

Orientalist Feminism; Representation of Muslim Women in Two American Novels: Terrorist and Falling Man

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Abstract: Several novels have appeared after the September 11 attacks which deal directly or indirectly with the effect of the event on individuals, both inside and outside of the United States. Though, the novels often claim to deal with the post-traumatic aftermath of the incident, the writers regularly use Orientalist stereotyping and it seems that after 9/11 this attitude toward Muslims has hardened and even strengthened the old Orientalist discourse. Besides representing all Muslims as terrorists, the representation of women in these novels is of significance as they often reiterate and perpetuate the image of Muslim women as oppressed subhuman who live in the state of abject slavery imposed allegedly by Islamic rules. While Oriental women in general and Muslim women in particular are represented as the oppressed ones they are also regarded as being seductive, submissive and often an epitome of immorality and transgressive sexuality.

This paper shall focus on John Updike's *Terrorist* and Don DeLillo's *Falling Man* as both novels were New York Times bestsellers and both novelists are prominent figures of American literature. The paper attempts to examine the ways in which the novelists have represented Muslim women in the context of the post 9/11 novels and how Muslims and their ideologies are represented with regard to women.

Keywords: Feminist Orientalism, representation, women, contrapuntal reading, post 9/11 literature.

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Introduction

The September 11 attacks of 2001, and the so called "war on terror", brought the Middle East and the old Orientalist discourse with its binary division between "us" and "them" into focus once more. Orientalism constructed an essential entity of the so called Orientals that represented them as being radically different from their Western counterparts. The discourse attempts to perpetuate Western superiority and Oriental inferiority; the alleged barbarity and incivility of the Orientals is mostly associated with assumptions on biological differences which considered Orientals to possess different racial characteristics. Such characteristics were regarded to be essentially the opposite of that of the white Western's and thus inferior. These assumptions also exist about gender: Oriental women are considered to be seductive submissive objects while their male counterparts are effeminate, stupid and violent.

The literature of any period is a reflection of its historical context and social feelings. It situates texts in history and exposes the ways in which historical contexts influence the production of meaning within literary texts (McLeod, 2000). So when one reads Dante's inferno (canto 28) in which the writer describes the punishment for the Holy Prophet Mohammad with such an extraordinary passionate tone, he realizes the extent of hostility toward Muslims in that era. The same applies to contemporary anti-Muslim literary texts and political or religious articles and statements.

This paper is an attempt to offer a contrapuntal reading of two novels, *Terrorist* by John Updike and Don DeLillo's *Falling Man* as both novels are New York Times bestsellers and both novelists are prominent canonical figures of contemporary American literature. The novels are of significance as both novelists have a reputation of authenticity among their audiences and critics which increases the credibility of their claims. Both novelists attempt to render the distorted representation with a "normative authority", so that the reader would accept such fabrications as a mirror like representation of the reality.

The present paper would focus on the articulation of gender with Orientalism and how the perception of the West about the so called Muslim Oriental women was produced, reproduced and was influenced by the grander discourse of Orientalism. The paper would also briefly explicate how the articulation of

sexual and cultural difference moves in parallel with the Orientalist discourse.

Theoretical and Mythological Approach

Representation of Oriental women in Western Orientalist texts is as old as Orientalism and was used as an indication of Muslim backwardness and barbarity. This approach served two purposes: on one hand the constructed image of suppressive and cruel Oriental males justified and was even considered as a moral imperative to conquer Eastern territories. This according to Spivak is the case of "white men saving brown women from brown men" (Spivak, 1999, p. 287) which refers to British campaign against sati, a colonialist attempt to save the so called Oriental women from Oriental men. On the other hand one of the recurring images of the Orientalist discourse is its association with freedom of licentious sex. In nineteenth century Europe, sex had been institutionalized with strict rules which were the result of Christian church religious teachings about the issue. So the Orient was looked as a place where "one could look for sexual experience unobtainable in Europe" (Said, 1995, p. 190). In Mohammad Sharafuddin's words then the orient was represented as "an imaginative escape and libidinous investment contained in the notion of Orientalism" (1995, vii). In this way the Orient become a refuge for Western writers to attribute stories and characteristics with its origins in the writer's mind, and based on his obsessions not facts.

