New Colonial Rescue

Appropriating a Feminist Discourse in the War on Terror

Doctoral Thesis

Eman Ahmed Khamas

Departament de Filologia Anglesa i Germanística

Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

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Director

Dra. Felicity Hand

Between patriarch and imperialism, subject-constitution and object-formation, the figure of the woman disappears, not into a pristine nothingness, but into a violent shuttling which is the displaced figuration of the ‗third-world woman' caught between tradition and modernization…Imperialism's image as the establisher of the good society is marked by the espousal of the woman as object of protection from her own kind.

Spivak, ‗Can the Subaltern Speak?'

Abbreviations

CDA: Critical Discourse Analysis

CTS: Critical Terrorism Studies

ME: The Middle East/ Middle Eastern

WOT: The War on Terrorism

WTC: World Trade Center

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Introduction

In recent years, late twentieth early twenty-first centuries, a new ‗feminist‘ discourse accompanied the War on Terror[1] in official Western discourse, in the media, feminist narratives, popular culture, and in literature (novels, fiction and nonfiction bestsellers, literary journalism, and autobiographies). The West, mainly the US, claimed feminist motivations for their wars in the Middle East: to ensure women‘s rights in countries where these rights were violated and abrogated, where women are rendered oppressed helpless victims; in other words these wars have had a civilizing, modernizing rescue mission in the name of human rights, among other justifications of democracy, such as curbing weapons of mass destruction, fighting terrorism, legitimate oil needs, world peace and stability and so forth.

This new ‗feminist‘ discourse, in fact was adapted and marketed to conceal the real motives of military interventions, invasions, and occupations within the context of reconstructing the political, economic and cultural systems in the area, thus it is a discourse that involved too many contradictions. To begin with it reenacts the same old colonialist racist discourse of the white man‘s responsibility of civilizing and liberating the Other, the stereotyped primitive man of color, from the chains of his own backwardness. Exactly as the white man‘s slogans through the last five centuries had humane civilizing missions in their declared narratives, now the new ‗feminist‘ discourse has the same mission of saving the Other, the Middle Eastern, Muslim, Arab woman from the misery she thrives in, imposed on her by patriarchal cultures, tyrant regimes, and above all Mediaeval religious (Islamic) traditions.

[1] Henceforth WOT

A new stereotype is constructed and represented: a helpless victim deprived of her individual human rights, desperately needing help; and that it is the responsibility of the advanced self-congratulating men and women who had preceded her in gaining their rights to give her a hand in fighting patriarchal masculine oppression and its despotic institutions. This stereotype, which is basically built on images drawn by the old Orientalist discourse, remained faulty because it was based on impressions outside the cultural structure of a given society, and on political backgrounds serving the US imperialist interests of colonizing the Middle East anew.

The new stereotype is decontextualized, western-centered and homogenous, hence often incapable of understanding the real nature of man-woman-institution relationships, which are necessarily controlled by systems of values deeply rooted in history, geography, and culture. Women are not a homogeneous class all over the world (Mohanty, 1991), joined by -and fighting against- the oppression of another homogeneous class, men. This binary universal division is basically naïve and based on stereotyping. What an educated, Christian, enlightened middle-class woman from a neighborhood, say, north of Baghdad, considers injustice and violation of her rights, might well be considered protection of her rights by another Baghdadi woman a kilometer away, with different education, religion, or class, to say nothing about millions of cultural types all around the world. What is best for one woman in a specific society and a specific historical period is not necessarily good enough for another.

In addition to that, Western colonial societies, the saviors in this case, built their advanced economic and technological cultures, partly, on exploiting other nations, the Middle East included, in which case they became the victims to be saved. This point in particular is a repetition of the eternal question: why do the developing countries not learn from the experiences

of the developed and copy them? The answer is simply because the victim cannot- and indeed should not- imitate her/his persecutors.

Middle Eastern[2] women, lacking in educational, health, and economic opportunities, still need to maintain the struggle to get out of the subaltern Other position within their own cultures. Struggling out of this situation, however, assumes clear awareness of the dimensions of the problem, deep feeling of its injustice, and willingness to fight. Moreover, in the Middle East, this struggle is directly connected to the overall political and economic problems that it suffers from. On the other hand, cultures are never static, and human beings tend to strategize their conducts accordingly, in a kind of cultural negotiation or compromise. For example, progressive women who volunteer to work as teachers in remote conservative communities wear Islamic dress, but does that make them victims or fighters?

Wars, foreign occupations and invasions complicate the situation for women, indeed for everybody, and make it even more difficult and, as in the case of Iraq and Afghanistan, actually deprive them from -and destroy- whatever rights they managed to achieve through their own struggle, apart from the fact that wars violate very essential and cultural human rights. The consequences are contrary to the declared intentions. These women

> blame the USA for the devastation to the environment and the deterioration in their quality of life…they have endured displacement, a cramped existence in refugee camps in foreign lands, the rape and abuse of their sisters, mothers and daughters, the slaughter of their loved ones on a daily basis at the hands of the US occupiers, and have had to watch helplessly as even their children suffer nervous breakdowns (Carty, 2008: 267)

Well-intentioned foreign (feminist) solidarity should be no more, and cannot be more, than solidarity. The subaltern Other cannot be fought for, and the moral responsibility of the

[2] Henceforth ME

supporter is not to speak for the female Other, but to listen and to let her speak, not speak *for* her. Otherwise solidarity only consolidates her subalternity. As Spivak argues, when the Other speaks for herself, she is actually creating her identity anew, reestablishing her position in a community (1995). Indeed speaking for the subaltern Other woman assumes a kind of solidarity that actually does not exist, because it steals her right to speak, i.e. Middle Eastern women create their opportunities to be *through* their struggle, not out of it, not without it.

Feminist sisterly support and responsibility towards the oppressed Other, could be strategically ‗hijacked' (Mohanty et al, 2008) and used to serve the new imperialist hegemonic discourse of the 21st century, whether the feminist leaders like it or not. Universal humanist slogans (defending the rights of ethnic minorities, women, children, homosexuals, democracy…and so on) have become the pretext for many selective interventions and military aggressions, to reconstruct the local cultures at a grassroots level in a way that serves the interests of the aggressors, regardless of how far these slogans serve the Other involved. Certainly, this is not a call to stop international solidarity; on the contrary it is a call upon these solidarity groups to restrategize their approaches, reread the historical experiences in the Middle East, at least to decide how far they have been effective.

To sum up, supporting the ‗Third World' woman, the Middle Eastern woman in this case, cannot be achieved through negatively judging her cultural paradigms, destroying these paradigms, uprooting her by force, or even advising her to act outside and against them. Indeed, these policies are counterproductive. Some women activists who accompanied the US occupation of Iraq were assassinated. It is through helping her guarantee opportunities of education, economic independence, health, and *above all peace*, that sisterly support could be

useful. It is by guaranteeing her opportunity to speak and to be heard; to let her create her historical opportunity to choose her cultural paradigm away from the harmful inherited traditions, and without imperialist destruction. Many feminist organizations are already doing this against their own imperialist states, jeopardizing their struggle to be stamped ‗supporting terrorism'.

My thesis is that a new ‗feminist' discourse was appropriated in the last two decades as a pretext in the war on terror strategy, and as a part of war propaganda, defaming and dehumanizing Middle Eastern cultures in the name of emancipating women within the context of democracy and civilization. It reenacts historically embedded colonial rhetoric, racialized discourses of male superiority and white supremacy, of female vulnerability, inadequacy, and inferiority as justification of war. This dissertation aims at deconstructing this new imperialist ‗feminist' discourse, showing that it springs from -and leads to- the same subjugation of the Other, violence against women and men, and more conflicts.

Given the centrality of the neocolonialist wars in the world today, it would be difficult to understand the new ‗feminist' discourse without understanding the specificities of the cultural warfare practices and ideologies mobilized by the US in pursuit of economic and political hegemony. This is why the methodological approach will be eclectic, blending cultural studies with literary criticism which enables the analysis of different narratives that deal with the cultural identity of the Other.

This dissertation is divided into two parts, each subdivided into chapters. But before the first part, I present the theoretical framework according to which I establish my analysis. The thesis is built on three philosophical premises and a political doctrine. First and foremost is

Foucault's theory of discourse in which he has 'contributed to a novel and significant general approach to the problem of representation. What concerned him was the production of knowledge (rather than meaning) through what he called discourse (rather than just language)' (Hall, 1997: 42-3). I outline his major ideas of the relation between knowledge/power, and discourse, i.e. 'a group of statements which provide a language to talk about a particular topic at a particular historical moment' (ibid: 291). Next I introduce Edward Said's significant contribution to postcolonial studies in his critical practice of Orientalism, in which he is extremely indebted to Foucault[3]. Said applies Foucault's notion of discourse in studying the British and French cultural production at the peak of colonialism during the 18th and 19th centuries, a study that he elaborated through his life's oeuvre. Next I refer to Spivak's outstanding contribution to feminist studies within postcolonial theory, arguing that it is *impossible* for any rescue discourse to avail women within a colonial project. The three premises are recurrently invoked through the thesis. Finally, I explain the political doctrine of Joseph Nye's Soft Power, elaborated in the 1990s, namely investing in American cultural power to make other peoples 'want to do' what the US wants without force or appeasement, a doctrine that is, ironically, built on Foucault's notion of docile bodies, and Antonio Gramsci's notion of hegemony.

The first part of the dissertation reviews the political, historical, and feminist discourses of WOT, with a case study of Iraq. Chapter III reviews -historically and critically- the conceptual

[3] Said also recognizes his indebtedness to two significant contributors to Orientalism: firstly, Anouar Abdel-Malek's 'Orientalism in Crisis' (*Diogenes*, no.44, 1963, pp. 104-12), where he suggested that decolonization had plunged Orientalists into crisis, and that they have to treat the 'objects' of their studies as sovereign subjects. Secondly, Raymond Shwab *The Oriental Renaissance* (1950), a massive study of the impact Oriental cultures had on European thought and literature in the 19th century, but without investigating the-other-way-round impact on the colonized, a task that Said elaborated.

confusion in the mainstream discourse of terrorism and its definitions. It suggests that the modern label of terrorism, as a declared state strategy, accompanied the Cold War and the ascension of the US as a super power of global reach immediately after World War II; and that empire and terrorism produce each other simultaneously. Applying a critical approach to the study of the discourse of the War on Terrorism, Critical Terrorism Studies observe that the discourse is culturally constructed, state-centered, and that it isolated, silenced, and homogenized terrorism. It has become an ideological frame for imperial wars, which are culturally waged, alongside the military and political ones.

In the fourth chapter I map the evolution of the rescue discourse through narratives of human rights, imperialism as self defense, and UN and international organizations narratives. I argue that the issue of liberation of ME women within the discourse of WOT is based on two integrated liberal assumptions: that women are subjugated by misogynist cultures that are medieval, patriarchal, androcentric, and undemocratic; the religion of Islam is the sole source of this misogyny; and that the sexual repression, women's segregation, and their absence from the public sphere and so on are behind the violent, aggressive, authoritarian and macho conducts characteristic of ME societies. To solve the 'problem', liberating women is achieved by culturally reconstructing these societies through democratization, and providing women with the institutional access to enter public spheres. These assumptions are simplistic, inaccurate, paradoxical and built on neo-colonial neo-Orientalist representations enacted within WOT, ignoring two centuries of progress in the situation of women.

Applying Spivak's notion of 'subaltern' women and Leila Ahmed's concept of establishment Islam I argue that women -and men- in the ME are silenced by the discourses of

both WOT and of institutionalized Islam equally. Women in the ME face huge challenges, not the least of which are cultural, but also political and economic, WOT representations use the discourse of establishment Islam and its cultural and social articulations as justification for a neo-colonial project in the ME. I demonstrate how this discourse of WOT is characterized by exaggerations, generalizations, de-historicization, de-contextualization, ignorance, racist stereotypical bias, and judgments not on local (cultural) terms, but rather through Western lenses. Women are represented as living in an extremely hostile environment. The question is if women in the ME are so much hated by their people, so repressed and subjugated -as the discourse of WOT suggests- how is it possible that they survived at all, let alone broke through the ‗taboos' and negotiated increasingly wider spaces to exist, work and progress? They must be very strong, strong-willed, aware of their location within their culture, not victims at all, and definitely not in need of any chivalric (military) rescue.

Chapter V is a case study of what I have already demonstrated in the previous chapters. I review the history of the Iraqi women's liberation movement in the 20th century, how it has always been connected to political liberation movements, how it has developed and flourished within the struggle for independence and nation building, and how its achievements have been totally destroyed by wars and the occupation of 2003. I also argue that what liberal feminists criticize as ‗state feminism' is not necessarily a negative concept connected to the political ideology of the state. Feminism in ME countries is necessarily developmental. Progressive states which provide women with opportunities in education, health, and jobs inevitably raise the status of women within traditional or conservative cultures. Through this case study I show that WOT, waged in the name of rescuing women, discursively and literally destroyed their chances, pushed them back to the pre-modern world, and brought terrorism to a country that was -until the US

invasion- free of it. Ten years after the occupation, Iraq has been torn by violence, chaos, and the ascension of social and sectarian fundamentalisms, all of which work directly against women‘s aspirations of liberation and equality.

The second part of the thesis is literary. In Chapter VI I trace the genealogy of the ME women‘s representations in the literary Anglo-American imagination through the last millennium, starting with the Medieval romance, whose appearance, significantly, coincided with the appearance of Islam as a prominent threat to Christianity. A short introduction is presented about the intellectual confrontation between the two beliefs, which had unnecessarily ended up with a permanent divorce. I give special textual spaces to the representational prototypes of ME women in the medieval romance and Chaucer, then I proceed to the Renaissance and early modern narratives, choosing one example of each. In the 18th century I move to the US and show how the founding mothers of Western feminism in the US -and Britain- used the Orient to critique their own gender systems without transgressing the limits of propriety and religion. Similarly, I show how the Romantics used the Orient to project their own anxieties and contradictions. Byron, for example, twisted the identity of the enslaved female to uphold his chivalric liberation discourse. By the 19th century, Orientalism is all over the literary production of the colonial age, parodied by Edgar Allan Poe in ‗Ligeia‘. In modernist narratives too, colonized cultures were used as catalytic agents for metropolitan self-questioning.

The next two chapters are text analyses. In Chapter VII, I talk about a phenomenon that spread after 9/11 of many bestsellers, a subgenre of diasporic (auto)biographical narratives of oppressed Muslim women extended all over the US and Europe. They talk about their suffering within the patriarchal misogynist cultures of Muslim societies, and support the idea that the

single reason behind violent tendencies in the ME is Islam, of which women are the most miserable victims. They neglect the complicated political, economic and social histories of the region. In Chapter VIII, British and American narratives that tackle the issue of terrorism from different points of view, but which represent ME women in the same image of a helpless victim, are analyzed. I have chosen to study the representation of these women in novels, rather than the media, the cinema, or political discourses because I believe that novels have not only a particular capacity of representing cultures in their broader sense, but also because ‗they were immensely important in the formation of imperial attitudes, references, and experiences' (Said, 1993: xii). Writing this dissertation, sometimes I felt that I am repeating myself, but then I realized that there are certain ‗rhetorical figures', to use Said's phrase, stereotypes that keep on appearing in narratives about the ME, most importantly women stereotyped as victims. This dissertation is about how those rhetorical figures have been used to justify WOT.

Chapter II

Theoretical Framework: The Fallacy of a Discourse

‗With the American power…Young women across the Middle East will hear the message that their day of equality and justice is coming.'

This statement was made by the President of the US George W. Bush at the Republican Party convention in 2004, which nominated him for a second term presidency. Bush was defending his government's determination to intensify the fight against terrorism before the party members, the American people, the world in general, and the peoples of Iraq and Afghanistan in particular, where the American troops were fighting within WOT campaign. Countless similar statements were made in the West by heads of state and other officials, NGOs, the mainstream media, and echoed in literature and the arts. Apart from the fact that military occupation is by definition contrary to freedom, several questions are raised: why would the cause of emancipating the ME woman be an issue here; how could it serve as motivation and justification of war; and how was it reflected in literature?

Drawing on Michel Foucault's power/knowledge theory, Edward Said's Orientalism, and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's post-colonial subaltern feminism (taking into consideration the subsequent critiques of them), and applying Joseph Nye's doctrine of Soft Power, this study tries to answer the questions raised above by critically analyzing the discursive mechanisms underlying the American discourse of WOT. Three propositions are made. First, the cultural representation of the ME woman within the discourse of WOT is imperialist and neocolonialist *par excellence*. Second, it is instrumentalised not only as motivation and justification of war, but

also as a means of engaging the ME woman in the US hegemonic project; and third, being a self-contradictory discourse, it actually destroys the socio-cultural infrastructure that these women managed to build through their local struggle for their rights.

Through the trajectory of his work, Michel Foucault demonstrates how knowledge and power are co-constitutive of each other through discourse, which constructs, defines, and produces the object of knowledge. Hall suggests that Foucault‘s project is to analyze ‗how human beings understand themselves in our culture and how our knowledge about the social, the embodied individual, shared meanings‘ comes to be produced in different periods (1993: 45). Thus his work is historically grounded, and his main concern is ‗relations of power‘. His discursive approach to representation is based on three major ideas: *the concept of discourse, the issue of power and knowledge, and the question of the subject.* By discourse he means statements we use to talk about a particular topic in a particular historical moment, it is the production of knowledge through language, but it is not only a linguistic concept. It is about language *and* practice: what one says and what one does. Discourse constructs the topic; it defines and produces the objects of our knowledge, thus objects of knowledge can‘t meaningfully exist outside specific discourse (1993: 45-47).

In *Knowledge/Power* (1980), Foucault suggests that knowledge, when applied to regulate others‘ conduct through its apparatus and techniques, becomes power which in turn decides how knowledge is to be applied. Thus the knowledge/power practices are never innocent, they are ‗strategies of relations of forces supporting and supported by types of knowledge‘ (*KP*: 196). In fact Foucault denies that there is *any* ‗power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time,

power relations‘ (*KP*: 27). Thus *all* political and social forms of thought were inevitably caught up in the interplay of knowledge and power. As such, knowledge ‗not only assumes the authority of ‗the truth‘ but has the power to *make itself true*‘ (Hall, 2001: 76 emphasis in origin). As far as the subject is concerned, Foucault emphasizes that the subject is itself produced in discourse, an insistence which is central to his work, because he argues that there is no possibility of a secret, essential form of subjectivity outside of discourse.

In his ground-breaking book *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison* (1977), Foucault analyzes penalty mechanisms in prisons in their social contexts to show how the human body is condemned, rendered docile, regulated, and used as instrument of power, ‗how it is directly involved in a political field; power relations have an immediate hold on it; they invent it, make it, train it, torture it, force it to carry out tasks, to perform ceremonies, *to emit signs*‘ (*DP*: 25, emphasis added). I argue that ME women‘s -and men‘s- bodies, souls, and minds have been rendered ‗docile …analyzable …manipulable… subjected, used, transformed [into] political puppets, small-scale models of power‘ (*DP*: 136), within the discourse of WOT. Later in this chapter I will also show how Joseph Ney invests in Foucault‘s premise of docile bodies, and in Antonio Gramsci‘s theory of cultural hegemony to build the colonial theory of Soft Power. As regards his book, Foucault elaborates the idea of the individual being

> the object of information, never a subject in communication… the major effect of the Panopticon [architectural composition]: to induce a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power. So to arrange things that surveillance is permanent in its effect…that the architectural apparatus should be a machine for creating and sustaining a power relation independent of the person who exercises it; in short, that the inmates should be caught in a power situation of which they are themselves the bearers (*DP*: 200-1)

It is on this idea of individuals being the object of knowledge, deprived of agency in communications, that Said, too, builds his theory of Orientalism, as will be shown shortly. In *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972), Foucault shows how knowledge is created through discourse, history is the discourse of the powerful, and consequently, discourse is a means of controlling the social practices and institutions by managing knowledge. He also argues that by studying the ruptures of history fragments that are left behind by the social and political powers could be identified. As regards culture, Foucault prefers to use the category of ‗discursive formation'[4] rather than ‗episteme'[5] which he had used previously, to highlight the role of discourse –not ideas- in the creation of knowledge, and the relationship of discourse to the knowledge that is allowed to continue into history. I apply this deeply historicized notion of discourse, and the idea of historical ruptures in studying the literary evolution of ME women in the Western imagination in Chapter VI, in addition to Said's application of Foucault's discourse-knowledge-power nexus in *Orientalism* (1978), to map the representation of these women as victims. A discursive formation, of the ME woman as an essentially subjugated ‗subject', prevalent in Western colonial discourse for over the last two centuries, is reenacted within the discourse of WOT. Moreover, I suggest that the very act of constructing and disseminating the discourse itself *is* a practice of power on the international level, giving those who control it privilege over other discourses, let alone the knowledge it produces.

As a non-Western ‗Other', the ME woman is re-represented across a range of texts: literary, artistic, political, legal, military, medical, etc. Historically, specific forms of conduct

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[4] i.e. ‗a dispersion of statements at different levels which can be identified as a unity if one can delimit the conditions and rules which govern that dispersion' (Cousins and Hussain, 1984:90)

[5] i.e. ‗discourse, characteristic of the way of thinking or the state of knowledge at any time' (Hall, 1997: 44)

were attributed to her, and practiced by the Westerners towards/against her. Different institutions, not necessarily grand ones on the macro-power level, to use Foucault´s term, like states, international bodies, women‘s and human rights organizations, but also on the micro-power level, participated in creating her image. ‗This means that these relations go right down into the depths of society‘ (*AK*: 27): personal relations, marriages, neighbors, schools… (when it comes to diasporas) and all the different kinds of partnerships, approached the situation of the ME woman as problematic to be dealt with or solved as such. Hence an object of knowledge is created through all these discursive events ‗in all the statements that named it, divided it up, described it, explained it, traced its developments, indicated its various correlations, judged it, and possibly gave it speech by articulating, in its name, discourses that were to be taken as its own‘ (*AK*: 35).

Foucault‘s three books mentioned above are usually referred to when talking about discourse in relation to power. But the beginning of Foucault‘s trajectory in this aspect also goes back to *The History of Sexuality* (1978), where he ‗singles out sexuality for analysis not because it is a special target of repression but because it is densely overlaid with power relations‘ (Cousins and Hussain, 1984: 202). Here Foucault defines power as: the multiplicity of force relations; the process which transforms them, strengthens, or reverses them; the support they find in each other to form a system; and lastly the strategies that take effect in various hegemonies. ‗It is the name that one attributes to the complex strategical situation in a particular society‘ (*HS*: 92-3), and introduces the term *biopower* to refer to the process by which techniques and institutions of power discipline the body and control and regulate populations. He argues that power is no longer exercised over legal subjects by the domination of death, but over the biology of human bodies and thus the level of life itself (*HS*: 139-145). Foucault‘s genealogical study suggests that the notion of sexuality did not exist until it was forced into the open in the nineteenth century with the

institutionalization and psychiatrisation of society. Regulated confession and psychoanalysis formed discourses of ‗true' sexualities, and condemned others as false and perverse. Thus, it is the power regime of sexuality that creates, categorises and legitimises the idea of sexuality.

In this historicized nexus of knowledge/power/discourse, representation is also culturally specific. Indeed, the representation of the Muslim-Arab woman assumed too many images in the last millennium (the Muslim princess enamored of a crusader knight, the defeated Sultana, the silenced queen, the odalisque, the harem, the historically non-existent subject, the oppressed wife and mother, and the terrorist) corresponding to the political, military and economic interactions between the West and the ME. In this aspect, *Power/Knowledge* is most relevant. Never were these dimensions so obviously reflected as they are in the discourse of WOT. Although based on the Orientalist representation, the ME woman in this context is victimized by misogynist monsters, this time the fundamentalist terrorists. Thus a two-edge discursive strategy is constructed, functioning as a perfect rationale for the US interventionist policy in the ME: eliminating the monsters and rescuing the powerless female victims by liberating them. Needless to say, the rescuer's power has the upper hand in this equation, and the ME woman's body becomes a space where power inscribes its effects. The ME woman becomes a discursive production, ‗subjugated to the discourse, articulating the knowledge it produces, having the attributes it defines, and the positions it constructs' (*PK*: 115).

Edward Said applies Foucault's notion of discourse to a great extent. Orientalism is a discourse, Said says: ‗without examining Orientalism as a discourse one can't possibly understand the enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage –even produce- the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, scientifically, and imaginatively, during the post-Enlightenment period' (1978: 3). Said defines Orientalism as the field of studies

concerning the Orient, a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between ‗the Orient‘ and (most of the time) the ‗Occident‘ (ibid: 2), and finally, as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient‘ (ibid: 3). *Orientalism* shows how ‗the Orient was (and is) approached systematically, as a topic of learning, discovery, and practice‘ (ibid:73). The colonialists‘ cultural hegemony of the 18th and 19th centuries, namely Britain and France, discursively ‗Orientalized‘ the Orient; invented and represented it in a way that essentialized specific traits - backward, degenerate, uncivilized, and so forth - to show its inferiority, to serve the West‘s interests and desire for domination; and to create an ‗Other‘ against whom the West‘s own identity as superior is presented. ‗European culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self‘ (ibid: 3). *Orientalism* is canonized as a postcolonial classic, it realizes and elaborates

> [t]he principle features of postcolonialism‘s intellectual inheritance…Said betrays an uneasy relationship with Marxism, a specifically poststructuralist and anti-humanist understanding of the contiguity between colonial power and Western knowledge, and a profound belief in the political and worldly obligations of the postcolonial intellectual…it directs attention to the discursive and textual production of colonial meanings and concomitantly to the consolidation of colonial hegemony (Gandhi, 1998: 64).

I will elaborate on *Orientalism* further through the next chapters. But I have to emphasize here that Said‘s major achievement in *Orientalism* and subsequent works is not only demonstrating the complicity of Western knowledge with the interests of Western power, but also extending ‗the geographical and historical terrain for the poststructuralist discontent with Western epistemology…to recognize that the colonized Orient has helped to define Europe as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience‘ (ibid: 72). In this sense Said surpasses Foucault whose ‗scrupulous attention to the discursive structure and order of Western civilization remains

culturally myopic with regard to the non-European world‘ (ibid). Similarly, Spivak suggests ‗that to buy a self-contained version of the West is to ignore its production by the imperialist project…The clinic, the asylum, the prison, the university- all seem to be screen-allegories that foreclose a reading of the broader narratives of imperialism‘ (1988: 291).

Moreover, while Foucault insists on the multi-directionality of power, i.e. it does not flow only from the more to the less powerful (*DP*: 27, *PK*: 142, *HS*: 95), Said‘s application –at least in *Orientalism*- emphasizes the one-directional aspect, given the fact that he is presenting the Orientalist discourse as colonial, which by definition implies domination and hegemony. ‗Orientalism deepened, even hardened the distinction between the superior West and the inferior East… the sense of Western power over the Orient is taken for granted as having the status of scientific truth‘ (1978:42-6). Both Foucault and Said have been criticized for silencing the object of discourse. In fact for Foucault it is the discourse that produces knowledge, not the subject who speaks it. Even when subjects produce texts they do so within the discursive formations of a particular period and culture, ‗thus the subject is produced within discourse, subjected by discourse… [and] can‘t stand outside power/knowledge‘ (Hall, 2001: 80). Said actually admits ignoring the colonized voice and corrected his approach in *Culture and Imperialism* (1993). In this work Said defines culture as

> …those practices, like the arts of description, communication, and representation…that often exist in aesthetic forms, one of whose principle aims is pleasure…; and specialized knowledge available in such learned disciplines as ethnology, historiography, philology, sociology and literary history. … second, and most imperceptibly, culture is a concept that includes a refining and elevating element, each society‘s reservoir of the best that has been known and thought, as Matthew Arnold [wrote] in the 1860s. … [it] is a source of identity, and a rather combative one at that, as we see in recent ‗returns‘ to culture and tradition. … culture is a source of threat where various political and ideological causes engage one another. (xiii)

He focuses on individual British, French, and American literary texts in relation to the imperial experience of colonial history because ‗it has a unique coherence and a special cultural centrality' (xxii). The book is divided into two parts: the formation of the history of the imperial experience, and resistance to imperialism. He develops the concept of geographical histories: the investigation of the geographical matter into cultures' historical experiences related to colonialism. He differentiates between colonialism and imperialism and affirms that colonialism ‗is always a consequence of imperialism, is the implanting of settlement on distant territory…[whereas] imperialism is the practice, the theory, and the attitude of a dominating metropolitan center ruling a distant territory…imperialism is simply the process or policy of establishing or maintaining an empire' (1993: 9). The notion of distance is emphasized because it implies peripheralizing those territories and their peoples who have to pay their commitment to a distant metropolis; and people of the metropolis are committed to those distant inferior peoples as protectors.

The second part deals with the question of resistance and decolonizing. Said's concern is not only the anti-colonial discourse but also the fact that ‗Westerners become aware that what they have to say about the history and cultures of ‗subordinate' peoples is challengeable by the people themselves, people who a few years back were simply incorporated culture, land, history, and all, into the great Western empires and their disciplinary discourses' (1993: 195). The importance of this aspect lies in the fact that the empire writes back. In other words, imperialism could be reflected in the literary works produced during the colonial age, but the new literary and artistic forms of expression of those ‗decolonized' peoples are responses to imperialism: answered, questioned, and subverted. Said suggests that such awareness implies a self confrontation on the behalf of the Westerners for being ‗representatives of a culture and even of

races accused of crimes – crimes of violence, crimes of suppression, crimes of conscience‘ (ibid).

He also explores the mechanism of the construction of any super-power and especially of US hegemonic power. For him, imperialism does not end; it rather assumes new forms of dominion that ‗underlines the continuity of the ideological need to consolidate and justify domination in cultural terms‘ (1993: 284). He suggests that US imperialism is cultural since it seeks its legitimacy via cultural authority which has been conceived by ‗the unprecedented growth in the apparatus for the diffusion and control of information‘ (1993: 291). This apparatus is basically the media. The US media managed to make for itself a worldwide authorial presence to which the truth is usually unconsciously assigned. But Said also criticizes empty patriotic and state-nationalistic discourses because they reenact American imperialist discourse. Said realizes that the authority of such discourses is believed and acquired even by the subdued peoples. He takes the examples of syllabus programs of literary theory and English departments in Arab universities where he could hear the echo of the imperial discourse. In this aspect, scholars write about ‗the long awaited and messianic arrival of *Orientalism* into the alienating English studies classroom…it finally taught them how to teach a literature which was not their own‘ (Gandhi, 1998: 65).

Culture and Imperialism is an investigation in the archeology of the metanarratives of imperialism which present the Other in a way that justifies and nurtures the attitude of the dominating, which *is* the reason that lies behind racism, discrimination and hatred. He elaborates the idea that cultures as a system of coherent values, and alterity or otherness are discourses and fictions; ‗[m]y principal aim is not to separate but to connect, and I am interested in this for the

main philosophical and methodological reason that cultural forms are hybrid, mixed, impure, and the time has come in cultural analysis to reconnect their analysis with their actuality' (1993: 14). *Culture and Imperialism* is a landmark in Said's theoretical achievement. It develops this position further to argue that ‗great texts or ‗masterpieces' encode the greatest pressures and preoccupations of the world around them…They successfully reveal and formalize prevailing structures of attitude and reference' (Gandhi, 1998: 68).

My study follows Said's footsteps in investigating the Western representation of the ME woman, extending the historical period that he covered, backward into the Middle Ages and forward into the 21st century, taking into consideration the postcolonial resistance to the imperialist hegemonic discourse, and concentrating on its gendered dimension: how the identity of the ME woman is reconstructed once again as a neocolonial subject. A neo-Orientalist discourse is revived, characterized by being ‗ahistorical, apolitical, state-centric, and mono-causal… adopting a simplistic and a stereotypical view of Islam as a violent, irrational and backward religion that turns Muslims into potential terrorists' (Ğol: 2010), which needs to be expunged and replaced by a more ‗civilized' western-friendly version of Islam, a version which neither veils the woman nor segregates her. Or as Said says ‗[s]ince one cannot ontologically obliterate the Orient, one does have the means to capture it, describe it, improve it, radically change it' (1978:95). This objective could only be achieved through defeating the fundamentalists and ‗winning the hearts and minds' -a common phrase in the mainstream media of WOT- of the Muslims especially women. Attitudes of patronizing West-centered feminists and activists take part in this neocolonialist discourse, by trying to ‗speak' on behalf of the ME woman, defining her problems, suggesting and actually working on solving them, outside their cultural paradigms.

To analyze the representation of the ME woman as a discursive production within WOT, Stuart Hall´s methodology is applied. Hall defines representation as ‗the production of meaning through language‘ (1997: 28), and suggests that analyzing a discourse includes six elements: (1) statements which give us a certain kind of knowledge; (2) rules which prescribe certain ways of talking about the topic and exclude other ways; (3) ‗subjects‘ who personify the discourse; (4) how knowledge about this topic acquires authority i.e. a sense of embodying the truth about it; (5) institutional practices for dealing with the subject; and finally (6) acknowledgement that a different discourse, or episteme will arise at a later historical moment, new discourses with the power to regulate social practices in new ways. (1997:45-6).

According to Hall‘s scheme, statements about ME women as powerless subjects victimized and in need to be rescued from despotic or fundamentalist evil-doers and their medieval religious doctrines, are made and disseminated through all venues possible. The rules according to which this representation is prescribed is the Western model as criterion of how women are supposed to ‗be‘ or ‗live‘ as human beings cherishing their rights to freedom and equality, the Western liberal feminist theories, and the international bodies‘ literature on women‘s human rights, all of which rule out any possibility of a different discourse, in Hall‘s second element. In this context, Foucault says that ‗[e]ach society has its ‗general politics‘ of truth that is its types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as truth‘ (*PK*: 131). How these discourses acquire authority as the only ‗truth‘ about the ME woman is going to be dealt with in the next chapter, however, the historical dimension is emphasized, especially through Orientalism, the media machine, the prevalence of English as an international language, and the unequal distribution of access to information technology in the contemporary world.

Regarding the characteristics attributed to the subject in Hall‘s fourth point, the ME woman‘s major problem is that she is characterized as victim. Intelligent, hard working and strong willed as she might be; her efforts are defined as blocked by overwhelmingly patriarchal and backward social and cultural systems, controlled by failing regimes. Hall´s final point, the possibility of new and different discourses, is essential to our study, because it gives the neocolonialist projects one of its main justifications; the possibility of reproducing the ME woman through changing the political realities of her country. The same Afghani and Iraqi women who until very recently were represented as tragically lacking in virtually any opportunity of development or in essential human rights, are suddenly characterized as enthusiastically participating in building the democratic political process installed by the US overnight. The previously mentioned other representations of the ME woman through history are relevant here, too.

Gayatri Spivak‘s contribution to subaltern studies opens new spaces for deconstructing these ‗benevolent‘ colonial discourses by demonstrating the impossibility of any colonial rescue, or of ‗righting‘ human rights ‗wrongs‘ by military or other intervention; not only because of the contradictions inherent in such a discourse (liberation by occupation), but also because it forecloses the subaltern formation as a subject/agent of history, mutates and renders her/him an object of benevolence, no matter how benevolent the ‗rescue‘ attempt is. In ‗Can the Subaltern Speak?‘ (1988: 217-313), where she puts together her famous sentence: ‗[w]hite men are saving brown women from brown men‘, she considers the British colonialists‘ abolition of widow sacrifice in India an epistemic violence and ‗a perfect specimen of the true justification of imperialism as a civilizing mission‘ (ibid: 306). Caught between the colonialist intervention and the nostalgia of the nationalist elite, the subaltern woman is silenced and her will confiscated.

Spivak argues that the subaltern women‘s voice was doubly muted by both the British colonialist and the nationalist elite. She demonstrates how colonialism manipulated the indigenous cultural structures and silenced the subaltern woman through the ‗extraordinarily paradoxical British abolition of widow sacrifice‘ in India, on one hand, and how the nationalist elite silenced her again by claiming that widows actually ‗want to die‘. In both cases of speaking about/for widows, the subaltern woman‘s voice was muted, her desire was represented by others, her will constructed by them, and consequently her right to subject identity formation was denied. Indeed, her identity as a subject was doubly ‗othered‘ (by the colonialists and the national elite) and reproduced without her having a say in the whole process. Spivak also argues that Western intellectual production is, in many ways, complicit with Western international economic interests and she offers an alternative analysis of the relation between the discourses of the West and the possibility of speaking of/for the subaltern women (296). She discusses the epistemic violence(s) of constituting the colonial subject as Other, of producing ‗the indigenous elite…a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect‘ - quoting Macaulay‘s infamous ‗Minute on Indian Education‘ (1835) - (282)…fit vehicles for conveying imperialist knowledge to the great mass of population, and of the manipulation of female agency.

While acknowledging that many Western women and human rights organizations are genuinely trying to support ME women outside the hegemonic imperialist discourse; I argue that feeling obliged to act in the interest of the Other, (the white man‘s burden), impedes understanding of the mechanisms that sustains the other as Other, maintains and normalizes the Western identity as subject, and assumes the cultural superiority of the West as the necessary and the indispensable for ‗righting wrongs‘ (Spivak, 2004). Through a two decade trajectory of the

idea of the silenced subaltern woman, Spivak considers globalized capitalism as a New Empire creating a new subaltern through multinationals, NGOs, and UN development programs, in a kind of humanitarian imperialism. Spivak joins Said�become's discursive analysis of the Western intellectuals' complicity with colonialism. In the New Empire, they are normalizing the alliance between capitalism, development and human rights. This study argues that WOT, with its ‗monstrous civilizing mission', in Spivak's words, is part of the process of reconstructing the world in the interests of corporate globalization, strategically using ethics of human rights and democracy to sell the war, ‗breaking the new nations in the name of breaking-in into the international community of nations' (2004: 525). A perfect example of this discourse is Joseph Nye's doctrine of Soft Power.

‗Metaphors can kill' says George Lakoff in his article ‗Metaphor and War: The Metaphor System Used to Justify War in the Gulf' (1991), where he argues that the Gulf War of 1991 was represented within the metaphor of the fairy tale of just war. The scenario goes like this: a crime is committed by the villain against an innocent victim. The hero makes sacrifices; he undergoes difficulties, typically making an arduous heroic journey, sometimes across the sea to a treacherous terrain. The villain is inherently evil, perhaps even a monster, and thus reasoning with him is out of the question, and he must be defeated. The hero is left with no choice but to engage the villain in battle. The hero defeats the villain and rescues the victim. The moral balance is restored. Victory is achieved. The hero, who always acts honorably, has proved his manhood and achieved glory. The sacrifice was worthwhile. The hero receives acclaim, along with the gratitude of the victim and the community. This scenario has been literally repeated within WOT, with the ME women as the innocent victims –apart from 9/11 victims. However

this patriarchal, chivalric notion directly contradicts the feminists‘ discourse of freedom and agency-building elaborated by Spivak and demonstrated in Chapter IV.

Nye‘s definition of Soft Power is simply the ability ‗to attract and co-opt others *to want* the outcomes that you want‘ (2004:2) rather than using hard power to *make them do* what you want by coercion or payment. The combination of both soft and hard powers is smart power Nye builds his doctrine on assuming that power, generally speaking, is a ‗three-dimensional chess game‘: military, economic, and transnational issues like terrorism, international crime, and spread of infectious diseases…etc. While the USA is indeed the only superpower with global military reach; it has to bargain its way in economic issues with the European Union, Japan and China because of current multipolar distribution of economic power. However, ‗obtaining favorable outcomes on the bottom transnational board often requires the use of soft power‘ (2004:5), to shape the preferences of others. The US is a very attractive country, Nye says, with many sources of soft power: popular culture, political values, and commerce. As democracy and human rights are attractive values, Nye suggests, the USA has to strategize its use; especially in ME, where US soft power confronts a particular challenge.

