than being presented as complex, fully realised individuals. This simplification contributes to a monolithic view of Arab identity, which fails to acknowledge the rich diversity within Arab culture(s).

Furthermore, Said's exploration of power dynamics reveals how these representations serve to justify Western hegemony. By depicting Arabs as either comical figures or threats, *American Dad* perpetuates a narrative that positions Western cultures as superior, reinforcing a cultural imperialism that marginalises the East. We may talk here about the infamous concept of "The West and the Rest". The humour employed in the animated sitcom often masks the underlying prejudices, allowing viewers to laugh at the absurdity while simultaneously internalising harmful stereotypes.

Jack Shaheen's cinematic views provide additional context to this analysis, emphasising the detrimental effects of such portrayals on public perception. Shaheen argues that media representations significantly shape societal attitudes towards Arabs and Muslims, often leading to widespread misunderstandings and entrenched prejudices. In his work, he highlights that when media consistently depict Arabs as terrorists or caricatures, it perpetuates a culture of fear and

misunderstanding that can manifest in real-world discrimination and violence. (Shaheen 2001)

In the episodes of *American Dad*, while humour is a central feature, it often falls into the trap of reinforcing negative stereotypes instead of challenging them. The comedic framing tends to trivialise serious issues related to identity and cultural representation, leaving little room for a nuanced understanding of Arab experiences. Instead of fostering empathy or critical thinking, these episodes risk solidifying existing biases, contributing to a cultural landscape where stereotypes thrive.

In a nutshell, the portrayal of Arabs and Muslims in *American Dad* can be critically analysed through the lenses of Said's Orientalism and Shaheen's cinematic perspectives. By examining how these stereotypes are constructed and perpetuated, we can better understand the implications for societal attitudes and the importance of more accurate and respectful representations in media.

10. Conclusion:

This paper has analysed the representation of Arabs and Muslims in the prime-time animated sitcom *American Dad*, emphasising the animated sitcom's interaction with cultural and racial prejudices via humour. Employing a postcolonial framework, namely Edward Said's notion of "Orientalism," we have seen how the animated sitcom sustains reductive and frequently detrimental portrayals of Arab identities. Each examined episode — "*Stan of Arabia*," "*Homeland Insecurity*," and "*Rough Trade*"; "*The One That Got Away*" and "*The Unbrave One*" — demonstrates a persistent theme of cultural misapprehension

that not only perpetuates prevailing stereotypes but also mirrors wider social perspectives on Arabs and Muslims in the post-9/11 era.

The research findings reveal that whereas *American Dad* employs satire and absurdity to target certain elements of American society, it concurrently risks normalising detrimental assumptions that foster a culture of fear and misunderstanding. The comic framing frequently conceals the serious consequences of these representations, resulting in a diminished comprehension of the richness and variety intrinsic to Arab and Muslim identities. The animated sitcom employs exaggerated caricatures, reinforcing a singular perspective that does not accurately depict the diverse cultural fabric of the Arab world.

Furthermore, the ramifications of these portrayals transcend mere entertainment. Edward Said and Jack Shaheen underscore that media representations profoundly influence public opinion and can result in tangible repercussions, such as prejudice and violence directed towards Arab and Muslim populations. The humour of *American Dad*, albeit amusing, needs critical analysis to deconstruct the prejudices it reinforces.

In conclusion, our research underlines the need for more nuanced and respectful depictions of Arab and Muslim identities in media. By encouraging empathy and understanding, future tales can challenge the established prejudices that now dominate popular culture. As consumers grow more cognisant of media's influence on society's perceptions, producers need to depict other cultures with care and nuance, transcending stereotypes to convey the intricacies of human experiences.

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