According to Parvin Paydar feminist Orientalism has three characteristics. First the assumption of an oppositional binary between the West and the East in which Muslim women are oppressed while their Western counterparts enjoy full freedom in their society. The second characteristic is the conception that the Oriental women are only victims of a male chauvinistic society and have no agency or resistant role in their social transformations. This approach tends to marginalize the so called Oriental women and therefore, Muslim women need saviors, i.e., the Westerns, to emancipate them from Muslim men. The third aspect of feminist Orientalism is the construction of a monolithic entity of Muslims and therefore the belief that all Muslim women are living under the same condition and have no unique aspect or identity for themselves (Payar, 1995, pp. 5-7).

Feminist Orientalism should be perceived in the wider scope of Orientalism. In the nineteenth century, "Oriental Studies" was an area of academic study through

which the "West" had to create the "East" in order to justify and perpetuate its dominance over it. According to Said Orientalism "can create not only knowledge but also the very reality that they appear to describe" (Said, 1978, p. 94). Said asserts that Orientalism is more an indicator of the power the West holds over the Orient, than about the Orient itself (ibid).

Creating an image of the Orient and a body of knowledge and subjecting it to systematic study became the prototype for taking control of Oriental studies. By taking control of the scholarship, the West also took political and economic control. In Said's view Orientalism is "a library or archive of information commonly and, in some of its aspects unanimously held. What bound the archive together was a family of ideas and a unifying set of values proven in various ways to be effective" (ibid, p. 5). Such attitudes form a myth in which the prototypical "Orient" is represented as exotic, passive, barbaric, and inferior by nature and thus both a threat and at the same time conquerable.

With the shift of Orientalism's power from Europe to the United States and despite all historical changes, its recurring images remain remarkably consistent, and its power is perhaps greater than the past. Thanks to the penetration and expansion of the mass media, the stereotyped knowledge of Orientalism can gain global recognition and instant diffusion.

Applying Foucault's perspective on discourse regarding power/ knowledge relationships (ibid, 32), Said brings very diverse and distinct Western texts under the heading of Orientalism. He elaborates the power relations between the East and the West, which played an important role in intensifying the misrepresentation and presuppositions surrounding the "Orient" and "Orientals"; Said argued the relation of the West and the Orient was a relationship of power and of complicated dominance and insisted that knowledge is always at the service of power, position and interests (ibid).

Foucault's model of discourse illustrates the historically specific relations between disciplines (defined as bodies of knowledge) and disciplinary practices (forms of social control and social possibility) (Childs et al, 1997, p. 26). Said is concerned with what Foucault calls "relations between discursive formations and non-discursive domains" (such as institutions, political events, economic practices and processes) (McHoul et al, 2000, p. 162).

In Foucault's perspective knowledge gives rise to power and, at the same time is produced by the operation of power. These discourses include certain kinds of texts or statements and exclude those that violate their set norms through types of encouragement and discouragement. In this way knowledge is no longer considered to be innocent and neutral but has close relations with power and is determined by "the laws of certain code of knowledge"(Foucault, cited in Loomba 1998, p. 34). Though representation bases itself on the notion of being faithful to the original (a mirror-like reflection of reality) it often works within the dominant paradigms, because any discourse has the tendency to elicit forms of knowledge which conforms to established paradigms and reinforces it (Childs et al 1997).

Method: Contrapuntal Reading of an Orientalist Text, a Counter-Narrative

A Contrapuntal reading of an Orientalist text is a way of reading a text in order to reveal its deep implication in imperialism and the colonial process. This method is a responsive reading that provides a counterpoint to the text that enables the critic to reveal the implications of the Orientalist work which may be hidden. In this approach the critic provides the affiliations of the text, its origin in social and cultural reality rather than its mere canonical criteria in a literary text, so that the critic can uncover cultural and political implications that are not explicitly addressed in the text (Ashcroft et al, 2007, p. 56). A contrapuntal reading of a text considers it with simultaneous awareness both of the metropolitan and those other subjected and concealed histories against which the dominant discourse acts (Said, 1993, p. 93). Contrapuntal reading of a text is a counter-narrative which penetrates beneath the surface of a text to elaborate the presence of Orientalist attitudes of the author in canonical literature in order to reveal the political worldliness of the text (Ashcroft et al, p. 93). Contrapuntal readings also avoid reductive and essentialising divisions of categories of social life and reductiveness (ibid).