In this sense Nye, ironically, applies the Marxist thinker Antonio Gramsci‘s notion of cultural hegemony and Foucault‘s notion of docile bodies. In his *Prison Notebooks* (1971), Gramsci defines cultural hegemony as a process by which educative pressure is applied to single individuals so as to obtain their consent and their collaboration, turning necessity and coercion into ‗freedom‘ produced by instruments of the ruling class. In this notion of hegemony and the manufacture of consent, he sees the capitalist state as being made up of two overlapping spheres, a political society or the state which rules through force, and a civil society which rules through

consent: ‗hegemony‘ is reproduced in cultural life through the media, universities, trade unions and religious institutions to ‗manufacture consent‘ and legitimacy. In practical terms, Gramsci‘s insights about how power is constituted in the realm of ideas and knowledge – expressed through consent rather than force – have inspired the use of explicit strategies to contest hegemonic norms of legitimacy. ‗The concept of hegemony serves for Gramsci an appropriate term for describing one form of relationship between a leading group or social class and subordinate classes, a relationship structured in term of consent rather than force or domination‘ (Smart, 1984: 159). Applied to Nye‘s theory of soft power, the US uses political, economic and military (hard) power to impose its hegemony, but it could also use its cultural (soft) power through media, the arts, literature to gain consent, spread and invest in the ‗common sense‘ that, in this case, ME women need liberating.

On the other hand, Foucault‘s analyses of the politics of truth, the relation between power and knowledge through discourse is, to a great extent, in accord with Gramsci‘s attempt to theorize cultural hegemony, summarized above. Foucault re-conceptualizes the exercise of power in relation to hegemony to show that hegemony ‗constitutes social cohesion of practices, techniques, and methods which infiltrate minds and bodies‘ (ibid: 160). In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault demonstrates how the human body enters a machinery of power, what he calls ‗political anatomy‘:

> a mechanics of power… it defined how one may have a hold over others‘ bodies, not only so that *they may do what one wishes, but so that they may operate as one wishes, with the techniques, the speed, and the efficiency that one determines.* Thus discipline produces subjected and practised bodies, ‗docile‘ bodies. Discipline increases the forces of the body (in economic terms of utility) and diminishes these same forces (in political terms of obedience). In short it dissociates power from the body, on the one hand, it turns it into ‗aptitude‘, a ‗capacity‘, which it seeks to increase; on the other hand, it reverses the course of the energy, the power that might result from it, and turns it into a relation of

> strict subjection…it establishes in the body the constricting link between an increased aptitude and an increased domination (*DP*: 138, emphasis added)

The italicized phrases above are literally what Nye‗s doctrine advocates. Through the next chapters, I will be showing how the discourse of WOT rendered ME bodies docile in Foucault‗s definition, how thousands of images of ME women‗s bodies have been disseminated -through all kinds of communicative means, films, TV drama, media, advertisements, and narratives- as abused, incarcerated, covered, beaten, killed, mutilated, and dehumanized, to support the rescue scenario. These images inevitably dim the other side of the story, the reality of ME women as fighters within traditional communities. On the other hand, the same bodies to be rescued are doubly abused by the US military intervention of rescue: through carpet bombings of cities, raids, displacements, destruction of infrastructures and native state institutions, and the use of prohibited weapons which genetically mutate women‗s bodies, thus depriving them of their already limited opportunities of self-construction as subjects with agency in history, and pushing them further back in the state of Otherness. The criminal side of the war on civilians - murder, maiming, assault, arson…and so forth- is also dimmed by the moral discourse of rescue.

Politically, this study suggests that, as WOT has been highly unpopular and seen as illegitimate, due to the fact that it was waged in defiance to international law, the USA depends heavily on soft power by assuming a civilizing mission of democracy and human rights, to soften the sharp edges of its hard power, namely military and economic. ME societies are represented as drowned in despotic and fundamentalist ideologies, where women are historically victimized; ideas of emancipation and equality within democratic systems sound very attractive, and convincing justification of a war, otherwise nationally and internationally unpopular.

PART ONE

Chapter III

The Discourse of the War on Terrorism: Critical Overview

‗As one closely examines the literature of terrorism,
one often comes away with a feeling of unreality'
Alex Schmid, *Political Terrorism*

Conceptual Confusion

Terrorism and counterterrorism have become powerful signifiers of our age, affecting the lives of virtually all peoples of the world; in the name of fighting terrorism, wars have been waged, peoples are being sanctioned, laws are rewritten, identities are constituted, and a huge cultural production has been generated. However, there is a ‗yawning gap between the terrorism signifier and the actual acts signified by the term' (Smyth et al, 2008: 1). Many scholars argue that terrorism is a media creation, ‗*un phénomène médiatique*' says Bernard Chaliand about Al-Qaida (2006). Terrorism certainly exists, how it is represented, perceived and dealt with is discursively constructed by research and security institutions, think tanks and academic centers, specialized journals, thousands of books, let alone speeches of policy officials and spectacular media stories. Studies on terrorism have probably become one of the fastest growing fields of knowledge of our time. Schmid and Jongman had compiled a bibliography of 6000 entries by 2005, admitting that ‗no single researcher can survey the field alone' (xiv). Mapping terrorism studies after 9/11, Ranstorp talks about ‗an ever expanding intellectual quilt that had a tendency

to grow in size, but less in layered intellectual depth', and refers to a book being published every six hours in the field (Jackson et al 2009: 14, 17). Literally hundreds of definitions have been suggested in these studies, in an ever ongoing debate, creating a prevalent discourse about terrorism, its history, typology, techniques, categories, motivations and possible solutions.

The inflated media coverage and mythomaniac image are one aspect of how the prevalent discourse represents terrorism, and how it is publically perceived. Polls show that terrorism has claimed public attention in the US more than any other important issue. Zulaika and Douglass rhetorically ask ‗What is the mystique of something that, while statistically less fatal than choking to death on one's own lunch, has been perceived as one of the greatest threats?' (1996: 6). Statistics show that there were 800 deaths attributed to terrorism all over the world in the *eight years* between 1968 and 1975, while the *annual* death toll from influenza in the US alone is ten times this number. The year 1985 is considered the worst year of terrorism in the US -before September 11, 2001- when the Reagan administration considered terrorism its major international problem and when 80 percent of the American people regarded it as ‗extreme danger'; that year 23 people were killed in the US in terrorist attacks; however, people who die *each year* as a result of being struck by lightning are four times this number. In the years 1989-1992, there were approximately 100,000 homicides in the US, but not a single fatality from terrorism (ibid).

Ironically, while terrorism has become a ‗discursive formation' of our age (as Foucault would call it), and despite the huge terrorism industry, there is a kind of common agreement among experts that no adequate definition of terrorism is possible, neither is there an epistemological theory for the phenomenon. In fact, terrorism has been represented by many

scholars as an extremely inconsistent, incomprehensible and an impossible concept to reach a consensus about; ‗to define international ‗terrorism‘ in a way that is both all-inclusive and unambiguous is very difficult, if not impossible‘ (Bassiouni, 1988: XV). Finlay argues that the incomprehensibility of terrorism is due to the ‗increasingly ‗rhetorical‘ self-serving and unprincipled usage of the term‘ and suggests that it should be dropped altogether (2009: 751); others talk about a persistent dilemma ‗despite decades of academic literature on the subject no commonly accepted definition has been found‘ (Badey 1998:90). Schmid and Jongman bluntly indicate that much of the writing in terrorism studies is ‗impressionistic, superficial, and at the same time also pretentious, venturing far-reaching generalizations on the basis of episodal evidence‘ (2005: 7)

Part of the problem is the fact that, while language and discourse are essential in constructing any social phenomenon, the discursive construction of terrorism in the official discourse, the orthodox studies[6] and the media, how the ‗reality‘ of terrorism was created and maintained, how it was publically presented and interpreted, were not questioned until fairly recently; although it was politically challenged by a handful of outstanding oppositional scholars and intellectuals, producing what Edward Said called *antithetical knowledge* (1981:149). One example of this confusion is: How is it possible that the peoples‘ legitimate struggles are represented as abhorrent terrorism, a notion prevalent in absolutely all the mainstream studies

[6] Mainstream scholars referred to in this and the following paragraphs on the concept and the historical background of terrorism are considered authorities in the field, their books are the most recurrently cited in the bibliographies of terrorism studies: Berman, 2003; Hoffman, 2006; Laqueur, 1996,1999, and 2004; Law, 2009; Rubin and Rubin, 2008; Sageman 2004; and Whittaker (2007). Martin (2010), Lutz and Lutz (2004), O´Kane (2007) are consulted as they are educational textbooks. See also Ranstorp ‗Mapping Terrorism Studies after 9/11‘ in Jackson et al, (2009). These names, however, are only examples of what is called the mainstream, traditional, orthodox, dominant, or prevalent studies on terrorism, as opposed to a more critical stance of the discourse. The list by no means claims to cover the entire field; there are literally hundreds of other names.

cited here? Few scholars deal with the label application itself, others look into it as an isolated event, and try to study its motives, tactics, typology and so forth, which are normally a matter of disagreement depending on which side of the conflict they stand, especially as modern terrorism is, more often than not, connected to stigmatized communities. Laqueur, for example, trivializes the Palestinian struggle against the occupation, to ‗looking to be rewarded by virgins in Paradise' (1996:26), and Law reduces it to ‗attract international attention through spectacular acts of violence' (2009:4, and Lewis, 2003: 125, among others).

On the other hand, instability and conceptual disturbance are created by the scholars' insistence on lumping together many kinds of political violence under the label of terrorism. From an evolutionary perspective, critical anthropologists argue that terrorism as a coercive strategy of intimidation was ‗unknown in bands, tribes, and chiefdoms, that is, for approximately 99 percent of human history' (Sluka, 2009:139). Nevertheless, historians have differentiated assessments that terrorism is by no means a new phenomenon. We find Law stating that, as far back as the ninth century BCE, ‗the Assyrians were the fiercest and most violent people …who ruled their far-flung and divers empire through systematic terror' (2009:11, also Chaliand, 2007: vii). Others consider tyrranicides and political assassinations of the Greeks and the Romans as the oldest examples of terrorism; many refer to the Jewish zealots, the Sicarii (dagger men) who assassinated some Romans and their partisans in Palestine in the first century CE; and the Hashasheen (assassins: hasheesh takers), a Muslim sect originated in Persia in the 11th century who practiced assassination against political figures (Laqueur 1999, Lutz and Lutz 2004, and Sloan 2006 among others). Religious, feudal and royal armed conflicts during the Middle Ages are also referred to within the context of terrorism. The emerging ideas about popular

sovereignty which empowered individuals to protest their subservience to traditional authorities were deemed illegitimate, too (see Law, 2009: 32-57).

The popular concept of terrorism as deliberately organized and ideologically justified is perceived to be brought into usage by the French revolution. However, *la terreur revolutionnaire* was associated with the ideals of virtue and democracy, ‗Terror is nothing but justice, prompt, severe, and inflexible; it is therefore an emanation of virtue' (Robespierre quoted in Hoffman, 2006:3). But terror (intense fear) is a psychological and mental condition; terrorism, on the other hand, is a political concept which was first coined by Edmund Burke to describe the Jacobeans' regime in France, calling their era the Reign of Terror (Martin, 2010: 24), when thousands who were perceived as enemies of the revolution, were persecuted.

During the 19th century the understanding of ‗terrorism' in Europe shifted from states' intimidation of their own citizens to violence directed against governments by different organizations; ‗democratic movements battled monarchies, Socialist groups challenged capitalism, and nationalist causes rejected the rule of diverse peoples by empires' (Rubin and Rubin, 2008: 5, also Rapoport: 1984). Although these movements used violence to destroy the relevant systems for certain grievances or others, not just for blackmail by instilling fear, almost all historians label them terrorism: the nationalists in Ireland and the Balkans, the Russian revolutionaries, and the anarchists are among them.

The first half of the 20th century returned to the era of ideological state terrorism; communists, fascists, and Nazis used terror as a strategy and a tactic. Their basic concepts are: extinction of the enemy, large scale murder, intimidation, and the mobilization of support from one´s own target audience (ibid: 6). In the United States, the beginning of terrorism is considered

no earlier than the assassination of President Lincoln, and the Ku Klux Klan who tried to intimidate the African American people. (Norris et al, 2003: 285).

These ostensible generalizations are in fact highly selective when it comes to specific historical events. While invasions in ancient history, for example, are considered terrorism, the prevalent historical studies of terrorism skip the European colonialists‘ campaigns in the last five centuries against millions of indigenous peoples and their cultures almost all over the world. In other words, ‗we would be unwise to overlook the role of terror in…the creation of the colonial reality, where the Indian and African *irracionales* became compliant to the reason of a small number of white Christians‘ (Taussig, 1987: 5). Another example is an event which is mentioned recurrently by historians as an epitome of modern terrorism (before 9/11/2001): the Lockerbie bombing of a Pan Am which killed 270 innocent people in 1988. The same year, an Iranian airliner was shot down on Iranian territorial waters by an American missile killing 290 passengers, including 66 children (Herold, 2006). This is never mentioned in any of these studies. Noam Chomsky invokes the metaphor of the pirate and the emperor in the story of Alexander the Great asking a pirate how he dares molest the sea; ‗how dare you molest the world?‘ the pirate replied, ‗because I do it with a little ship only, I am called a thief, you, doing it with a great navy, are called an emperor‘ (2002: vii).

Silenced histories are another aspect of the terrorism discourse, indeed of all discourses, as they are by definition exclusionary. A third aspect is the politically biased representation. Genealogically, the modern ‗official‘ concept of terrorism in the West is connected to the struggles for independence fought by previously colonized countries, labeled terrorism and reduced to peripheral skirmishes within the Cold War context. Super powers have the habit of

giving themselves the right to intervene in other parts of the world to guarantee their own interests, under different pretexts. Immediately after World War II, the United States ascended the international stage as the new super power. Having defined the Soviet Union as a non-cooperative partner and as a threat, the Truman Doctrine[7] initiated the Cold War by establishing the American interventionist foreign policy to confront the communist extension, violently suppressing many left-wing movements. Sam Raphael confirms that within the ‗Soviet network theory', there was a kind of a broad consensus among many key experts on terrorism on the ‗Soviet use of ‗surrogate' or ‗proxy' forces to test the resolve of the West…the Kremlin was claimed to support ‗terrorist operations' that attempt to tear down the fabric of the Western society' (Jackson et al, 2009: 54). Thus, the national revolutions of independence and the struggles for social and economic justice were perceived and confronted as threats to the super powers' interests.

Each of the successive American presidents after Truman adopted essentially the same interventionist foreign policy, under different concepts, basically built on the notion of an

[7] The Truman Doctrine of liberal internationalism and containment strategy was an approach that combined the use of political, economic and military aid in foreign policy to combat the Soviet ascension. See Elizabeth Edwards Spalding, *The First Cold Warrior: Harry Truman, Containment, and the Remaking of Liberal Internationalism (2008) and* Denise M. Bostdorff, *Proclaiming the Truman Doctrine: the Cold War Call to Arms* (2008). A military man and a staunch believer in a global leading role for the US in post-World War II, Truman was the first to use terror in his speech to the Congress on March 12, 1947. He exaggerated the threats in Greece ‗which is threatened by terrorist activities' and Turkey, in order to scare the Congress and the public into approval of the new interventionist foreign policy, to secure a preeminent position in the world. ‗Totalitarian regimes imposed upon free peoples, by direct or indirect aggression, undermine the foundations of international peace and hence the security of the United States', he said, and ‗The United States must support free peoples … to work out their own destinies' (Spalding, 2006: 71). His legacy in foreign policy, apart from the Doctrine, is: NATO, CIA, National Security Council, Voice of America, Radio Liberty, Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Greek Civil War and the Korean War, and what is referred to as the unconventional warfare.

assumed external terrorist threat: Kennedy[8], Nixon[9], Carter[10], Reagan[11], and Bush[12] (among others) established doctrines, each augmenting to a higher level the American right to intervene

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[8] Early in the 1960s ‗the Kennedy Administration was the first to employ terrorism… in more than one hundred speeches - as a public justification for American involvement in the Vietnam War' (Winkler, 2006: 17), and to use the term terrorism interchangeably with communism; as it realized that terrorism could function as ‗a powerful cultural term capable of uniting rank-and-file citizenry of a nation' (ibid: 18). The Vietnam War, waged within the American politico-military doctrine of counterinsurgency interventionism, is an example of many wars represented as proxy or surrogate wars between the two super powers, rather than risking an open confrontation. Counterinsurgency became a medium of the secret war directed against internal enemies wherever friendly governments were under threat of subversion or insurgency. These domestic campaigns were aspects of a larger war within which the United States also launched unilateral ‗guerrilla' operations (which often included air and naval support) to overthrow undesirable regimes… (McClintock, 1991: http://www.statecraft.org/introduction). A principal message of the 1960 manual was the need to react unconventionally to insurgency… There was no mention of hearts and minds, of development, reform, or sophisticated propaganda, yet. (ibid, Ch. 9)

[9] President R. Nixon set the foundational framework of how the U.S. would address terrorism and initiated its current discourse; although in fact no terrorist act against the U.S. had happened yet. He was the first to use the metaphor of cancerous disease to describe terrorism: aggressive, indiscriminate, and having multiple manifestations; implying that it must be combated through a variety of responses anywhere in the world; and foreshadowing future administrations' use of military actions as a lethal mechanism to surgically remove terrorist and perceived conditions that fostered terrorism. He also created the dichotomy between the world of terrorism and the moral world of the civilized free societies. Nixon initiated another aspect of the discourse, that of not permitting any justification for terrorist acts. (Campos, 2007: 34-40)

[10] President J. Carter intensified Nixon's discourse and maintained a no concession policy. He added a new dimension to the discourse of civilization and law confronting the illegal and uncivilized terrorist by inviting other states of the ‗civilized' free world to join economic and diplomatic sanctions against the terrorists, but avoiding putting terrorism within the context of war, without totally dropping this option. He also incorporated terrorism in the discourse about U.S. national security, bringing the public into passive participation by inviting them to refrain from any action that could jeopardize the lives of the American hostages held in the American embassy in Tehran in 1979. Iran and the Soviet Union (invading Afghanistan late in the same year) are perceived as perversions of the international legal system of the civilized world. (ibid: 40)

[11] With the beginning of the dissolution of the Soviet Union and its satellites early in 1985, the Reagan Administration decided that the US had been concentrating on the wrong enemy (communism) and came up with yet another politico-military doctrine of the ‗Low Intensity Conflict' or Warfare, which took counterinsurgency a drastic step further, considering the Third World insurgencies as ‗the predominant threat to US security …(and) calls on the government to take the offensive - in contrast to the passive stance of deterrence - to overcome the revolutionary peril' (Klare and Kornbluh, 1988: 3). LIC, according to the US army definition: ‗is a political-military confrontation between contending states or groups below conventional war and above the routine, peaceful competition among states. It is waged by a combination of means, employing political, economic, informational, and military instruments. Low intensity conflicts are often localized, generally in the Third World, but contain regional and global security implications'. Retrieved on March 9,2010, from Global Security website

http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/policy/army/fm/100-20/10020ch1 htm#s_9.

Chomsky, among many other critical scholars, considers LIC itself as ‗hardly more than a euphemism for state-directed international terrorism…constructing … an array of client and mercenary *states* -- Taiwan, South Korea, Israel, Saudi Arabia, and others -- to finance and implement its terrorist operations'. (in George,1991: 15). El Salvador, Nicaragua, the Philippines, Angola, Cambodia, and Afghanistan are among the countries targeted by LIC. (Klare and Kornbluh, 1988:7). These and other states in the Socialist Bloc and the Middle East, were blacklisted as

in any part of the world deemed vital to US interests, forming an *American Doctrine.* This is the title of Dario Lisiero‘s book (2008), where these doctrines were reviewed, in a different context[13], starting with The Monroe Doctrine of 1823. During the Cold War it was against the Evil Empire, later it became against the Axis of Evil. Gore Vidal counts *205* military attacks by the US against different countries of the world since WWII, until 9/11 (2002, 22-41), and quotes Arno J. Mayer, who spent ‗school days‘ in a German concentration camp:

> [S]ince 1947 America has been the chief and pioneering perpetrator of ‗preemptive‘ state terror, exclusively in the Third World…Besides the unexceptional subversion and overthrow of governments in competition with the Soviet Union during the Cold War, Washington has resorted to political assassination, surrogate death squads, and unseemly freedom fighters (e.g., bin Laden). It masterminded the killing of Lumomba and Allende; and it unsuccessfully tried to put to death Castro, Khadafi, and Saddam Hussein; and vetoed all efforts to rein not only Israel‘s violation of international agreements and UN resolutions but also its practice of preemptive state terror.(ibid: xii)

The American Doctrine is the administrations‘ official philosophy of foreign policy and international relations, based on a general assumption that any world event that is not compatible with American interests is a threat to be dealt with. It is through the prism of this realist doctrine that violence all over the world is categorized, interpreted, presented, and reacted to

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terrorists, labeled Rogue states, (later Axes of Evil), were accused of supporting terrorism and giving the terrorists weapons of mass destruction. It is in the Regan administration that some states were classified as ‗Rogue States‘ for the first time.

[12] The Bush Doctrine - officially the 2002 *National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (hereafter NSS), summarizes the US international strategy for the 21st century: to defeat global terrorism and to *prevent* attacks against us and our friends; to defuse regional conflicts; to *prevent* our enemies from threatening us, our allies, and our friends with weapons of mass destruction; to ignite a new era of global economic growth through free markets and free trade; to expand the circle of development by opening societies and building the infrastructure of democracy; to develop agendas for cooperative action with the other main centers of global power and to transform America‘s national security Institutions. It is also known as ‗preemptive defense‘, which is simply a new approach to security in which the US reserves for itself the right to attack any country that it believes to be supporting terrorists who *might* threaten American interests. (Bush: 2002)

[13] Lisiero‘s is an historical analytical introduction to the American Doctrine; see also McClintock ‗American Doctrine and Counterinsurgent State Terror‘ in George (1991).

cooperatively or coercively; depending on how close or far it is from the super power´s (and its satellites‘) interests. Probably the most glaring example is the Afghani ‗mujahedeen‘ who were honorably received in the White House as freedom fighters and were supported militarily, financially and politically when they were fighting the Soviet troops in Afghanistan, in the eighties. Later the same men were considered ruthless terrorists to be exterminated when they were fighting the US troops. For the mujahedeen, however, they were fighting an invading and occupying enemy, whether it was Soviet or American. Another glaring example is the American attitude towards the Iraqi regime‘s two wars with Iran in 1979 and Kuwait in 1990. In the first Iraq‘s name was lifted from the ‗Rogue States‘ blacklist, and was militarily supported. In the second, the same regime was blacklisted again as supporting terrorism, sanctioned, and was actually invaded and destroyed in the first Gulf War. Thirteen years later, labeled as one of the ‗Axes of Evil‘, it was invaded again, devastated and occupied on other pretexts (see Chapter V).

Definitions:

It is obvious, from this list of some violent turning points in human history that are labeled terrorism, that the term‘s shifting meanings have been used synonymously to cover different kinds of political violence, discursively constituting the objects: wars, political assassinations, kidnapping, rebellion, underground struggle, guerrilla war, insurgency, and so on. If all these and other sorts of political violence

> were simply called by those names, without ever using the word ‗terrorism‘, would there be something missing in the description in the real world?...Does this concept better clarify the fact, or is it, as with so many historical constructs, a hypostatized creation of learned and lay people alike that is a certain path to self-deception? (Zulaika and Douglass, 1996: 100,103)

Zulaika goes back to this idea again in 2009, applying it, not only to the term, but rather to the whole discourse of terrorism

> Does the new discourse of ‗terrorism' really add something…to what we already know about the facts?...not only do we not contribute anything substantive whether cognitive or political…but that the new overweening discourse, with its implications of essential Evil, taboo, and a logic of contagion, is a return to a form of thinking that is closer to the mental world of medieval witchcraft and inquisitorial nonsense. It is the type of discourse that becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. (18)

By ‗un-delimiting' the concept, it is hardly surprising that terrorism is represented as impossible to define. However, the widely accepted academic definition so far, is Schmid's:

> Terrorism is an anxiety-inspiring method of repeated violent action, employed by (semi-) clandestine individual, group, or state actors, for idiosyncratic, criminal, or political reasons, whereby – in contrast to assassination—the direct targets of violence are not the main targets. The immediate human victims of violence are generally chosen randomly (targets of opportunity) or selectively (representative or symbolic targets) from a target population, and serve as message generators … whether intimidation, coercion, or propaganda. (2005)

Nevertheless, this definition does not apply to many of the above mentioned historical events considered terrorist, not because of some linguistic or conceptual deficiency; rather because it is applied to the wrong events. The Assassins, for example, liquidated each of the targeted individuals *per se* for political reasons, not to send a message of intimidation, or to frighten the people in general. It was political assassination. But absolutely all the cited histories of terrorism included the Assassins, possibly because of the imaginative similarities with Al-Qaeda. Lewis says that they ‗are the true predecessors of many of the so called Islamic terrorists of today' (2003:123). The real issue, then, is to dig under such superficial mythifications to find out the messages conveyed.

Even dictionary definitions are inconsistent; e.g. *OED* defines terrorism generally as: ‗a policy intended to strike with terror those against whom it is adopted'; however, *OED Online*

gives a radically different definition: ‗the unofficial or unauthorized use of violence and intimidation in the pursuit of political aims', *Cambridge Dictionary Online* generally defines terrorism as: ‗violent action, or threats of violent action, for political purposes'. Escapist relativist clichés like: ‗one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter', or ‗Terrorism, like beauty, lies in the eyes of the beholder' are not of any help, either. Inconsistency, in fact, is a flagrant aspect of this discourse. Two CIA reports on terrorist attacks demonstrate the point. ‗Its 1979 report claimed that there had been 3,336 terrorist incidents since 1968, whereas its 1980 report claimed that there were 6,714 over the same period' (Zulaika and Douglass, 1996: 23). What happened is that the CIA doubled the number of attacks for the same period so that the same violent events were retrospectively ‗re-written' as terrorist. Similarly, many of yesterday's ‗terrorists' are today's Nobel *Peace* Prize Winners: Yitzhak Rabin, Menachem Begin, Shimon Peres, Sean McBride, Nelson Mandela, and Yasser Arafat.

There would have been no problem if political violence and terrorism were semantically synonyms, but, while the first is politically neutral, there is a kind of general, almost instinctive condemnation of terrorism as a signifier, especially in the West. ‗Virtually any especially abhorrent act of violence perceived as directed against society…is labeled terrorism' (Hoffman, 2006: 1). The loathsome connotations are: evil, brutal, immoral, cowardly and so forth. The dilemma emerges with the term's application in context. Which kind of political violence is terrorism and which is not, and why? Homogenization is misleading. Laqueur, for example, says ‗terrorism almost always has a negative meaning' then, two paragraphs later ‗terrorism might be the only feasible means of overthrowing a cruel dictatorship, the last resort of free men and women facing intolerable persecution' (1999: 8-9). What he is referring to here might be called ‗armed struggle' or ‗resistance', which is another kind of political violence, with the positive

connotations he stated. Anthropologist Jeffery Sluka confirms that ‗The empirical reality of the contemporary armed popular movements we have studied has simply not fitted with the ‗terrorism' image presented by governments and the mainstream media' (Jackson et al, 2009:139). A few examples of the most quoted definitions might be useful to demonstrate the problem in the dominant discourse of terrorism studies:

- Hoffman's: ‗a purposeful political activity which is directed towards the creation of a general climate of fear… to influence some course of events.' (2006: 13)
- Laqueur's: ‗the use of violence by a group for political ends, usually directed against a government' (1999:46)
- UN: ‗Any action …that is intended to cause death or serious bodily harm to civilians or non-combatants… to intimidate a population or compel a Government or an international organization to do or to abstain from doing any act.' (cited in Blakeley, 2009: 10)
- American (official): FBI: ‗unlawful use of force to intimidate or coerce a government'; Department of Defense: ‗The calculated use of violence or the threat of violence to inculcate fear, intended to coerce or intimidate governments'; State Department: ‗Premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetuated against noncombatant targets by sub national groups.'
- The UK Parliament website: ‗The use or threat for the purpose of advancing a political, religious, or ideological cause, of action which involves serious violence'.
- Lutz and Lutz's: ‗Terrorism involves political aims. It is violent or threatens violence. It is designed to generate fear in a target audience… [It] is conducted by an identifiable organization. [It] involves a non-state actor or actors… [It is] designed to create power (2004: 10).

The recurrent elements of terrorism in all these definitions are: creating the atmosphere of fear by non-state violent activities for political coercion. Fear is implied in any act of violence, what makes it terrorism, though, is the strategic use of fear. However, the Vietnam War was waged in the name of fighting terrorism; but the Vietnamese did not fight the US troops in Vietnam to horrify the American people, say, in New York. In fact it was the American troops

who killed 3-4.5 millions of Vietnamese (AFP, 1995)[14]; burned villagers by using incendiary weapons, and liquidated tens of thousands through the Phoenix intelligence program[15]. Similarly, bombing Japanese cities by atomic bombs indiscriminately killed almost a million people (*Yomiuri Shimbun*, 7 and 9 August 2010). Thus, Schmid‘s definition actually applies, here, to the American forces. In both cases, civilians were killed on a large scale to intimidate the states into surrender. Alas, this fact is never mentioned in the cited mainstream studies on terrorism, simply because it was practiced by a state. Accordingly, two points are to be emphasized here: that the concept of terrorism should be delimited; and that it is practiced by states too, and not only groups or individuals.

> Denying the possibility of state terrorism is not only incompatible with the original usage of the term; it is also inconsistent, arbitrary, and biased…it has always caused more harm…since [its] resources are far more powerful…a powerful government cannot justify its use of terrorism simply by noting that its weaker opponents employ this strategy (Jagger, 2005: 208-15)

Ruth Blakeley studies state terrorism in its relation to neoliberalism (2009), and demonstrates the role it played in efforts to secure access to and control of resources, including labour and markets in the South, in the interests of elites (19). Through the metaphor of the ‗elephant in the room‘, she states that terrorism was a regular coercive tool in the foreign policy practice of liberal democratic states from the North. ‗An estimated 170-200 million civilian deaths were caused by state instigated mass murder‘ (1), yet the in mainstream policy, media, and academic circles, terrorism tends to be understood as targeting the members or interests of

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[14] French Press Agency April 4, 1995, http://www.chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/ casualty.html, accessed on May 3, 2010.

[15] The Phoenix program (1968-1971) was a campaign designed by the CIA to liquidate and pacify the Vietnamese resistance. It was responsible for 81,740 deaths, detentions and disappearances. See the official website of Douglas Valentine http://www.douglasvalentine.com/the_phoenix_program_11712.htm, accessed on March 8, 2010.

liberal democratic states of the North, by fanatical groups, but far less attention is given to terror perpetrated by those states themselves. The historical record, Blakeley says, shows that it is the great powers with colonial legacies that have been directly responsible for the regular use of state terrorism, which was used to open the South for exploitation by Northern elites; ‗by the early European and American imperialists, by European colonial powers as they attempted to defeat national liberation movements, by the US during the Cold War to defeat political movements that threatened elite interests and by the US and its liberal democratic allies in the post-Cold War period and in the War on Terror' (6-7).

Terrorism need not be represented as a hopelessly value-laden concept that entails judgment, depending heavily on the narrator's biases, or eschewed for the sake of objectivity. In fact, it is to avoid objectivity that a definition is eschewed; because it ‗involves commitment to analysis, comprehension, and an adherence to some norms of consistency' (Ahmad, 2001: 13). The key question here is: who defines terrorism? According to Norris *et al* ‗terrorism from below'- political violence directed against the state- is the common meaning of terrorism in the established democracies including the research community, partly because Western governments seeking ways to outlaw these actions and to enforce the state's right to counter them violently, sponsor much policy analysis on this topic (2003:9). It is hardly a secret that many of the key experts on terrorism are incorporated in the political, military, and diplomatic US institutions, directly or through study centers and think tanks, connected to the state. The official websites of all the scholars mentioned in note 1, and many others, confirm this fact. A related question is: ‗whose voices are marginalized or silenced and whose are empowered in defining terrorism and responses to it ... and how have dominant definitions of key concepts and practical responses become dominant?' (McDonald, 2007: 255). In post-2003 Iraq, many individuals have been

assassinated or arrested and organizations blacklisted on the accusation of supporting terrorism, simply because they criticized the occupation or the succeeding governments' policies. Thus for the purpose of proceeding with this research, I would define terrorism as: *a kind of political violence practiced by states or non-state organizations randomly targeting innocent civilians as a means of coercion by instilling fear.* The facts that are emphasized here are: terrorism is only one kind of political violence among other kinds, that it is not only practiced by individuals or organizations but also by states, that it randomly targets civilians who are not involved in the relevant conflict, thus innocent, and that it strategizes fear to impose certain political agendas.

War on Terrorism:

Similar to the interventionist doctrines mentioned above, WOT is also a practice of a hegemonic power. The Bush Administration builds the discourse of WOT on a long tradition in American history, a tradition of an imperial state of a worldwide reach.

> The US came into being within an empire, and found its place and space in the hierarchical world order that resulted from the global movement of Euro-Atlantic expansion…[R]elentless US economic and territorial expansion in the 19th century was an integral, dynamic part of this global movement. Rooted in material forces and notions of cultural hierarchy, it was consistently coercive…, the US became an active participant in the inter-imperial system, engaging routinely in worldwide interventions in the colonial periphery… Empire became a way of life; a state of being… [There has been a] pervasive assumption, shared by historical actors and mainstream theorists… that world peace requires an authoritative centre of gravity, a ‗benevolent despot'. (Golub, 2010)

That ‗world peace requires an authoritative center', a benevolent hegemon, is an assumption no longer shared by much of the world. Thus, the military, political, and economic practices of WOT had to be presented in a carefully constructed discourse, designed to present WOT as essential, inevitable, and having goals that are achievable and good for world peace and progress; a discourse that is capable of subduing dissent by justifying basically terrorist practices and

policies in the name of fighting terrorism. Stating that WOT is essentially an hegemonic practice of empire, however, does not imply that a new discursive frame is being constructed on my part to confront the existing one, by trying to rewrite some terrorist actions around the world as American creations. It is, on the contrary, an attempt to dismantle the deliberate fallacies of the existing discourse of WOT, by wading in what Taussig called its ‗epistemic murk' (1987:121), to enlarge the space for some other stances in order to ‗transgress' the dominant discourse. ‗What distinguishes cultures of terror is that the epistemological, ontological, and otherwise philosophical problem of representation - reality and illusion, certainty and doubt- becomes infinitely more than a ‗merely' philosophical problem of epistemology, hermeneutics, and deconstruction. It becomes a high powered medium of domination' (ibid).

WOT has become a catalyst of American foreign policy, through which any (inter)national policy could be deployed. Apart from the fact that colonialism played a big role in shaping the world as it is now, WOT is discursively constructed and produced to serve the essentially same imperial domination in the name of peace, progress and civilization, in the same way that the colonial powers built their empires. ‗The US was reproducing the self-understanding and self-regard of the classical imperial powers of the modern period … America's civilizing mission was marked by the exceptionalism of its political history and culture' (McCarthy, 2007: 3).

The discourse of WOT was culturally constructed rather than politically, militarily or economically, although these factors are *the* decisive ones. In fact the geostrategic motives were subdued by cultural narratives, as analyzed below. It is not surprising, then, that the rhetorical strategies of colonial discourse, now well-researched and theorized in postcolonial studies, and

cited by David Spurr, for example, in *The Rhetoric of Empire*[16] are hardly different from those of counter terrorism discourses. Thanks to orthodox discourses, terrorism has become a major trait of the Third World peoples, in the Western public view at least. However, many Western scholars vehemently resisted this view from the beginning, and especially after the Vietnam War, arguing that it is not limited to the Third World, and that it justifies and normalizes the hegemonic power‘s practices[17]. After the invasion and the occupation of Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003, and the ‗scandals' that followed[18], ‗the disillusionment with the existing field of knowledge and practice has opened up the intellectual, political, and discursive space that is necessary for the articulation of new ideas, questions, approaches, and paradigms' (Jackson et al: 2009, 2); and an international network of scholars initiated a critical approach to the study of political terrorism[19].

[16] Spurr cites twelve discursive categories of Western colonialism in journalism and travel writing in the 19th and 20th centuries: 1- Surveillance (inspecting and examining the colonized landscapes, interiors and bodies as objects of observation); 2- Appropriation (claiming the colonized objects and territories as the colonizers‘ own); 3- Aestheticization (fascination with the exotic, the grotesque, the bizarre, and the elemental); 4- Classification (labeling other nations as inferior); 5- Debasement (assigning them abject qualities); 6- Negation (denying the Other‘s history and culture); 7- Affirmation (celebrating the colonialists‘ values against the Other‘s backwardness); 8- Idealization of the primitive as a romantic symbol; 9- Insubstantialization (rendering the Other‘s reality dreamlike fantasy, mysterious and out of focus); 10- Naturalization (naturalizing the process of dominating the primitive by the advanced); 11- Eroticization (allegorization of colonized nations in terms of the female body); and 12- Resistance (counterdiscourse which resists the impositions of value inherent in any colonizing discourse); (1993).

[17] Noam Chomsky, Edward Said, Edward Herman, Michael McClintock, Alexander George, Gerry O‘ Sullivan, Seymour Hirsh, Richard Falk, John Pilger, to name just few.

[18] The main pretexts for invading Iraq that it had weapons of mass destruction, and that it had links with Al-Qaida, were proved and officially admitted to be untrue. That the invasion was done in defense of democracy and human rights was refuted by the torture stories and pictures of Abu Graib (and Guantanamo) prison and the humanitarian catastrophe that resulted from the invasion and occupation.

[19] The initiative started with fifty scholars who attended the first conference of CTS held in Manchester, UK in 2006. It held many conferences, established graduate and post graduate study programs in different universities, created associations and published books and two journals among other activities (Jackson et al, 2009: 2).

The traditional discourse of WOT, which is also referred to as war against the ‗new‘, ‗international‘, ‗global‘, ‗postmodern‘, or ‗Islamic‘ terrorism, fails to answer many questions: Is terrorism indeed the threat that it is portrayed as being? Why are citizens of a country killed in the name of protecting another‘s? Why, when an official army indiscriminately bombs a city is it not called terrorist, while an attack by individuals or a group on a military target is? Why, while there was no single terrorist attack by weapons of mass destruction, WOT military campaigns are based on the assumption that some ‗evil‘ states might provide terrorists with these weapons? Why is the neoliberal economic terrorism against the South not researched as such? Why, and how, is analyzing terrorism tabooed? Why are experts on terrorism from the relevant peoples marginalized? These and many similar questions remain unanswered within mainstream discourse.

Frustrated by the ontological, epistemological and ideological commitments of the existing mainstream studies, Critical Terrorism Studies attempt to provide new conceptual frameworks and praxis by transgressing the taboo line, problematizing the prevailing discourse and addressing its shortcomings. By what Toros and Gunning call ‗deepening and broadening‘ the terrorism studies - studying its social and historical underpinnings, and including state terrorism, counterterrorism and structural violence- they explore how the existing power structures came about and how they have actually shaped both the problem and the prevailing knowledge about it. Failing to question these structures, traditional terrorism studies have essentially served to sustain the status quo. The broadened and deepened understanding of terrorism requires going beyond disciplines and changing the relationship with the phenomenon itself. Thus, by embedding the inquiry in a network of social and political relations on a universal level, which we all are part of, terrorism has become less ‗othered‘ (Toros and Gunning 2009,

99). If peoples are considered as citizens of this planet, then the Iraqi or the Afghani peoples, for instance, would not be killed in the name of defending the American people; rather, all of the three peoples would be protected from all kinds of terrorism.

CTS apply critical discourse analysis as an orientation to the study of discourse and language of WOT; that is language ‗embedded in its social context...echoing the Bakhtinian idea that language is never neutral' (Hodges and Nilep, 2007: 4). Building on Foucault's notion that discourses are regimes of power/knowledge, that ‗the exercise of power perpetually creates knowledge and, conversely, knowledge constantly induces effects of power' (*PK*, 1980: 52), CDA conceptualizes language as ‗a form of social practice…called discourse; [and stresses] both the determination of discourse by social structures, and the effect of discourse upon society through its reproduction of social structure' (Fairclough, 1989: 41-2). Thus, rather than just a transparent medium between a signifier and a signified, CDA conceptualizes language as exceeding its referential role, to actually constructing ideas and beliefs, and reproducing facts. While power creates knowledge when its institutions make certain statements about an object - terrorism, in this case - and determine the conditions under which they are considered true or false, discourse produces knowledge through language. As far as ideologies are concerned, Fairclough finds out that they are brought to discourse not as explicit elements of the text, but as the background assumption which ‗on the one hand leads the text producer to ‗textualize' the world in a particular way, and on the other hand leads the interpreter to interpret the text in a particular way' (85). CDA also studies

> the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context. With such dissident research, critical discourse analysts take explicit position, and thus want to understand, expose, and ultimately resist social inequality…More specifically, CDA focuses on the ways

discourse structures enact, confirm, legitimate, reproduce, or challenge relations of power and dominance in society. (Van Dijk, 2001: 352-3).

Critically analyzing the narratives of ten of thirty one key terrorism experts, Raphael attributes the failure of the mainstream discourse of terrorism to the fact that it is *state-centered* (also Ranstrop, Gunning, McDonald, and Said, cited here). The Cold War terrorism literature in the Regan era, for example, echoed the administration propaganda efforts to justify its military interventions in Central America, using the same ‗exaggerated, mis-contextualized, inconsistent, or even wholly inaccurate' claims (Raphael 2009:56). In the post-cold war era, too, many ‗friendly' countries all over the world systematically used terrorism by pro-US security forces (trained and armed by the US) who were responsible for torture, disappearance, killings and assassinations within ‗counter-terror' campaigns. Terrorist insurgent forces were used by Washington to destabilize unfriendly regimes.

All these histories were silenced by complicit state–centered studies. Silencing also involved the political and social context in which these armed movements operate, while their internal dynamics, motivating ideology, targets, tactics, and strategies, were analyzed. Indeed, some core experts, such as Rapoport and Laqueur argued against addressing the causes of terrorism – oppression, poverty, lack of education...etc. Through replicating the official analysis, silencing the facts or decontextualizing them, the core terrorism experts actually insulated terrorist policies from critique and consequently legitimated them (ibid: 58- 64). More than two decades earlier, Said had confirmed that ‗with few exceptions the discourse of terrorism is constituted by an author whose main client is the government of a powerful state opposed to terrorism, but also anxious to shield itself from arguments about perceptions of its own (quite routinely barbaric and violent) behavior' (1988:51).

To solve the puzzle of how highly contested and unstable knowledge maintains academic credibility and political influence over decades, Jackson finds out that it reflects dominant values and existing cultural narratives. Its common sense aspect draws on a series of powerful cultural frames, existing discursive structures and a self-perpetuating set of knowledge-generating practices, excluding and marginalizing ‗disruptive‘ voices (2009: 66-81). It is common sense, for example, that Western liberal democracies never engage in terrorism, if they do then it is de facto legitimate, not terrorism. In *Language and Power*, Fairclough suggests what he calls ideological common sense: ‗common sense in the service of sustaining unequal relations of power‘, building on the Gramscian notion of common sense as an ‗implicit philosophy‘ in the practical activities of social life, backgrounded and taken for granted‘ (84).

Another self-perpetuating knowledge is the myth of a global network of thousands of Muslim extremists, ready to use Weapons of Mass Destruction against the free societies, only because they are fanatic and sick. Historically, the only time that the atomic bomb was used, was by the US itself; and while no evidence whatsoever existed that terrorists or their sympathizers actually have -or have the intention to use- WMD, the ‗new‘ religious terrorism is perceived as more murderous than the world has ever seen before, thus it has to be dealt with by any means necessary, including war, torture, and violations of human rights; because non violent responses are bound to fail. Jackson also explains that the dominant discursive structure persists as a consequence of the ‗embedded‘ or ‗organic‘ nature of many leading experts who are directly linked to state institutions. From a Gramscian perspective, the leading terrorism scholars are ‗organic intellectuals‘ connected institutionally, financially, and ideologically to the state. It justifies and legitimates its policies.

The most self-defeating aspect of the discourse of WOT is its humanitarian, peace-generating and liberating rhetoric. In the violent atmosphere of WOT, moderate voices on all sides of the conflict are necessarily marginalized, foreclosing all peaceful alternatives. It has made the populations of the involved states more vulnerable. The Iraqi and Afghan peoples were multiply terrorized by the invading troops, their allied local forces *and* the terrorists. In the US 2.752 people were killed in the 9/11 terrorist attack and 4.488 soldiers in WOT[20]; but in Iraq and Afghanistan millions were killed or exposed to practically all kinds of human rights violations. On the other hand, the American human rights discourse loses any kind of credibility among the targeted nations- no matter how sincere the international NGOs are- as it accompanies such monstrous military campaigns, again foreclosing any opportunity of cooperation on these important issues. WOT was also waged in the name of commitment to defense of democracy and liberal values; but these values were actually suspended. Contrary to these values, the US officially cooperated with regional illiberal allies of Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Pakistan for example, in the fight against terrorism. Matt McDonald analyses the self-contradictory discourse regarding the emancipatory mission of WOT, arguing that hundreds of thousands among the ‗liberated‘ were dead. Liberating some cannot be achieved at the expense of others‘ lives (2007).

The world did not become safer. According to a survey by *Foreign Policy* and the Center for American Progress in the summer of 2006, ‗86% of the experts who were surveyed thought that the world was much or somewhat more dangerous… 80% of the over 100 experts who were questioned had worked in the American government (Crenshaw, 2006). The US did not become safer. In the 24-year period from 1980 to 2003 there were 350 terrorist suicide attacks around the world, 15% of them were against Americans. In the next six years (2004 to 2009) the world

[20] Until August 14, 2013 according to the US Department of Defense, published on http://antiwar.com/casualties/

witnessed 1.833 suicide attacks, 92% of them were against Americans, strongly confirming that military occupation ignites terrorism (Pape and Feldman, 2010:2).

Stuart Croft analyzes WOT metanarrative which dominated both political discourse and popular culture; and finds out that it functions by the same hegemonic ‗common sense' in the Gramscian sense, which legitimizes its policy program. Croft finds four major elements constitute this meta-narrative: the construction of the enemy as essentially evil-doers against innocent U.S. citizens; clearing the government's responsibility of 9/11; presenting WOT as a sacred crusade for freedom and justice; and that it should be global under the leadership of the US (2006). Similarly, Jackson critically analyzes the discursive production of WOT: its assumptions, symbolic systems, rhetorical modes and tropes, metaphors, narratives and meanings, and cites four ideological narratives used to write the American identity, structure the overall foreign policy, reflexively construct external threats, and discipline internal and external opponents (2004).

The Metaphor of Terrorism as War

The war metaphor was imposed on defining terrorism three days after the 9/11 terrorist attack on the World Trade Center. ‗War has been waged against us by stealth and deceit and murder', Bush said (February14th,2001)[21]. The date (9/11) was discursively iconized through the immense media coverage, to become a linguistic signifier by itself[22]. Baudrillard, however,

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[21] The phrase ‗war on terror' was used for the first time when the Reagan Administration came into office.

[22] By comparison, dates like December 2001, or November 6, 2004, or even 6-9 August 1945, hardly mean anything by themselves. However, December 2001 refers to a well-known massacre in Afghanistan where some 3000 POWs, some of them just being suspects of Taliban, were stuffed into sealed cargo containers and left to asphyxiate. (See for example *Newsweek*, August 26, 2002 or *The Scotsman*, June 17, 2002). November 6, 2004 refers to the second attack on Fallujah, Iraq, when the town was literally flattened by two-month bombing with prohibited weapons, killing some 3000, many civilians, women and children (Jamail, 2008). On September 11, 2001 (or any other day)

argues that 9/11 is a symbolic event; rather than the exaggerated media coverage is the fact that 9/11 is a symbol of a ‗global super power destroying itself…by its unbearable power that has become hegemonic to this degree, [it] has fomented all this violence which is endemic throughout the world' (2002:4-5). In either case, within WOT discourse, it refers to the ‗exceptional American victimhood… unprovoked and undeserved assault on an innocent and peaceful nation' (Jackson 2005:33). Words like national tragedy, terrible shock, suffering, sorrow, tears, calamity, nightmare, horror, anguish, wound to our country, loss …etc were constantly repeated in the official discourses (and replicated by the media, and the popular and scholarly literature) to

> divest the nation of the moral responsibility for counter-violence… [provide] a moral abdication for the civilian deaths in Afghanistan… an important foundation stone in the discursive creation of war against terrorism…as justified self-defense, …its treatment of terrorist suspects as proportionate - an act of justice rather than revenge,…and it places the moral responsibility for the consequent suffering on the original attackers rather than on the American policy (ibid: 36-37).

Even the responsibility for the undemocratic procedures the Western governments have been taking, is attributed to terrorists, according to novelist Mario Vargas Llosa who writes that terrorists are responsible for jeopardizing the great achievements (and the culture) of freedom in the West (2010:39).

9/11 was framed within the metaphor of war because, according to Lakoff, ‗metaphor has the power to create a new reality rather than simply to give us a way of conceptualizing a preexisting reality' (1980: 144); it plays a central role in the construction of social and political

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‗30.000 children died of hunger and preventable diseases; 3 million civilians have been killed in Congo since 1998; one million in Rwanda in 1994; tens of thousands in Algeria, among many other examples in other places' (Jackson, 2005).

reality …many metaphors are imposed upon us by people in power (159-60). Terror is a state of mind, an idea, not a country or a state to wage war against; so it is an open ended war, especially that terror could be generated for true or false reasons. Thus, framing terrorism as war sets the foundations for endless wars to come. September 11th was discursively linked to some American war meta-narratives in the official discourse: the Independence War (against colonialism), World War II (against axis states), the Cold War (against the evil empire), ‗clash of civilizations' (against barbarism), and globalization (against backwardness) (Jackson, 2005: 57). Thus the war metaphor redefined the event, decontextualized it and implanted it in different historical and political contexts which are littered with the famous American messianism; leaving no space for the facts to speak for themselves, foreclosing other readings, in the service of vested interests.

Several intellectuals suggested different scenarios for reacting to terrorism, had the event not been displaced, but rather presented within its own context, as a criminal act that would be addressed by policing actions, highlighting the role of the international bodies and laws and promoting their authorities in investigating and bringing the perpetrators to justice[23]. Represented as an act of war, not crime, it had to be addressed within the context of defense strategy, rather than international security and judicial institutions. The negative reply to this logic is clearly summarized by the British war historian Sir John Keegan ‗If we put affairs into the hands of a nascent, not yet developed, international justice system we could be here while the first nuclear terrorist outrage takes place… they've killed 7,000 people in New York in the twinkling of an eye. Just think if they get their hands on nuclear weapons' (2001).

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[23] See, for example, McCarthy (2007: 3), Blackburn (2002: 6), Chomsky (1988), Jackson (2005), and Anghie (2005) among many others.

The official decontextualized discourse ensured that the attack was perceived as unprovoked; neither because of any fault or responsibility on the American side, nor because of any resentments on the attackers‘ part, (demanding the US forces‘ withdrawal from Saudi Arabia, for example), but because of their inherent barbarism; thus any attempt to understand the terrorists‘ motives, and consequently trying to address them, is absurd. Many scholars expressed admiration for Bush‘s success in the post 9/11 public addresses and attributed it to rhetorical eloquence, ‗turning rhetoric into a useful asset‘, and/or to the clear and compelling vision of the world that his administration offered; a Manichean frame of *we* the good fighting *them*, the evil, on behalf of the world and the civilization that believes in progress and pluralism, tolerance and freedom, a ‗war between citizens and barbarians, between American values and those of the horde rushing the gates of civilization from the Middle East and Afghanistan‘ (Murphy, 2003: 621-25). War was represented as a moral, if not religious, duty.

The 9/11 terrorist attack created a meaning vacuum in the American consciousness. Numerous statements were made; debates were organized expressing the shock and the inexplicability of the event, asking ‗Why do they hate us?‘ a question that was repeated in virtually all media, books were published titled by this question. ‗America struggled to comprehend what had happened. Meaning had to be ascribed, and that was the task of the decisive intervention. But that meaning did not come out of the blue‘ (Croft, 2006: 266). No empirical or practical answer was given to fill the vacuum. The only answer was that ‗they‘ hate ‗us‘ because we are good, and they are bad. ‗Like most Americans, I just can't believe it because I know how good we are‘ Bush said (September 14th, 2001). Michael Ignatieff describes the American empire as: ‗the imperialism of a people who like to think of themselves as the friend of freedom everywhere. It is an empire without consciousness of itself as such, constantly shocked

that its good intentions arouse resentment abroad‘ (2003). No question was officially raised, for example, as why the WTC and the Pentagon were targeted, and not any other place. The only motivation cited is hatred and envy of America, its culture, prosperity, virtuous qualities and above all its freedom. But the ‗techniques of decontextualization and dehistoricization are not new and have occurred elsewhere in colonial or post-colonial situations‘ (Said, 1988:49).

In many of his speeches, Bush repeated the word hatred frequently. They hate our freedom, they hate our democracy, they hate our way of life, they hate our civilization…etc. Again this hatred is not due to any possible injustice that American foreign policy had inflicted on other parts of the world; it is a natural component of tyranny ridden cultures. ‗We face enemies that hate not our policies, but our existence; the tolerance of openness and creative culture that defines us‘ (September 11, 2001). ‗They hate our freedom‘ was recurrently repeated by senior officials; Bush mentioned freedom in this context 15 times in his famous speech to the Congress on Sept. 20, 2001 and 41 times in *National Security Strategy*, for example. This is absolute hatred; it has no other remedy other than eradication by war, ‗The only way to defeat terrorism as a threat to our way of life is to stop it, eliminate it, and destroy it where it grows‘ (ibid). At the heart of this discourse lie American exceptionalism and supremacy- a belief in the superiority of its systems and powers. On one hand, nothing could be wrong with its culture or policy, however inconvenient tolerance may be; on the other hand, it is only by imposing the American democratic model that the problem could possibly be solved.

September 11th introduced a discourse of new terrorism; marking ‗the beginning of a new and ominous phase in the history of both Islam and terrorism‘ (Lewis, 2003:137); ‗in many respects, the beginning of the 21st century is an era of globalized terrorism‘ (Martin, 2010: 3). It is a network whose hub is the Middle East; it acts beyond national and regional boundaries; and

its driving force is Islamic fundamentalism. Synonym to new terrorism, Islamic terrorism threatens global peace and security. While multiple historical, political and economic factors lie behind the phenomenon; WOT discourse highlights the cultural aspects, as mentioned above, foregrounding pretexts for enforcing cultural change. It is a fact that the complex ethnic, religious, and political history of the region provides a fertile ground for conflict; the international factors, however, played a major role in generating terrorism out of this perplexity.

Analyzing the rhetoric of the post 9/11 official discourse, John Murphy suggests that it remarkably seized the huge political opportunity to shape the people�Gs understanding, applying the Aristotelian *epideictic rhetoric*, an appeal that unifies the community and amplifies its virtue; rather than arguments that justify the expediency or practicality of the action. The world was polarized between ‗we', the good who deserve praise and ‗them', the evil to be blamed. ‗We' represent civilization's fight for freedom; the fight of citizens who believe in progress, pluralism, tolerance and freedom against the barbaric forces of darkness who want to sink the world in an age of terror (2003). An unwavering attitude was taken, ‗We will not tire, we will not falter' Bush said (ibid). Given the huge technological gap between the US military capabilities and the ‗others', ‗Today, the United States enjoys a position of unparalleled military strength and great economic and political influence' (*National Security Strategy*, 2002), the choice was in fact already made to apply the ‗unparalleled' force against ‗easy' targets.

Writing the Terrorist Identity

It was extremely important for the American Administration to present WOT as self-defense against an evil, savage, and barbarian attack, terms recurrently repeated in the discourse, to exclude any attempt of political interpretation and to foreclose any reading of the terrorist as a

political subject . America was attacked because it was good and the enemy was evil, not for any fault in its policies towards the world[24]. Therefore the terrorist‘s identity had to be carefully constructed, not only to justify the war, but to serve some political agendas, too. Modern terrorism is largely associated with Islam, and represented generally as a confrontation between the Western World and Islam; a culture where violence is supposed to be endemic. Official and scholarly discourses tried to distance themselves from the implied understanding that the war is against Islamic societies, suggesting that it is against some fundamentalists on the margins of a basically peaceful religion. ‗The terrorists practice a movement that perverts the peaceful teachings of Islam…The terrorists‘ directive commands them to kill Christians and Jews, to kill all Americans, and to make no distinction among military and civilians‘ (Bush, Sept. 20, 2001). Despite this attempt, Bush referred to WOT as a ‗crusade‘ (ibid).

The images of ‗brown-skinned Arab/Muslim looking‘ men (Jagger, 204), a gruesome bearded mullah, a young Palestinian with angry eyes, and a turbaned heavily armed Afghani jihadist, who hate the West and who are willing to hurt its innocent civilians, are immediately invoked. The mainstream identity culture has been essential in selling these stereotypes in the discourse of WOT; printed and electronic media and entertainment productions have played a decisive role in diffusing these images, as has scholarly literature. Stuart Croft analyzes how the

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[24] It might be sufficient to say here that the Middle East inherited many ethnic problems because of the artificial boundaries set by the colonialist powers after WWI, before they withdrew from the region. Trying to enhance stability in order to secure the energy sources and confront the Soviets within the Cold War paradigm, the US supported many authoritarian regimes and reactionary political currents, encouraging an atmosphere of harsh repression, which in turn bred radicalism. In the 1980s, Al-Qaeda was practically created and supported by the US to fight the Soviets in Afghanistan. However, the American refusal to withdraw its heavy military existence in the Gulf, especially in Saudi Arabia after the 1991 war against Iraq, turned Al-Qaeda against it. Moreover, the biased American policy in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and infinite support to Israel frustrated the region and created huge resentment against US, again encouraging extremism.

US media and popular culture (editorial cartoons, movies, novels, TV series, popular songs, religious writings, ‗tattoos‘…etc), were decisive in the construction and diffusion of the powerful discourse of WOT, by constructing a crisis and a future policy for its solution (2006). As terrorists are always identified and labeled as such by others who stand for peace, progress, modernity, and the virtues of freedom, democracy and human rights, this separation necessarily induces collective identities on both sides, incorporating cultural and group identities. In the center there is the Western culture of those virtues, pushing to the peripheries all those cultures that are supposed to be incompatible with such values.

While demonizing and dehumanizing the enemy is normal practice in war; the discourse of WOT is more than just war propaganda. It rationalizes the imposition of American values on the Middle East and the South in general. The ideological hypothesis of WOT is exemplified by the *Greater Middle East* plan of bringing security to the American people by fostering democracy in the Middle East, i.e. by codifying American values in cultures where people are infatuated with fundamentalism, making the world better for a safer America.

> Old patterns of conflict in the Middle East can be broken, if all concerned will let go of hatred, and violence...the world has a clear interest in the spread of democratic values, because stable and free nations do not breed the ideologies of murder... The threat to peace does not come from those who seek to enforce the just demands of the civilized world; the threat to peace comes from those who flout those demands. (Bush: 2003)

Ideologies of murder do not breed in democratic cultures; the terrorists‘ hatred and violence lie in the barbarism of the uncivilized world, Bush says, echoing three ‗fashionable‘ ideas of the 1990s: Samuel Huntington‘s hypothesis of the ‗Clash of Civilizations‘(1993); Bernard Lewis‘s ‗ The Roots of Muslim Rage‘ (1990), and Francis Fukuyama‘s ‗The End of

History'(1989)[25]. These three complementary narratives basically replace the ideological confrontation of the Cold War (red menace) with the cultural conflicts to be of the 21st (green menace). These articles, all of which were expanded and (re)published in books, triggered huge academic and media reaction.

Huntington proposes that the conflicts of our age are cultural conflicts between groups of seven different civilizations, most imminent of which is the Islamic, especially when combined with the Confucian. Huntington actually reorientalized the Orient by invoking the legacy of classical Orientalism, not by representing the Orient as a site of cultural and material treasures, but rather as a site of threat that would undermine Western civilization and power. The reason is what Huntington calls ‗the return to the roots phenomenon' or the re-Islamization of the ME. According to this hypothesis, Western culture has indeed permeated the rest of the world, but Western ideas of liberty, democracy and human rights have little resonance in the Islamic world, which sees the West as using international institutions, military power and economic resources to run the world in ways that will maintain Western dominance and to promote Western values. As such, these policies, in turn, create negative reactions and a reaffirmation of indigenous values (1993: 22- 49). In another article Huntington says that ‗non-Western societies envied the economic prosperity, technological sophistication, military power, and political cohesion of Western societies' (1996:38) and hated what they call the gap between the Western principle and the Western practice. ‗What is universalism to the West is imperialism to the rest' (1993:40).

Bernard Lewis sees that Islam now is inspiring a mood of hatred and violence, and ‗it is our misfortune that we have to confront …most of that hatred [which] is against us…against the

[25] Huntington and Fukuyama headed a petition signed by sixty prominent academics endorsing the war on terrorism.

Western civilization as such' (2003: 22). It is based on Islamic doctrine, and stems from the widening gap between Islam's glorious past and its miserable present and because the fundamentalists need an enemy to blame (ibid:24). Lewis suggests that this hatred is a revival of ancient prejudices; similar to the anti-American mood that found intellectual expression in Nazism, Soviet Marxism, and Third Worldism before – invoking the Holocaust in talking about September 11th. According to him, the Muslims are returning to a classical Islamic view, that infidel Christians are the ancient and immoral enemy of Islam, hence innately evil. ‗It is not just a complaint about one or another American policy but rather a rejection and condemnation, at once angry and contemptuous, of all that America is seen to represent'(ibid:65).

His theory is that in the first thousand years of the last 14 centuries, the Muslims ruled the world and the Christians were retreating under threat, until the 17th century. In the next 3 centuries, Islam was defeated by the European colonial empires, bringing the whole world, including Islam, within its orbit. Accordingly, the Muslims now are driven by a desire to restore their greatness, but they have suffered successive defeats. First they lost their domination, second they were invaded, and third, their values were disrupted by what Lewis would call, the rebellious children and the emancipated women of the West. Lewis says that because it is easier to blame others for one's misfortune, Muslims find in Western imperialism, the Anglo-French colonialism, and the Jews scapegoats to explain the deteriorating imbalance between themselves and the West. The blame game, as opposed to self-critical approach, has led to neurotic fantasies and conspiracy theories. Lewis finds out that freedom and democracy are the only remedy to the Muslim ills (2002: 151-9).

Fukuyama sees in the collapse of the Soviet Union an end of history, and an ultimate triumph of economic and political liberalism, but not in Islamic countries. However, unlike Huntington and Lewis, Fukuyama does not see any significant threat in Islam; because he considers modern liberalism itself was historically a consequence of the weakness of religiously-based societies which, failing to agree on the nature of the good life, could not provide even the minimal preconditions of peace and stability. Again, Islamic fundamentalism is seen as a response to the failure of Muslim societies to maintain their dignity vis-a-vis the non-Muslim West, and a nostalgic reassertion of a purer set of values that existed in the distant past, like Fascism, in this respect. To understand how strong this revival is, one has to understand ‗how deeply the dignity of Islamic society had been wounded in its double failure to maintain the coherence of its traditional society and to successfully assimilate the techniques and values of the West' (1992: 237). Anger and shame, Fukuyama says, do not arise from personal failure, rather from the disgrace brought upon one's group. Illiberal challenges (mainly of Islam and Confucian societies) to the ever-increasing homogenization of mankind, brought about by modern economics and technology, are reassertions of cultural identities that reinforce existing barriers between people and nations (ibid: 236-44).

To sum up what Huntington, Lewis, and Fukuyama are suggesting; the deepest source of Muslim anguish today lies in the dramatic decline of the Muslim world from a leading civilization in the world into an impotent and marginalized region. Muslims, facing the progress modernity of modernity in the West, are living in an identity crisis and driven by indignation because of their failure to create an identity compatible with the modern world. Terrorism among the Arab and Muslim ‗young' men is supposed to spring from this identity crisis. ‗The radical Islamist ideology that has motivated terror attacks over the past decade must be seen in large

measure as a manifestation of modern identity politics‘ (Fukuyama, 2007: 6) Fukuyama suggested that Islamic terrorism has nothing to do with Islamic culture per se; rather it is the importing of modernity into ‗those‘ societies that produces the crisis of identity and radicalization. ‗Modernization and democracy are good things in their own right, but in the Muslim world they are likely to increase, not dampen, the terror problem‘ (ibid).

The formula of ‗modernity stress/ identity crisis‘ found great resonance in social-psychological studies of the terrorist mindset, within the discourse of WOT. Frustrated and raged by their inability to co-opt modernity, feeling powerless and left behind in a globalizing world, desperately looking for identity, the Islamic terrorists, just like the Nazis, the Russians, and the Fascists, found in violence an answer to their existential angst, by becoming heroes of a religious cause. The portrait is of distorted, misguided, and alienated individuals, whose acts have no meaning save within a group. ‗Scapegoating is an essential component of their toolbox. Generating hatred against an enemy held responsible for the debasement of the present and the destruction of the glorious past focuses energy‘ (Mazarr, 2004). Again the political agency of these men is downplayed in favor of portraying them as psychologically disturbed. Although different kinds of terrorism exist in the world, religious terrorism is considered uniquely dangerous. Audrey K. Cronin gives five reasons for that: It is engaged in a Manichean struggle of good against evil, implying an open-ended set of human targets; it engages in violent behavior to please the perceived commands of a deity, so its actions can be especially unpredictable; it is unconstrained by secular values or laws; it often displays a complete sense of alienation from the existing social system (they are not trying to correct it, rather to replace it); and because of dispersed popular support in civil society (2003, 41-2).

Statistics, though, show that religious terrorism is second highest in terms of the loss of human life, the first is state terrorism, and the least is political terrorism (Ahmad, 2006: 261). Displacing politically motivated terrorism as religious magnifies the danger, rewrites the motives, and represents it as a menace not only to the values of Western civilization, but to the good order of the world in general, therefore it must be stamped out worldwide. Eqbal Ahmad argues that terrorists are motivated by the need to be heard, it is also an expression of anger, of feeling helpless and alone. Victims turn into terrorists; both the Jews and the Palestinians were victimized. The Stern, Irgun and Hagannah Jewish Terrorist groups came in the wake of the Holocaust; and battered Palestinians in refugee camps turn very violent. Ahmad argues that the absence of a revolutionary ideology, too, became central to terrorism because it left the globalized individual on his own (2006:262-3).

As essentially a ‗brown-skinned Arab/Muslim', it was relatively easy to construct the ‗new' terrorist identity, building on a long history of cultural stigmatization, given the fact that, publically, Islam and Arab are little, if not antithetically, known in the West. The tradition of stereotyping of the Muslims goes back to the Crusades of the Middle Ages, the golden age of the Islamic problem, according to R.W. Southern, when ‗Islam was a problem at every level of experience, and made the West profoundly uneasy' (1962:4). I will come back to this point in the next chapter; but it is relevant to say here that the hostilities between Islam and Europe fluctuated deeply through the centuries and negatively shaped the identity of the Muslim in the Western consciousness, and vice versa. In the late colonial and modern age, Orientalism framed the Arabs in an image that served the colonial project effectively by presenting them mainly as the inferior other, whose main trait was irrationality (Said: 1978); even a typical orientalist like Bernard Lewis admits that there is

> [A] widespread perception that there are significant differences between the advanced Western world and the rest, notably the peoples of Islam, and that these latter are in some ways different, with the usually tacit assumption that they are inferior. The most flagrant violations of civil rights, political freedom, even human decency are disregarded or glossed over, and crimes against humanity…are seen as normal even acceptable. The underlying assumption in all this is that these people are incapable of running a democratic society and have neither concern nor capacity of human decency (2003:90).

In the US, however, Islam and Arabs were latecomers as negative signifiers, and were always associated with crisis. They suddenly filled the news early in the 1970s with the oil crisis, with the Islamic Revolution in Iran and the hostage crisis in 1979, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan shortly after and finally with terrorism. An Arab is simply a terrorist who sits on an oil barrel.

In 2002, a new edition of Raphael Patai‘s *The Arab Mind* [26] was timely reprinted, in which Muslim Arabs were essentialized as violent, people who hate the West, among other things. According to Patai, an Arab is unable ‗to maintain incessant, uninterrupted control over himself…a docile, friendly and courteous Jekyll could turn into a raging, dangerous and maniacal Hyde…in an astonishingly short time‘ Patai says (160), and echoes many ‗authorities‘ in oriental studies that the ‗Arabs‘ emotional dependence on their [glorious] past is paralleled by the rejection of the West and what it stands for‘ (298). ‗They can‘t stand what the US stands for‘ Bush said. Democracy is one of the values that ‗the West stands for‘ in this context. Democracy has to be brought about by force ‗to make sure that the force of right will, in the ultimate issue, be protected by the right of force‘ Bush said quoting Winston Churchill (2001). The pre-emptive

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[26] Raphael Patai‘s *The Arab Mind was* first published in (1973). It is probably the single most popular and widely read book on the Arabs in the US military; considered the bible on Arab behavior, not only for the neo-cons, but also for the US military and the State Department. It is even used as a textbook for officers at the JFK special warfare school in Fort Bragg. It gives an overwhelmingly negative picture of the Arabs, and their supposed personality defects. Patai asserts, for example, that Arabs ‗hate‘ the west. It is a classic case of orientalism, reprinted with an enthusiastic introduction by Norvell De Atkine, a former US army colonel and the head of Middle East studies at Fort Bragg. See Brian Whitaker, *The Guardian,* 24 May 2004.

war is what the ‗empire of good' is going to apply in fostering democracy, free markets, and human rights (Ignatieff, 2003). WOT discursively made liberation out of invasion and occupation.

Apart from the ‗Evil Empire' of the Regan era and Bush's term of the terrorist supporters' ‗Axis of Evil', the theologically loaded metaphor of evil invokes ‗the demons and ghouls of folk tales and the obscure criminals of the horror genre in cellars of death houses, ghettos and camps', providing a negative definition of civilization, degraded modernity, and a reservoir of cultural forms and meanings to draw on, (Hariman, 2003: 513); a reservoir that actually extends beyond religions. Evil is an abstract idea of some antithetical power in the universe, incarnating our deepest fears and anxieties; murderers, strange creatures, demonic spirits, aliens…etc. The savage and the barbarian myths played such a role through history. Hayden White studies their pedigree in ancient and medieval Western literature as concepts satisfying people's existential need ‗to dignify their specific mode of existence by contrasting it with those of other men, real or imagined, who merely differ from themselves… (as) symbols, the referents of which shift and change in response to the changing patterns of human behavior' (1978:152).

As the contemporary political facts were not useful to fill the meaning vacuum created by the 9/11 terrorist attack; the savage and the barbarian symbols were used, not as fictions, but as truths; the Islamists were reconstructed as a danger that exists out there, that could be contained by force; ‗creatures whose attributes bear just those qualities that the imagination insists they must bear' in what White calls ‗remythification of the Wild Man', the dog-headed cannibals who the European had to exterminate in order to build the New World; the primitive

men who represented an example of ‗the arrested humanity, as that part of species which had failed to raise itself above dependency upon nature' (ibid:178)[27].

The loathed villain was constructed first by tabooing any knowledge about him.

> [T]he most striking thing about ‗terrorism'…is its isolation from any explanation or mitigating circumstances, and its isolation as well from representations of most other dysfunctions, symptoms and maladies of the contemporary world. Indeed, in many discussions there is often a ritual of dismissing as irrelevant, soft-headed or in other ways suspicious, anything that might explain the actions of terrorism: ‗Let's not hear anything about root causes,' runs the righteous litany, ‗or deprivation, or poverty and political frustration, since all terrorists can be explained away if one has a mind to it. What we should be after is an understanding of terrorism that helps us defeat it, not an explanation that might make us feel sorry for the terrorist.' Thus terrorism was stripped of any right to be considered as other historical and social phenomena are considered, as something created by human beings in the world of human history. Instead the isolation… has had the effect of magnifying its ravages (Said, 1988: 47)

Similarly, Zulaika and Douglas suggest, trying to know the terrorist is abominated for fear of ‗deflecting indignation and preparing to surrender' (1996: 150). Anthropologically, taboos are rooted in the fundamental need to control dangerous behavior and to protect society; the taxonomic structures are potentially threatened by marginal anomalies. While nothing is inherently anomalous and it is within the framework of a given taxonomic system that some things become so, the dog-headed cannibals, for example, provided a moral justification for the

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[27] White differentiates between the savage and the barbarian. While the first refers to a host of men with one eye in the middle of their forehead, feet turned backward, a double sex, men without mouths, pygmies, headless men with eyes in their shoulders, and doglike men who bark rather than speak. These black giants, the descendents of the cursed Ham and Nimrod were wild and rebellious. In a moral ordered world to be wild or savage is to be incoherent and mute, deceptive, oppressive, and destructive; sinful and cursed; and finally a monster, one whose physical attributes are in themselves evidence of one's evil nature. Barbarians, on the other hand, were able to organize themselves in groups large enough to constitute a threat to ‗civilization'. Both savages and barbarians in the Medieval were conceived to be enslaved by nature; to be like animals, slaves to desire and unable to control their passions; to be mobile, shifting, confused, chaotic; to be incapable of sedentary existence, of self-discipline, and of sustained labor; to be passionate, bewildered, and hostile to ‗normal' humanity. (ibid: 162, 165)

extermination of the locals in order to found European plantations worked by African slaves. ‗Terrorism discourse is the attempt to taxonomize anomaly, narrativize nonsensical logic, and categorize chaos itself' (155). It is not primarily about behavior or attributes, but as the essential qualities of the brutalized natives' humanity. The terrorist joins a host of archetypal monsters of arbitrary evil: savagery, madness, heresy, barbarism. In short, they are people with animal soul. We cannot afford to be human when confronting terroristic inhumanity. This is civilization locked in deadly struggle with wildness. Terrorism implies systematic disorder and, like dirt, is itself a residual category.

One of the deepest fears in Western societies, reminiscent of colonial discourses, is the fear of the uncontrollable natives, the suspicious others. The discourse of WOT normalized and rationalized this fear when terrorism was represented as a continuous threat to everything that the West stands for. Not only lives and security were threatened, but ‗our way of life', ‗our values', ‗our freedom', ‗our policy', ‗our economy', ‗our peace and stability', ‗our friends and allies', ‗the essence of our civilization'…etc. A three hour BBC documentary, *The Power of Nightmares: The Rise of the Politics of Fear* (2004), shows how the fear of an invisible and incomprehensible danger of a powerful and a sinister network was strategically used in the war on terrorism, a phantom enemy, an enormous monster was created.

The recurrent adjectives used to describe the terrorists within the discourse of WOT were: evil, savage, barbarian, mad, violent, deviant, cruel, treacherous, alien, animals, cancer, parasites, faceless…and so forth, who hate American civilization, freedom, and democracy[28] .

[28] Jackson cited at least sixty degenerating adjectives used or implied in describing the terrorists in the official discourse after 9/11 (2005).

Marking out the enemy in these frames necessarily excludes the self as the opposite: good, innocent, peace and freedom loving, one who respects human rights, along with many other positive connotations recurrent in the discourse. But WOT is not only about eliminating the terrorist groups, it is also about the cultural environment that produces the angry young men, and about uprooting the causes of their anger and preventing people like Bin Laden from offering a backward alternative to modernity. As the Middle East is plagued by political repression and economic failures, the discourse suggests, it is only by changing the cultural paradigms, that any cure is possible. ‗Those who claimed…that Operation Iraqi Freedom was necessary to light the spark of modernity in the Middle East and the larger Islamic world …The spark had already been lit' (Mazarr, 2004). What is needed to be done now is to replace the violent culture by another, American friendly:

> Surely, we must deter, locate, and destroy terrorists… but we must address the psychological roots of radicalism and terrorism in the Islamic world… a strategy that lays engagement alongside deterrence, human development alongside special operations, multicultural outreach alongside border controls, and, most of all, positive identity alongside terrorist ones …A strategy to achieve this goal could have several elements. One, as Paul Berman [second American governor of Iraq after 2003] has emphasized, ought to be a full-blown war of ideas— the sort of contest that the West waged against Soviet communism from the 1940s onward…The goal of such a campaign would be to furnish the people of the Islamic world broad and deep new sources of information about the United States, the West, and their values and to explain, with far more detail and persuasive force, the basis for U.S. policies. (ibid)

According to this prescription, ‗the full-blown war of ideas' should be subtly performed, not by any openly patronizing traditional manner, not by educating the natives of how wonderful life in the West is, not by accumulating development programs, but by combating the extremist ‗identity entrepreneurs' by others who offer

> not an identity based on violence, terror, and the hoped-for utopia of seventh-century primitiveness, but instead a future of greater freedom, higher standards of living, and continued expression of national and cultural values. By addressing the insults to Arab and Muslim identity in the modern world that can accommodate basic U.S. interests, and if they can translate these ideas into concrete organizations, parties, or programs that can offer membership and dignity and hope to large numbers of people, they can become partners (ibid).

This scheme, reminiscent of Macaulay‘s ‗indigenous elite‘, is a development of what Joseph Nye, the former assistant secretary of defense, called Soft Power; a concept which Nye coined in 1990 in his book *Bound to Lead,* and later explored and developed in *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (2004). It simply refers to ‗the ability to influence the behavior of others to get the outcomes one wants‘ (2004:2), by attraction and example, rather than by coercion and bribes. Since the Roman Empire, Nye says, no other polity is comparable to the US. Rome did not succumb to the rise of another empire, but to the waves of barbarians; modern high-tech terrorists are the new barbarians. America cannot hunt down all those barbarians hidden in remote regions of the globe; ‗the dazzling display of America‘s hard military power… did not resolve our vulnerability to terrorism‘ (xi). It is better, and cheaper, to structurally reshape their societies, creating environments conducive to American wishes. ‗If a country can shape international rules that are consistent with its interests and values, its actions will more likely appear legitimate in the eyes of others‘ (11).

Soft power is particularly relevant in fighting terrorism, not only because ‗terrorism depends crucially on soft power for its ultimate victory…and on its ability to attract support from the crowd‘ (22), but also because ‗anti-Americanism may be a cover for a more general inability to respond to modernity in the Middle East‘ (43). Nye believes that America has the biggest arsenal of soft power in the world: (popular) culture, democratic values, commerce, foreign policy, immigrants and so forth. However, ‗the question is what messages are sent and received

by whom under which circumstances‘ (44). Thus Nye himself critiqued Bush‘s flawed use of American soft power, which resulted in ‗squandering‘ it, when ‗public opinion polls show serious decline in American attractiveness in Europe, Latin America, and most dramatically, across the entire Muslim world‘ (Parmar and Cox, 2010:4).