Literature Review

A brief look at the literature, paintings, travelogues and etc. of eighteen and nineteen centuries to the present reveals the fact that representation of Oriental and Muslim women has not changed over centuries and some common traditions

and stereotypes are recurring with almost little or no change at all.

Representation of the Muslim women in medieval literary works as oppressed and veiled can be traced in texts such as *Chanson de Roland* and *Auccasin and Nicolette* from the twelfth to thirteen centuries. The Muslim woman archetype enters as an unknown veiled foreign figure in *Don Quixote* during the renaissance: "Is this lady a Christian or a Moor? Her dress and her silence make us think she is what we hope she is not" (as cited in Kahf, 1983, p. 81). The statement shows the association of Muslim women (Moor) with silence and the difference between Muslim and Christian women. According to Kahf it was during the renaissance that representation of Muslim women and her dressing became more visible and her veil was associated with transgressive sexuality (ibid, p. 86).

Other characteristics which gained increased popularity were sexual motifs such as harems and concubines; this according to Kahf can be referred to as the "motif of enclosure" in which the audience had the image of the jealous Muslim man guarding, veiling, and enclosing the women (ibid, p. 105).

The dominant image of the Oriental women during the eighteenth century is perhaps best reflected in a statement by De Forest who is considered as one of the prominent American writers of realist fiction. Prior to his travel to the Orient, in his book *Oriental Acquaintances*, De Forest writes about his expectations of the Orient as a place of laxity and luxurious life with its stereotypical male and female, mentioning his inspiration derived from *The Arabian Nights*:

The fat Turk in the geography, and the wealth of the Arabian Nights, formed the warp and woof of my Eastern expectations. I fancied that each Oriental possessed an independent fortune, and smoked interminable pipes, seated on luxurious cushions... I was extremely shocked, therefore, to find the greater part of the population at work...the Turkish women cofounded my inquisitive eyes with vexatious veils and swaddling...they seemed to be absurdly contented with their ghostly way of life; not a soul of them ever solicited me to carry her off from the harem of tyranny (as cited in Schueller, 1998, p. 91).

Like many of his counterparts, De Forest authoritatively reproduces the Orient of the popular imagination; though he finds the discrepancy between his imaginary Orient and the real one he still expresses his contempt toward the "vexatious veils", and Turkish women's "absurd" contention with their "ghostly life"; he also

expresses his surprise that oriental women didn't ask him to save them from tyranny of the harem.

The same approach toward Muslim women, veil and their status in Islamic countries is still persistent in modern literature and it can be best perceived in literary texts (as well as political ones) that are produced in Iran after the Iranian Islamic Revolution of 1979. Iranian Muslim women are represented as victims of the cruel patriarchal practice who have no control over their destinies. Memoires written on Iran are perfect example of how Muslim women are represented by Orientalists and in case of Iranian writers the Orientalized Orientals have made a significant contribution to the existing literature.

Azar Nafisi's *Reading Lolita in Tehran* became a best seller which resulted in a number of Iranian memoirists to imitate her. The important point about almost all of the Iranian memoir writers in the West is their more or less similar political affiliations as well as personal history which make the books appear more as a part of political agenda than as of a literary value; such books often work within the well established Orientalist discourse. In her memoir, Nafisi: "displays an extraordinary amount of contempt towards anything that has to do with Islam" (Marandi & Pirnajmuddin, 2009, p. 180). A trend which is often imitated in other Iranian memoirs such as *Lipstick Jihad* (Azadeh Moaveni), *Journey from the Land of No* (Roya Hakakian), *Prisoner of Tehran* (Marina Nemat), *Persian Girls* (Nahid Rachlin), *My Life as Traitor* (Zahra Ghahremani).

Memoires written by foreign writers who have briefly lived in Iran (or other Islamic countries) are also among books in this category with similar characteristics. The Book *Not without My Daughter* by Betty Mahmoody, became a best-seller in 1987 and its publication ensued a series of such books which aimed to gain the same success by following the established patterns of that book. The claim to be a "true story" is the commonality of such works, often narrating the adventures of an Oriental husband and his Western white wife who is the heroine of the story. The entrapped heroin attempts to save her life and possibly her child from the brutal husband.