In any case, within the context of WOT, a new strategy was built on the model of American success in post WW II Europe and Japan. A transformed Iraq could become a key element in a different Middle East, drawing on the analogy of the Cold War, ‗much as a democratic Germany became a linchpin of a new Europe‘, former National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice said[29]. This ambitious transformation plan was translated into practical procedures in the *National Security Strategy* of 2002, also referred to as the Bush Doctrine, which vowed ‗diminishing the underlying conditions that spawn terrorism‘ (6). Furthermore, Antony Anghie discusses WOT as ‗defensive imperialism‘: ‗It is principally through the language of war-as-self-defense that the ‗other‘ is constructed, excluded from the realm of law, attacked, liberated and transformed‘ (2005: 278). The rogue nations, once defeated, must be *transformed* into democratic states, otherwise they will always be fertile ground breeding terrorists, if left on their own in a state of chaos. Democracy liberates the oppressed people and creates law-abiding societies that would be allies rather than threats to the US.

[29] 'Transforming the Middle East', *The Washington Post*, August 7, 2003, p. A21.

Chapter IV

In Her Name: Targeting the Middle Eastern Woman

In the 19th century, the paramount moral challenge was slavery. In the 20th century, it was totalitarianism. In this century, it is the brutality inflicted on so many women and girls around the globe.

The New York Times

The world is not, as some suggest, headed toward a clash of civilizations …We ARE engaged in a battle of ideas. It is essential that, in the years ahead, the United States re-occupy the high ground in this battle.

Madeline Albright, ex. US Secretary of State

Obviously, I stood out because I'm a Western woman.

Lt. Harry Harrison (Bronze Star medal for her service in Iraq)*

Evolution of a Discourse

Human rights and democracy have been the contemporary version of the colonial mission of civilizing barbarous societies over many centuries. Ethical humanitarian justifications have underpinned the political ideology of military interventions of powerful Western countries in the decolonized Third World after WW II. Jean Bricmont called it ‗humanitarian imperialism: using the denunciation of violations of human rights and the absence of democracy to legitimize our interventions, wars and inference' (2006:10)[30]. Obviously, militarizing human rights by

*Epigraphs (in order): Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl Wuddun, ‗Saving the World's Women' *The New York Times* (August 17, 2009); Madeline Albright, ‗The Future of Human Rights', a paper delivered in Center of American Progress in Washington DC, published online on April 8, 2008, and retrieved on September 1, 2011. http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2008/04/pdf/albright_remarks.pdf (emphasis in origin); and James Wise and Scott Baron *Women at war: Iraq, Afghanistan, and other conflicts* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2006), p.16.

definition is self-contradictory: defending human rights (read peace, justice, and equal chances) by war (read killing and destruction). Disproportionate and indiscriminate targeting of civilians and essential infrastructure breaches all humanitarian norms. Still, within the discourse of WOT, well-financed and publicized cultural productions endlessly ruminated by the media, have relatively succeeded in selling this ideology which is based on the assumption of the universality and superiority of Western values. It is a clear model of hegemony in the Gramscian sense, where a dominant group claims to represent another group‘s interests as part of its own political project, not only by coercive power, but also by persuasion through civil society- an ‗equilibria in which the interests of the dominant group prevail‘ (Gramsci 1971: 182).

Bricmont argues that today‘s political ethics is totally dominated by what can be called the intervention imperative, a ‗right‘ that is ‗not only widely accepted, but often becomes a duty‘ (2006: 18). The discourse of WOT emphasized an altruistic dimension: it is waged in the interests of the targeted peoples. In a letter endorsing WOT, sixty American intellectuals wrote ‗We fight to defend ourselves, but we also believe that we fight to defend those universal principles of human rights‘ (ibid: 30). But the claim of the humanitarian civilizing mission goes beyond the hegemonic notion of defending the Other‘s human rights, to the notion of waging war-as-self-defense within this discourse: protecting our democratic and civilized selves from the Other‘s backwardness. According to international law, a country has the right to start a war in the case of imminent threat, which was not the case of Iraq, at least. However the US misused the concept of preemptive war.

[30] Also see Richard Wilson (ed.) *Human Rights in the War on Terror* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005); and Nader (2006).

It suggested that a rogue state, once defeated must be transformed into a democracy, which would play a crucial dual role: liberating the oppressed people and creating a law-abiding society that would ally with -rather than threat- the US, thus ensuring the safety and security of the American people. ‗[P]romoting moderate and modern governments in the Muslim world to ensure that conditions and ideologies that promote terrorism do not find fertile ground in any nation' (Bush: 2002), is closely related to the representation of terrorism as associated with the Muslim world, the ‗fertile ground' for terrorism. Antoni Anghi argues that ‗it is principally through the language of war-as-self-defense that the ‗Other' is constructed, excluded from the realm of law, attacked, liberated, defeated, and transformed' (2005: 278). He also demonstrates how through the invocation of human rights, the reproduction of the structure of the civilizing mission, and framing the other as both dangerous and repressed, what might be seen as an illegal project of conquest is transformed into a legal project of salvation and redemption (273-309).

‗But even within the humanitarian discourse, there appears to be a hierarchal argument' says German Brigadier General Helmut W. Ganser, ‗Politicians have in fact repeatedly addressed human rights and women's rights when justifying and seeking approval for military intervention' and quotes president Barak Obama's speech on March 25, 2009.

> As President, my greatest responsibility is to protect the American people. We are not in Afghanistan to control that country or to dictate its future. We are in Afghanistan to confront a common enemy that threatens the United States, our friends and our allies, and the people of Afghanistan and Pakistan who have suffered the most at the hands of violent extremists...For the Afghan people, a return to Taliban rule would condemn their country to brutal governance, international isolation, a paralyzed economy, and the denial of basic human rights to the Afghan people -- especially *women and girls*. (2010, my emphasis)

Obama uses a hierarchy of arguments, where the protection of the American people is on top of the agenda. Women's rights in Afghanistan are mentioned at the end of the string of arguments

just in a supportive role. They are by no means at the forefront. ‗As far as I recall most references made by politicians to women‘s rights in the context of military interventions are given similarly low priority. Certainly, many mistakes have been made in Afghanistan since 2001 and we are still far from implementing women‘s rights there' (Ganser, 2009)

Nevertheless, feminism and women‘s freedom have been discursively highlighted within the double civilizing mission. The story is quite simplistic: Societies in the ME are homogeneously represented as backward, pre-modern and fundamentalist whose worst victims are their women. Accordingly, ‗the solution lies in promoting democracy and Western values of freedom and liberty through religious and cultural reform so that the Muslim might be taught to discard fundamentalist propensities and adopt more enlightened version of Islam' (Mahmood, 2010:82). Democracy, by definition, cannot be imposed, but within this discourse the US assumes a global responsibility of bringing democracy to the ‗Others' who lack it, with the help of the very women to be rescued.

Women‘s rights were internationally recognized as human rights in the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights in 1993, after more than two decades of intensive international activities, where violence against women and their victimization were emphasized as manifestations of unequal power relations between men and women. Subsequently, women‘s testimonies in public tribunals, documentaries, publications, UN and international (women‘s) organizations reports and so forth, presented horrifying images of women‘s plight all over the world, especially in the developing countries[31]. In addition to these narratives, issues of poverty,

[31] Since 1975 there have been several international conferences on women‘s issues every five years, all of which emphasized women‘s freedom in all aspects of their lives. In 1979, The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/, retrieved on July 20,

debts, population explosion, and high fertility were addressed in the international political, economic and financial institutions as an impediment to modernization in the Third World; they added impetus to the whole discourse relevant to women‘s disadvantaged situation.

Those narratives were of unquestionable informative value; however ‗the victim subject has become the dominant focus of the international women‘s human rights movement… [reinforcing] gender and cultural essentialism, which in turn have been further displaced onto a Third World and ‗First World‘ divide...and justified imperialist interventions‘(Kapur, 2008). The ‗women question‘ was reconfigured to gain curious momentum and centrality in the construction of the discourse on Third World backwardness. While making their oppression more visible, it was actually furthering, naturalizing and institutionalizing their Otherness as relegated objects. Images of extreme helplessness, subjugation, ignorance, and victimization were prevalent in these narratives, as transnational phenomena in the so called ‗Third World‘. The victim subject of honor killing in Middle Eastern countries, circumcision in Africa, dowry killing (often by burning) in India, sex trafficking in East Asia, and foot binding or one-child policy in China for example, were culturally essentialized and provided ‗a shared location from which women from different cultures and social contexts can speak‘ (ibid).

2011) was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, providing the basis for realizing equality between women and men through ensuring women's equal access to, and equal opportunities in, political and public life as well as education, health and employment. Different Islamic countries, organizations, scholars and institutions found the discourses in these international conferences and conventions, especially CEDAW, insensitive to religion and culture, especially when it comes to family values, creating a strong and unnecessary reaction against the very concept of ‗feminism‘. In 2000, the UN Security Council resolution 1325 on the impact of war on women promoted the role of women in conflict resolution and peace building, adopting the slogan of ‗women are not the problem, they are the solution‘. However, these narratives were generally criticized for not prioritizing women‘s interests within the contexts of class, ethnicity, religion and political orientation, but rather by reducing women‘s problems to their sex, thereby further essentializing their inequality. (For thorough discussions of UNSCR 1325, see Shepherd 2008 and Gibbings 2005).

The Middle East, as a part of the Third (Muslim, Arab) World was suddenly and confusingly (re)introduced to the Western consciousness in the 1970s within all those narratives, but more significantly when the energy shortage[32], the Islamic Revolution in Iran, the hostage crisis[33] and the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan among other events became ‗news' (Said, 1989: 61). ‗Culturally there was no distinct place in America for Islam [as a problem] before World War II' (ibid: 13). For the West generally and the United States in particular, the ME has become a dangerous and chaotic place, distinctive by conflicts, undemocratic regimes, and (women's) human rights abuses. The ME has become a problem and a threat mainly because it holds the oil reserves, thus common knowledge about it has always been highly politically-saturated.

> [T]he confluence of power bearing upon Islam is notable, as much as for its component groups (the academy, the corporations, the media, the government), as for the relative absence of dissent from the orthodoxy it has created. The result has been a gross simplification of ‗Islam' so that numerous manipulative aims can be realized, from the stirring up of a new cold war, to the instigation of racial antipathy, to mobilization for possible invasion, to the continued denigration of Muslim and Arabs.(ibid: xviii)

The stereotyped wild-eyed heavily mustached Arabs, in traditional *kūfiyya* and ‗*Iqāl* (Arabic head cover) holding a knotted oil pipe prevailed, publically referred to as the three Bs syndrome: Billionaire, Bomber, and Belly dancer (wealthy oilman, terrorist and sex object). All of those events added to the momentum of the Western apprehension of Middle Easterners, generally represented as combining backwardness and danger.

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[32] The energy shortage was connected to the nationalization of oil companies in many of the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC) and the oil embargo as a reaction to the US military support to Israel in the war of 1973.

[33] Fifty-two Americans were taken hostage in the US embassy in Tehran for 444 days in 1979.

Not surprisingly, ‗it is after the 1970s that we witness more significant inroads being made by Western academic feminism into Middle Eastern scholarship‘ (Kandiyoti, 1996: 12; also Haddad, 2005 and Offenhauer, 2005 among others). In the last two decades scholarly and other narratives on the situation of women in Muslim societies, which disproportionately focused on the ME, have exploded and grown so voluminous in all areas of social science and humanities that any introduction would necessarily be selective[34]. These literatures were bipolar: on one side negative and critical, building on the monolithic stereotypes of the neo-orientalist-colonialist discourses in depicting ME women as being helplessly victimized; and on the other, more positive but mainly indignant, defensive, apologetic, or explanatory redefining women against the assault of the early discourse: Islamists, leftists and liberals, although politically extremely different, are voices formulated within the dominant Western discourse. On both poles the situation of women in ME was looked into and judged not on its own terms, but rather through Western lenses, or compared to Western women, ‗specifically U.S. women [who] become the ideal for freedom‘ (Oliver, 2007: 57). Confirming that the dormant study of women in the ME

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[34] After the 1970s a large number of books on Islam were published affirming its superiority. They were indignant against what was perceived as a Western cultural onslaught. Simultaneously, several Muslim and Arab women scholars, regardless of their orientation, explained that Islam *per se* is not responsible for the position of women in Muslim societies; rather it is the social traditions. While they do not have yet a cohesive framework, yet many feminists in the ME confronted Islamic traditionalism by presenting textual reinterpretations of Quran, and at the same time distancing themselves from the ‗West‘; other voices criticized Orientalist representations of Muslim women. In the 1980s, Iranian feminist scholars challenged the ideology of the Islamic Republic policies. Their discourse was supported by some Arab feminists such as Nawal Sadawi and Fatima Mernissi. On another side, progressive nationalist scholars defied both the Western and the Islamic systems, and challenged patriarchies within secular thought. Islamic liberationist feminist discourses have been formulated as a response to Islamic traditionalism as well as Western norms. Generally speaking, Muslim women in the West analyzed and criticized religious texts and traditions more freely than in most Muslim societies. Yvonne Haddad compiled a two-volume bibliography (530 pages) of scholarly studies on the situation of women in Islamic societies in 1970-1997, with 48 pages of lists of titles alone (Offenhauer, 2005).

flowered in the US in the 1970s, Nikki Keddie says that there is special focus on the past in those studies. Given the fact that

> the West‘s special hostility to Islam goes back to religious and military confrontations…Muslims seen as a dangerous group of unbelievers, specific negative attitudes toward Islam, and especially toward Arabs, which combined religious, racial, and colonial attitudes were widespread in the West. The role of women in Islamic society was frequently stressed by Westerners sure of their superiority, and Muslim women were widely seen as little better than slaves, either totally repressed or erotic objects, and as needing Western control or tutelage to gain any rights…[their] bad conditions as stemming directly from Islam (ibid: 555).

According to feminist scholar Marnia Lazrag, the tenacious focus on religion in the scholarship on women in the ME, which is especially problematic as Islam itself is seen as impervious to change, is kept ‗in a sort of ghetto where theoretical and methodological developments that take place in the mainstream of social sciences are somehow deemed inapplicable‘ (1988: 84). The persistence of the veil as a symbol, for example, illustrates the difficulty researchers have in dealing with a reality with which they are unfamiliar. Islam - detached from the socioeconomic and political context within which it unfolds - comes across as inevitably antifeminist, as *the* cause of gender inequality. Lazrag also highlights the homogenizing aspect and Western centrality. Another feature is the representation of Arab women as being so different (read lesser) that they are deemed unable to understand or develop any form of feminism. When they speak for themselves they are accused of being ‗pawns of man‘ (1988: 88). The implication is that an Arab woman cannot be feminist prior to disassociating herself from Arab men and the culture that supports them. There is also an implicit idea that it is women who should undo Islam. The problem, Lazrag suggests, is that writing about women in the ME, due to the fact that ‗it unfolds within an external frame of reference and according to equally external standards…the consciousness of one‘s womanhood coincides with the realization that it has already been

appropriated by outsiders‘. On the other hand, a feminist engaged in representing the Others ‗wields a form of power over them…when the power of men over women is reproduced in the power of women over women, feminism as an intellectual movement presents a caricature of the very institutions it was meant to question‘ (ibid: 97).

Conceptual and Contextual Frame

To conceptualize how the discourse of WOT positioned ME women within the contemporary practices of war, violence and empire building, it is inevitable to review the historical turning points in the discourses of gender, race and in particular religion in the ME, wherein women were silenced by multiple forces. Applying feminist postcolonial theorist Gayatri Spivak‘s theory of the impossibility of any colonial rescue in her almost three-decade ‗relentless challenge to all those specious knowledge systems which seek to regulate the articulation of the ‗gendered subaltern‘‘ (Gandhi 1998: 86); and feminist scholar Leila Ahmed‘s discrimination between original Islam and establishment Islam in ME, in her study *Women and Gender in Islam: Roots of a Modern Debate* (1992), I argue that within the discourse of WOT, women (and men) in the ME, though not necessarily subaltern in the strict Spivakian sense, were doubly silenced both by a revived, oppressive, and institutionalized Islam which had operated through 14 centuries, and by the neo-colonialist and imperialist discourses of the West, past and present (sometimes in the name of religion too).

Spivak‘s ‗Can the Subaltern Speak?‘ (1988) has already been introduced in Chapter II. She demonstrates how colonialism manipulated the indigenous cultural structures and silenced the subaltern woman, and how the nationalist elite silenced her again by claiming that widows actually ‗want to die‘. In both cases her right to subject identity formation was denied, and she

was doubly ‗othered'. Spivak discusses the epistemic violence(s) of constituting the colonial subject as Other, and of the manipulation of female agency. ‗This benevolent first-world appropriation and reinscription of the Third World as Other is the founding characteristic of much third-worldism in the US human sciences today', Spivak says. In the scheme of ‗white men saving brown women from brown men' women are triply silenced ‗if you are poor, black and female you get it in the three ways' (ibid). Spivak's (rhetorical) question-essay also theorizes writing alternative histories that started early in the 1980s by a group of scholars based mainly in India. They initiated a trend of rewriting the colonial history and resistance of India incorporating the constitutive role of the subaltern- the Gramscian notion of inferior ranks- missing (silenced) in the official story that was written by ‗a handful of dominant native leaders or colonial historians', according to Said in his ‗Foreword' to *Selected Subaltern Studies* (1988:vii).

At this stage of her trajectory, Spivak's notion of the subaltern was of the muted oppressed, whose discourse is totally removed from recognition. A decade later, she rethinks the ‗subaltern' in *A Critique in Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of Vanishing Present* (1999), and comes up with the ‗new subaltern', the urban proletariat in the developing nations (1999: 275-6), those removed from lines of social mobility (2004:531). She is still reconstructed, reproduced, and represented by others; as a subject she is more deeply submerged in the new empire of globalization, (violently) crushed by multinational capital in the South, and remains silenced. In the 1970s euphoria of activism, Third World Women and Development, which was mobilized on a national level, has become today a ‗particularly privileged signifier…in the interest of the financialization of the globe…and has changed to ‗Gender and Development' (1999: 200) by proponents of global feminism that speak *about* / *for* women in developing

countries, the homogenous oppressed, where ‗the pattern of domination is determined mainly by gender rather than class' (ibid: 272).

Again the Western subjects are centralized as her ‗representatives', who actually construct a will for the subaltern subject. Those are the new warriors of the 21st century: NGOs (often funded by the West as ‗force multiplier…an important part of the combat teams')[35], World Trade Organization, world financial institution, researchers, (increasingly) UN development projects, and women, children, and human rights transnational organizations. According to Spivak, globalization, development in the South, and third world program aids are merely a continuity of the colonial civilizing mission, within the neoliberal capitalist agenda, where ‗[T]he contemporary international division of labor is a displacement of the divided field of nineteenth-century territorial imperialism' (274), and ‗some of the best products of high colonialism, descendants of the colonial middle class, became human rights advocates in the countries of the South' (524)

Globalization initiated another process of global inequality and socioeconomic impoverishment, particularly in the Third World, and within its development discourse, the North's superiority over the South is taken for granted as Western development is the norm, thus representations are still configured ‗in terms of an ‗us/them' dichotomy in which ‗we' aid/develop/civilize/empower ‗them' (now called) ‗beneficiaries', ‗target groups', ‗partners' or ‗clients', instead of ‗poor', ‗underdeveloped' or ‗disadvantaged'(Kapoor,2004: 629), which hardly change the discourse or dismantle the us/them power relationship. The subaltern woman

[35] The NGOs, ex US Secretary of State Colin Powell said in 2001, were a tremendous ‗force multiplier' for the U.S. military, and, by extending the reach of the U.S. government, would do much to help accomplish the intervention's goals. See Lischer, (2007)

is represented as victimized by economic and social, but mainly cultural systems within the gender and development institutions, which is rather logical as it is their *raison d'être*.

Regarding the discourse of WOT, Spivak states that ‗I am troubled by the use of human rights as an alibi for interventions of various sorts' (2004a: 524). She warns against ‗subalternist essentialism' which…in the present state of the world, also reproduces and consolidates gender oppression, thus lending plausibility to instant rightspeak of the gender lobby of the international civil society and Bretton Woods' (542). In ‗Righting Wrongs' (2004), she argues that the emergence of the human rights model as the global dominant is contingent upon the turbulence in the wake of the dissolution of imperial formations and global economic restructuring, especially in the 1990s. The possibility of being a ‗helper in today's triumphalist US society, she says, is embedded in the rights-based cultural and educational system: I am necessarily better, indispensible, one to right the wrong, the end product for which history happened…etc (ibid: 532), and suggests that ‗another antonym to *right* is *responsibility*' (ibid: 534, emphasis in origin), and again responsibility *to*, not *for* the subaltern. In ‗Terror: a Speech after 9/11', she writes

> Women are prominent in this war on terrorism, this monstrous civilizing mission. We cannot ignore the very vocal fresh-faced women, shown by CNN, at the helm of a US aircraft carrier. One of them, unnervingly young, said to the viewers, ‗If I can drive an aircraft carrier I can drive any truck'. This was in response to the most bizarre example of single-issue feminist patter that it has been my good fortune to hear from the mouth of a male CNN correspondent: ‗No one will be able to make sexist jokes about women drivers any more'. All women? ‗Women of Afghanistan' are coded somewhat differently. Given this gender-prominence, a feminist critical theory must repeat that expanding the war endlessly will not necessarily produce multiple-issue gender justice in the subaltern sphere' (2004a: 84).

The visible consequences of WOT have nothing to do with gender justice at all, Spivak confirms. The women's emancipation movement in Afghanistan started late in the 19th century, as is the

case in many ME countries. But the images that are coming out from ruined Afghanistan for more than a decade now are different from what those feminists had in mind. ‗There is no possibility, in an American protectorate, of gender holding the repeated and effortful turning of capital into social…That happened in the era of the seventies' new social movements in what we now call the ‗global south' ‗(ibid: 85)

Leila Ahmed, on the other hand, discusses the reemergence of *hijab*, or the veil, in the late twentieth century among Muslim women[36], and differentiates between two meanings of gender in Islam: of the first Islamic society in Arabia and of the subsequent dominant Islam.

> The meanings and social articulations of gender informing the first Islamic society in Arabia differed significantly from those informing the immediately succeeding Muslim society…the distinctive meaning that the notion ‗woman' acquired in that society (in which traditions of a number of religions and culture blended inextricably) were inscribed into the literary, legal, and institutional productions that today constitute the founding and authoritative corpus of establishment Muslim thought. The androcentric and misogynist biases of this society affected…the Islamic message… [which] preached, in its ethical voice, the moral and spiritual equality of all human beings. In the [succeeding] context, the regulations instituting a sexual hierarchy were given central emphasis while the ethical message stressing the equality of all human beings and the importance of justice went largely unheeded and remained, with respect to women, essentially unarticulated in the laws and institutions…by the dominant classes and by the creators of establishment Islam. (ibid: 238)

The ethical voice, in contrast, was emphasized by marginal and lower-class groups who challenged and contested the dominant political order and its interpretation of Islam, including the meaning of gender. However, the establishment version survived ‗because it was the interpretation of the politically dominant- those who had the power to outlaw and eradicate other readings as ‗heretical', and continued to be powerful today (ibid: 239). Many Westerners look astonished when Muslim women say that Islam is essentially an egalitarian religion, it is because

[36] See also Mahmood (2001), Abu Lughod (2002), Zine (2007), Moore (2008), and Lazrag (1988).

in the ‗official' dominant version of Islam, women are immutably positioned as subordinate. In accordance with Foucault's theory of knowledge/power/discourse, and the fact that discourses shape and are shaped by specific moments in specific societies, I argue that Ahmed's distinction between two Islams is relevant here as it problematizes and displaces the understanding of women's subordination as an inherently *cultural* issue, and replaces it in the political, economic and gender discourses. Ahmed suggests that: ‗Throughout Islamic history the constructs, institutions, and modes of thought devised by early Muslim societies that form the core discourses of Islam have played a central role in defining women's place in Muslim societies' and that: ‗In establishment Islamic thought, women are defined as different from, and lesser than, Muslim men' (ibid: 1,7).

Historically, inegalitarian ideologies that limit women to the biological reproductive aspect of their identities were prevalent in *all* ancient civilizations, according to many historians[37], including Ahmed who explores the historical development of the notion of ‗women' in pre-Islamic cultures of the Mediterranean ME: the Mesopotamian, the Judaic, the Hellenic, the Persian, the Christian and eventually the Islamic cultures, suggesting that women suffered a decline in status with the emergence of urban centers and city states. All these cultures contributed and borrowed from each other the notions of woman in which her humanity was submerged and she was viewed as an essentially and exclusively biological, quintessentially sexual and reproductive being. Accordingly, Islam incorporated an already developed scriptural misogyny into the socio-religious universe it too would inscribe, especially after it went out of

[37] Nikki Keddie 2006, Lapidus 1988, Bahrani 2008, among others.

Arabia and conquered the neighboring lands. Jews stoned women, Christians considered them evil and responsible for the fall of mankind, Persians kept harems and concubines, Greeks regarded them inferior and their existence useless unless for bearing children and so forth (11-37).

Norms were of female inferiority and male dominance in the family, household, tribe, and state. Nikki Keddie shows that the pre-Islamic ME empires saw, among their rulers and urban elites, the rise of harems, female slavery, and elite women‘s veiling, partial seclusion, and separation from the hard physical labor that most women and men had to do. Male honor included dominance over women and their sexuality and the practice of ‗honor killing‘, which is a tribal custom not found in the Quran or Islamic law. The importance of lineage purity to both tribal and settled groups involved an emphasis on female virginity at marriage and fidelity during marriage. The position of women in pre-Islamic Arabia (mainly nomadic with less social and gender stratification), for which sources are scarce, remains controversial, with some stressing the reformist role of the prophet Muhammad regarding women; they argue that women before Islam had a low status, that they were essentially bought, sold, and stolen, and that female infanticide (denounced in the Quran) was prevalent. Many now believe original Islam improved the position of women, that it condemned the practice of female infanticide, it said that the male dowry[38] should go to the wife, not to her male relative, and endorsed women‘s ownership and control of property, saying that women should inherit half of what men got. According to these scholars the decline of women‘s position after the earliest Islamic period was due to foreign and

[38] Muslim men pay women dowry in marriage and compensations in divorce.

local patriarchal accretions, not to what was written in the Quran, which modern groups of Islamic reformists see as implicitly gender egalitarian (Kiddie, 2007: 13-25).

However, Ahmed argues that women in pre-Islam Arabia were better off than they were in the adjacent societies, and that while the Quran is stubbornly egalitarian in its ethical mission, it is far more ambiguous on women and gender, creating tensions between the pragmatic and the ethical perceptions.

> Thus some Quranic verses regarding marriage and women appear to qualify and undercut others that seemingly establish marriage as a hierarchal institution unequivocally privileging men. Among the former are verses that read: ‗Wives have rights corresponding to those which husbands have, in equitable reciprocity' (Sura 2:229). Similarly, verses such as those that admonish men, if polygamous, to treat their wives equally and that go on to declare that husbands would not be able to do so- using a form of the Arabic negative connoting permanent impossibility- are open to being read to mean that men should not be polygamous. In the same way, verses sanctioning divorce go on to condemn it as ‗abhorrent to God'. The affirmation of women's right to inherit and control property and income without reference to male guardians, in that it constitutes a recognition of women's right to economic independence (that most crucial of areas with respect to personal autonomy), also fundamentally qualifies the institution of male control as an all-encompassing system. (ibid: 63)

These and similar ambiguities led to divergent textual interpretations, and ‗a misogynist reading was undeniably one reading to which Islam plausibly lent itself' (ibid: 87). I argue that this ambiguity also stems from the fact that the liberating spirit of original Islam was overwhelmed by highlighting the empirical details of the social practices of the age. Islam, while genuinely trying to reform women's social conditions, was acting within the available, extremely limited cultural space. Like Ahmed, I notice that there are huge discrepancies (even contradictions) between the text, Quran, and its applications (the laws and social customs related to women that are attributed to the religion of Islam).

But my argument is that while the original Islam of the 7th century was also a humanitarian reforming social movement, it was historically and socially particular. It tried to ameliorate (women‘s) human conditions within a culture that practiced infanticide, polygamy, (women‘s) slavery, kidnapping, among other abuses. To negotiate a new women (and underprivileged) friendly social system in such a culture, without provoking strong social reaction that could put an end to the new religion, the Quran had to maneuver its way and maintain mild, piecemeal, and sometimes even ambivalent language which opened ways for misogynist textual interpretations that were misused to legitimize and legalize women‘s subjugation through different readings of the same text, later on[39]. Thus Islamic feminists, who today strategize their struggle on this issue of rereading the Quranic lexicology, find themselves in a cul-de-sac. One example is a highly problematic sentence in Quran ‗Men are in charge of women‘ (4:34). There are at least ten authoritative interpretations of this sentence, because the classical Arabic word ‗*Qawwam*‘ (in charge of) could mean in control of, and/or responsible to, which are almost opposite. Women and men in this sentence could be equally considered servants or leaders according to the relevant interpretation. The lexical rereading of the sentence in either way, however, does not solve the problem, it only reverses the equation[40].

[39] Examples: Quran sanctions on women‘s dress specifically and exclusively addressed women in the Prophet‘s family, so that they would be distinguished from other women and treated accordingly. Some Muslim Ulemas (theologians) however, considered those sanctions compulsory to all Muslim women, as the Prophet‘s family should be an example to all Muslims. Similarly, the lines that mention polygamy in Quran, state that a man can take two, three or four wives on one condition: that he treats all of them equally justly, which he cannot, the lines confirm twice, implying that he should not take more than one wife. Other lines that sanction prayer and fasting in Ramadan, for example, exempt women during menstruation. Some Ulemas read these sanctions as gender sensitivity (to women‘s biological particularity), while others read them as evidence of women‘s inferiority.

[40] Similarly, Shahrzad Mojab, among other ME feminists, examines developments in ‗Islamic feminism‘, and offers a critique of feminist theories, which construct it as an authentic and indigenous emancipator alternative to secular feminisms. Focusing on Iranian theocracy, she argues that the Islamization of gender relations has created an

Indeed, women seclusion, *hijab*[41], polygamy, marriage of young girls, easy divorce for men and other manifestations of Islamic misogyny highlighted within the discourse of WOT, were *not* sanctioned in the Quran, especially if read in its overall egalitarian and humane message, clearly and repeatedly manifested, as Ahmed shows. Other practices such as female circumcision, honor killing, including stoning, were never mentioned or practised by first (nor by most of later) Muslim societies. The misogynist reading of the Quran flourished and acquired authority during the Umayyad (662-750) and in particular Abbasid (750-1258) societies, when the conquests and economic expansion brought enormous wealth and slaves to the elite who had power, authority, and resources to purchase as many women as they fancied. ‗Keeping enormous harems of wives and concubines guarded by eunuchs became the accepted practice' (Ahmed: 83). For those men, one meaning of ‗woman' was ‗slave, object purchasable for sexual use' (ibid: 85). Outside the ruling class, polygamy and concubinage were uncommon.

The combination of this perception of woman's identity as purchasable objects for sexual use, with the already prevalent misogynist conceptions in ME pre-Islamic societies mentioned above, ‗must have eroded any humanity from the idea of women… and created an ideology of gender in the mores and texts of the religiously and politically dominant' (ibid, 87) - the

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oppressive patriarchy that cannot be replaced through legal reforms. Many women in Iran resist this religious and patriarchal regime, and an increasing number of Iranian intellectuals and activists, including Islamists, call for the separation of state and religion. But Mojab argues that feminists of a cultural relativist and postmodernist persuasion do not acknowledge the failure of the Islamic project. She argues that western feminist theory, in spite of its advances, is in a state of crisis since it is challenged by the continuation of patriarchal domination in the West in the wake of legal equality between genders. By being suspicious of the universality of patriarchy, it overlooks oppressive gender relations in non-western societies, and, by rejecting Eurocentrism and racism, it endorses the fragmentation of women of the world into religious, national, ethnic, racial and cultural entities with particularist agendas (2001).

[41] After lexically deconstructing the two references to *hijab* in Quran, Marnia Lazrag reads them as follows: ‗Women should dress in a way that does not expose their breasts and genitals or flaunt their natural beauty, so as not to draw attention to themselves and avoid harm' (Lazrag, 2009: 23).

orthodox Islam in which the ethical voice of relative equality for women was not heard left little trace on the law. There were many dissenting voices challenging orthodox Islam based on a different, more ethical and spiritual reading of the Quran, and a view of the practices and sayings of Prophet Mohammad as relevant to particular society at a certain stage in its history[42]. Ahmed suggests that the versions that survived reflect the triumph of the establishment version at a formative moment in history.

Significantly, none of the books that Ahmed mentions in those periods were written by women, or written with the object of describing the situation of women. One story, though, is very relevant to the decisiveness of power in interpreting the text. Umm Musa, the wife of the second Abbasid Caliph, Al-Mansur, stipulated in her marriage contract that he should not take another wife or a concubine. He later requested from judges to invalidate the contract, but she could always bribe them into ruling in her favor. When she died she left her fortune for concubines who had borne only girls (78). Ahmed confirms that women were not passive creatures, wholly without material resources or legal rights that the Western World imagined them to be. They were active within the limited parameters permitted by their society (111). In the Middle Ages they worked in trade, textiles, sewing, embroidery, teaching girls, as midwives, bakers, greengrocers, sellers of foodstuff, peddlers, washers of the dead, mourners, singers, prostitutes, servants, bath attendants and so forth, but their presence remains invisible in the academic histories of the age where gender as an analytical category is still absent.

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[42] Orthodox Islam considers the Quran and Prophet Mohammad‘s acts and words as universal and eternal, good for all times and places. Ahmed mentions at least three dissenting movements: the Khariji, the Qarmatian, and the Sufi in Medieval Islam.

Medieval, Renaissance, and early modern histories of Islam in the West were embedded in the political and religious conflicts and war (especially the Crusades) discourses. Medieval historian Richard Southern -referred to in Chapters III and VI- says that this was the golden age of the Islamic problem for Christendom at every level of experience: unpredictable, immeasurable and immensely successful. There was also the puzzling novelty of its intellectual position; scholars, philosophers, scientists and chivalric heroes; together with other successes: great cities, wealthy courts, and long lines of communications. On the other hand it was the age of medieval ignorance with regard to Islam. Before 1100 there was no mention of the name of ‗Mahomet' in medieval literature outside Spain and southern Italy. It is the kind of ignorance of a man in prison who hears rumors of outside events and attempts to give a shape to what he hears, with the help of his preconceived ideas. Western writers of that era were in this situation. They knew virtually nothing of Islam as a religion. For them Islam was only one of a large number of enemies threatening Christendom from every direction. As men inevitably shape the world they do not know in the likeness of the world they do know, the Saracens were given the worst of what the medieval imagination could make (1962:3-32). Similarly, Norman Daniel concludes, in his comprehensive study of the formation of Islam's image in the West since the Middle Ages until the present, that Islam took its place rather radically, but inevitably, in the historical sequence as a prefiguration of Antichrist, for as long as political, economic and military requirements dominated European thought upon the subject. This attitude has been continuous and it is still alive, although there has been variety within the wider unity of tradition (1993:218, 12).

The colonial representations of (women in) the ME in the late 18th and in particular 19th centuries built mainly on two historical sources: the Medieval and Renaissance texts on Islam

and the travelers‘ narratives later on (discussed in Part II*)*. But it was in the 19th century that the egalitarian voice was heard again in the ME, and the treatment of women in Islamic custom and law were discussed, challenging the misinterpretations that had besieged Islam over the centuries, and planting the first seeds of women‘s liberation movements. Historically, two main tendencies characterized the discourses of women‘s liberation movements in the ME: they were always deeply connected to the national struggles against colonialism and for the advancement of their countries; and they looked up to the advancement of Western societies. Significantly, *all* first reformers were religious intellectuals who called for, and worked on, women‘s education as an essential part of the national rise against the European colonialists[43]. They presented new interpretations of the Quranic verses related to women such as Muhammad Abdu, who reinterpreted the Quran as actually calling for monogamy (which was accordingly applied in Iraq, Syria and Tunisia). On the other hand, secular reformers, such as Qasim Amin in his book *Tahrir Al-Mar‘a* [44] (*Liberating Woman*) published in 1899, concentrated on changing cultural customs, mainly the veil and women seclusion and emulating European women to achieve social transformation, thus echoing the colonial British stance[45].

[43] Rifa‘ah Al-Tahtawi, Mohammad ‗Abdu and Jamal Al-Din Al-Afghani, all of whom considered education for women to be the key to their liberation, and regarded ignorance of their rights in essential Islam was the special problem.

[44] The Arabic word *Tahrir* (liberating or setting free somebody or something) in Amin‘s title was inaccurately translated as (Liberation). The Arabic equivalent for liberation is *Hurriya* (the concept of freedom) and *Taharror* (the act of breaking fetters).

[45] Leila Ahmed mentions that Qasim Amin was told to write the book by Lord Cromer, the British governor of Egypt at the time.

Orientalism / Neo-Orientalism

As mentioned in the theoretical framework, in *Orientalism* (1978) Edward Said argues that the West colonized the Orient through cultural traditions and discourses –i.e. Orientalism- which upheld military and political domination. Those traditions produced knowledge that represented the Orient as an object of study and control, and created textual spaces for an ontological and epistemological dichotomy of Orient/Occident, through discourse. Intellectuals, artists, writers, anthropologists, politicians, naturalized negative assumptions and stereotypes of the Orientals as irrational, exotic, alien, erotic and backward; thus defining not only the Orient but also the European‗s self-image, ‗us' the European as opposed to (them) the Oriental ‗Other', the inferior inversion of Western culture. ‗[T]he major component in European culture is precisely what made that culture hegemonic, the idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures' (Said: 7), establishing a sense of imperial self-justification. I suggest that it is this inferior depiction that Qasim Amin and his ilk preached, calling on Arab and Muslim women to discard their backward traditions in order to catch up with the liberated and advanced European women, thus initiating the ‗veil' as a signifier of backwardness, so prevalent within the discourse of WOT.

Orientalism, as a ‗Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient' (ibid: 3) especially politically and ideologically, has been a useful critical approach to the discourse of WOT, among other manifestations of West-East interactions, which proved that colonialism never stopped. Orientalism has been applied beyond historical context, and new dimensions were explored and extended. Some critiques tagged the new dimensions with the term of ‗neo-Orientalism'. Both terms established binary opposition between the advanced West

and the backward East; both produced discursive knowledges and imaginaries of the East that contributed to controlling it; and both defined the Western self-image and constructed its identity as superior in opposition to the inferior East. In fact Said himself initiated the approach (without naming it) in the last part of *Orientalism*, ‗The Latest Phase', and expounded it through his critical trajectory[46] until shortly before his death in 2003, when he wrote that the ‗demeaning generalization and triumphalist cliché' of orientalism are behind ‗the mobilization of fear, hatred, disgust and resurgent self-pride and arrogance' of WOT; (2003: xiii). In this part I discuss the neo-orientalist aspects of WOT.

Elleke Boehmer limits neo-Orientalism to a tendency in postcolonial studies, whose symptoms are

> the enthusiastic exoticizing (and often also feminizing) vocabulary of postcolonial literary critique: an ‗Arabian Nights' exegetic language which lays emphasis on the narrative ‗magic', verbal richness, and ‗marvelous crowdedness' of postcolonial texts, and is tied in with an institutional interest in privileging migrant, multivocal, Rushdiesque (usually Indian or Indian subcontinent) writing as most vividly demonstrating that exotic otherness.(1998:18)

Tessa Bartholomeus finds that Westerners' fascination in the spirituality of Asian religions, arts, and traditions as an arena of self-discovery is a type of neo-Orientalism that represents the Asians as erotic, mystical, or venal. David Geraghty, on the other hand, investigates the role of expatriate Indian authors in mediating neo-Orientalism, writers who are welcomed and generously rewarded such as V.S. Naipaul and Salman Rushdie, whose controversial *The Satanic Verses* has been quite influential in the demonization of Islam within the discourses of WOT. Neo-Orientalism, as such is a body of discursive practices about the Orient by the people from

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[46] Especially in *Covering Islam* (1981) and *Culture and Imperialism* (1993).

the Orient located in the non-Orient for the people of the non-Orient (2008). Within the African context, Anthony Appiah refers to

> a condition of what we might ungenerously call comprador intelligentsia: of a relatively small, Western-style, Western-trained, group of writers and thinkers who mediate the trade in cultural commodities of world capitalism…in the West they are known through the Africa they offer, their compatriots know them both through the West they present to Africa and through an Africa they have invented for the world, for each other, and for Africa (1992: 149)

As far as the ME is concerned, Dag Tuastad finds in neo-Orientalism symbolic violence of new barbarism as he examines the way of representing violence as a natural product of backward cultures and peripheralised peoples, which implies explanations of political violence that omit political and economic interests and contexts and presents violence as a result of traits embedded in local cultures to serve hegemonic strategies (2003).

For Douglas Little and Melanie McAlister neo-Orientalism is American (as distinct from the European) Orientalism[47]. Little, in *American Orientalism* (2008), reviews the political history of American relations with the ME since 1945 as ‗a byproduct of two contradictory ingredients: an irresistible impulse to remake the world in America‘s image and a profound ambivalence about the people to be remade‘ (ibid: 3), and concludes that ‗most Americans have assumed that their country‘s wealth and power would provide the moral authority necessary to control the Middle East‘ (ibid: 341). According to Douglas two factors were essential in these relations: oil and the state of Israel (77). While the US presented the problem with the ME as of the impossibility of its modernizing, the US historically supported traditional, Islamic states, and

[47] Anwar Abdel-Malek considers the hegemonic imperialist American power as the center which dominates and exploits its periphery, that is the tricontinental sphere. Contemporary imperialism, ‗is in a real sense*, a hegemonic imperialism, exercising to a maximum degree a rationalized violence taken to a higher level than ever before – through fire and sword, but also through the attempt to control hearts and minds‘* (1981: 29,145, emphasis in origin).

vigorously opposed any nationalist revolutionary ones. However, having been fed a steady diet of books, films, and news reports, most Americans view Islam as a danger, and Arabs as ‗uncontrolable monsters' often compared to the Nazis (ibid:339), ‗autocracy, despotism, and dictatorship were the default settings from Riyadh to Rabat' (ibid:337) .

In *Epic Encounters* (2005) McAlister, again emphasizes the oil and Israel factors, but argues that given the fact of the diversity of American people and political movements, it is inaccurate to apply Said's Orientalism to the post World War II American representations of the Orient (by now called the ME), which became less alluring and more disdainful and dangerous. After 9/11 the meanings of the ME have been far more mobile, flexible, and rich than the old binary, and the long history of US-ME cultural encounters has frequently been occluded. The ME, McAlister argues, was mapped for Americans through the intersecting deployment of cultural interests and political investment, always through the American ‗benevolent supremacy'. It was *made* interesting through the biblical narratives of the epics, for example, the transnational alliance for evangelical Christians established by the alliance with Israel, and transnational feminism, the arguments of African Americans, and national interests (specific literary texts are analyzed in Chapter VI). The politics of race and gender has been central to the US representations of the ME and Americanness is particularly signified by women's freedom. Women like Condeleeza Rice, for example, would stand as representative for American identity, power, democracy and moral superiority especially as she is African American (303-307).

In this research, I incorporate all these approaches to define neo-Orientalism in the discourse of WOT as essentially neo-colonialist, where the identity of the Oriental Other remains derogatorily stereotyped, inferiorly positioned and oppositionally situated vis-a-vis the West. A

new essential trait is added to the clichés of irrationality, exoticism, eroticism and inertia and so forth. The neo-Oriental is also *dangerously psychopathic,* one who threatens the lives and cultures of civilized people, because he/she is essentially sick, culturally and psychologically disturbed. Neo-colonialism is different from colonialism only in the forms and appearances where the processes of exploitation of Third World resources become more sophisticated, and neo-Orientalism has attended to this specific aspect.

American cultural anthropologist Raphael Patai, for example, dissects the Muslim Arabs' ‗mind-set' in his 450-page *The Arab Mind* and concludes that they suffer from severe personality split on every level of their life experience: their thoughts, words, and actions are divorced from reality (311), as mentioned earlier. Extremely abusive childrearing and different processes of enculturation ‗which begin even before a child is born' and reinforced with years, produce misogynist fundamentalists, mold a boy and a girl in two substantially different personalities; male-superiority and female-inferiority become deeply internalized in consciousness and exert considerable influence on the social order (27-37).

Muslim Arabs are verbal people, according to Patai; they tend to substitute words for actions. However, literacy (inspired by the West) impaired their psychological integrality as it aggravated inferiority of their vulgar spoken language against the fine literary Arabic, on one hand, and of Arabic against the European languages, on the other (308). The linguistic inferiority is but one manifestation of a split personality; another is the dichotomy between the Westernized and Westernizing elite and the tradition-bound masses. Patai inaccurately claims that *all* political leaders know (and are deeply influenced by) English or French, thus can't help looking with Western eyes at their traditional countrymen, whose cultural components again fall in two

categories: Bedouin and Islamic. The negative components are: kinship, manliness, aversion to physical work, emphasis on (sexual) honor, raiding, blood revenge and predestination (fatalism). Nevertheless, there are positive components: courage, hospitality, generosity, and honor but they revolve around the respect others have for one, because the entire Arab ethical system is basically other-determined. Thus shame, and not guilt, is the main factor in determining conduct (310). The mutilating splits go on and on in arts, architecture, music, and literature until the final conclusion is reached that the Arabs suffer from ‗a disturbing inferiority complex which itself makes it more difficult to shake off the shackles of stagnation‘[48] (313).

Women are supposed to be the most unfortunate victims of this ‗inferiority complex‘. ‗Within a few months after weaning, the female infant is well on the way to internalizing the role she will play in life as a woman: a subordinate, a person of little importance, destined to a life of a servile position‘ (31). It is only when a wife gives birth to boys that she starts to gain some power which grows as she gets older and becomes a guardian of traditions. Men‘s relation to mothers is represented as the strongest and most curious, as they are never separated, emotionally and psychologically. Young boys are abruptly and violently pulled out of the warm, caring women‘s sphere into men‘s masculine harsh world. Women, generally, are the most sensitive and problematic area in Arab life (328). The two sexes see each other primarily as sex objects; and they are the production of severe sexual repression. Sex is connected to sin, dirt and shame in Arab culture; thus to understand the Arab personality it is essential to understand the

[48] Similarly, David Pryce-Jones in *Closed Circle: An Interpretation of the Arabs* (New York: Harper and Row, 1989), refers to this ‗theory‘ of inferiority complex. On more than 400 pages of racist representations of the Arabs and Muslims within the same wretched triangle of backwardness, violence and irrationality, Pryce-Jones comments that, instead of doing something about them, ‗decadence and backwardness are conceded without ado, even with self-flagellatory eagerness which stimulates an inferiority complex‘ (370).

sexual-repression-frustration-aggression syndrome, the result of double-standard sexual morality (118-142). Women‘s position in the ME society is very important for the West

> For as long as the mental faculties of the mother are hemmed in, encysted, and stunted by the illiteracy, ignorance, and superstition in which she is kept by the male-centered ethos of Arab culture, she will go on instilling into the minds of her sons and daughters the very same character traits, values, concepts, and ideals that have been so bitterly excoriated by Arab critics of the Arab personality after the 1967 Arab defeat by Israel (333)

Patai does recognize that there are nationalist, Marxist, and Islamist feminists who struggle for their rights, but their progress is hampered by conservative forces, men and women. Thus the fight for the emancipation of women ‗will have to be waged not only on political, social and psychological planes, but also on those of Muslim tradition and religious scholarship‘ (335). The overwhelmingly negative image of Arab/Muslim peoples and cultures is based on assumptions that are not substantiated by any data, or even convincing arguments. He monolithicizes 300 million people in 22 diverse countries, with different lived realities, histories and cultures. This kind of sweeping statement has been used as an excuse to displace the source of violence supposedly rooted in traditional societies, especially when confronted by Western modernity.

(Iranian) French intellectual Dariush Shayegan defines cultural schizophrenia as the ‗mental distortions afflicting those civilizations that have remained on the sidelines of history… trapped on a fault-line between incompatible worlds, worlds that mutually repel and deform one another, a state of in-between‘, in what he calls ‗ideologisation of tradition‘. (1992: vii). To him, those societies, which have been ‗on holiday from history‘ for centuries, invent excuses and seek scapegoats. Secular and modern concepts such as democracy, socialism, women‘s emancipation and liberalism result in ‗hybrid mixtures, explosive cocktails which fill the minds with confusion rather than helping to solve the problem‘ (12-28). To represent the mental configurations of the

culturally schizophrenic identity (of men and women), Shayegan uses a metaphor of psychoanalysis, a mental anatomy of a hypothetical Middle Easterner in a seven-page soliloquy, here are some excerpts:

> The new ideas and objects are wholly alien to me. I have neither appropriate words nor adequate mental imagery to understand them properly… All my mental categories have been fashioned to hide what is now being revealed in the world…somehow my thought unveils the *suprareality* of the things it considers…Objects have changed a lot more quickly than my perception of reality. I find no breaks with the past…there is this *hurt* inside my mind…I seek to construct my own past…in the light of criteria which come from outside… Schizophrenia is maintained by a whole network of signs which turns my days into an eternity of stunned boredom…I am always the victim of others…just give me modern tools, an abundance of petrodollars, the most tolerant ideas of the age of democracy, and in the space of a few months I will set up the most repressive state apparatus in the world: paradise of hell.. I lack ideas…I am blocked…as pathological as my obsession, as neurotic as this cumbersome religion I do not know what to do about…I am not interested in facts…details fatigue me…I am lazy…I love angels…I am flying (5-11, emphasis in origin).

The Middle Easterner, represented from inside, looks hyper-sensitive, articulate, and well aware of his/her cultural dilemma, thus acutely obsessed and depressed. Indeed some intellectuals in ME do express similar anxieties, but this representation poses several questions that Shayegan does not answer: Why would *all* people in ME, or even just in Iran, be tortured by such chronic derealizations? More importantly why would they necessarily turn into violent oppressors? And if high education and wealth (which are beyond the access of the masses) fracture the ME identity as such, what to be done then? Logically, poverty and illiteracy are not the answer to the problem of schizophrenia. How do political and economic problems, especially in the globalized world, affect people‗s lives? Is it only ‗traditional culture' that poisons the ME present?

Similarly, feminist sociologist Juliette Minces uses a metaphor of imprisonment to title her book *House of Obedience*[49] *Women in Arab Society* (1982), and *Veiled: Women in Islam* (1993), and offers an exemplary neo-Orientalist representation of women as victims. She suggests that a woman in ME is mercilessly crushed by *all* social institutions and familial structures: man, family, system, laws, religion, and herself too. This is a problem for the West; she says ‗societies which continue to hold that fifty per cent of their population should remain subordinate, and be relegated to the status of minors or inferiors, cannot but be a problem for us' (1982: viii). Secluded behind the impenetrable walls of religion and traditions as they are represented, Minces textually re-incarcerates women of ME inside the past, too. Traditions and practices that have vanished, dramatically decreased or were increasingly rejected by their people through the last century (including match-makers, public baths, sorcery and the harem) are revived or represented in Minces' narrative as overwhelming and eternal, not as unusual or deviant, again without presenting any supportive data. Questions about, say, the percentage of polygamous men in the ME or if the practice is still socially acceptable at all; the number of girls killed for motives related to honor; the countries where circumcision has been practiced and why[50], the percentage of literacy and employment among women and so forth, are never

[49] ‗House of Obedience' is a law based on certain interpretations of a verse in Quran, which obliges a ‗disobedient' wife to live with her husband by force. It is interesting to notice that the cover image of the book depicts two Arab women, meekly sitting on the ground with their backs to each other, between two high windowless brick walls, ignoring a half-opened door behind them.

[50] One of the fallacies of the discourse of WOT, is generalizing girls' circumcision in many Arab and Muslim countries. While it is a tribal tradition in 28 African countries, including Sudan, Egypt, and Somalia, circumcision is neither known nor practiced in many countries of the ME, including Iraq. During what was called the Comprehensive Development Plan in the 1970s, when many Egyptian farmers came to work in Iraq, the Iraqi farmers were shocked to learn of this tradition. This is not to suggest that Iraqi farmers are more progressive than their Egyptian counterparts, but just to confirm a fact about this specific tradition. See UNICEF report *Changing a Harmful Social Convention: Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting*, retrieved on Sept.12, 2011from http://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/fgm_eng.pdf

answered. Millions of Arab Muslim women are *all* imprisoned behind the bars of religion and tradition, silently waiting for Minces and her ilk to speak *for* them, and convey their grievances to the civilized world to come to their rescue.

For her, the subordination of women continued because ‗the Holy Book serves as both Bible and Civil Code, it is the determinant element which influences every aspect of private and social life' (15), and because rigid patriarchal structures impose upon women a ‗role and a position such that any modification of their status threatens to bring down the patriarchal, familial or tribal pillars on which those societies rest' (23). Chandra Mohanty argues that

> Not only is it problematical to speak of a vision of women shared by Arab and Muslim societies (i.e. over twenty different countries) without addressing the particular historical, material, and ideological power structures that construct such image, but to speak of the patriarchal family or the tribal kinship structure as the origin of the socioeconomic status of women is to again assume that women are sexual-political subjects prior to their entry to the family. (1991:61)

Minces apologetically recognizes that there are ‗historical factors and other differences in degree of exploitation or lack of emancipation of women of various classes and in various countries' (13), nevertheless her book is littered with statements that defy this recognition. Indeed, several statements are outrageous generalizations and inaccuracies regarding some practices. A few examples:

> Equality before the law is not granted and most women in the Muslim world continued to be *totally subordinated…women are ignorant* of life outside…there are practically no atheists or agnostics in these societies…It is out of question that the girl should chose her own husband…It would be *nonsense to bring love into marriage*; women in love are *considered immoral…Kuranic law threatens* both (adulterous) men and women with stoning…girls are often *taken out of school* by their parents at puberty…*mothers create the despots* who will eventually rule over their daughters…a brother can *give away one of his sisters* to his best friend…as far as a boy is concerned, he will *despise an unveiled woman* who has deliberately put herself on offer, she must therefore be *contemptibly lewd*…women's liberation was quite out of the question, *and remains so today*…It is

> difficult for a man, given his education, to imagine any form of relationship other than *a sexual one* with a woman who is not a member of his family, who *can only be a prey*. Men remain *sexually obsessed*…Freedom for a woman is thought to consist in not saying ‗No' (14-38)...etc (emphasis added).

In her representations of women and men in the ME, Minces creates two separate and parallel societies: of men and of women, related to each other *only* by sexual obsessiveness. Women are so anachronistically represented that any present girl in the ME will find in them an image of her great grandmother. Using the present tense of verbs, Minces says that:

> women are *confined and submissive*…*excluded* from decision…never consulted,…*they are not even really supposed to exist*…they *gather at the well* or the spring, meet weekly in the *public bath* to wash, eat, rest, talk …and potential daughters-in-law are assessed physically…young girls hidden *behind their veil* are allowed a glimpse of her suitor…long queues of women waiting to be treated for ailments which may be imaginary but which may be *a brief escape from confinement*…a husband barely knows his wife and will thus have *no idea just how far he can trust her*…he exercises both *physical and psychological domination* over his wife…he will frequently be extremely violent towards her…she will be *locked up in the house*…women themselves would *not feel psychologically equipped* to stay by themselves… they are so *unaware of their rights*…they barely exist before marriage…her main trump cards is *manipulation of her husband sexuality…hypocrisy, deceit and duplicity* are in the end, the *only* weapon available…one would add *arrogance, laziness and vanity* (among the rich)…Muslim women are often *admirable tacticians*… literate girls seek refuge in *romantic novels* and women's magazines…or they try to *run away or commit suicide*- individual responses to a collective problem…*Society has produced specific mentality amongst women*, which is common to all subject creatures…*Their identities reflect the idea that male society has of them.* (42-45). (emphasis added)

These almost touristic representations could be argued away as inaccurate simply by presenting data, but this is not to suggest that Minces is simply lying, manipulating or presenting what she sees with the eye of Western imagination. Many of those images did exist, and might still exist within some fundamentalist circles. Nor do I aim to present realities that challenge

knowledges produced by her discourse, which is beyond the scope of this research. Besides, stating realities would not dispel the discourse. Rather, I argue that the discursive injustice undermines itself through its own inconsistencies and mechanisms, and its relation to power. By presenting ahistorical generalizations and homogenizations, Minces, like many Western feminists[51], is using a rhetorical strategy in which ‗the Oriental or non-Western societies are pushed back in time and constructed as backward' (Yegenoglu, 1998: 6), thus aggravating the alleged social and cultural injustice inflicted on women in the ME, by distorting their image and producing partial knowledge to justify her (Minces') benevolent enterprise. Millions of (literate) women in the ME go out every morning to universities, schools, offices, factories and farms; highly educated professionals (and many housewives) exist in almost all walks of life; politicians, activists, women's organizations and feminist scholars have presented divergent visions and theories on liberating themselves and their societies, but all these women are invisible to the neo-colonial eye; and their voices fall on the deaf ears of imperialism. We never hear the objects of Minces' investigation present themselves; they are totally silenced, unless they complain of some negative practice, then they are welcomed and generously quoted as native testimonies confirming the imperialist discourse of rescue. Thus all that Nawal Al-Sadawi, a prominent Arab Feminist, struggled for is reduced in such a narrative (here and in Patai above) to a painful experience of circumcision decades ago.

[51] See for example Woodsmall quoted in Ygenoglu 1998, Kiddie 1987; Nicholas Kristof, *Half the Sky* (New York: Knopf, 2009), and ‗Saving the World's Women', *The New York Times* (August 17, 2009); and Geraldine Brooks (1995).

Minces would often refer to Westernized families amongst the privileged sectors in the ME who initiated a degree of reform vis-à-vis Islam. Indeed, she confirms that ‗The demands of Western feminists represent the greatest advance towards the emancipation of women as people. Ideally, the criteria adopted, like those of human rights, should be universal' (25). It is striking how the ‗authoritative knower' practices her ‗epistemic violence', to use Spivak's expressions, when she mutes the ‗victims', confiscates their voices, distort their images; how she also assumes a role model for herself, and presumes that she knows what is best for the ‗others'; and although she stops short of explaining what the ideal criteria of Western feminists are and why they should be universal, yet she explicitly calls upon women in the ME to displace their own norms, and replace them with the Western ones, established as universal. She is simply telling the ‗lesser' women in the ME to erase their identities and inscribe her own on them. Yegenoglu argues that such Western feminists represent women in the ME as a negative deviant of the universal norm, the Western ideal in this case. ‗The colonial nature of such a feminist discourse is not an aberration, but rather a structural necessity of a discourse that represents otherness as negativity' to be corrected (1998: 104).

American anthropologist Laura Nader argues that normative blindness is never more obvious than in Western dealings with the rights of women, *elsewhere*; and notices that there were more women in engineering classes in Baghdad University than at UC Berkeley during the same time period, that American domestic violence is about the same in Syria, and that assaults by husbands, ex-husbands and lovers cause more injuries to women than motor vehicle accidents, rape and muggings combined (2006:6). Clearly, this does not suggest that women in the ME are better (or worse) off than in any other place in the world, it simply states that normalizing a specific ‗example' is neither right, nor useful in academic discourse.

ME Women in the Neo-Orientalist discourse of WOT

Said recognizes the importance of Orientalism‘s sexual aspect, and admits not giving it a deserved space. His elaboration on ‗latent Orientalism‘ and how it encouraged a ‗male conception of the world‘, how Orientalism ‗viewed itself and its subject matter with sexist blinders‘, and his discussion of Flaubert‘s representation of the Oriental woman as silenced open limitless spaces for gendered studies. Nevertheless, feminists criticize Said for relegating gender and sexuality to a sub-domain in *Orientalism*. Yegenoglu engages in this domain building on Said‘s notion of ‗latent orientalism‘ (1998). The colonial/imperial discourses of cultural and sexual differences are powerfully mapped onto each other, she suggests, because ‗it is precisely the site where the *unconscious* desires and fantasies of the ‗other‘ and ‗otherness‘ appear as powerful constituent of the so called autonomous and rational Western subject and expose this position as structurally male‘ (11, emphasis in origin). The Western obsession with the veil, for example, not only signifies the Orient as seductive and dangerous, but ‗the presumption of a hidden essence and truth behind the veil is the means by which both Western/colonial and masculine subject constitutes their own identity‘ (ibid). In a hegemonic US feminism, the Western subjects, regardless of the gender identity of the person who represents the ME, ‗occupies not only the position of colonial, but also a masculine subject position…and reflects the historical, cultural, psychical, and political obsessions of the culture that produced Western women‘ (12).

Reina Lewis, too, considers a new gendered reading of Orientalism, taking into account not only race and colonialism, but also gender, class, and nation. She suggests that ‗women‘s

relationship to Orientalism and imperialism…did not have to be either simply supportive or simply oppositional, but that could be partial, fragmented and contradictory' (1996: 237), a suggestion that can be safely applied to the feminist stance to WOT. Boehmer, on the other hand, confirms that women as colonizers ‗were by no means absent from colonialist activity…shared certain colonialist attitudes (most obviously, stereotypical responses to indigenous people), but they also experienced different practical and discursive constraints from men in the colonial field' (2005: 215).

Many (feminist) scholars argue that the discourse of WOT is Orientalist in essence, highlighting the first negative category of the bipolar feminist literature mentioned above. It appropriated a feminist discourse of liberating ‗women of cover' (Bush, October 14, 2001) in the ME from misogynist fundamentalists and traditional cultures, as justification of war; a strategy that is hardly new in colonial history, and has substantial resonance in Europe and the US. Given the fact that the issue of woman in the ME was until recently extremely neglected, stereotyped, and her representation sensationalistic, ‗prior to World War II, the few texts available in the West on Islam and Muslim women were written by Orientalists, and virtually none were written by and for Muslims ‗ in the West (Haddad, 2005:1). This discourse was built on a historically prevalent understanding of women's situation as oppressed within a patriarchal gender system based on extended families, male domination, early marriage, high fertility, restrictive codes of female behavior, a concept of honor based on women's virtue, polygamy, veiling, sex-segregation, and religion as the sole determinant of women's conditions.

Islamist movements, too, participated in foreclosing women's opportunities of genuine emancipation by essentializing empirical details of female propriety in Islam rather than its

liberationist spirit, by contrastively positioning Muslim women as superior to Western women, and by maintaining reversed epistemological distinctions between the East and the West which the neo-colonialists had activated in their new civilizing mission. These movements represent Western cultures as essentially materialistic, ridden with social problems, which would contaminate the spiritual identity of Islamic culture. Liberated Western women are stereotyped as profane and licentious, hence a dangerous example for Muslim women, family, and the pure, serene, and peaceful home where children could be brought up as good Muslims, and spared the Western social ills. Laura Nader talks about the ‗siege mentality'

> Women are no longer treated as Arab women, but as ‗potential Westerners', posing a severe identity crisis. How Arab women should act, and what they should want to achieve is no longer a matter of consensus… [They] resent Western models of aspiration as they encroach on their lives and they are used as justification of Muslim ‗fundamentalism'. Some religious leaders have put the entire matter into an internalist perspective. Instead of blaming the West for exporting its ills, they are searching for agencies that import them. This adds to a kind of ‗siege mentality' in which stripping Arab [and Muslim] women of their rights has become well justified, and condoned as a protective act (1989:327).

As assumed guardians of Islamic spirituality, Muslim women should be protected, and their spirituality is manifested by their virtuosity, honor, chastity and asexuality, with *hijab* as a symbol of this morality[52]. They are supposed to be shy, modest, persevering, and humble, i.e. the very ideals that historically subordinated women. When the discourse of WOT used Muslim women's liberation as a central part of their crusade, again using the *hijab* symbol, it actually touched on an already sensitive issue, and women became the principle site of expressing nations' cultures. Islamist movements reacted by claiming that the abandonment of Islamic

[52] Sayyid Qutb, Sheikh Sha'rawi, and Sheikh Qaradawi, among other religious sheikhs, claimed that Islam gave women *all* their rights, and compared virtuous Muslim women to Western, especially American women, represented as sex objects, lacking in civil rights, exhausted by consumerist ethics, disrespected, and threatened.

values and the incorporation of Western ones, were behind the decline of Muslim societies. Women became the site where Western contamination has to be fought, and the (un)veiling of women and their bodies became a suitable instrument signifying modernization/backwardness for each of the conflicting parties. Each highlighted selected areas in the other's culture, in order to defame it by referring to its treatment of women, for political motivations.

In the last three decades feminist theorists managed to deconstruct the colonial discourse of women's subjugation, and to integrate issues of sexual, racial, class and national differences within feminist theory. However the issue of religion proved to be more problematic as many women 'chose' the traditional religious ways perceived as inimical to their interests. But, in an essay challenging the normative liberal assumptions about 'agency' and 'freedom' that had portrayed Arab and Muslim women as passive and submissive beings, thinker Saba Mahmood provides an alternative prism through which women's agency might be understood differently. Analyzing the Women's Mosque Movement[53], Mahmood differentiates between agency as resistance to relations of domination, and as 'the capacity to realize one's own interests against the weight of custom, tradition, transcendental will, or other obstacles' (2001:206)[54]. Similarly, she draws distinctions between negative freedom (the absence of external obstacles to self-guided choice and action), and positive freedom (the capacity to realize an autonomous will, one generally fashioned in accord with the dictates of 'universal reason' or 'self-interests' and hence

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[53] Unlike contemporary Muslim feminists who appropriate and reinterpret the scripture to challenge many forms of legal and social discrimination against women, the women of the mosque movement in the mid-nineties focus on cultivating an embodied practice of personal piety. It is centered on all women, informal teaching and discussion circles located in mosques across Cairo in both poor and affluent neighborhoods.

[54] The essay was extended later on and published in *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (Princeton and Oxfordshire: Princeton University Press, 2005).

unencumbered by the weight of custom, transcendental will, and tradition‘(ibid:207). Thus turning to *hijab* in modern Egypt, for example, especially by highly educated professional women from secular backgrounds, could be explained in a variety of ways: functionality, practicality, economic difficulties, affirmation of agency and resistance to the commodification of women‘s bodies; it could also be an expression of piety as an Islamic virtue; but not necessarily submission to fundamentalist patriarchy.

In this regard, Mahmood invokes questions about ‗the conceptual relationship between the body, self, and moral agency as constituted in different cultural and political locations‘ (223). She argues that in judging any objectionable practice, it is important to take into consideration the desires (as socially constructed), motivations, commitments and aspirations of the people to whom this particular practice is important. Several Arab, Muslim and other feminists, such as Abu-Lughod, Ahmed, Kandioty, Lazrag, Yegenoglu, (cited here), and other prominent feminist scholars like Suha Sabbagh, and Mervat Hatem to mention a few, present nuanced readings of the *hijab* as indeed a religious reawakening, a protection from men‘s misogyny, a religious source of dignity and freedom, opposition to sexual objectification, rejection of secularism, an expression of a feminist identity, a political symbol against occupation, or for militant reasons as in Algeria, Palestine and Iraq under occupation. I argue that even if the *hijab* is considered a kind of oppression, it should not necessarily be interpreted as a sign of submission on the part of women, and that they have the right to decide for themselves, and not simply be judged as submissive.

Clearly, the discourse of WOT does not take these considerations into account; it used the discourse and practices of establishment Islam and deliberately reenacted the notion of Islamist

depredations of women as the major driving force behind the neo-colonial war. A month after the US invasion of Afghanistan, it was the American First Lady Laura Bush who delivered the week‗s radio address to the nation for the first time in US history to declare that after ‗our recent military gains in much of Afghanistan… women are no longer imprisoned in their homes. They can listen to music and teach their daughters without fear of punishment‘ (Laura Bush, 2001). She talked about the ‗heart breaking‘ and ‗miserable‘ situation of women, and the ‗brutal oppression of women [that] is a central goal of the terrorists‘

> Life under the Taliban is so hard and repressive, even small displays of joy are outlawed - children aren't allowed to fly kites; their mothers face beatings for laughing out loud. Women cannot work outside the home, or even leave their homes by themselves… The poverty, poor health, and illiteracy that the terrorists and the Taliban have imposed on women …they pull out women's fingernails for wearing nail polish. The plight of women and children in Afghanistan is a matter of deliberate human cruelty, carried out by those who seek to intimidate and control. Civilized people throughout the world are speaking out in horror because in Afghanistan, we see the world the terrorists would like to impose on the rest of us. All of us have an obligation to speak out. The fight against terrorism is also a fight for the rights and dignity of women. (ibid)

Two days later, the (then) British Prime Minister's wife, Cherie Blair, said: ‗[T]he women of Afghanistan *still* have a spirit that belies their unfair, down-trodden image…We need to *help* them free that spirit and give them their voice back, *so they can create the better Afghanistan we all want to see*‘ (Blair, 2011, emphasis added). Who wouldn‗t be humane enough to agree with these first ladies of the civilized world, who while cherishing their freedom and basking in their high political positions, are benevolently calling to help miserable women out of their unfair conditions? Another ‗heartbreaking‘ example is a story, published in *New York Time Magazine,* of Fern Holland, an American woman rights advocate who worked in Iraq in 2004. Sitting in her room in the Babylon Hotel on the Euphrates, ‗with a glass of Johnnie Walker and listening to

Michelle Branch singing ‗All You Wanted'', she writes to a friend back home describing Iraqi women, ‗all of whom were draped in black from crown to toe'

> They are widows. They wear all black; all you can see is their faces, no hair or neck. They don't wear gloves though and you can see their hands: very rough hands, dry and cracked and evidence of broken fingers from years ago, and huge knuckles from years of manual labor. Their faces wrinkled and dark, no makeup, but 2 small faded blue circles on their chins -- tattoos. One of Saddam's thugs grew crops on their land and they thought they could remove him upon liberation… No such luck…No one should jump over a woman's rights…They can't just harass women this way (Rubin, 2004).

Fern bulldozed the thug's house, and got killed afterwards. But this is all that Fern's (and *NYT Magazine)* gaze saw of Iraqi women, who get a bit more of textual space by a photo slide show, where some women are shown crying for joy for their new liberation, visually confirming the ‗facts'. Fern however is presented differently. Here are a few excerpts

> She was the *best face of America*… slight, 5-foot-2, fiery American, with *golden hair and sky blue* eyes… at 33 with a go-it-alone, *pioneer mentality* …as an American, she felt a *moral obligation* to the world… She was just *born with some light* that comes from nowhere… Fern got *straight A's*… She was the family's *peacemaker*, comedian and natural athlete… She was *pretty and popular*; a friend to the ostracized, class salutatorian and homecoming queen….She was an honor student in psychology… flew off to see the world, which to her meant *saving* it… She *tended children* dying of nuclear-disaster-related diseases in a Russian hospital. She *taught kids* in a squatter camp in South Africa… joined the *Peace* Corps and found herself in the Namibian bush... An *idealist tempered by realism*, Holland was a *doer, not a doubter*… Whatever the Bush administration's motive was for invading Iraq, it *didn't matter* to Fern… ‗I don't know anything about W.M.D. But I can tell you this countryside is littered with the graves of men, women and children murdered by this regime… (ibid, emphasis added).

Fern's biography is generously displayed: her parents and siblings, childhood, education, sports, hobbies, jobs, activism, journeys, ideas and her relation to Iraq. It is a story of her crusade against injustice. On the other hand, the representation of Iraqi women is limited to the fact that they are victims of Saddam's thugs; they are silenced and spoken for. Similarly, Afghani women are represented as victims of religious zealots. In both cases, they have no names, no identities,

no histories, no thoughts, no voice nor agency. Two imaginary and completely different worlds are constructed here: of the victims and of the saviors. ‗Us' the civilized, strong, rich, healthy, educated, politically and publically active women, trying to save ‗them' the deprived ME women framed as covered, broken, and helpless[55].

These images have been endlessly reproduced in the last two decades through official discourses, media, cinema and TV (entertainment) programs, many scholarly studies, popular culture and (international) human rights and women's organizations, sometimes inadvertently. Muslim women have become a popular topic. In the two years 2008-2010 there were 65,700,000 web pages updated or created, 17,400 videos uploaded, 19,200 scholarly articles published, and 958 new books on Muslim women (VandenBroek, 2010)[56]. One example of this robust production is the focus on the *burqa* as a signifier of Islamic oppression. During the years 2001-2006, three of the most prestigious newspapers *Washington Post, New York Times* and *the Guardian* published 637 articles on *burqa* alone, in which the most recurrent words were: terror, prison, oppression, sinister, fear, insult, tension, fundamentalist, cultural road blocks, burden, and traditional (VandenBroek, 2009). Islamist websites on the other hand have been endlessly publishing stories, speeches, sermons, and videos theorizing and advocating Islamic women's morality, agency, and sexuality.

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[55] A study of the representation of Muslim men and women in *The New York Times* between September 11, 2001 and September 11, 2003 found out that Muslim women were portrayed as victims of violence and Islamic practices, in need of Western liberation, which was sometimes defined narrowly as exercise of individual choice. Those representations were also marked by a continual obsession with the veil. Articles on Muslim men were often about Islamic resurgence, terrorism and illegal immigration with details about ‗resumes of holy warriors' and ‗manuals of killing'. Representations of Muslim men as dangerous and Muslim women as victims, established the need to intervene to control the men and rescue the women, the study concluded (Mishra, 2007).

[56] This, however, does not imply that *all* this production depicts a negative representation of women in the ME, rather it is to emphasize the sudden interest in the issue.

Hollywood, in particular, has played an essential role in stereotyping ‗the dirty Arabs' as screen villains, women abusers whose ‗bodies are scripted as dangerous, pre-modern and uncivilized in American popular culture' (Agoyu, 2009). Jack Shaheen studied the Arab stereotype as shown in 900 films in his huge documentary book *Reel Bad Arabs* (2001) where the Arabs surfaced as the threatening culture ‗Others', with changing variations according to the evolution of world politics. The villain Arabs include:

> bearded Mullahs, billionaire sheikhs, terrorist bombers, Black Bedouins, and noisy bargainers. Women surface either as gun-toters, bumbling subservient, or as belly dancers bouncing voluptuously in palaces and erotically oscillating in slave markets. More recently, image-makers are offering other caricatures of Muslim women: covered in black from head to toe, they appear as uneducated, unattractive and enslaved beings, slowly attending man; they follow several paces behind abusive sheikhs. (Shaheen, 2001: 23)

Such stereotyping reified culture through tendencies to ‗plaster neat cultural icons like the Muslim woman, over a messy historical and political dynamics' (Abu-Lughod, 2002). Many questions arise here: Why is there this obsession with Muslim women? How have these images evolved? How far are they compatible with reality? And why is it only in the Middle East? Why not in Bosnia, for example? As Abu-Lughod asks, ‗Why knowing about the culture particularly its religious belief and treatment of women was more urgent than exploring the history of the development of repressive regimes in the region and the US role in this history?' (ibid).

Homi Bhabha answers that colonial discourse as an apparatus of power creates a space for a subject people through the production of stereotypical knowledges (1982:23), and Chandra Mohanty elaborates the discursive production of the ‗third world woman' as a singular monolithic subject in Western humanist and feminist discourses. It is in the ‗process of discursive homogenization and systemization of the oppression of women in the third world that power is exercised in much of recent feminist discourse' (1991:54), which assumes that women

have a coherent group identity outside social relations, across contexts, regardless of class or ethnicity. This assumption produces an arbitrary image of a doubly othered subject, an ‗average third world woman' (read: underdeveloped, sexually constrained, not progressive, traditional, legal minor, illiterate, backward) (ibid: 72). Significantly, Mohanty concludes by confirming that in a world of the hegemony of Western scholarly establishment, this image ‗might well tie into the larger economic and ideological praxis of ‗disinterested' scientific inquiry and pluralism which are the surface manifestations of a latent economic and ideological colonization of the ‗non-western world'' (74).

What is at stake here is not only the instrumentality of the women's liberation issue in the imperial neocolonial project, but literally a surgical reconstruction of whole societies by war and invasion in the service of hegemonic imperialist desire, strategies of self-protection, and economic neo-liberalism; and the use of women's agency in this process. Women's identities are reconstructed and represented within the discourse of WOT to serve a double edge of defaming their cultures and ‗correcting' them, within the neoliberal feminist project. Women, who are presented as suffering all kinds of injustice within the misogynist culture of their people, are supposed to save themselves and their culture from backwardness with the help of the Western (technologically highly advanced military) intervention. The stupefying logic by itself is an insult to their intelligence.

In *What Went Wrong?* (2002) renowned neo-Orientalist Bernard Lewis, like any ‗western observer schooled in the theory and practice of Western freedom' (159) diagnoses the contemporary ME malady of ‗limping in the rear', as precisely the lack of freedom of mind, of economy, of tyranny, and above all of women (ibid).

> [T]he main culprit is Muslim sexism, and the relegation of women to an inferior position in society, thus depriving the Islamic world of the talents and energies of half its people, and entrusting the crucial early years of the upbringing of the other half to illiterate and downtrodden mothers. The products of such an education, it was said, are likely to grow up either arrogant or submissive, and unfit for a free, open society… the success or failure of secularists and feminists will be a major factor in shaping the Middle Eastern future. (157)

As in many neo-Orientalist writings, ‗the most profound single difference between the two (Christian and Muslim) civilizations is the status of women' (ibid: 67) thus dividing billions of people into two monolithic groups, distinguished by their treatment of women, ignoring their divergent histories, geographies, ethnicities, cultures, and empirical realities of their existence. However, he states that ‗[W]omen's rights have suffered the most serious reverses in countries where fundamentalists of various types have influence or where, as in Iran and most of Afghanistan, they rule' (ibid: 73). Contradictorily, while the Islamic traditions are found as the sole reason behind women's degradation, women's situation in Iran (where there have been substantial feminist movements and theorizations under the canopy of Islam) is considered to be the worst among all ME countries. Curiously, he neglects another theocracy, Saudi Arabia, normally seen as the epitome of women's subjugation by religious institutions, within the same logic[57]. Again he considers that the lack of freedom is what underlies so many troubles of the Muslim world, and Iraq as a ‗notoriously repressive regime'; nevertheless he admits that ‗the legal emancipation of women in Iraq went the farthest among Arab countries' (ibid: 73).

Another aspect of such representations is the eternality of their subjugation, prevalent in the discourse of WOT. According to Lewis, these women were ‗*doomed forever to remain the worst-positioned'* among other oppressed groups: unbelievers and slaves in Islamic history; and

[57] Historically Saudi Arabia has been the closest US ally in the region (apart from Israel), while present-day Iran is not.

while the European powers used their influence to secure a legal equality and economic privilege for Christian subjects of Muslim states, and armed forces to abolish slavery, they ‗*showed no interest in ending the subjugation of women*' (both quotations 2002: 69, my emphasis). Narratives of some Turkish visitors to Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries are selected to demonstrate this eternality. One of them, a diplomat, was astonished and horrified at the immodesty and forwardness of Western women, of the incredible freedom and absurd deference accorded to them, and of the lack of manly jealousy of European males. Why a comment by a Turkish diplomat from the 17th century would represent the attitude of more than 1.6 billion Muslims four centuries later is beyond Lewis's interest to justify.