The books are often praised by their readers and receive positive reviews in the press. Praising Betty's courage and contrasting her with the dark, exotic and monstrous Iranian husband, the German magazine *Der Spiegel* wrote: "She is the pure West. She is brave, wise at the right time [...] her husband is the dark mystery,

whose change from American into Iranian resembles the change of Dr. Jekyll into Mr. Hyde" (Der Spiegel cited in Hart, 2001). Of course no one bothered to hear the monstrous father's story because the "pure west" tells the truth which needs no evidence for the self-assured Western audience.

Some novels with mass public appeal such as the Princess trilogy were also published. The Princess was the New York Times best seller and is written by an American writer with made up names in order to protect the well being of individuals. The writer makes an interesting and ironic claim at the beginning of the book by thanking Sultana, supposedly a Saudi princess, for her help "to dispel the many negative stereotypes held" (Sasson, 1994, p. 2) of Arabs and her contribution in helping "we of the West" (ibid) to know the Arab's customs which deserves respect and admiration. Regardless of the authenticity of Sultana's adventures and the brutality of Saudi's life and the Saudi royal family, the work repeats negative stereotype attributed to all Arabs and Muslims: sexism, polygamy, male chauvinism, brutality and etc. which are referred to in almost each and every page of the book.

Terrorist and Falling Man: Canonical Texts and Writers

Don DeLillo (born 1936) is an American author, playwright, and occasional essayist whose novels have dealt with diverse subjects and themes such as nuclear war, the Cold War, the advent of the digital age, and global terrorism. The Anthology of American Literature 2004 (Volume II, 8/E) lists DeLillo as canonical; The Concise Anthology of American Literature 2005 (6th edition) also puts Don DeLillo among the canonical writers. In addition, the Online Anthology of American Literature lists him as representing the American literary canon.

DeLillo, "the literary master of the terrorist's imagination" as the New York Magazine puts it, returned to his favorite theme of terrorism and its representation with *Falling Man* in 2007. Don DeLillo's post 9/11 novel *Falling Man* was published in 2007 and features a group of people who had survived the 9/11 attacks and the shock and horror they went through in its aftermath. At the same time with shifts in the narrative of the story, the readers are exposed to fractions of Hammad's mind, one of the 9/11 Muslim hijackers. Through these fragments the readers are supposed to become familiar with the motivations of a supposedly authentic Muslim for carrying out a terrorist act as a Muslim.

John Updike (1932- 2009) is considered as one of the most visible, successful and prolific writers of American literature. The fifth edition of the Heath Anthology of American Literature and the American Literature Anthology (writers' edition) as well as the Norton Anthology of American Literature (seventh edition) both index John Updike as a prominent canonical author. According to Amis, Updike is "a master of all trades, able to crank himself up to Ph.D. level on any subject he fancies: architecture, typography, cave painting, computers, evolution...and Gospel scholarship" (Amis, 1991, p. 34).

The 22nd novel of John Updike, *Terrorist*, is fictionalized in Paterson, the city of New Prospect, Northern New Jersey. Ahmad Ashmawy Mulloy is an 18 year old American-born Muslim with an Irish-American mother and an Egyptian exchange student father who disappeared when he was three. His high school guidance counselor, Jack Levy, a reluctant Jew and Shaikh Rashid, a fervent Muslim and Ahmad's imam also play a pivotal role throughout the novel. The inner conflict within Ahmad, his disdain toward the decadence and dissipation of American life, his attempts "to walk the Straight Path", his thirst for Paradise, his ambivalent sexual feelings toward Joryleen, a fellow high school student who is an African-American, and his transformation to a jihadist suicide bomber, are the main themes which unfold over the course of the novel.

Feminist Orientalism: Representation of Muslim Women in *Terrorist and Falling Man*

One of important aspects of Orientalism is that the Orientalist often considers himself as an omniscient narrator that speaks who represents the Orientals. The so called Oriental is considered incapable of self representation as Karl Marx puts it: "They cannot represent themselves; they must be represented" (Hartley, 2003, p. 248). The Orientalist is able to penetrate into the heart and mind of his subjects and reveal his or her intentions, motivations, wills and thoughts.