Middle Easterners, aware of the disparity in power between themselves and the West, are believed to put their efforts in the visible sources of power and prosperity: weaponry and wealth, neglecting the greater more profound sources (women, science and music). It is this hypocritical insularity that makes the ME lag behind, it is suggested, while they welcome the Western products of infidel science in warfare and medicine, they refuse to accept or even recognize the underlying philosophy and sociopolitical context of these scientific achievements (ibid:81). The *hijab* as a signifier of backwardness is a perfect example of this hypocrisy, ‗as the dominant civilization is Western, Western standards therefore define modernity' (150). Given the fact that he is considered *the* best authority on Islam and the ME of our time[58] and his statements are taken, and quoted, on face value, Lewis does not feel that he needs to substantiate his broad-

[58] Lewis received the prestigious National Humanities Medal from President Bush in November 2006. *What Went Wrong?* remained on *The New York Times* best-seller list for many weeks, many editions appeared and was considered Lewis's best book. Dozens of reviews were written by prominent scholars (some mentioned on the front and back covers), according to the book's pages on ‗amazon.com' and ‗The Book Depository' websites. Ironically, Lewis supported polygamy in one of his lectures promoting the book, organized by Carnegie Council on March 26, 2002, retrieved on Nov. 3, 2011, on: http://www.carnegiecouncil.org/resources/transcripts/131.html

brushings by any data, information, context or even reference to at least one study on ME women, nor to the political, economic or cultural factors in the modern history of the ME, which were decisive in changing its face. He pieces together fragments of his choice to reconstruct an eternal image of a victim to support his implicit call -quoted above- upon Western powers to save women in the ME.

A multi-lingual scholar, especially in oriental languages as he is, Lewis has at his disposition literally thousands and thousands of studies on women in Islam and the ME, written by Arab and Muslim (among other) scholars, women and men. Yet the Middle Eastern woman‘s voice is absolutely silenced, not a single voice is heard. On the other hand, there is an unmissable air of lightness, recklessness, and indifference in his argument, assuming ignorance in the audience, and supporting an authoritative patronizing tone. This kind of rhetoric, typical of the discourse of WOT, practices intellectual violence against generations of ME scholars in all fields of science, and epistemological violence by spreading distorted knowledges, especially among non-expert readers, who are the majority of the public, let alone journalists and media ‗experts' who blindly quote him.

Similar neo-orientalist tropes which revitalize the old colonial representations of the natives are prevalent in the discourse of WOT. They are manifested in the Western narratives of progress and modernity ‗We will bring Progress and prosperity to Iraq' (Bush, 2003), the Crusade rhetoric of camouflaging the strategic and economic interests as a ‗messianic' mission of justice against evil doers (the invasion of Afghanistan was originally called ‗Operation Infinite Justice'), the racialized discourse casting Muslims as uncivilized and barbaric and their women as sex objects victimized by misogynistic cultures, and the masculinist stance of the whole

conquest drive[59]. *Nine Parts of Desire: The Hidden World of the Islamic Women* (1995) would make a neo-Orientalist example *par excellence* of these tropes. Written by Geraldine Brooks, a correspondent to the ME of *The Wall Street Journal,* the conservative mouthpiece of American finance and capitalism, *Nine Parts of Desire* is one of several books that could be categorized as a genre by themselves[60]: non-fictional narratives written by Western women who spend some time in the ME for one reason or another: journalists, wives of diplomats or businessmen, activists, or married to Middle Easterners; but none of them were *there* specifically for research. They go back home and write their memoirs which turn out to be international bestsellers, reprinted several times, and translated into several languages.

Being women they have access to the supposedly secret world of Arab and Muslim women, spaces where men cannot enter (hence the titles: *hidden world, inside, invisible, journey*…). But entering ‗inside' does not make the narrator one of the dwellers, she remains distant, different, and often annoyed by their existence. The neo-colonial feminist holds her torch of civilization to shed light on those creatures' miserable lives, thus she cherishes positional superiority that gives her a better vision into *their* misery. The light, however, is not meant for the Other women to see better, it is for the beholder to have a better gaze. After all, she writes in

[59] Said (2003), Riley et al (2008), Gol (2010), Thobani (2003), Hunt and Rygiel (2007) among others.

[60] Other similar narratives, for example, are Betty Mahmoody and William Hoffer *Not Without my Daughter* (New York: St. Martin's Press,1987); Carmen bin Laden *Inside the Kingdom: My Life in Saudi Arabia* (New York and Boston: Warner Books, 2004); Ayaan Hirsi Ali *Caged Virgin* (New York: Free Press, 2006) and *Infidel* (New York: Free Press, 2007), Quanta Ahmed *In the Land of Invisible Women: a Female Doctor's Journey in the Saudi Kingdom* (Naperville: Sourcebooks, 2008). Full text of the later is available online https://xpv.uab.cat/,DanaInfo=.aljdCq3osqk1l3.Nr43+Open.aspx?id=181756&loc=&srch=undefined&src=0 , many narratives of this genre are appearing now as many military, administrative or business women are coming back home after serving in Iraq and Afghanistan within WOT.

English[61], which is beyond the access of many of them. They are not her audience, rather it is the US and international market; and she is disseminating *her version of their reality* through the huge knowledge-producing institutions behind her, which are again beyond their reach.

The injustice of her (and their) positionality by itself is disturbing, and paradoxical to the very concept of feminism. Apart from her imperialist authoritative weight as she penetrates and dissects their lives with all her professional training and expertise, it is equally disturbing that she could interpret and reproduce their condition, aware of the fact that they can neither know how they are being seen and represented, nor be able to return the gaze. Feminism, after all, is about justice for women. In fact, her position pushes them deeper into darkness because highlighting specific cultural aspects necessarily and simultaneously dims neighboring spaces in the overall image. The neo-Orientalist gaze here is not only the traditional curious one in Said‘s Orientalism, looking for the exotic and the sensational. It is also the selective gaze of an investigator looking for evidence, specific ‗facts' that confirm her -and her institutions‘- preconceived theory, overlooking whatever does not fit in it. As a subject matter of investigation, the ‗role‘ of a silent, passive, and described object- as opposed to the role of active interlocutor in a dialogue- is imposed on the Middle Eastern women within these narrations. By textually silencing the already silenced women, through imposing on them the image of a voiceless victim (of men-culture-religion), it is those men, culture, and religion that are actually targeted through women‘s bodies and thoughts. The narrator/investigator here assumes the same organic intellectual‘s role of the hegemonic power in the Gramscian sense.

[61] More often than not she speaks Arabic or another oriental language, or she can employ an interpreter.

Geraldine Brooks signed on as ME correspondent ‗looking for risk and adventure', but she is disappointed to find it ‗depressingly unexotic', there are no ‗white-robed emirs, almond-eyed Persians, camels marking the horizon like squiggles of Arabic calligraphy' (1994:6). She is constantly annoyed by the heat and the noises especially that of muezzin's call to prayer, which would disturb her sleep or interrupt a meeting. But she is determined to understand ‗the background noise of Islam' (227), and why women in the ME would make choices exactly the opposite of hers (10), understood as the logical one. They are ‗black-veiled hordes' among whom she felt ‗locked up by mistake in some kind of convent from hell' (19). At their homes, however, they look different:

> When the door opened to my knock, I thought I had the wrong room. The woman in front of me had frosted blond hair streaming to her waist. She wore a silk negligee with a deep plunge neckline. On the bed behind her, another woman lay languidly in a bust-hugging, slit-sided scarlet satin night-gown. Through the filmy fabric, it was obvious that their bodies were completely hairless, like Barbie dolls. It was, they explained, *sunnat*, or Islamically recommended, for married women to remove all body hair every twenty days (…forty days for men). The traditional depilatory was a paste of sugar and lemon that tugged the hairs out by the roots… But in photographs everyone came out looking exactly the same: a little white triangle, apex down, inside a big black triangle, apex up I suddenly understood why Khadija, (Khomeini's wife), had hennaed her hair to carrot-orange (27)… Somehow, I'd never imagined that the stony-faced ayatollah had a wife with vamp-red hair (14).

There is constant return to the exhausted Orientalist depiction of sexualized women's bodies (seductive clothes, hair color, and the implicit sex reference to the apex-down triangle), but no parallel interest in women's thoughts, actions, social and political background. Brooks overlooks more than a century of women's movements and national programs in many countries of the ME, engaging them in almost all fields and transforming their realities and bodies' visibility. The book's rare mentions of some secular professional women, a Palestinian woman activist, for example, would go like this:

My father died when I was nine…said Tamam, raking her nails through a wedge of curly hair. ‗Lucky for me. If he was here, maybe I would have been killed many years ago'. Tamam reached across the low coffee table in her apartment and stubbed out a cigarette. As she leaned forward, flesh rippled over the top of a low-cut bustier. Tamam lived alone, and lived dangerously…For three years she had a lover: a handsome young Palestinian doctor who claimed to be a feminist. ‗Of course it was just talk. In the end he went back to his village and married his cousin (49).

In fact the sensational 19th century myth of Muslim women having a ‗secret' harem world that intrigues researchers to ‗unveil its mystery' sounds too outdated at the end of the 20th century, with all the books, films, and media coverage. Veil, seclusion, and female circumcision are represented here as the Islamic way of controlling women's sexual lust, which is supposedly nine times stronger than men's, according to a saying (whose source is uncited) inaccurately attributed to Imam Ali, the fourth Muslim Caliph and the Prophet's cousin[62]. Although honor killing is scarcely documented elsewhere, Brooks says that it reaps ‗hundreds' of women lives every year (231) and ‗a quarter of the women of Islam (that is around 200.000 millions) are victimized by the twin brutality of honor killing and circumcision' (54), without mentioning any reference to her information. In Palestine, however, honor killing is better documented thanks to the Israeli military and police, she says, (50).

Representations of Palestinian women are particularly striking. Brooks typically ignores the role the Israeli occupation has on their lives. She does not refer, for example, to the state of siege under which the Palestinians live, which Mbembe considers as a ‗modality of killing':

[62] Brooks attributes the following sentence to Imam Ali: ‗Almighty God created sexual desire in ten parts; then he gave nine parts to women and one to men', and uses it as an epigraph and a title for her book to justify a presumed Islamic apprehension of women's sexuality. In fact, nowhere in Imam Ali's writings does such a saying exist, or in any of The Prophet's, the Imams' and the Companions' sayings. An Iranian historian from the 10th century, Ibn Babaweih Al-Qummi (d. 992), however, referred to a political joke about the Umayyad Caliphs (662-750), that ‗they were not really men, because they had one tenth of the desire their women had', in his book *Man La Yahduruhu al Faqih,* Part III, Chapter of Jokes, no. 4620. Manuscript retrieved on December 12, 2011 from http://www.mezan.net/books/manlayahdraho/fakeeh3/html/ara/books/faqih/faqih-3/a157.html,.

When any movement requires formal permits, villages and town are cut from any support for survival, daily life is militarized, freedom is given to the military commander to shoot when and whom he decides, local institutions are systematically destroyed, and the besieged population is deprived of the means of income; all these are invisible killings added to the outright executions and bombings (2003: 30). Yet Brooks sticks to her story that Palestinian women are victimized by their violent men who are polygamous rapists, women manipulators, and sister-killers, ‗big barking dogs who feel that their whole purpose in life is to guard our bodies' (51).

In fact, Zionist feminists[63] used the Palestinian/Israeli conflict as evidence of Arab and Muslim men's oppression of women, and a justification of the treatment of the Israeli occupation authority against those men, thus displacing the political historical struggle and reducing it to a cultural clash with the women-hating Islamists. Iraqis are also described as barking. Nothing is said about Iraqi women apart from caricaturing their weddings, although the book was written after the first Gulf War and in the middle of the economic sanctions which hurt them badly. Saudi women's difficult situation, on the other hand, is emphasized as a generalized sample of all the miseries inflicted on women by Islam. By generalizing selected bits of reality, this book, again, disproportionally highlights what serves the message, leaving other parts in the darkness, especially since those bits are crookedly and inaccurately represented much of the time[64].

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[63] See Chesler below.

[64] Examples of these inaccuracies are the meaning of ‗Islam' as submission, which is true; but the Quran and the Prophet repeatedly made it clear that submission is *only* to God, and never to any other creature, a meaning that Brooks implies in the relation of wife to husband. Wedding ceremonies in Iraq are presented as the same as in Egypt, which might be argued as insignificant, but it says a lot about the book's claim of representing women's reality. Tamam's name is translated as ‗enough', while it actually means ‗perfect' or ‗complete'. Enough is ‗Kefa' or ‗Kifaya', hence the Egyptian political movement of the same name.

Racist superiority normally overwhelms such narrations, which lack any empathy; rather it is full of pity towards the ‗women who have plenty to cry about here' (105). The writer's only ‗Oriental' match is Queen Noor of Jordan, the beautiful, intelligent, and elegant American woman; the perfect feminist who gave the Kingdom a civilized touch and ‗saved' the Jordanian women, although not much is said about ‗her achievements' for that matter, nor about Jordanian women's organizations. But Queen Noor's representation of the Western woman saving the Oriental is essential here. In fact the book does not say much about its object of research, ME women. What it actually does is sustain and boost an already existing image, superficial representations of women ‗because the nuanced positions would contradict the essentialist picture that she is painting' (Bahramitash, 2005:231).

A similar type[65] of such narratives is written by feminists of Middle Eastern origins who live and publish in Western countries, providing native testimonies, again confirming the discourse of WOT: ‗a plethora of [non]fiction bestsellers written by Muslim women about their suffering at the hands of Islam's supposedly incomparable misogynist practices…as a symptom of a much larger pathology that haunts Islam, namely, its propensity to violence' (Mahmood, 2008: 83). These autobiographies, poor in merit as they are, have a complex relation to the neo-colonial project of the 21st century. Being insiders and victims, they are dealt with as authentic and heroic: the subaltern is finally speaking and being heard; but she is actually ‗giving' her voice/agency to the neo-colonialists, thus legitimizing their aggression, and putting anti-WOT feminists, both Western and native, in a difficult position. This genre will be analyzed in detail through specific texts in Part II.

[65] These categories are used only for the sake of study; they do not imply any essential political or critical differences.

Another type of these narratives is what anti-WOT feminists call ‗embedded feminism'[66], defined as ‗the incorporation of feminist discourse and feminist activists into political projects that claim to serve the interests of women but ultimately subordinate and /or subvert that goal' (Hunt 2007: 53, also Riley et al, 2008, and others). In fact many US official politicians, militarymen, diplomats, journalists, men and women who have never shown any interest in women's rights previously, have suddenly become vehement feminists after 9/11. Apart from them, and although rescuing their oppressed non-Western sisters has always been part of the colonial civilizing mission, embedded feminists are theoretically and organizatioally involved in the US foreign policy of military intervention in the ME, so they are part of the war propaganda. Feminist psychologist and activist Phyllis Chesler, for example, says that she ‗would only go to the ME as part of an American Marine force' (2006: 112), not only railing against oppressors but actually ‗going up against *them* personally, physically, risking anything' (7, emphasis added). She introduced the notion of ‗Islamic gender apartheid' in her writings, and accuses any feminist who does not support WOT of hypocrisy and self-defeat (2006, and in Spencer & Chesler, 2007). Islamic gender apartheid is defined as the position of Muslim women who are supposedly living in constant fear: extremely victimized, beaten, raped, killed, sexually mutilated, easily divorced, treated like sexual slaves… for no reason other than ‗Islam sanctions these abuses and excuses them' (2006: 24).

In *The Death of Feminism* (2006), Chesler advises that ‗America must begin to factor both gender and religious apartheid into our evolving foreign policy [because women are] crucial in the evolution of freedom and democracy in the Middle East and in Muslim countries'(9). She

[66] ‗Embedded feminism' is derived from the US Department of Defense policy of embedded media in Iraq in order to favorably ‗shape the public perception about the war' (Hunt 2007: 52).

warns that feminists have become infected by multicultural relativism which endangers lives and values of the civilized Judeo-Christian peoples in Europe and the US. In fifty-six non-western countries gender apartheid and pernicious Islamism prevail, she says, and feminists ‗must work with our government and with our international allies on this, because it is one of the most important feminist priorities of the twenty-first century' (13). Chesler and like-minded WOT advocates[67] come out of Patai's cloak, and like him they generalize highly selective personal observations and anecdotes to confirm their theory of Arab and Muslim psychological-sexual deviance. According to them, this culture is pathological, where men have multiple personalities, schizophrenic, duplicitous (85). Shame and honor play decisive roles and the utter debasement of women is paramount (142). Children who are supposedly brought up by a devalued and traumatized young mother and who witness her being beaten, experience it as a direct attack on themselves. Soon they must disassociate themselves from her and join the world of adults in spectacularly savage ways. But from a psychoanalytical point of view, on a deep unconscious level, the theory suggests that they may also wish to remain merged with the source of contamination- a conflict that suicide bombers may both act out and resolve when they kill but also merge their blood eternally with that of their enemy. Precarious male identity is a consequence of this abrupt rupture with the female domestic sphere coupled with his need to

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[67] Chesler builds her psychoanalytical theory mainly on Israeli writers Aron Schmitt and Jehoeda Sofer *Sexuality and Eroticism Among Males in Muslim Societies*, (New York: Haworth Press, 1992), where they say that the separation between the domestic sphere of women and children and the public sphere of men is not a matter of ‗separate but equal', rather men are considered stronger physically, intellectually, and morally and able to control instinct and emotion- unlike women and children who are discriminated against and abused in everything including matters of sex; and Kobrin explains terrorism as displaced rage against the abused ‗early mother' and abusive child–rearing. Nancy Kobrin *The Banality of Suicide Terrorism: the Naked Truth about the Psychology of Islamic Suicide Bombing* (Washington DC: Potomac Books, 2010).

both ‗stand his ground (but at the same time to bow in front of his father and other men in positions of power and respect). The macho behavior hides this uncertainty, the male desire to be taken care of becomes transformed, unconsciously, into the wish to appear invulnerable. The grown man remains a non-man in relation to his father' (143).

Like *all* savior feminists, Chesler is ‗shocked' by the medieval condition of Muslim women that *never changes*. What is shocking, though, is not illiteracy, poverty or preventable diseases; rather it is the domestic and psychological misery (83). Similar narratives which are built mainly on literary texts and isolated stories, unsupported by any data, also present children's (boys and girls) sexual abuse as prevalent in Muslim societies, and build on this assumption that these children grow up as angry and predator men; terrorists who are also women abusers. The cultural and psychological portrait of the Middle Eastern women is represented as very complicated, and their oppression is fetishized: media stories, novels, videos, films, and (auto)biographies repeatedly indulge in horrible scenes of beating, stoning, mutilation, decapitation and so forth. A dark world of bloody and sadistic torture is depicted.

The theory is that ME cultures sanction breaking women's self-esteem and rendering them worthless, so that they are not taught to think of themselves as individuals, rather as daughters, wives, mothers, and sisters of men. Outside these relations a woman is treated as if she's non-existent, and trained to obey a hierarchy of (state and family) male dictators. Once married she is supposed to be property of the husband, learn to keep her mouth shut and ‗just take it', because violations are considered normal. However (older) mothers of men have special status and authority. Like men, women also internalize their society's hatred; and like men they are exceptionally cruel toward other women. Most Arab and Muslim women *strongly* support

and justify the very culture that demeans them, and passively accept and justify their own mistreatment and the abuse of other women. They do not have the courage to resist the system because they throw all their courage into religion.

Although girls and women may go through similar indoctrination anywhere in the world, she says, *in the ME it is culturally and religiously sanctioned*. Domestic terrorism and mistreatment of girls are culturally mandated and reporting and condemning them are taboos. It is imperative that *we* (Westerners) understand this mentality if *we* really want to introduce concepts such as democracy and freedom into the region. However there are some heroic women or men who dare to break these codes, but she or he will need nothing less than a *witness* protection program to remain alive. Domestic violence exists everywhere, including in America, but due to selfless and pioneering second wave feminist work, this has begun to change in the West, but not yet in the ME. Perhaps it can, *under the right conditions*.

Accordingly, ME women are divided into three categories: heroes, doomed and tragic figures, and collaborators (with Islamism). Women are *unlikely* to oppose tyranny unless they are specially and persistently ‗deprogrammed' and also militarily and legally protected from domestic terrorism. Clearly only the evolution of democracy and the elevation of women can begin to change such dynamics (130-150). Chesler provides a host of examples of the brutal crimes committed against women by Muslim men, not just in non-Western countries but also in Europe, where millions of Muslims have emigrated in past decades and are supposedly unassimilated and hostile to Western culture[68]. Arabs and Muslims in Europe are at the bottom

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[68] Muslims in Europe are represented by another best-selling feminist, the Italian journalist Oriana Fallaci in her *The Rage and the Pride* (2002). Fallaci's is a notoriously racialized text against poor and inferior Muslims, full of portraits of contemporary Muslims who invade Europe and transform beautiful Italian cities into ‗filthy Kasbah'.

and as such they feel permanently humiliated, and easily recruited by Islamists, and Muslim women bear the greater burden of this situation.

Anti-WOT Feminism

The hegemonic discourse of WOT has been vehemently critiqued by huge feminist literatures[69] which contested its arguments from different points of views, and agreed on one major point: in the interest of empire building, WOT manipulated women‗s issues and images, the most fraught of which is the victimized ‗Muslim women' narrative. These feminist literatures introduced highly enlightened, politically valid, and theoretically varied insights that could be clearly classified within post-colonial theory.

According to Cynthia Enloe, despite scores of ethnographies, histories, novels, and memoirs by women all over the world, and especially in the ME, demonstrating mind-boggling diversity of experience, ideas, political actions, and creative expressions of women, this simplistic narrative of Muslim women ‗has been taken off the nineteenth century imperial shelf, dusted, polished, and put to new use especially by officials of the US administration of Bush and their international allies in order to wrap its war in the justifying banner of women‗s liberation' (2007: xi). Critical feminist scholarship analyzes the way WOT has been constructed, waged and

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Muslims grope at her breasts, sell drugs, defecate in beautiful buildings, and infect the local population with AIDS. She criticizes feminists for being silent about the treatment of Muslim women. She does not consider Islam a religion but a tyranny, a dictatorship. ‗It has never wanted to know about freedom and democracy and progress' (30).

[69] A few examples are: Susan Hawthorne and Bronwyn Winter *After Shock: September 11, 2001/ Global Feminist Perspective* (Vancouver: Raincoast, 2003), where 86 articles for feminists all over the world contested WOT; Robin Riley et al, *Feminism and War: Confronting US Imperialism* (London and New York: Zed Books, 2008).; and Betsy Reed, ed. *Nothing Sacred: Women Respond to Religious Fundamentalism and Terror* (New York: Thunder‗s Mouth Press/Nation Books, 2002); books cited in this study, and many others.

legitimized on gendered terrain, and the effects of the manipulation of women‘s issues on millions of women‘s lives around the world. Women, as a category, are neither privileged nor oppressed per se, as this scholarship suggests, challenging the familiar concept of ‗global sisterhood' prevalent in the 1970s and 1980s, and insisting on the intersectionality of gender oppression with other oppressions based on race, class, religion and so on (Brah and Phoenix: 2004:76). It analyzes the discourses of war stories and the interests and agenda they serve, focusing on official WOT stories, reports, policy documents, and speeches as well as mainstream western media coverage, and looking at the ways these stories produce events, identities, and conflicts; create rescues, enemies, dangers, and liberations; define solutions, and future actions (Hunt and Rygiel, 2007: 5).

In 1993, Himani Bannerji introduced the concept of ‗returning the gaze', i.e. applying Foucault‘s ‗gaze of power' to racist-sexist-imperialist constructions of otherness and difference, where the process of objectifying and stereotyping the marginalized by the powerful group is returned back by the marginalized themselves, Third World Women in this case (xii). Building on this concept, the anti-WOT feminists actively engage in shifting the gaze that dominates discussions of WOT from focusing on terrorists and their victims to the predominantly Western coalition countries and elites who fuelled and legitimized the war. Thus in the remarkable and lasting women‘s rescue story, for example, these feminists expose how this story camouflaged the Bush administration‘s record on women‘s rights: its political negotiations with the Taliban on oil pipelines while well aware of the Taliban‘s treatment of women (in 2001 and again in

2012)[70], its funding of the Afghan warlords of the Northern Alliance whose record of violence against women is no less horrible, the occupation forces‘ sexual assault on Iraqi women, its attack on women‘s reproductive rights at home and abroad, its linking of women‘s liberation to post-war reconstruction based on neoliberal economic agenda, the Iraqi and Afghani women‘s experiences of WOT which stand in stark opposition to the stories of liberation, and abusing feminism and discrediting Western feminists once again in US neo-imperialism...etc. So, far from being a war for women‘s rights, it was a war on them (Hunt and Rygiel, 2007:6-10).

In this context too, feminists diagnosed the gendered (neo-)Orientalist aspects of WOT. Archetypal representations of the debased Middle Eastern women as monolithically helpless camouflaged the imperial interests (Abu Lughod 2001, Bahramitash 2005, Ahmed 1992, Zine 2007, Gol 2010 and others). The previous erotic exoticization of Oriental women is replaced by the Middle Eastern victimization narratives: patriarchy, fundamentalism, *Shari‗a* (Islamic law), misogynists, autocracy and so forth. Anti-WOT feminists show how Muslim women were cast as ‗idiotic, uneducated, and guilty of marrying pricks who want to marry four wives‘ (Oriana Fallaci, 2002: 95). Feminists also refer to the ‗eroticizing of domination‘: the use of sex and sexual metaphors associated with colonization (notorious torture in Abu Ghraib prison, the sexual humiliation and submission, and emasculation of the enemy), the sensationalization of women‘s plight: videos and images of women being stoned, shot, burnt, or mistreated became decontextualized prime time entertainment and media scoop in the war story, and to the use of *hijab*, as a symbol of difference and Islamphobia in Western societies.

[70] US started negotiations with the Taliban in 2013, again on the future of Afghanistan. See for example, Ewen MacAskill and Simon Tisdall ‗White House Shifts Afghanistan Strategy towards Talks with Taliban‘ *The Guardian*, (July 19. 2010).

As mentioned above, anti-WOT feminists introduced the notion of ‗embedded feminism'. Hunt, however, generalizes the notion to include nationalist and revolutionary movements' attempts to empower women (2007: 53), which can't possibly be put in the same category with WOT, whose commitment to women's liberation is far from being genuine, or from promoting women's rights as embedded feminism actually ‗strengthened colonialism and patriarchy while undermining the struggle for women's rights' (ibid: 54), and as it presented Western feminism as a savior of third world women. As I will show in the case study of Iraq, nationalist and revolutionary movements play a great qualititative role in elevating women's condition within their political struggle of resisting the colonialist and imperialist hegemony, and the national development projects.

Feeling sorry necessarily positions embedded feminists (self- proclaimed inventors of feminism) as superior to the (should be) grateful Other women to be protected. Iris Marion Young cautions feminists against adopting a stance of protector toward women in less developed societies, and suggests that these feminists are assuming superior tones of enlightenment and righteousness, singling out the most exotic and distant of the Other women's situations, representing them as submisive victims and failing to consider them as equals (2003). Such feminists as Eleanor Smeal, leader of the American Feminist Majority Fund (FMF), ‗jumped onto the war bandwagon and assumed chivalrous forms of masculinism within a structure of superiority and subordination' (ibid). The male protector in the chivalric traditions confronts evil aggressors in the name of right and good, while those under his protection submit to his order., Embedded feminists, parodoxically, expressed a similar logic: the suppression of women in these societies is a symptom of their backwardness. Troops will be needed to bring order and guard fledgling institutions, and foreign aid workers to feed, cure and educate, but all this is only a

period of tutelage that will end when the subject people demonstrate their ability to gain their own livelihood and run their own affairs. Thus ‗it is difficult for feminists in Western societies not to be heard as continuous with this stance of superiority and paternalistic knowledge of what the poor women of the world need‘ (ibid: 230-1).

These scholarly feminist achievements by no means signify that anti-WOT feminist views are an identical or homogenous category. Although well-aware of the opportunistic stand of both the imperialist and the fundamentalist concepts of women‘s agency, they are varied and multiply divided between (liberal, leftist and Marxist) secular and faith-based, who are again ideologically divided between those who resist imperialism by insisting that Islam gives women *all* their rights and those who call for scriptural reinterpretation, or between Islamic feminists positioned in the North, and those who act in countries of Islamic majorities in the South. What is relevant to the discussion here is that all these feminists, regardless of their ideological orientation, are united in exposing the imperialist dimensions of the discourse of rescue and resisting it. RAWA and HAWCA[71] repeatedly urged the US not to bomb their country and not to add to its people‘s sufferings. They called upon the international community to oppose the war. After the war, too, they demanded that the US did not support the Afghani Northern Alliance whose record of violations of women‘s rights is worse than their predecessors. But neither the US government nor the embedded feminists listened. Thus, ‗this engendering of war on terror has produced the hegemonic tendencies of white, middle-class, western feminism as these feminists echo Bush‘s call to save victimized and oppressed Afghan women‘ (Hunt 2007:61). In fact FMF added insult to injury by organizing fundraising acts selling *burqa*-like cloth, as a

[71] Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan and Humanitarian Assistance for the Women and Children of Afghanistan.

symbol of ‗solidarity'. Hunt confirms that FMF supporting position to WOT highlighted its visibility and political power, and embedded feminists gained ‗access to these corridors of power because of their willingness to legitimize the state's engendered war story and Orientalist assumptions on which it is based (ibid). Razack says that in the post-9/11 climate, to write about violent Muslim men guarantees royalties and the prestige of being on best-seller lists…because it provides WOT and the American bid for empire with ideological justification (2008:83).

Chapter V

The Mitigating Effect of Soft Power

Case Study: Iraqi Women

> *In traditional societies, women are hugely influential in forming the social networks that insurgents use for support. When the women support COIN* (counter insurgency) *efforts, family units support COIN efforts. Getting the support of families is a big step toward mobilizing the population against the insurgency. Co-opting neutral or friendly women, through targeted social and economic programs, builds networks of enlightened self-interest that eventually undermine the insurgents. Female counterinsurgents, include interagency people, are required to do this effectively.*
>
> David Petraeus, American military commander in Iraq (2008)

> *Tear away the veil, woman of Iraq/ Unveil yourself, for life needs transformation/ Tear it away, burn it, do not hesitate/ It has only given you false protection.*
>
> Iraqi poet Al-Zahawi (1926)

At the turn of the 20th century women, and many men, in Iraq were hardly recognized as human beings within a worn out feudal and tribal system. After five centuries of Ottoman occupation, poverty, illiteracy, and diseases were prevalent; and men had absolute power over women. ‗The Iraqi woman was the victim of a complex system of oppression' Al-Sharqi says, in addition to the general suffering of a nation due to foreign occupation and reactionary government, ‗she had to suffer the discrimination of feudal and patriarchal society which treated her as mere chattels or domestic slaves'(1982:74). A man would apologize to listeners before referring to his wive(s), as if dirt; and mentioning the name of a man's female relative in public was considered an insulting gesture. An ideal woman was the one who stepped outside once in a

lifetime: from her father‘s house to her husband‘s. Women were covered by layers of veil, ignorance and superstition, and traded as compensation in dispute conciliations. However, women in rural areas enjoyed more visibility as they had to work on farms, while women in urban and more affluent families enjoyed more recognition and opportunities. This chapter aims at showing how Iraqi women struggled to reverse this degradation and leapfrogged to achieve substantially better status throughout the 20th century; and how WOT washed away their achievements. I will be referring only to pioneers and prominent feminist Iraqi figures and organizations, as introducing the whole history is beyond the capacity of a single chapter.

As was the case in other countries in the ME, the women‘s liberation movement in Iraq[72] started with the turn of the 20th century and was initiated by men advocates, mainly (religious) intellectuals and poets. However, the enthusiasm with which their call was received and embraced suggests that women were aware of their plight and were ready and eager to work on changing it. Early Iraqi feminists became professional pioneers in the Arab world, always connected to national liberation movements, social justice and especially to the advancement of education. They were all of high/upper-middle class who had the opportunity to attend school. In 1899, the first school for girls was established in Baghdad. Jewish families were more willing to send their daughters to school, and encouraged Muslim families to do likewise. Poets and defenders of women‘s rights, Jamil Sidqi Al-Zahawi and Ma‘ruf Al-Russafi, influenced by the Egyptian social reformers such as Muhammad Abdu and Qasim Amin, started writing on educating and unveiling women. Both Al-Zahawi and Al-Russafi were from highly regarded

[72] For a history of the Iraqi women‘s movement in the first half of the 20th century (in English) see for example Efrati (2012), Zangana (2009), Ismael (2007), Ismael and Ismael (2000), Walther (1999), Al-Sharqi (1982), and in Arabic Dawood (1958), Al-Duleimi (1951), and the writings of Suad Kheiri on the website of the ‘Center of Women‘s Equality‘ http://www.c-we.org , among many others.

families, advocated religious and social reform, and considered women's liberation essential to social and political change. In 1910 Al-Zahawi was fired from his job as a teacher of law and put under house arrest after publishing an article defending women's rights, and Al-Russafi was beaten after giving a speech, denying that Islam sanctioned veiling. They were often verbally abused and their lives were threatened several times. Nevertheless, by 1918 there were already three schools for girls, twenty-seven in 1926, and forty-five in 1930.

During the British occupation (1917-1921), while this nascent movement was stirring in Baghdad, the conservative tribal and feudal forces advocating maintenance of the status quo were supported against the reformist nationalists, and repression of women was enshrined first when Britain aligned with those forces[73], and second when it codified unjust customs by issuing the Tribal Civil and Penal Law of 1918. In these customs women's sexual purity was a matter of tribal honor, and tribal law not only held women responsible for any transgression, but also controlled access to women through gender segregation. In this law, for example, a man has the right to marry his cousin; if she refuses he has the right to prevent her from marrying anyone else. Another example is using women as compensation in dispute settlement (Ismael, 2007: 250).

Among the first Iraqi feminists was Asma' Al-Zahawi, sister of Jamil, president of the first Iraqi women's organization *Nadi Al-Nahdha Al-Nissa'iya* (Women Awakening Club 1923) and co-editor (with Bilina Hassun) of the first Iraqi women's magazine *Layla*, first issued on October 15, 1923. Both the Club and the magazine called upon women to wake up from their

[73] Britain maintained a policy of appeasement with some tribal sheikhs to confront (otherwise costly) local upheaval. See Martin Gilbert *Winston S. Churchill*: *Biography, volume IV, 1916-1922* (London: Heinemann, 1975).

slumber, and educated them on their rights of education and work, their health and hygiene, and some political and economic issues. Their activities were mainly literacy classes, sewing, and collecting donations for war victims. In 1929 the Club was invited to represent Iraqi women in the first Arab women‘s conference in Cairo, but was forced to decline. Three years later, in 1932, the conference was held in Baghdad, reflecting the significant advances women had achieved within a short time. In fact the 1920s were of huge political and cultural change in Iraq. Women‘s emergence into public life was strong through their participation in The Great Iraqi Revolution of 1920[74]. Sabiha Al-Sheikh Dawood (1914-1975), one of the early Iraqi feminists wrote the history of the Iraqi women‘s movement and told stories of women fighters, and Zangana mentions at least 20 oral poetesses who were active in the Revolution (2009: 39).

Sabiha was the daughter of a religious intellectual and a political resistance leader in The 1920 Revolution who later became an MP and a minister. Her mother, Nai‘ma Sultan Hammuda, a well-known social personality and co-founder of ‗the Awakening Club‘, led a delegation of Iraqi women to meet Gertrude Bell, the British Oriental Secretary to the high commissioner, protesting forced displacement and demanding the release of political prisoners, among whom was Ahmed Sheikh Dawood, her husband and Sabiha‘s father. At the age of 8, Sabiha was the first Iraqi girl to participate in a literary festival, when she recited poetry of Al-Khanssa‘[75]. In

[74] June 30th, 1920 Iraqis all over the country revolted for several months against the British occupation, before they were severely crushed by the British bombs, air force, and poisoned gas into surrender in October. Although a decision was made to create an Arab State in Iraq, War Secretary W. Churchill‘s policy was of never giving any concessions in moments of defeat, and before ‗those Arabs are given a good lesson‘. Thus ‗a long stern process of punishment and retribution began, punitive expeditions set out to all the centers of revolt, villages were burned, fines were collected‘, but it was when Churchill found it gratuitous ‗to go on pouring armies and treasure into these thankless deserts‘ that the war ended. Martin Gilbert, *Winston Churchill(1975: 490-495).* Zangana mentions that at least ten thousand Iraqis were killed in that revolution(2009:39).

[75] Khanssa‘ was the most prominent Arab poetess (b. 575 - 664).

1936, she was the first girl to enter Law College[76] and to become the first female judge in the Arab world in 1946. Like Asma‘, she is also one of the first Iraqi women journalists. She had two salons, one literary on Thursdays, and another scientific and political on Fridays. She was a co-founder of many organizations: the Iraqi Red Crescent, the Mother and Child Society, and the Iraqi Women‘s Union. Her book *The Beginning of the Road to Women‘s Awakening in Iraq* (1958) is an invaluable history of early Iraqi feminism. In fifteen chapters, she covered different issues: the role of women in the 1920 Revolution, education for girls, first women‘s organizations, and men intellectual advocates of women‘s rights, women poets, women Arab conferences...and so forth.

Asma‘, Sabiha, Nai‘ma, and Bilina were a few names in a list of around sixty ‗ladies‘: elite, enlightened women from well known affluent, religious and political families. They called for women‘s rights in education, work, and a free choice of husband, but they did not explicitly call for unveiling. They were very much supported by distinguished men: religious reformers, intellectuals, poets, journalists, and political personalities, who, ironically, were engaged in fierce wars against the veil[77]. Researchers tend to explain these women‘s reluctance to oppose the veil openly, as they were more concerned with more important issues in the women‘s cause. Personally, I believe that their decision was strategic too; they did not want to create strong social reaction against their activities, especially among women. Indeed, the fact that they were from religious families, and were supported by religious personalities gave them more credibility

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[76] On her first day at university, Sabiha removed her face veil. Her mother who accompanied her, gave a speech in front of 180 male students, saying ‗Here is a sister of you all, I hope that you take good care of her, that she does not disappoint you and that she will not regret this experience‘.

[77] Apart from Al-Zahawi and Al-Rusafi, pioneer journalist Rafael Batti, historians Sati‘ Al-Hussari, and Abdul Razack Al-Hassani.

and added impetus to their call in a conservative society. Later, when the ‗veil issue' became irrelevant, they unveiled without even being noticed. A group of first Marxists in Iraq, for example, led by Hussein Al-Rahhal, created the first leftist circle in Iraq in 1924, and published *The Journal*, calling among other things for women's liberation. They were more than the public could take at that time, and the paper was closed[78]. In fact, early feminists were keen on not connecting women's oppression to religion, and always criticized and opposed reactionary social customs. They often used examples of famous Muslim women to support their argument.

The next three decades were formative in Iraqi (women's) history. In 1932, Iraq won independence and was admitted to the League of Nations, ending centuries of Ottoman occupation and 17 years of British rule. But independence was bound by a treaty through which Britain retained control over foreign policy, military bases and Iraqi oil[79]. The Hashemite monarchy failed to achieve significant progress and became increasingly oppressive. Political corruption and economic misery prevailed, leading to several revolts against Britain, the monarchy and social injustice. Schooling spread steadily, but slowly and disproportionately in urban centers, while rural areas remained lacking in virtually any social services, including education. The women's liberation movement evolved within these revolts, and the political aspect of their struggle, which emerged in the 1920 Revolution through their participation in the nationalist struggle for independence, was enhanced alongside the social and cultural discourses. In 1934, the Iraqi Communist Party was established and it was the first political organization to address the issue of women's liberation as a principle objective. In the 1940s the first political

[78] Al-Rahhal was also a fierce critic of the feudal system and demanded redistribution of land.