Don DeLillo takes the same approach through his use of narrative mode; he speaks authoritatively and negatively about the Orient in essentialist terms. He seems to recognize Hammad and his friend's impulses and motivations as Muslim terrorists; he is also able to place himself in the position of a Muslim "Oriental" woman. This mode gives the writer the advantage of representing Muslim's beliefs,

values and ideological stances, as well as their attitude towards people, events and things as he wishes. As a result the narrative of the story does not transmit a set of facts about the real world of the characters; rather it is constructed and produced as a result of the writer's preferences and within the dominant discourse.

The Orientalist assumption about gender is also quite evident in the novel. In Orientalism Edward Said once wrote that Flaubert's encounter with an Egyptian courtesan produced a widely influential model of the Oriental woman. She never spoke of herself; she never represented her emotions, presence, or history as he spoke for and represented her. The same approach is more or less obvious in *Terrorist*. No Muslim woman is represented in the novel and the only time that the reader can have a touch of it is through Ahmad's Christian mother who wears a scarf at his son's wish that she would not be "looking like a whore" (Updike, 2006, p. 114). Ironically in Jack Levy's eyes the covering poses "a provocation, implying a dazzling ultimate nakedness. Her headscarf speaks of submission, which stirs him". Words such as "provocation", "nakedness" and "submission" are traditional attributes of Oriental women who are considered to be seductively submissive objects. As Sardar puts it: "For the western gaze, the Orient offers exotic, sinful, sexual delights all wrapped in an ancient, mystical and mysterious tradition (Said, 1978, p. 6).

In Orientalism there is a constant and inseparable association between the Orient and sensuality. As Said pointed out female Orientals are usually the creatures of a male power- fantasy: "They express unlimited sensuality, they are more or less stupid, and above all they are willing and submissive" (Said, 1978, p. 207). Don DeLillo's depiction of an Oriental woman confirms almost exactly with what Said mentioned about the Oriental female as a sexual object: she has an Oriental body "she had dark eyes and floppy body that liked contact" (2007, p. 81) as well as sensuality "she wanted him to know her whole presence, inside and out" (ibid, p. 82). She makes Hammad feel more intelligent in her presence by: "asking questions or just being herself" (ibid), which suggests that she is naturally stupid and there is no need for her to put that much effort to make him feel smart.

The Oriental male is equally sensual and has an undifferentiated sexual derive. Several times the novelist mentions Hammad's sexual desire for passerby women (ibid, p. 78 & 176), a saleswoman in a supermarket (ibid, p. 171) and for her girlfriend's

roommate (ibid, p. 82) besides herself.

Sardar seems to provide a good interpretation of this attitude toward Muslims when he pointed out that "Symbolically, the violent and barbaric Muslim male and sensual, passive female, come together to represent the perfect Orient of the Western perception: "they fuse together to produce a concrete image of sensuality and despotism and thus inferiority" (1999, p. 48).

In *Falling Man* the representation of Muslim male and female relationships are significant. The relationship between Lianne and Keith and Keith's affair with Florence are portrayed in a parallel with Hammad's relationship with women. The woman that Hammad has sexual affairs with is Syrian, German and a little Turkish. Her identity and personality has no significance. Unlike the other female characters whose feelings and thoughts are represented the only impression that readers get from her is that her whole presence is sexual and for the sexual gratifications of Hammad.

In *Terrorist* Jack Levy is compared with Ahmad's Egyptian father, Omar, who is "irresponsible, opportunistic and a clueless loser" (Updike, 2006, p. 87) as his mother, Teresa, puts it. Like his other Oriental counterparts, Omar believed that: "a woman should serve a man, not to try to own him, he'd say, as if he were quoting some kind of Holy Writ" (ibid, p. 84). On the other hand, Levy, though has a sexual affair with Teresa she: "knows he will never leave her [his wife]: his Jewish sense of responsibility and sentimental loyalty, which must be Jewish too" (ibid, p. 122). Teresa's main source of attraction toward Ahmad's father is typically Orientalist when she explains the reason for her marriage: " love mostly with him being, as you know, exotic, third-world, put-upon, and my marrying him showing how liberal and liberate I was" (ibid, p. 86).

The Holy Quran Represented as the Root of Women's Mistreatment

Throughout the novel the writers try to insinuate their readers that the Holy Quran is the source of Muslim's wrong doings and a book which advises women's mistreatment. In *Terrorist* Updike often selects verses and chapters of the Quran based on his denigrating purposes and without contextualization, ignores the fact that to correctly interpret the Quran requires the knowledge of when and under what circumstances different verses were revealed to the Prophet Mohammad. This

approach is evident when Updike intended to reinforce the underlying theme that the Quran and the religion of Islam are the roots of women's oppression.

As an example when Ahmad consults the Quran for sexual advice he finds that "it talked about uncleanness but only with regard to women, their menstruation, their suckling of infants. Here Updike uses a verse which is not related to such issues and immediately after that he writes about a verse which calls women "pollution". But in fact there is no verse in the Holy Quran which calls women unclean or polluted. The displacement of the verses makes it difficult for a non-Muslim reader to guess that the verse is referring to women's menstruation. The source for this idea seems to have roots in the Old Testament, but Updike tries to associate it with the Quran. It seems that the writer is more inspired from a verse about the same issue in Leviticus, the Old Testaments:

If a woman has a discharge, and the discharge from her body is blood, she shall be set apart seven days; and whoever touches her shall be unclean until evening. Everything that she lies on during her impurity shall be unclean; also everything that she sits on shall be unclean. Whoever touches her bed shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. And whoever touches anything that she sat on shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. If anything is on her bed or on anything on which she sits, when he touches it, he shall be unclean until evening. And if any man lies with her at all, so that her impurity is on him, he shall be unclean seven days; and every bed on which he lies shall be unclean (Leviticus 15, 19-24).

Due to extreme views that existed among different pre-Islamic religions toward menstruating women (people would not eat, drink, or sit with the woman and would even send her to a separate place), people asked Prophet Mohammad what is the Islamic rule on this issue; Unlike the former extremities the Quran orders sexual abstinence during this period and nothing more.

One should also consider the significant amount of attention which Updike gives to the Quran's Arabic transliteration and his extensive use of it. By using the Quran's Arabic transliteration Updike creates an aura of authenticity showing his reader how far he is the master of his subject and the distorted representation is intensified with the novelist's emphasis on writing from the real text. In this way the words which the Western reader can make no sense penetrates into his mind

with careful intensity. Beside the fact that the Western reader is unable to read and comprehend the transliterations prepares the context for the misrepresentations of writer and the misunderstanding of the reader.

As an example the Arabic transliteration of a verse is presented to the reader: "ta'fu wa tasfahu wa taghfiru- afa and safaha"; the text continues with saying that: "abstain and run away! Do without women of non-Heavenly flesh, this earthly baggage, these unclean hostages to fortune! Travel light, straight in to paradise!" (Updike, 2006, p. 106). The writer does not mention whether this is the meaning of those transliterated words which simply means "forgive and overlook, and cover up their faults" (64,14) or the writer's own interpretation. In fact the representation of Islam's perception on women which Updike tries to portray in these verses again seems to have roots in the Old Testament where women are considered to be inferior and essentially different from men: "No wickedness comes anywhere near the wickedness of a woman. . . .Sin began with a woman and thanks to her we all must die" (Ecclesiastes 25,19, 24) or "the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man" (Corinthians 11,3-9). In the Quran women are not considered less than men in different aspects of religion and are not disrespected. As the Book states, both men and women are created from one soul: "O humanity, be reverent to your Lord who created you from one soul and created its mate from it, and from these two disseminated many men and women." (Quran 4,1)

Virgins as Motivation

The promise of virgins for martyrs which asserts the stereotypical clichés about Easterners being oversexed so that even when they are fighting for their sacred cause there is sensuality behind it, has turned into one of the most recurring images of Muslim representation. The verses of the Holy Book related to rewarding martyrs are those which promise them with "best rewards" without making any specification (3,169–170). There are several examples in which Updike mentions virgins as one of the main motivations for the many young men such as when Sheikh fears that a revision about the virgins "would make Paradise significantly less attractive for many young men" (Updike, 2006, pp.104, 69, 105, 167), which confirms the Orientalist cliché of Muslims sensuality. The popular conception of

paradise in the Quran which is held among Westerners and is propagated is that it is a place just for sensual pleasure; but an examination of actual descriptions in the Quran gives quite a different picture. Some of these fabrications originated probably from different sources such as the man made books of Hadiths and Sunna which have no authenticity among Muslim scholars. Interestingly the sources which are used by the "authentic" writer are some of the most obsolete but popular clichés (which one can find in Wikipedia with no profound research), whose credibility is rejected by Muslim scholars.