[79] Oil was discovered in 1927 in huge quantities in Iraq and its exploration rights were granted to Britain for the next 75 years.

women‘s organizations were founded: Women‘s League against Nazism and Fascism (1943-, renamed later the Iraqi Women‘s League), and Iraqi Women‘s Union (1945, which initially included five women‘s organizations including the League), in addition to many social, cultural, religious and charity societies. The League was suspended in 1947 in a government crackdown against opposition groups, but the Union remained active through the 1950s.

Iraqi women‘s political activities, including the underground struggle, gave their movement an identity of being one current within other students‘, workers‘, and professionals‘ movements, and not feminist centered. Their slogans were for democracy and social justice, pan-Arabism, rights to education and work, and women‘s rights in divorce and child custody. By the 1940s it became less religious or elitist, and more of students and enlightened lower/middle-classes. There were at least nine women‘s magazines[80]. Women were actually practicing their liberation through the political struggle, but it was not yet a wide popular movement, more urban especially in the capital, than rural or regional. In 1941 women participated in political demonstrations despite the violent government reaction. In *Al-Wathba* uprising in 1948, thousands of Iraqi men, and hundreds of women demonstrated against the Portsmouth Treaty between Britain and the monarchy, which gave the British troops an open access to Iraqi land, sky and waters. The first Iraqi women killed by police bullets were in that demonstration, among other 400 men who were gunned down on a bridge which was hence named the ‗Martyrs‘ Bridge‘ in Baghdad. Many women were arrested and two got life sentences. The next decade was of continuous upheavals. The Iraqis were mainly opposing the economic (oil) policy, the

[80] al-Mar'a al-Haditha (1936), Fatat al-'Iraq (1936), Fatat al-Arab (1937), Sawt al-Mar'a (1943), al-Rihab (1946), al-Umm wa-l-Tifl (1946), Tahrir al-Mar'a (1947), Bint al-Rashid (1948) and al-Ittihad al-Nisa'i (1949). (Efrati, 2004)

occupation of Palestine, and the colonial policies especially against Iraq, Egypt, and Algeria. Any event related to any of these issues, would trigger huge demonstrations and a severe backlash by the government, which maintained martial law until the end of the monarchy in 1958.

Umm Nizar (1908-1953) was the first Iraqi woman to write political poetry against colonialism and social injustice. A self taught and a mother of seven children, she wrote her poetry secretly until the death of Jamil Al-Zahawi in 1936, when she started publishing, and her first published poem was an elegy for him. She was the wife of Sadiq Al-Mala‘ika, a teacher and editor of a twenty-volume encyclopedia of Arabic. Her only book of poetry *A Song of Glory* (1965) was published twelve years after her death by her daughter Nazik Al-Mala‘ika, the first modernist Arab poet.

> The Elegy was received enthusiastically by the literary circles of Baghdad, which were surprised that an unknown poet could produce a work of such maturity and artistic value… [She] was preoccupied with two main topics in her poetry: patriotism and the cause of Arab women. She glorified the role played by Arab women through history…that women were worthy of playing a major role in the modern Arab world. She also emphasized the predicament of the women of modern Iraq, victims of stagnation, ignorance and narrow-mindedness and she urged them to strive to overcome their difficulties. In the sphere of patriotism Umm Nizar wrote about Iraq‘s struggle for independence, the Palestinian issue, and other liberation movements in the Arab world (Zeidan, 1995: 58)[81].

Nazik Al-Mala‘ika (1923-2007) remains one of the biggest symbols of the Iraqi and Arab women‘s liberation. Her main achievements were in poetry, but also in education and feminism, always connected to national liberation. She established the University of Basra, and worked through her life as a teacher of literature. She was one of the earliest Iraqi girls to study abroad

[81] See also Zangana, 2009: 44.

on her own[82]. As a feminist, Nazik‘s writings are classics now. She presented a new meaning of women‘s liberation. Moral laws, she said in 1953, are no more than accumulation of habits through history, and they lack justice not only because they excluded women, but also because any law that does not give women the freedom to dissent, is meaningless (Al-Muhsin, 2004). For her the meaning of freedom for women is not just to study and work; rather it is to have a critical mind capable of producing a new and original vision, and to be able to adapt it to her spiritual needs. Thus Arab women‘s freedom is ‗external‘ not ‗constructive‘, although they study and work but they still think within an odalisque mentality, she said in a lecture in Basra University in March 1968 (Rassoul, 2007).

Nazik revolutionized Arabic poetry through her innovative poetry and critical theorization of a new form known as ‗free verse‘, breaking the fourteen-century tradition of two-hemistich verse lines with a single line scheme of Arabic prosody. Her idea was basically that the content dictates the structure: rhythm, line length, rhyme scheme, and number of lines, rather than vice versa[83]. Her poem ‗Cholera‘ 1947, is

> the opening shot of the free verse movement in the Arab world…grew out of the poet‘s grief for and sympathy with Egypt, then in the throes of cholera epidemic, [for] the poor and downtrodden who always pay the highest price, ‗In the shack where grief lives/ everywhere a spirit screams in the darkness‘…[She] was shaken to the core when faced to the disease and death, and in turn she shook the foundation of classical Arabic poetry, creating new rhythmic language that could contain the present in all its complexity…

[82] After finishing her studies in Arabic literature in Baghdad University, she got a degree in criticism and comparative literature in Princeton and Wisconsin universities in US. She also studied philosophy, music, theater, French and Latin. She published six books of poetry, four of criticism and one of short stories. For a bibliographical introduction to Al-Mala‘ika poetry and theory in English, see: Altoma (1997) and Suleiman (1995).

[83] Literary historians argue that Nazik was not the only pioneer in Free Verse, because she was working with the prominent Iraqi poet Badr Shakir Al-Sayyab (1926-1964) on the new form, especially in his poem ‗Was It Love?‘ 1949. Thus both poets were pioneers in this sense, but Al-Sayyab was dismissed from his job and arrested for his communist activities, and the publishing of his poem was delayed (Moreh, 1976: 203).

> When her father criticized her for abandoning the classical form…she responded confidently that the poem was a beginning of a new Arabic poetry (‗Ashur 2008: 186)

But her pioneering movement was not only structural; rather it was in the usage of imagery, music, language and daring themes, especially on women‗s rights, as in her much quoted poem ‗Washing off Disgrace', where she denounces ‗honor'-killing:

Oh mother, a rattle, tears, and darkness

Blood gushed out, and the stabbed body trembled

‗Oh mother!' Heard only by the executioner

Tomorrow the dawn will come and roses will wake up

Youth and enchanted hopes will ask for her

The meadows and the flowers will answer:

She left to wash the disgrace[84].

Amina Al-Rahhal, sister of Hussein mentioned above, was the first Iraqi female lawyer and first woman to be a member of the central committee of the Iraqi Communist Party in 1941, she was also the first to attend an Arab women‗s conference in Damascus in 1930, while she was still a student. Some historians say that she was the first Iraqi woman to discard the *hijab* alltogether. Naziha Al-Duleimi (1923-2007), another member of IPC central committee, was the first Iraqi and Arab woman to become a cabinet minister in 1959, and became the vice-president of the Women‗s International Democratic Federation; and remains another symbol for the Iraqi women‗s struggle. As a medical doctor, she was forcibly transferred (for her political activities) to many Iraqi rural areas which made her especially aware of the women‗s difficult condition, and wrote her booklet *The Iraqi Women* through that experience. But her major achievement as a minister of municipalities was her role in turning the slums of Baghdad into a modern town

[84] Translator unknown *The New York Times* (June 27, 2007).

called *Al-Thawra*, and in clandestinely establishing the League for Defending Iraqi Woman‘s Rights in 1952.

The Iraqi Women‘s Union and the Iraqi Women‘s League remained the major sister organizations that contributed to women‘s development. The older one worked within the social, economic and political boundaries for legal and constitutional reforms against illiteracy, poverty and disease. It explicitly criticized the imperialist aggressions, but its political involvement remained low key. It encouraged women‘s education, organized endless cultural and charitable activities, aided war victims, networked with Arab and international women‘s organizations such as the International Alliance of Women, contributed to annulment of legalized prostitution, worked within the parliament for better conditions of divorce, child custody, juvenile courts, and above all struggled for women‘s political rights and legal reforms. The younger sister, the League, was closely connected to the Iraqi Communist Party, more radical, and at many times underground, and its members were arrested, tortured, and sentenced to (life) imprisonments. It argued that any genuine advance in women‘s condition was not possible without comprehensive structural political and economic change (independence from imperialist control and reactionary forces, and socialism), nor without mobilizing masses of women. Its membership included all social classes, religious, ethnic and political groups. They helped poor women and orphans, and addressed daily problems. Naziha was well-known for opening free of charge clinics.

Sabiha represented the Union, articulating its policy, especially in *The Beginning of the Road*, and Naziha, the League, especially in her booklet *Iraqi Women* (1951)[85]. Finally, the historical achievement that both organizations realized was the Personal Status Law no. 88 of

[85] For a comparison between the two directions in the Iraqi women’s movement see Efrati (2008 and 2012).

1958, which guaranteed legal equality for women. The social climate in which these organizations worked was economically, rather than religiously or culturally, divided. Within the poorer classes, which were the majority, there was little access to education and health care especially for girls, and tribal and traditional values prevailed. Women in upper and middle classes had more opportunities of education and benefited more from the changes achieved through women�000s activism.

The July 14th, 1958 Revolution which ended the monarchy and the British domination of Iraq, established the republic, and ‗postcolonial Iraq managed to redistribute wealth fairly widely and to provide top facilities in education, research and health' (Aziz, 2003: 165). The young and progressive spirit of the new regime challenged the tribal social traditions, limited the economic exploitation, and opened substantial spaces for women within the economic and legal spheres. The whole atmosphere was of hope and enthusiasm. New laws for land and oil reform were passed, increasing revenues and, consequently, better services in housing, education and health and so forth. The tribal custom law (which allowed honor killing and relegated women to a lower status) was abolished, and replaced by the Personal Status Law 88 mentioned above, which was considered among the most progressive in the Middle East, and which placed family affairs such as marriage, divorce, child custody, and inheritance under the control of unified civil law, rather than different religious readings of the Shari'a (Islamic law). In effect, ‗Iraqi women leaped from the back of the pack into the forefront in terms of women's rights in the Arab world', say Ismael and Ismael, who quote Anderson:

> The radical features in the code…consist in severe limitation, but not total prohibition, of polygamy; the elimination of child marriage; the grant of wife the right to judicial dissolution of marriage in a variety of different circumstances; the limitation…of unilateral repudiation of wives; the insistence on documentary evidence for bequests…and the truly astonishing

> innovation that the provisions in the Civil Code application to the inheritance of land held on a form of leave from the government…are now made applicable to the intestate succession to property of every description (193).

The Iraqi Women‘s League and Naziha, its president, played a major role in the ensuing changes favorable to women, in her capacity as one of the women‘s leaders and as a minister. By 1960, the League had 42.000 members, had established 87 literacy centers, and several health clinics. Kurdish women established their own organization in 1959, and in 1961 another women‘s organization was established, ‗Women of the Republic‘, outside communist ideology.

Politically, the principle source of conflict after the July 14 Revolution was not social agendas but was centered on the identity of Iraq itself (Zangana, 2009: 55). The pan-Arabists favored the Arabic identity, while the Communists refused to join the United Arab Republic between Egypt and Syria in 1958, and all allowed foreign powers to interfere. But the religious factor did not play any significant role, either politically or socially. There was ‗a sense of intercommunal contacts, coeducation of students of different religious and ethnic backgrounds, and the sharing of religious celebrations and everyday lives‘ (Al-Ali & Pratt, 2009: 27). In the next two decades, the communists, (to a lesser degree) the nationalists and later in 1968 the Ba‘thists, continued supporting women, issuing more laws and creating a better environment for women‘s advancement within their whole efforts to build a new, and more advanced country. Similar to ICP, the Ba‘th Party gave women full rights of a citizen and considered her liberation a democratic necessity.

The 1960s and the 1970s witnessed great social advances for women. Article 9 of the Iraqi Constitution confirmed that citizens are not to be discriminated against on grounds of gender, language or religion. The Iraqi population enjoyed higher living standards in the context

of economic and developmental policies. Eradication of illiteracy was a state priority, especially for women, so was incorporating them in the work force. A woman, Dr. Suad Khalil Ismail, was appointed minister of higher education (later became deputy and acting director of UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, UNESCO, 1973-79). Primary school was obligatory and education in all levels was free of charge for boys and girls, so were literacy classes for adults of both sexes. Fathers who did not send their daughters to school were legally answerable. In the 1970s, poorer university and post graduate students received financial support; and textbooks, uniform and dormitories were free; the latter gave female students from remote areas greater opportunities to pursue their studies. Female enrolment in primary school jumped from 29.4% to 37.4%, in secondary education from 24.7% to 29.6%, and in higher education from 22.6% to 31%. (Ismael & Ismael, 2000: 192). In 1982, Iraq won the UNESCO award as the best country in illiteracy eradication.

> The Education system in Iraq, prior to 1991, was one of the best in the region; with over 100% Gross Enrolment Rate for primary schooling and high levels of literacy, both of men and women. The Higher Education and the scientific and technological institutions were of an international standard, staffed by high quality personnel. (UNESCO Fact Sheet, March 28, 2003)

The Iraqi health system, too, was considered the best in the Middle East, both in access and quality, comparable to some developed countries in Europe[86].

Labor and employment laws gave women equal opportunities in the civil service, maternity benefits, and freedom from harassment in the workplace. All forms of employment

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[86] ‗The state policy during the sixties and seventies strongly supported the creation of extensive and a well distributed physical and social infrastructure. Public services, including an extensive network of well equipped and well staffed health facilities, ensured wide and equitable access of the population to health care. Drugs, medical supplies and equipment were amply provided as needed to the health facilities. All in all, the Iraqi health system was probably one of the best in the Middle East at that time' Popal (2000).

were open to women, ‗from lorry- and bus- drivers…to doctors, university professors and the top executive positions in ministries' (Al-Khayyat quoted in Rich, 2009). A year of full-salary maternity leave (which was later reduced to first six-month full salary, and second six-month half salary), free transportations to and from the workplace, apart from general supportive attitudes from male colleagues, and the whole cultural atmosphere encouraging women to work through the media, the official discourse, and cultural productions, resulted in improving the status of women. The number of women working in industry between 1968 and 1976 increased from 7.000 to 20.000, and women employees in government offices reached 15.4% in 1977 (ibid).

While most advances in women's status occurred in the political and economic spheres, the government also reformed the personal status laws in the 1970s and 1980s. Divorced mothers were granted custody of their children into their teens after which the child could choose with which parent to live, a woman could seek divorce in certain conditions, a wife's permission is required for a husband to take a second wife, and all divorces had to be court sanctioned. Women attained the right to candidacy in 1980 (they got the right to vote in 1967). In 1986, Iraq became one of the first countries to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) but, like several other Muslim countries, made important reservations with regard to family law. In 1978, another law ‗permitted a judge to vote against a father's will for early marriage of his daughter. Forced marriages were outlawed and the minimum age of marriage increased. Also, women were permitted to join the armed forces' (Keddie 2006: 128, and Neshat, 2003:57, among others).

Socially, a working and educated women became the norm, especially in big cities, and women were seen everywhere, with or without *hijab*[87]. In mid-1970s, there were hundreds of students in the English department of the College of Arts in Baghdad University. There was only one girl who wore a scarf with modern clothes. Mixed picnics were common, especially during the summer vacations when young people would participate in voluntary campaigns of cleaning the universities, planting farms, or working in factories. As in other countries in the region, most advancement in the status of Iraqi women occurred in the public sphere. Some feminists argue that these achievements did not mean that women were emancipated, or that the traditional mentality of a patriarchal culture had changed. They agree that women‘s status was certainly elevated, but that many men still maintained the patriarchal protective attitude towards women in the private sphere, especially in rural areas. While this is true, structural social, material and cultural changes eventually lead to mentality transformation, and that education and economic independence (through work) empower women and make them better aware of their essential and social rights, which was evident in women‘s reaction to the regressive post-2003 occupation policies. Thus almost all scholars, feminists and historians cited here who are extremely critical of the Ba‘th‘s repressive policies, and human rights violations, admit its positive achievements for women.

1979 was a decisive year in Iraq‘s modern history: Saddam Hussein became president, and the Iranian (Shiite) Islamists came to power, determined to export their version of revolution to neighboring countries, especially Iraq using the Da‘wa sectarian party ‗in carrying out a series of assassinations and assassination attempts of top officials‘(Al-Ali and Pratt, 2009: 40). Saddam

[87] The typical Iraqi veil is *Abaya,* which is a black open cloak that covers the head and the body, but not the face.

wanted to build a modern, pan-Arab and secular Iraq with greater regional influence, and to contain the traditional powers of patriarchy, tribes, and religion within a centralized state. He was especially progressive in women‘s issues. Haifa Zangana, a Kurdish Iraqi novelist, a journalist, and a feminist writer, who was a member of the Central Leadership faction of ICP, was actively engaged in the armed struggle against the Baa‘th, and was arrested, tortured, and finally fled into exile, writes that both parties believed that women‘s liberation could not be achieved without national liberation from colonialism and reactionary forces, that women‘s emancipation was part of the nation‘s advancement, that no revolution can be genuine if it does not aim at the liberation of women (2009: 72-3).

The Iraqi-Iranian war (1980–88), was devastating for both countries. Millions were killed and the political, social, economic and psychological situation deteriorated. The war discourse of patriotism was prevalent, people were militarized, deserters executed and any dissent was unacceptable. The opposition started armed resistance in the north of Iraq, and were crushed, imprisoned and executed, and thousands were forced into exile. Significantly, it was in this bloody era that the US supported the Iraqi regime, lifted its name from its list of states supporting terrorism, and supplied it with chemical weapons. Due to the bleak atmosphere of war, repression, and the feelings of insecurity and loss, noticeable resorting to religion, sectarian sensitivity, and traditional ideas gradually began to gain ground. But at the same time women assumed greater roles in the workforce, including the military, and until the 1990s, the number of working women continued to grow. In 1980s, women were 46% of all teachers, 29% of physicians, 46% of dentists, 70% of pharmacists, 15% of factory workers, and 16% of governmental employees (Neshat 2003:56). At home they had to be stronger as they had to

confront the death of loved ones, and to assume more responsibilities of looking after the children and the bereaved or disabled relatives[88].

The General Federation of Iraqi Women (1969) was the biggest women‘s organization in Iraq‘s history; it had 59 branches all over Iraq. Some feminists opposed its official nature and the fact that it was not independent but they agree that the GFIW affected the lives of millions of Iraqi women. It helped implement the state policy of women‘s empowerment, running rural and urban community centers that offered job-training, educational, health and social programs for women. The GFIW also played a role in implementing legal reforms and in lobbying for further reforms in the personal status code (Keddie, 2006: 127). Its membership exceeded one million, and it gained consultative status in the UN in 1996. In its report to the UN in March 2009, the GFIW described its aims in four points: women‘s empowerment, social and health education and support for poor women, activating women‘s rights through the constant following up of the law implementation and working on removing obstacles that hinder it, and addressing society as a whole to change harmful conceptions and attitudes towards women and their rights. It practiced this role through many of its publications, such as *Woman* magazine, and *Gender* weekly, radio and TV programs, and cultural activities[89]. Many leaders of The League joined GFIW. During the war it played a remarkable role supporting women, but its historical contribution remains it

[88] I lost a brother in that war, and had to look after a big family of thirteen, including another injured brother, a bereaved mother and a sick father, both died heartbroken within a year. Most Iraqi women lived in the same or worse situations.

[89] GFIW ‗Iraqi Women: Six Years after the Occupation‘, a report to the UN Human Rights Committee in its session of March, 2009. Available on http://www.brusselstribunal.org/UN_GFIW150510.htm.

campaigns in erasing illiteracy and offering health care for millions of women through its 24 clinics, especially in rural and remote villages[90].

Coming out of a long and economically exhausting war, Iraq found the Kuwaiti policy of flooding the world market with oil, and illegally extracting oil from southern Iraqi oilfields, especially aggressive and decided to invade the emirate[91]. Consequently, the First Gulf War was a six-week American air campaign dropping 85,000 tonnes of bombs, apart from Cruise missiles which were used for the first time in warfare, substantially destroying Iraq‘s life-support system which sent the country back into the middle ages: civilian facilities, neighborhoods, cities, infrastructures of energy, water, transport, communication, and its industrial base, killing thousands of its civilians[92], and contaminating it with depleted uranium (DU) weaponry which was used against Iraq for the first time in the history of recent wars. DU related radioactive contamination raised the number of casualties in contaminated areas in southern Iraq. Accordingly, millions of Iraqis have received higher doses of radioactivity which explains the sudden increase of children‘s leukemia, congenital malformations, and breast cancer (Al-Azawi, 2006). Apart from that, two famous war stories show its genocidal nature: the bombing of Al-Amiriya war shelter and the Highway of Death stories. On February 13, 1991 two American 2,000 pound laser–guided bombs were dropped on Baghdad's Al-Amiriya bomb shelter where 480 civilians, mostly women and children, were literally incinerated. On March 2, 1991, two days after the ceasefire

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[90] All histories of the GFIW in the studies cited here demonstrate this role.

[91] In a famous interview with Saddam on the eve of the invasion, the American ambassador in Baghdad, April Glaspie, who was summoned by Saddam, conveyed President Bush‘s desire of broad and deep friendship with Iraq, his understanding of its needs, and the neutral US position on Arab-Arab affairs Walt (2011).

[92] According to the BBC, ‗nobody knows how many civilians died in that war, but estimates for civilian deaths as a direct result of the war range from 100,000 to 200,000‘.

was announced on February 28, the American troops attacked the retreating Iraqi troops from the back, killing thousands. US soldiers‘ testimonies also confirmed that hundreds of surrendering Iraqi soldiers were executed in the battlefield (Hersh, 2000).

A downward trajectory of Iraqi women started here and through another equally devastating war: the thirteen years of the most comprehensive economic sanctions imposed by the UN in 1990, and perpetuated by the US until 2003. When Iraqi society tottered on the verge of famine and total collapse six years after imposing this siege, the UN Security Council came up with the oil-for-food program, ‗allocating 32 cents per day for every Iraqi to cover his needs of food, medicine, agriculture inputs, electricity, water, sewerage, and education‘, says the program UN coordinator Hans Von Sponeck (2006: 14)[93]. Mortality of children under the age of 5 years reached 131 per 1000 in 1999 and 25% suffered chronic, often irreversible malnutrition, and communicable diseases appeared on epidemic scale[94]. By mid-1990s, 567,000 Iraqi children under five died, according to the UN numbers, the equivalent of the combined total of two Hiroshima atomic bombs and the former Yugoslavia ethnic cleansing (Crossette, 1995 and Lopez, 2000). The then US ambassador to the UN, Madeline Albright said her infamous sentence that the ‗price was worth it‘ to change the Saddam regime[95]. 11,000 Iraqis were dying every month, and by 2000 approximately one million Iraqi children under five died. The sanctions wiped out a single generation of literacy, and destroyed the hospitals and the health care system (Lindauer , 2010).

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[93] Sponeck followed Denis Halliday as the UN coordinator of the program; both resigned from the post because they considered the ‗humanitarian‘ program criminally flawed and genocidal. Sponeck (2006: 7).

[94] Unless mentioned otherwise, numbers mentioned here on the impact of the siege are from Hamzeh (2003).

[95] Interview with Madeline Albright in *60 Minutes* program on May 12, 1996; retrieved on June 28, 2009 from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FbIX1CP9qr4

Under the siege, Iraq was prohibited from selling its oil (over 90% of its income), and the economy was brought to a standstill. The dinar value dropped (from $1= 4 Iraqi dinar in 1990 to $1= 1,985 ID in 2000), average salaries became the equivalent of 2 dollars a month, and could not cover even bus tickets, while prices skyrocketed. Overall poverty rated 62% in 1998. Consequently, many women left work and lost their economic independence, others insisted on going to work hoping that one day the siege would be lifted[96]. Many women sold whatever valuable properties they had, became street vendors, or begged to survive and support the family[97]. Women-supported families increased due to the husband's death, absence, disability, or chronic illness. Poverty forced women and young girls to live in overcrowded houses and to work in unsafe environments, exposing them to violence and abuse. Studies showed that women suffered from anxiety, sleeplessness and fear due to social and psychological pressures and problems (Hamzeh, 2003).

One of the worst aspects of women‘s suffering due to the siege is the deterioration of health conditions. Chronic malnutrition and anemia among girls and (pregnant) mothers increased, so did maternal mortality rates by 265%, between 1990 and 1994. Miscarriages, tumors (especially breast, uterine, and blood cancer), fetal deformation and stillbirth, diabetes, and molar pregnancy remarkably increased. Deaths during pregnancy and childbirth tripled, and

[96] Women‘s employment rate generally went down from 23 to 10 %, but they made up 40 per cent of the public-sector work force and women professionals‘ rates remained relatively high, even increased. Women members of professional unions in 2000 were as follows (per cent): judges 7, accountants 30, pharmacists 62, chemists 35, geologists 20, dentists 55, medical doctors 38, nurses 37.7, and administration employees 55. (Hamza 2003)

[97] I used to teach in the College of Languages, apart from my work as a journalist. Like most Iraqi women, I would return home to invent new ways to support the family: creating dishes from cheaper and lesser ingredients, boiling unpurified water, baking bread, planting vegetables in the garden for daily consumption, and re-sewing my old clothes to make them suitable for the children, instead of concentrating on developing my professional and scholarly work. Like most Iraqi men, my husband, a university professor, would work in the evenings as a taxi driver.

life expectancy of Iraqi women declined from 65.2 in 1990 to 60.8 in 2000[98]. Iraqi mothers were the most affected by their children‘s illnesses, disability and mortality. GFIW had to devote 50% of its entire activities to health care alone. In 1990, 44.7% of students enrolled in the educational system were girls, and literacy among women was 88%; it dropped to 67.3% after eight years of sanctions. High among the illiterate were girls of ten (68.7%) in 1998. Many factors such as poverty, poor health, the need to send children to work and the deteriorating standards of the educational system have intertwined to minimize the benefits of the educational system for females.

Although women were the prime victims of the sanctions, wars, and a crumbling state, the American Administration was indifferent to two decades of slow death and disintegration of the Iraqi society, least to its women. As an Iraqi woman activist based in London said ‗We wrote so many letters and we organized many events: talks, workshops, seminars, demonstrations [during the economic sanctions]. *They did not want to know. They were just not interested. It was only in the run up to the invasion that the governments started to care about the Iraqi women*' (Al-Ali & Pratt, 2009: 56, emphasis added). Even in the build up to the invasion of Iraq in 2003, the US government did not ‗discover' the potentialities of using the Iraqi women‘s liberation issue in the discourse of WOT until a few months before the occupation, when Iraqi women in the diaspora complained that they were being excluded from the discussions of post-invasion Iraq[99]. Feminist Majority Fund, an American group which had diligently championed the war

[98] Global Japanese Data Ranking, http://www.dataranking.com/index.cgi?LG=e&CO=Iraq&GE=po&RG=0, retrieved December 28, 2012.

[99] In 1998 the US Congress passed a law ‗Iraq Liberation Act', signed by President Bill Clinton, which designates seven Iraqi opposition groups to work with the American government on removing the Iraqi regime (Congressional

and invasion of Afghanistan, *worked hand in hand with the Pentagon to craft the message of supporting the war in the name of saving women*. Suddenly and within a few months, several US-funded Iraqi women's organizations were established inside the US, *to mobilize the American public and politically support the war, by representing the unheard voice of Iraqi women*, persecuted by the regime, and *asking to be rescued* through the American invasion. Most prominent of these organizations were Women for a Free Iraq, The Iraqi Women's High Council, Women's Alliance for Democratic Iraq, American Islamic Congress, and Iraq Foundation. Later on, two major programs were announced inside Iraq: the US-Iraq Women's Network, and Iraqi Women's Democracy Initiative (Al-Ali& Pratt, 2009, and Zangana 2009 and 2006). These organizations were part of the opposition Iraqi groups which worked with US government on the invasion, and were funded and supported by many US institutions[100].

(Feminist) scholars were bewildered by the paradoxical gap between all these organizations' ambitious projects, supported by huge funding, extraordinary official interest[101] and media coverage, high training and facilities, on the one hand, and the miserable realities in the Iraqi women's conditions under/after the occupation on the other. They try to explain it away by lack of security, conservative Iraqi culture, political uncertainty and corruption, or the increase in religious activism. I argue that similar factors had not been able to stop women's

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Record, Vol. 144, 1998). These groups held a series of meetings with US officials for that purpose, from which women were excluded.

[100] Among them are the US State Department, US Agency of International Development (USAID), International Republic Institute, the National Democratic Institute, the Independent Women's Forum, The United States Institute of Peace, National Endowment for Democracy, and Women's Democracy Initiative.

[101] Representatives of these women's organizations were regularly received by the US officials on the highest levels from US president, and vice president, to the State Secretary, and Congress members and hearings. They also received special attention from the American governor of Iraq, Paul Bremer.

development in the past, and that these factors were enhanced by the occupation itself, not the opposite. The US misused women's issues as a part of its soft power arsenal alongside the military and political weapons, and that the embedded organizations' efforts failed because they served this goal rather than women's issues per se, a goal that has been designed as cosmetic rather than real change, and they actually reversed the Iraqi women's achievements through the 20th century, as shown below.

In his book *Soft Power* (2004), Joseph Nye, the US ex-under secretary of defense gives endless lists of examples where America could win its wars by using its second face of power: the cultural arsenal as much as the military and political power (5), and gives the Cold War as an obvious example of how American soft power eroded the Soviet Union from within (50). His theory is simply to wage a continuous campaign of (the more effective) seduction, not only coercion or appeasement, to make the other want the outcome that the US wants, as shown earlier. Soft, or co-optive, power is the ability to shape the others' preferences by policies that are seen as legitimate or having moral authority (6). In modern times, with the absence of a prevailing warrior ethics, this is even more relevant because it means that the use of force requires an elaborate moral justification to ensure popular support. When countries make their power legitimate in the eyes of others, they encounter less resistance, Nye suggests, and it was even more important that the US policies in occupied Iraq look successful in order to recover the lost soft power. In the run up to the invasion, there was a 'dramatic decline in American attractiveness…[the Iraqi war] has made the US unpopular'[102].

[102] Majorities of 34 developed countries out of 43 said they disliked the growing influence of America in their countries (Nye, 2004: xii and 35).

The US failed to convince the UN Security Council to legitimate the war. There was huge international outcry when millions of people around the world demonstrated against it. Many prominent international personalities, humanitarian and human rights organizations including the UN, and independent media coverage exposed the role the US played in maintaining the siege that destroyed Iraq and killed millions of its people. On the other hand, the Bush Administration realized that its war justifications of weapons of mass destruction and link to international terrorism that Iraq was supposed to have, would not hold long (ibid: 107)[103]; The US government was left with soft power to justify the war: human rights and democracy stories, one of the most powerful sources of attraction (ibid: 55), especially when used in foreign policy, which can in turn produce more soft power when they promote broadly shared values(ibid: 62).

The role of the embedded or the colonial feminists was essential in this context. Building on a long history and contemporary discourses of Arab and Muslim women's depiction of being repressed, those feminists found fertile ground to cultivate the rescue discourse within the war agenda. However, Western and especially American feminism is one of the weak areas of the American soft power in Middle Eastern societies, which find in the American version of the liberated woman an affront to their cultures (Nye: 55). Thus diasporic Iraqi women in the US and Britain became holy grails in this mission. They served a double purpose: they presented native stories that confirmed the war discourse, and participated in building political and public support

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[103] Colin Powell and Condoleezza Rice, both were US Secretaries of State, declared in February and July 2001 respectively that Iraq did not have WMD, neither could it produce them or conventional weapons. Both changed their testimonies later before the 2003 invasion. Powell later regretted this change considering it a dark spot in his political life. See for example Charles J. Hanley ‗Piecing together the story of the weapons that weren't' *USA Today* 9/2/2005; ‗Powell Calls Iraq U.N. Speech a 'Blot' on His Record' *USA Today* 9/8/2005, and ‗Colin Powell and Condoleezza Rice Tell the Truth About Iraq' on http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v0wbpKCdk_kQ, retrieved on February 4, 2011.

for it; and later in Iraq after they returned with the invasion, where their role was more complicated than just propaganda for the occupation. They were trained to play a bigger role in Iraq‗s transformation on grassroots level within the American project of creating the Greater Middle East[104].

The NGOs‗ role as an extra arm for the military and politics was officially stated by Colin Powell‗s description of NGOs as ‗force multiplier‗ of the American military[105]. In June 2003, the administrator of USAID, Andrew Natsios, instructed an audience of NGO officials that if they wanted to continue to be funded by the U.S. government they needed to emphasize their links to the government, and that, if they were not willing to do this, he would find other NGOs or profit contractors that were, and fund them instead (Rief, 2010). Nye emphasizes the role of civil society and the ‗indigenous surrogates‗ in the development of a long term strategy of cultural and educational transformation (122). After 9/11, the Bush Administration, drawing on the analogy of the Cold War and the American role in the transformation of Europe, decided to engage in the transformation of the ME, and a ‗transformed‗ Iraq was the key element in the new different ME (119).

In the internet era, NGOs‗ power has been greatly enhanced; because they are able to attract more followers, Nye says. ‗These flexible NGOs and networks are particularly effective in penetrating states…they often involve citizens who are well placed in the domestic politics of

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[104] An American initiative (within WOT) of widening the ME to include The Arab World, Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Central Asia, around a set of policies aimed at transforming the region politically, economically, and socially. Cutting across the three areas is furthering women‗s rights. M. Ottaway and T. Carother ‗The Greater Middle East Initiative: Off to a False Start‗ *Policy Brief* (March 29, 2004). Carnegie Endowment, Retrieved on February 4, 2011, http://carnegieendowment.org/files/Policybrief29.pdf.

[105] Colin Powell said in 2001 that NGOs were a tremendous ‗force multiplier‗ for the U.S. military, by extending the reach of the U.S. government, they would do much to help accomplish the intervention‗s goals. (Lischer, 2007)

several countries‘ (91). Such networks are supposed to create a new type of transnational political coalitions and are more credible and trusted than governments. In Iraq it took the American military four weeks to break the regime, but it was only the first step toward achieving American objectives. Nye quotes Deputy Secretary Jane Holl Lute, former military officer who served in the Gulf and who observed that the mark of great power is not what it destroys, but what it creates (99). Here comes the role of NGOs, which look separate from and not responsible for American government actions, while they shape an environment conducive to accepting the occupation.

A decade after the invasion and occupation of Iraq in 2003, there is an almost universal consensus that it didn‘t make the world safer, neither did it create of Iraq a democratic example in the ME, or helped Iraqis ‗achieve a united, stable and free country‘, the declared WOT objectives[106]. According to the United States Institute of Peace, Iraqi women who made initial strides forward, face ghosts of the past and find themselves increasingly vulnerable to having their rights and opportunities rolled back (Kuehnast et al 2012). My claim again is that (women‘s) human rights have been *irrelevant*, in the first place, that the declared objectives hid the real aim: ending the state of Iraq after it was labeled ‗rogue‘[107]. Leonard Peikoff, of global policy think tank RAND, for example, called for not only destroying the regimes but also ‗de-Nazifying the country, by expelling every official and bringing down every branch of its government…It requires invasion by ground troops and perhaps a period of occupation. But

[106] ‗Bush Declares War‘, CNN (March19, 2003), retrieved on February 6, 2012 from http://articles.cnn.com/20030319/us/sprj.irq.int.bush.transcript

[107] After 9/11, US Deputy Defense secretary Paul Wolfowitz declared that a major focus of US foreign policy would be: ‗*ending states that sponsor terrorism*‘. Iraq was labeled a ‗terrorist state‘ and targeted for ‗ending‘. President Bush went on to declare Iraq the major front of the global war on terror. US forces invaded illegally with the express aim to dismantle the Iraqi state (Baker et al, 2010: 3).

nothing less will end the state that most cries out to be ended'[108]. Raymond Baker et al define ending states as more than regime change and political and economic restructuring. ‗It also required cultural cleansing, understood in the Iraqi case as degrading of a unifying culture and the depletion of an intelligentsia tied to the old order' (2012: 6). Although covert regime subversion, targeted assassinations, and death squads were practiced in decolonized countries for decades, deliberate systematic dismantling of states as a declared policy was not, especially on the scale of what was done in Iraq.

American official narratives on ending the state of Iraq go much prior to 9/11[109], as a first step to remolding the ME. Immediately after the invasion, all the Iraqi state institutions and constructions were dismantled, and their facilities destroyed and looted except the Ministry of Oil. The constitution was cancelled, the army, the police, the industry, and the services were dissolved or destroyed, and all the educational, health, financial, economic and administrative systems were broken down. Educational, professional, and social unions and (women's) organizations were cancelled through the ‗De-Bathification' decision[110]. Indigenous sectarian

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[108] Leonard Peikoff ,'End States Who Sponsor Terrorism', on Any Rand Center for Individual Rights, October 2, 2001 retrieved on February 12, 2012 from
http://www.aynrand.org/site/News2?page=NewsArticle&id=5207&news_iv_ctrl=1021

[109] In 1992, the ‗Defense Planning Guidance' written by Paul Wolfowitz and Lewis Libby, and later rewritten by then Defense Secretary Dick Cheney argued that the primary objective of US post-Cold War strategy should be preventing the emergence of any rival superpowers by safeguarding American hegemony over vital resources; and Iraq has the second biggest oil reserve in the world (estimated 200bbl). In 1996, *A Clean Break: A New Strategy for Securing the Realm* authored by prominent US neo-conservatives identified Iraq as a primary strategic threat to Israel, and its removal as an opportunity to alter ‗the strategic balance in the Middle East profoundly'. In 2000, the Project for a New American Century (PNAC) presented a paper entitled *Rebuilding American Defenses*, reiterated the importance of the Gulf as a region of vital importance: ‗The United States has for decades sought to play a permanent role in Gulf region security…the need for a substantial American force presence in the Gulf transcends the issue of the regime of Saddam Hussein' (Baker et al, 2009:8-12).

[110] The Coalition Provisional Authority Order No. 1 states that ‗Individuals holding positions in the top three layers of management in every national government ministry, affiliated corporations and other government institutions (e.g., universities and hospitals) shall be interviewed for possible affiliation with the Ba`ath Party, and subject to

forces were armed and co-opted in the occupation forces creating a civil war that divided Iraqi society vertically, and destroyed any chance of political reconstruction for decades to come.

As demonstrated above the Iraqi women‘s liberation and empowerment were integral parts of the state building since 1920 and especially after the establishment of the republic in 1958; it was born and grew up within the State‘s developmental efforts. Thus the destruction of the Iraqi state institutions is also the destruction of women‘s opportunities and achievements. When infrastructures, health care, education, services, job opportunities, and security are abysmal, chances for any social or political advancement become impossible. As in all wars, the invasion and the occupation of Iraq violated its people‘s basic rights, and subsequently its civil, political, and social rights. Since 2003 Iraq has remained within the top humanitarian emergencies in the world. No mother would think of her political rights when she cannot afford medicine for herself or her child, for example; and few families would send their daughters to school if they find it too insecure, or beyond their means. According to UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) the human rights situation remains fragile, widespread poverty, economic stagnation, lack of opportunities; environmental degradation and absence of basic services constitute ‗silent' human rights violations that affect large sectors of the population[111]. Similarly, several international and local organizations including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, OXFAM, Save the Children, and international annual reports of UN relevant

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investigation for criminal conduct and risk to security. Any such persons detained to be full members of the Ba`ath Party shall be removed from their employment‘. Available on the CPA website http://govinfo.library.unt.edu/cpa-iraq/regulations/index.htm, retrieved on April 1, 2012. This decision deprived Iraq of the best of its professionals who previously joined the Ba‘th party, not necessarily because they believed in it, rather to have better chances to get a job.