Conclusion

The stereotypical representation of Arabs and Muslims as Jacksons puts it "tend to lump Arabs, Muslims, and Middle East into one highly negative image of violence and danger" (cited in Lester, 2011, p. 65); such images are largely drawn from collective memory than actual experience. *Terrorist* and *Falling Man* apparently represent the pervasive influence of centuries of deeply rooted Orientalism and are perhaps continuing that tradition in a more subtle way. Each culture requires the existence of another culture as an alter ego to maintain and develop its own culture; Orientalism represents not the so called Orientals but the West to itself. The West's dominant discourse about the East is often the projection of qualities and characteristics that have nothing or little to do with the social and political reality of these regions.

Representational politics of Muslim women is closely aligned with political and ideological conditions of imperialist discourse. The colonial representation of Muslim women as oppressed and victims of the alleged Islamic rule goes back to the medieval times and continues to the present. Such policy of representation was and is used to justify the political, economic and cultural domination and provides the moral justification for expansion of imperialism.

Representation of Muslim women in Updike's *Terrorist* and Don DeLillo's *Falling Man* follows and reiterates the Orientalist representation of the Muslim women which has existed since the Middle Ages. Though the novels have been written in the 21st century and there has been an increase in contact with and information about Muslims, the writers often use the same clichés and stereotypes about Muslims which have existed since the Middle Ages as Sardar puts it:

Willful misunderstanding and knowledgeable ignorance have remained the

guiding spirit of Orientalism, it has survived defiantly and remained dominant when alternative information has been readily available. Orientalism is composed of what the West wishes to know, not of what can be known (Sardar, 1999, p. 19).

In both novels which were presented in the present paper, Muslim women have been produced discursively as products of male gaze within the context of varying relations of power and domination. Such construction ignores the diverse realities and experiences and the social reality of Muslim women's life on a global scale.

The danger of DeLillo's supposed authoritative narration and Updike's fictitious representation of Islamic principles is that such fabrications replace the reality which has little or nothing to do with Islam. To conclude, the novels work within the old-established Orientalist discourse with no profundity of research about Islam, the Quran, the Prophet, Jihad, Muslim women, etc. The readers are exposed to an amalgamation of fabrication, racism, half-truths (in quite a selective way) and distortion of reality and this in turn leads to more stereotyping and injustice.

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The article explores representations of South Asian Muslim terrorists and feminist activists in the U.S. mainstream media as well as the production of gendered, religious, and political identities, focusing on the case of a presumed terrorist sleeper cell and on widely circulating autobiographical texts by two Muslim women. The two cases I discuss here are inherently uneven as Hayat became visible as the target of an FBI investigation and has no writings of his own; Manji is known as an author, media figure, and producer of a PBS documentary, "Faith without Fear." But clearly, Muslim women spokespersons are important for a liberal feminist Orientalist feminism; representation of Muslim women in two American novels: *Terrorist* and *Falling Man*. SM Marandi, Z Ghasemi Tari. *International Journal of Women's Research* 1 (2), 5-20, 2012. 12. 2012. Sam Shepard and the "familial maze": possible worlds theory in *Buried Child*. O Amani, H Pirnajmuddin, SM Marandi. *GEMA Online* @ *Journal of Language Studies* 17 (2), 2017. While Oriental women in general and Muslim women in particular are represented as the oppressed ones they are also regarded as being seductive, submissive and often an epitome of immorality and transgressive sexuality. This paper shall focus on John Updike's *Terrorist* and Don DeLillo's *Falling Man* as both novels were New York Times bestsellers and both novelists are prominent figures of American literature. Marandi, S., Ghasemi Tari, Z. *Orientalist Feminism; Representation of Muslim Women in Two American Novels: Terrorist and Falling Man*. *International Journal of Women's Research*, 2012; 1(2): 5-20.