[111] UNAMI Human Rights Office/OHCHR, *2010 Report on Human Rights in Iraq- Baghdad,* January 2011.

organizations such as UN Fund for Women (UNFEM), UN Children's Funds (UNICEF), UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), and UNAMI agreed that the situation of women deteriorated dramatically after the occupation[112].

According to all these organizations, the biggest problems confronting Iraqi women through a decade after the 2003 occupation have been insecurity and poverty which transformed their success story into a national catastrophe. After the gains of education, health care and employment, and the significant advances in political and economic participation between 1958 and 2003, women and girls of Iraq have borne the biggest brunt of conflict and insecurity after the 2003 invasion. The International Committee of the Red Cross in Iraq says that

> Iraqi women have repeatedly been victims of the armed conflicts affecting civilians during the last 30 years. Since 2003, they are increasingly caught in the crossfire, killed or wounded in mass explosions and displaced from their homes. Women are targeted for their behavior and role in society, they suffer from sexual violence or are victims of kidnappings and assassinations and they are especially vulnerable to trafficking and exploitation[113].

It is estimated that until March 2012, 1.455.590 Iraqis have been killed[114] in the indiscriminate bombing of cities, random shooting in crowded places, on highways, checkpoints, house raids, snipers' fires, and sectarian conflicts. Many of the victims have been men, but these

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[112] Apart from the UNAMI report mentioned above see also: OXFAM International *In Her Own Words: Iraqi Women Talk about Their Greatest Concerns and Challenges;* Human Rights Watch*, At a Crossroad: Human Rights in Iraq Eight Years after the US-Led Invasion*; Amnesty International Report 2011: *The State of the World's Human Rights*; UN Refugee Agency *Restoring Hope, Rebuilding Life* 2012-2013; and UNICEF *Poverty, Conflicts and Girls' Right to Education*, all available on the official websites of the relevant organizations.

[113] ICRC 'Women in War' (March, 2009).

[114] ‗Iraqi Deaths Due to US Invasion' *Just Foreign Policy* (March 26, 2012) http://www.justforeignpolicy.org/node/156

organizations agree that women suffered the most[115]. Assassinations, threats and abductions have been rampant for several years; and in what was once a secular country, there are now threats to women who don't dress ‗modestly', even those who drive. U.S.-led occupation forces showed higher rates of indiscriminate killing of women and children than insurgents, a study by a team of British and Swiss researchers has found (Hicks et al, 2011). ‗If you use heavy aerial bombing in a populated area, it is likely to have a more indiscriminate effect on women and children' the team leader said[116]. Hundreds of women have been targeted and killed as professionals or for their public role. In the medical profession alone, many have fled or abandoned their work, triggering a brain drain and crippling the health system (UNHRC: ibid). According to the B*Russells* (sic) *Tribunal* 377 media professionals were killed in Iraq since the Iraq invasion, 35 women among them[117]. Indirectly, continued insecurity has also greatly degraded the quality of women's lives across the country and restricted women's personal mobility. Other top challenges were fear of being harmed by occupation soldiers, and militia violence. 88.8% of women expressed a great deal of concern that they or someone living in their households would become a victim of the violence occurring in Iraq; and 71.2% of them said they did not feel protected by occupation soldiers (UNHRC, ibid).

The trauma of the abduction for many women does not end with their release; its ‗shame' is a lasting stigma, therefore it is underreported by families. Moreover, Iraqi experts believe that

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[115] UNHRC Document A/HRC/19/NGO/14 *Violations of Women's Rights in Iraq,* 19th session in Geneva February 27 – March 23, 2012.

[116] Reuters ' Civilian Death Study Rates 'Dirty War' in Iraq' (February 16, 2011) retrieved on March 2, 2012 from http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/02/16/us-civilian-death-idUSTRE71F3KL20110216

[117] B*Russells Tribunal* 'Iraqi Media Professionals Killed in Iraq under US-Occupation' March 27, 2012, retrieved on the same date from http://www.brussellstribunal.org/Journalists.htm.

domestic abuse has increased during the years of war and economic hardship. The World Health Organization has estimated that one in five Iraqi women has reported being a victim of domestic violence, and experts say the rate is much higher. Women have been raped in Iraqi detention centers, according to several reports including the US military ones[118]. UNAMI reported that its staff had interviewed several women and girls detained at the Women‘s Prison of al-Kadhimiya in Baghdad who said that they had been beaten, raped or otherwise sexually abused in police stations. The General Secretary of the Union of Political Prisoners and Detainees in Iraq declared (2010) that the US occupation in Iraq relies on systematic rape, torture, and sadistic treatment of Iraqi women prisoners in its prison camps. Their clothing is removed and they are deprived of food and water for days in order to break their will. Teams from the International Red Cross and groups operating under the umbrella of the United Nations have been prevented from visiting the detention centers and learning about what goes on there. Rarely do local organizations demand to visit prisons and detention centers because of the lack of security and the fact that the sectarian militias control the facilities. In prison, pregnant women receive limited or inadequate ante/post-natal care and the food for such women often falls below necessary standards of nutrition, and there are poor personal hygiene levels (UNHRC, ibid).

Moreover, a UN report stated that ten million Iraqis live in absolute poverty, one third of the population especially the young below the age of thirty, with a percentage of unemployment

[118] Major General Antonio M. Taguba investigated prisoner torture and abuse in Abu Greib American prison in Iraq and wrote a report in which he found out that Iraqi women were raped in prison by American soldiers and ‘Numerous incidents of sadistic, blatant, and wanton criminal abuses were inflicted on several detainees . . . systemic and illegal abuse’. Maj. Gen. Antonio M. Taguba ‘U.S. Army report on Iraqi Prisoner Abuse’ (5/4/2004), retrieved on March 12, 2012. from http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/4894001/#.T3TNP2FaYyo .

exceeding 50%[119]. The economic policies, ‗which reflect American free-market priorities, presented Iraqis with wrenching change, dismantled state-run enterprises that employed hundreds of thousands of Iraqis and ended subsidies…leading to high unemployment and frustration'(ibid). The study found Iraq's damaged infrastructure to be the largest factor in creating poor living conditions. The Failed States Index (FSI) has categorized Iraq's condition among the most critical in the world, along with Afghanistan and Somalia for the last decade[120].

In 2012, a fact sheet on the situation of Iraqi women published by the UN Inter-Agency Information and Analysis Unit (IAU) which includes 18 international agencies, confirmed its enormous deterioration[121]. The sheet showed that the illiteracy rate among Iraqi women (24%, up to 50% in rural areas) is more than double that among men (11%); and that one in ten girls has never attended school. Across the country, only 14% of all women are either working or actively seeking work, especially girls with diplomas (41%), or bachelor degree (68%). Nevertheless, one in ten Iraqi households is female-led, and nine out of ten women heading households are widows. Women, who have lost a breadwinner because their husbands have been killed, arrested or disabled, or have gone missing[122], suffer enormously and often face daunting difficulties.

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[119] Christian Berthelsen ‗Poverty is Another War Rolling through Iraq' The *Los Angeles Times* (February 19, 2007) http://articles.latimes.com/2007/feb/19/world/fg-poverty19; and Layla Anwar ‗Poverty in the New Iraq' *URUKNET* (January 3, 2010), http://uruknet.com/index.php?p=m61753, both retrieved on February 28, 2012.

[120] FSI is a 12-indicator scale, ranging from security to public services, refugee flow, poverty and so forth. Fund for Peace, ‗The Failed States Index 2011' *Foreign Policy*, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/failedstates, retrieved on March 26, 2012.

[121] Women in Iraq: Fact Sheet, *http://reliefweb.int/node/480966,* retrieved on March 8, 2012.

[122] Tens of thousands of Iraqi women have been seeking family members who have been missing as a result of the war. The number of missing persons in Iraq ranges from 250,000 to up to one million. See UN Human Rights Council Document A/HRC/19/NGO/14 ‗Enforced or Involuntary Disappearance in Iraq', issued on February 28, 2012 in the Nineteenth Session of UNHRC.

Government programs intended to support widows suffer from corruption, outdated systems, and administrative obstacles. Assessments of female headed households confirmed critical issues related to access to work, food insecurity, and inadequate shelter, all of which make woman-headed households vulnerable to abuse and exploitation, especially that the vast majority are not working and are dependent on aid from the state and community, the sheet said. Drawing on a comprehensive statistical survey, Dr. Souad Al-Azzawi showed that the deteriorating security situation drove Iraqi women out of work. At least 85% of educated women are unemployed[123].

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) monitors concluded that one out of every eight displaced families is headed by women, 71% of whom are able to work yet cannot find employment and thus cannot effectively provide for their families. In addition, women, especially single mothers, face social and cultural stigmas that place them at an extreme disadvantage when attempting to secure employment or additional educational opportunities[124]. When money is short, women tend to save on education and health care. Up to 47% of the children in households headed by women do not attend school. Some needed the boys‘ meager earnings to feed the family. IOM reported that in November 2010, 2,750,000 internally displaced people lived in Iraq; more than 82 percent of them are women and children under the age of 12. Years of conflict in Iraq have left the country with more than 1.5 million war widows (nearly 10 percent of the female population; two out of three of them were widowed during the war) and a shortage of young unmarried men - pressures that brought about the return of polygamy. ‗The

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[123] Souad Al-Azzawi ‗Deterioration of Iraqi Women's Rights and Living Conditions Under Occupation‘ *Global Research* (January 13, 2008) www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=7785, retrieved on March 2, 2012.

[124] IOM ‗Review of Displacement and Return in Iraq‘, February 2011, retrieved on March 14, 2012 from http://www.iauiraq.org/documents/1308/librar.pdf

Iraqi state has neglected the widows with their enormous problems'[125]. According to the Iraqi Widows Organization ‗only one-sixth of Iraqi widows receive federal aid, amounting to between $34 and $81 a month. In order to receive such benefits a widow must be well-connected or enter into a ‗temporary marriage' based on sex with one of the bureaucrats who distribute the funds. Many widows are forced to work as servants, beg, or ask their families for help[126].

Many of the refugee widows lack work permits, qualifications and opportunities which leads them into prostitution in order to survive and feed their families. The sheer lack of protection itself pushes some women into prostitution, with threats of kidnapping issued against them should they not agree to prostitute themselves (Al-Azzawi: ibid). On the other hand, with the 2003 invasion, and the chaos and anarchy that dominated the country in its wake, Iraq became a major source of victims of trafficking who are now being transported to neighboring Middle Eastern countries, notably Syria and Jordan. The Social Change through Education in the Middle East, an organization based in London, stated that the neglect of authorities to deal with this problem effectively has fostered a state of impunity in which crimes against women are neglected and the offenders go unpunished. Domestic violence, rape and other forms of gender based violence have become a common practice among the internally displaced persons in Iraq and the large Iraqi refugee communities in other countries of the ME. Iraqi women are being subjected to different types of trafficking: exploitation of prostitution, forced labor or service, slavery and servitude (Micha et al, 2011: 10).

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[125] Relief International ‗Million Iraqi Widows During the War' quoted in Women in the World Foundation website http://womenintheworld.org/cheat-sheet/entry/a-million-iraqis-widowed-during-war, retrieved on March 13, 2012.

[126] Raja Al-Khuzai ‗Iraqi Widows Organization: Rebuilding Hope' retrieved on March 2, 2012 from http://imow.org/economica/stories/viewStory?storyId=3659

It remains unknown exactly how many women and girls may have been subjected to sex-trafficking, it is estimated that approximately 4,000 women, one fifth of whom are under 18, disappeared in the first seven years after the 2003 invasion. Many are believed to have been nationally and internationally trafficked for sexual exploitation by criminal gangs; with sale or forced marriage being the most prevalent method of sex trafficking (ibid). Women and girls struggling to support themselves and their families have become targets of rape and other forms of gender-based violence by gangs and armed forces. Indeed, as early as 2003, UNICEF warned that the conflict had resulted in an increased number of children living on Baghdad‘s streets who were particularly vulnerable to trafficking and exploitation, a phenomenon, which was simply unheard of prior to the first Gulf War of 1991, and was rapidly worsening.

The occupation, its resulting chaos, the absence of the rule of law, corruption amongst government authorities, the rise of religious extremism, economic strife, as well as familial pressures, have all been identified as contributing to this rise in transnational trafficking. But within Iraq, hundreds of Kurdish women are trafficked mainly into Baghdad or Basra in the South; whereas women and girls from southern regions are trafficked northwards. In central and southern Iraq, where violence and socio-economic insecurities dominate the political landscape, women are also particularly vulnerable to other forms of gender-based violence, such as rape and forced prostitution. This lack of security has had a notable impact on the daily lives of women and girls, who often confine themselves to their homes for fear of rape or kidnap, hindering their participation in public life (ibid).

Politically, the occupation brought about a democracy based on a quota system of sectarian and ethnic affiliations (Shiites, Sunnis, Kurds, Arabs, Christians, and so forth) rather than a democracy based on free citizenship, creating a new phenomenon of identity politics in

the Iraqi scene, thus politicizing and institutionalizing divisions. Sectarian and ethnic-based parties, well known for their traditional understanding of women‘s rights and roles, have dominated the political power thereafter. The sectarian governments have undermined women‘s rights drastically in many ways. Firstly by failing to achieve a minimum level of environment conducive to women‘s empowerment; secondly by institutionally and legally undermining women‘s rights achieved in previous decades, and thirdly by a state security apparatus which harassed women by using them as a means of political blackmail through kidnapping, arrests, rape, and assassinations thus pushing women further outside the public sphere.

In the history of modern Iraq, religion has been irrelevant as an obstacle in the process of women‘s role in society; and the biggest blow to their advancement was the 13-year comprehensive economic siege and wars that dissipated their chances of sustained development. The last thing women needed at this point was yet another war and a failing state, both of which was exactly what the occupation brought about. The US authorities which needed a phrase, or a slogan to activate their policies, could not use the liberating-women-from-religious-oppression rhetoric, as they did in Afghanistan, also because most political parties that allied with the US in the occupation were conservative religious and nationalist. As such, the biggest slogan in post-invasion Iraq was women‘s involvement in democratizing the political process. ‗We will continue our efforts to work with Iraqi women to ensure their participation in a free and open Iraq‘ said the US Undersecretary of State for Global Affaris, Paula Dobriansky[127].

[127] Dobriansky ‗Women and the Transition to Democracy: Iraq, Afghanistan, Beyond‘, on the website of the US Department of State Archive http://2002-2009-usawc.state.gov/news/rem/24308.htm retrieved on April 1, 2012. Similar statements were repeatedly made by virtually all the then US officials.

The first few months after the invasion witnessed feverish campaigns organized by the occupation authorities and the women‘s NGOs who accompanied it raising awareness of women‘s persecution under the previous regime, of the huge opportunities that the occupation would provide them, and above all the danger of terrorism (read resistance to the occupation). Millions of dollars were spent on organizing several conferences, seminars, and training workshops (in and outside Iraq) to educate women on peace and democracy, leadership and political training, and organizational management (how to launch a conference, write reports, leaflets and project proposals, and organize public meetings), deal with media and so forth, apart from courses in English and computers. The aim was to involve women in the political process sponsored by the occupation, because ‗Women‘s inclusion is important…They have a moderating impact on politics‘ according to Peter K., of the US Institute of Peace (Al-Ali& Pratt: 58).

But those early efforts were lost within a few months as daily life conditions and security deteriorated further and women‘s urgent and real needs were neglected. Political and armed resistance to the occupation increased, so did the US and Iraqi authorities backlash. Stories of prison abuses, civilian killings, house raids, collective detentions, the Fallujah and other massacres, refugee camps and similar stories dissipated any credibility that those efforts had as women‘s organizations were scandalously silent in front of them, in fact they even tried to justify the abuses in the name of fighting terrorism, and as women consequently resisted those efforts. Some feminists involved were targeted, killed, injured, or threatened by both resistance forces who considered them collaborators, and by sectarian militias who found in women‘s activism defiance to their power. However, the US needed a success story of women‘s political involvement badly, ‗We need results‘ the Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage said, ‗no

dilly-dallying‘, and more millions of dollars were poured into women‘s organizations. ‗Everyone in the US administration, the UK government, the NGOs, and other international organizations stressed their continual insistence to get women involved… [but] women were becoming more excluded‘[128]. The contradictory gap between the violations committed on the ground against Iraqi women by the occupation authorities and the sectarian militias allied with them, on one hand, and their discourse of empowering women and involving them politically, on the other, undermined not only the discourse itself, but rather women‘s organizations and the very concept of feminism to people who did not have a nuanced understanding of the whole situation, or to others who deliberately used it to support their negative attitude to feminism.

Although women were given 25 % quota in the Iraqi Parliament, this quota, again, worked against women‘s rights rather than enhanced them. Women‘s political representation proved to be nominal, symbolic and was (ab)used solely for political propaganda. In the parliament, the dominating confessional parties added numbers of women just to meet the election conditions of quota, and clearly chose the staunchest of their conservative, heavily covered female members to work on advocating their policies on women‘s issues, or female relatives who had few qualifications and did not have any experience in politics or women‘s rights, thus they blindly supported their agendas.

The minister of women, Ibtihal Gasid, for example, who is from the Da‘wa sectarian party, and the only female minister in the government, issued regulations for working women to dress ‗decently‘ and declared that she does not believe in gender equality and that she personally

[128] For detailed information on organizations‘ names and projects and amounts of money allocated see Al-Ali & Pratt 2009 and Zangana, 2009.

does not leave the house without her husband's permission (Al-Sheikhley: 2012). Another woman parliamentarian, Jenan Al-Ubaedey, from the sectarian United Iraqi Alliance, actually promotes women's beating by her male relatives, and polygamy (Philip, 2005). More progressive parliamentarians remain a minority, their job made harder and their efforts undermined by such women members who are backed by clerics. Other women activists and advocates with long history and experience were either killed, excluded, detained, displaced or simply intimidated into silence or exile. Among them were (veteran) women activists, lawyers, university professors and deans[129], medical doctors, writers, journalists and so forth. They were all expunged from the field and their previous efforts were aborted and lost. Women's organizations that came with the occupation were quickly disillusioned and found out that it was impossible for them to work on the ground and left the country.

The political divisions across ethnic, religious and sectarian lines are similarly reflected in women organizations which remained fragmented and ineffective. They failed to establish a political platform; or to agree on women's issues outside the parties' lines. Neither could they address their divisions, which make it even more difficult to agree on a common cause or key issues such as the personal status law. Due to insecurity, more progressive activists failed to reach out beyond the urban elite to women at the grassroots level in rural areas, where more extremist interpretation of Islamic teachings were used to impose constraints on women's education, work, and political participation (Kuehnast et al 2012). Thus those organizations failed to establish a women's movement capable of comprehending women's problems and needs. On the contrary, those of them who were connected to (and funded by) big religious

[129] 467 Iraqi professors and lecturers have been assassinated since 2003, according to the B*Russell*s Tribunal database http://www.brussellstribunal.org/academicsList.htm, retrieved on March 12, 2012.

parties participated in regressive education through thousands of political meetings and activities in which they have promoted their parties‘ electoral campaigns and disseminated a revivalist discourse calling upon women to return to a medieval status of subordination in the name of religion. They have also tried to fill the vacuum in services and social security, using charities to buy votes in poverty-stricken communities, advocating a dark version of religion that pushes women back in that status. They even worked on physically preventing any different voice to be heard in those areas[130].

A perfect example of regression in legal rights was the introduction of law number 137 in 2004, giving religious clerics the power on family issues of marriage, divorce, inheritance and child custody, issues that were codified in the constitution of 1958 and amended in the 1970s, which represented the most progressive and liberal interpretation of the Islamic law in the region, as shown above. Those laws guaranteed that personal status issues were court sanctioned according to a unified civil law under the authority of the state, which in turn played a great role in dissolving sectarian differences and tensions as it applied to all Iraqis as citizens regardless of their sect. Thus some women organizations, powerfully protested Law 137 and forced the then Governing Council to withdraw it. However, a similar attempt to curtail women‘s rights is found in cancelling the previous laws and replacing them with Item 41 of the new Iraqi constitution. This item states that ‗Iraqis are free in their adherence to their personal status according to their own religion, sect, belief and choice‘. As liberal as it looks, the item in fact takes the judicial

[130] In February 2006, while making a documentary on Iraqi women, I tried to interview a female member in the Union of Iraqi Oil Workers, well-known for her progressive activism. When I first met her to have an appointment, she and her husband were very friendly and immediately agreed to conduct the interview. When I showed up later, her husband prevented me from seeing her, without giving any explanation. Later that evening I received two calls: one from a head of an Islamic women‘s organization of Al-Da‘wa party, reproaching me for not contacting her first, and another from the Governorate Council of Basra telling me to report to its office to ‗talk‘ about what I was doing.

authority and control from the state and gives them back to clerics and their different personal interpretations of the Islamic law, and deprives women of any legal protection, especially that the new constitution fails to mention explicitly what women‘s rights are in the family context. Given the fact that the sectarian and ethnic political parties have already shown greater regressive attitudes on women‘s issues, and in the whole atmosphere of chaos, corruption and insecurity, Iraqi women have lost many of the important legal rights they managed to achieve through a century of hard struggle.

PART TWO

Chapter VI

Evolution of an Image:

Representations of Middle Eastern Women

in Anglo-American Narratives: an Historical Overview

Here women‘s voice is never heard –apart,

And scarce permitted guarded, veiled to rove

She yields to one her person and her heart,

Tamed to her cage, nor feels a wish to name

Byron, *Childe Harold*

The subject of the dream is the dreamer, a powerful exploration of the fears and desires that resides in the writerly conscious

Tony Morrison *Playing in the Dark*

An essential part of the literary Western discourse on Islam focused on women[131], especially after the second half of the 18th century. As demonstrated earlier, it essentialized them as victims of a backward culture. This image is ‗so diffused as to be part of conventional wisdom in the Western world…at almost all levels of culture…so ubiquitous as to be invisible‘ (Kahf, 1999:1) from television cartoons, advertisements, university lectures, or articles in a major

[131]Before Islam, the East had existed in the Western imagination. Aechylus‘s *The Persians*, and Euripides‘s *The Bacchae*, for example (Said, 1978, 56-7), but I start with Islam as it is more relevant to women‘s image within the WOT context. But I do refer to representation of pre-Islam Orientals in the literary Western imagination.

newspaper. However, this representation did not spring suddenly from a vacuum, it ‗has been a changing and evolving phenomenon…products of specific moments and developments in culture' (ibid: 2, 4). This chapter studies how the image evolved through these specific moments in English literature from medieval times to the present, albeit much of the literary production that participated in creating the victim image was also written in other European languages.

Dr. Samuel Johnson had said that ‗[e]very man who attacks my belief diminishes in some degree my confidence in it, and therefore makes me uneasy; and I am angry with him who makes me uneasy' (qtd in Southern,1962: 3-4) which shows that the existence of Islam was the most far reaching problem in Medieval Christendom. But the Western view of Islam has been characterized by strikingly inconsistent and rapidly shifting attitudes as a result of changing interests during the rise and fall of Islamic power in Europe from 711-1799 (Daniel, 1966: 133). In his book, *Western Views of Islam in the Middle Ages* (1962), Southern divides these attitudes intellectually in three main phases: the Age of Ignorance which was Biblical and unhopeful (from the 7th century through the first Crusade in 1100). The second is the Century of Reason and Hope which was imaginative and untruthful (the 13th century), and thirdly The Age of Vision which was philosophical and extravagantly optimistic (the 14th through mid 15th centuries).

In the first phase, writers knew virtually nothing of Islam, and had only the Bible as an intellectual source. Bede introduced the Saracens into the medieval tradition of Biblical exegesis as the descendants of Ishmael, Abraham's son from his slave wife, Hagar, thus inferior to Sara's son, Isaac. For Bede they were ‗a very sore plague' like other misfortunes which had befallen the Christian world for its sins (Metlitzki 1977, 14). In Spain, Eulogius the bishop of Toledo, and

Paul Alvaris inspired the idea that the rule of Islam was a preparation for the final appearance of Antichrist because the Christians preferred to read Arab theologians and philosophers, loved poems and romances of Arabs and ‗despise the Christian literature as unworthy of attention…The Carolingian scholars, on the contrary, were far removed from Islam, and showed no inclination to follow their line of thought' (Southern: 21-26). Thus in places like Sicily, Seville, Granada, and Toledo, Islam was treated more seriously for two reasons: as a heresy that could not be fought unless understood, and the discovery of the Arab knowledge and translations of classical science and philosophy.

Before 1100 the name of ‗Mahomet' was almost unknown in the rest of Europe. The Crusades were the most important, albeit dramatic, confrontation between the West and the Middle East; and the first Crusade was the first real contact with Islam, but it brought back ‗triumphant imagination rather than knowledge' (ibid, 28). Significantly, almost all the European romances and epic poems were all produced in this same period[132] and ‗as soon as they were produced they took on a literary life of their own…and the picture of Mahomet and his Saracens changed very little from generation to generation' (ibid, 29). An important part of this image is that Islam's success was explained by authorizing laxity and promiscuity, depending on a biography of Muhammad written by a man who admitted that he had no written source, but claimed that ‗it is safe to speak evil of one whose malignity exceeds whatever ill can be spoken' (Sardar 1999: 23 and Southern: 31 among others). Norman Daniel says that fraud was the sum of

[132] The Romances of Charlemagne and Arthur, the Miracles of the Virgin, the wonders of Rome and the legends of Virgil, the legendary history of Britain are all products of approximately the same period and precisely the same point of view as that which produced the legends of Mahomet and the fantastic descriptions of Muslim practices (Southern, 29). In these traditional epics and romances, written with the Crusades as background and then with the Turkish threat hovering around them, Islam was the enemy (Cochran, 2009:5).

Muhammad's life, based on three points: violence, salacity, and humanity. He was considered a great blasphemer because he made religion justify sin and weakness, thus he could not be a messenger of God (107-8). Similarly, the imaginative reconstruction of Muslims until the 12th century was built on sheer ignorance, largely by men of literature of the period, when a flood of misrepresentations of Islam was at its highest. But as Europe was riddled with heresies and as military defeats followed, Islam was represented as the 'sink of heresies' (Peter the Venerable qtd in Southern: 38), and the Saracens as the chief instrument of Antichrist.

Nevertheless, after the second half of the twelfth century some rational views of Islam were beginning to spread and the Quran was translated into Latin in 1143, this being the second phase, the Century of Hope and Reason, according to Southern (also Daniel, Mitlitzki, and Sardar cited here, among others). The appearance of the Mongols in the Far East, too, relieved the West of its fear of Islam, and the fall of Baghdad, the center of Caliphdom, in 1258 was concrete evidence. At the same time the works of great Muslim philosophers: Al-Kindi, Al-Farabi, Avicenna, and Averroes were translated, and through them Greek thought, because they had translated Ancient Greek philosophy[133]. But the 13th century was a turning point in the relationship between Europe and Islam in other senses too: there were five Crusades, Europeans failing to make a strategic asset of the Mongols, and Christendom seeming smaller and lesser to the rest of the world, especially after the Fall of Acre in 1291. Thus minds were set to study Islam in order either to find some common ground or to refute its intellectual content. Men like William of Rubroek and Roger Bacon among other intellectuals tried to convert Islam from

[133] In her detailed study of the Islamic impact on literature, philosophy, and science (especially in astrology, mathematics, and physiology) in medieval England, Metlitzki traces the Arabic and Islamic origins of hundreds of themes, motifs, characters and knowledge. See Metlitzki 1977.

within, but the hope proved to be short lived because intellectuals ended up philosophically confirming that ‗there is no hope of any integration of the basic tenets of Islam into Christendom'[134].

A desperate third phase followed the Fall of Acre, especially since the Mongols did not turn to Christianity, but rather to Islam, and scholars mentioned here, among others, conflicted between two paradoxical lines: to recognize Muslims' intellectual achievements or to consider them no more than barbaric infidels. Ricoldo, for example, was in Baghdad when he heard of Acre, he wrote desperately attacking Islam as ‗lax, confused, mendacious, irrational, violent, obscure, and so on' (qtd in Southern, 69). The problem was never solved; it was temporarily diverted because it was a special moment in Europe too. Dissensions inside Europe and the discovery of the ‗new' world, led to indifference towards Islam as a problem. But

> this established canon, proved to be so great as to survive the break-up of European ideological unity, both the division into Catholic and Protestant, and the growth of agnosticism and atheism…Islam took its place rather dramatically, but inevitably, in the historical sequence as a prefiguration of Antichrist, for as long as political, economic, and military requirements dominated European thought upon the subject. There was little academic interest in the subject for its own sake…and there was practically no systematic comparison of the interior lives of the two religions (Daniel 1966: 271,193)

and this canon was perfectly reflected in the literary production of each age.

In the medieval romance, one of the recurrent motifs[135] is of a Muslim queen or princess who falls in love with a captured Christian knight; betrays her father or husband, defects,

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[134] To mention a few: Raymund Lull, Florentine Ricoldo, Simon Semeonis, John Wycliffe, John of Segovia, Nicholas of Cusa, Jean Germain, even Martin Luther expressed utmost despair for any solution to the problem of Islam, not even war, which was useless, because the West remained in its sins, and Islam was God´s punishment to sinful Christians (Southern 62-104).

converts, and marries her lover. De Weever mentions seventeen out of twenty-one of them in *Chansons de jests*, the four left are black warriors (1998: 5). This motif is played against a quite expectedly racialized background within the context of demonizing the enemy in war propaganda (1098-1221). These noblewomen share certain common features: they are white, powerful, wanton, sexually forward and above all traitors (Cohn, 200:130; Kabbani 1986: 16; Kahf, 1999:4 ; Metlitzki 1977:12 among others). Floripas, the female protagonist of the *Sultan of Babylon*[136], is one of the earliest powerful representations of these women in the Euro-western imagination (Bitel, 2002: 246 and Muldoon, 1997: 124), stereotyped in the image of a medieval Other.

In *Sultan of Babylon* the Saracens are the monsters, opposite to the Christian knights in many things, not only religion. It is a war poem, thus the enemy is debased and rendered grotesque, in ‗a text which invokes almost every medieval fantasy about the exorbitance of Islam' (Cohn, ibid: 135). The Saracens are hideous creatures; black devils, frightening giants with a boar's head; gluttons who eat disgusting food: serpents, chameleons and drink beasts' blood; hedonistic, barbaric, dog-headed heathens, and worshipers of impotent false gods. Cohen demonstrates the enjoyment in the ‗long narrative gaze' upon the Other (ibid: 125-29). The Sultan himself is a tyrant who kills messengers and tortures prisoners, murders thousands of innocent women and children, and destroys everything ‗Beest ner man, childe ner wife, / Brenne,

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[135] Mitlitzki mentions four regular motifs in medieval English romance as far as the representations of the Saracens are concerned: the enamored Muslim princess, the converted Saracen, the defeated sultan, and the Saracen giant, all of which are tackled here with special emphasis on ‗the enamored princess'.

[136] The romance of the *Sultan of Babylon* was adapted in Middle English at the end of the 14th century from the French *Chansons de Jests* written around 1100. It is one of many medieval tales dealing with the exploits of King Charlemagne (742-814) and his Twelve Peers. See the introduction in Alan Lupack, Ed. (1990) *The Sultan of Babylon*, *Three Middle English Charlemagne Romances*. Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications. Quotations from the poem are mentioned by line number, within the text.

slo, and destroy alle!‘ (417-18) and ‗Ten thousand maidyns fair of face…shulde al be slayn (226, 229). Predictably, the Crusaders: King Charles and his knights, are all chivalric, courteous, brave, strong, ‗doughty‘ and ‗worthy men of dede‘ (730) to whom Muslim women ‗willingly offer their bodies‘ (ibid: 130), which the knights reject virtuously.

However, this negative representation of the Other becomes ambivalent and problematic when the same dehumanized Saracens are also described as strong, wealthy, and their worthiness ‗al may not be told‘ (40). They are not ignorant, their engineers participate in planning the battles, and use engines in the war; they are cultivated teaching the European knights intelligent entertainment games. The Sultan, ruthless as he is, is a ‗worthy conqueroure…with grete honoure‘ (983), proud and bold (517) so are his warriors ‗horible and stronge as devel of helle‘ (1006). There are too many of them besieging the Christian Europe ‗Assiens, Frigys, Paens and Ascoloynes, / Turkis, Indeis, and Venysyens, / Barbarens, Ethiopes, and Macidoynes, (1040-43). A common factor among all these antagonistic descriptions is strength and alienness, reflecting fear among the Christians not only superiority, as a modern reader would expect, or even envy (Kahf, 1999:18) . One of the revealing episodes is when the Muslim treasures of gold and silver were wasted by throwing them down the citadel to distract the Muslim warriors from attacking the knights. (2475-2486). ‗By debasing the image of their rivals, Western Christians were enhancing their own self-image and trying to build self-confidence in the face of a more powerful and more culturally sophisticated enemy‘ (Blanks 1999:3).

In this masculine world, the only fully-fledged female character is Floripas, the Sultan‘s daughter. She is portrayed as very intelligent, outspoken, crafty, and an astute political and military strategist; she is strong-willed, although she does not actually fight. She has her ways

with sorcery too; above all she is a traitor. She is ‗fair', there is no real emphasis on her beauty; she is no object of male gaze. Unlike other characters, she is rarely described so we learn about her assertive qualities from her own deeds and speeches.

In the first half of the romance, her loving father usually refers to her as dear fair daughter and seeks her counsel; she appears only once when her father accepts Lukafere, King of Balads' proposal to marry her. Lukafere is ‗bolde, hardy, and wyse' (1810), but she rejects him unless he accomplishes his promises of arresting King Charles and the Twelve Peers. It is not clear at this stage of the poem if her rejection is because she realizes that the Saracens are prone to failure. The subsequent events confirm this reading, though. She does not play any part in the early victories of her people; instead she has the major role in their later defeat. When the Christian knights are arrested and tortured in her father's dungeon she saves them, savagely killing at least two of her people in the process: her governess by shoving her out of the window and the jailor by knocking out his brains with a key clog. She cries to her father asking for forgiveness for killing the jailor who betrays the Sultan by helping the prisoners, a lie that grants her their custody. (1552-1617)

Her slyness and ruthlessness immediately turn into motherly tenderness towards the Christian prisoners once they are in her bed chamber; ‗gafe hem there a right good mele./ …a bath for them was redy there./ And after to bedde with right gode chere' (1654-58). She had already saved them when she convinced her father to spare their lives to ransom her brother's safety, who is a prisoner of the enemy. She actually conspires with them to kill and mutilate her father ‗Sle down and breke both bake and bones' (1946). During the citadel siege her military mentality and psychological prowess excel both the Saracens and the Christians, for whom she

plans the battles, lifts the morale, solves the logistical problems, feeds the knights with her magic girdle, and is always quick with a badly needed solution in some critical turn of events. She actually changes the course of the war.

Her ostensible motivation is love for Sir Guy, King Charles‗s nephew, whom she has never seen or met before; she does not even know what he looks like (1887). It is hardly plausible, though, that a woman with such characteristics would be childishly infatuated by a man this way; still, she offers him protection, love, and conversion if he marries her.

> [H]im have I loved many a day
> And yet knowe I him nought
> For his love I do alle that I maye
> To chere you with dede and thought.
> For his love wille I cristenede be (1891-95)

She makes this unconventional offer in the most desperate moment for the hostage knight, practically blackmailing him. He refuses, and had to be persuaded by his peers, with difficulty ‗Thus thay treted him to and fro;/ At the laste he sayde he wolde.' (1923-24).

What motivates her, then, if not love? Certainly not Christianity as she converts only to marry Guy. Convincing characterization is not to be expected in such religious drama either. Actually the motivation is not hers, but the text‗s. She is a ‗wish-fulfilling embodiment' (Metlitzki: 161) of a medieval fantasy of how the Muslim woman ‗should' be: a Trojan horse, a trope of conquering the enemy from inside, or an Achilles' heel in the body of a stronger enemy. Being a woman makes all the difference. Floripas is doubly ‗Othered', by gender and by race. Gender is strategically deployed in texts where the Saracen woman who converts ‗is the site where alterity is both articulated and overcome…her ideological importance is obscured when attention is focused on either race or gender' (Kinoshita: 91). Her gender distances her from the

chivalric ideals of loyalty and honesty. After all, inconstancy is a typical classical trait of the female character; it is expected in ‗the beautiful evil', and to be redeemed after her conversion. Thus ‗reconciliation happens on many levels. Christianity is recognized as superior to Islam; an extraordinary assertive woman is returned to wifely submissiveness; and a territorial authority won by war is legitimized by marriage…it is only through a woman that full conquest is achieved' (Bennett 2005: 151). Indeed, Floripas is completely dormant at the end, i.e. subdued. Significantly, it is her brother, Ferumbras, who asks King Charles to execute their father.

Ferumbras' betrayal, for example, is more problematic[137], textually speaking. He converts too, but only after he is mortally wounded. He is presented as brave, honest, courteous, loyal to his father and his duty; and he fights honorably. As such, he is not so different from the Christian knights in the first place, but he has to prove his worthiness to deserve his new identity. Before converting, he refrains from killing the Pope when he could, on moral grounds. Likewise, when Sir Oliver's sword was broken in the battle, he did not kill him ‗To sle a man wepenles; that shame wolde nevere goon' (1277-78). He kills the Christian traitor who opens the gates of Rome for him as the Saracens' leader. He even saves King Charles' life. But again, a man who kills and spares lives on moral grounds wouldn't abandon his principles in the moment of truth when he faces death. And if the Saracens are boar-headed heathens, how come Ferumbras is so honorable? On the other hand Lukafere, Floripas' fiancé, does not lack any of the same knightly qualities, on the contrary he is intelligent enough to suspect her treason, and thus has to be burnt alive ‗Tille he were rosted to colis' (2016)

[137] For in depth discussion of the difference gender makes in conversion see Bonnie Miller-Heggie 2004, and Houlik-Ritchey 2008.

Similarly, the only other female Saracen character, Barrok the bold, is not given more than 16 lines in the 3275- line romance. She is one of the four black female Saracens of the twenty-one mentioned above. She is a warrior, unlike Floripas; thus demonized, portrayed as a large black giantess with a scythe that caused the Christians great distress. She is savage; she grins like the devil of hell, bleats like a sheep, i.e. inhuman. No man dares to come close to her; it is only King Charles who silences her with a deserved shot of his arrow through the brain (2939-2951). Her husband, another black giant, is killed earlier in the romance, and her two babies are left to starve to death. Contextually and textually, she is cruelly punished for being a faithful defender of her cause. In tracing the archeology of wildness, Hayden White describes the wild woman of medieval legend as ‗surpassingly ugly, covered with hair…a demon, a devil and a witch…an instance of human regression to an animal state…endowed with evil spiritual powers, servant of Satan' (167). Many Barroks are going to reappear through the history of West-East confrontations. Being defiant, they basically maintain the same demonized characteristics, appropriated according to the relevant age, as demonstrated in this chapter.

In fantasy[138], the audience is not supposed to ask questions, just to enjoy, although the pleasure is unmistakably sadistic. Still, Floripas raises many tensions in a self-contradictory text. The fact that the text does not describe her is only to escape a linguistic dilemma, rather than rhetorical objectivity. ‗If the Saracens are black devils, what is a beautiful Saracen woman who marries the poem's hero to look like? How [is she] to be described?' (De Weever: xii). Within

[138] In her characterization of the English Medieval romances, Dorothy Everett speaks of their ‗unromantic nature', because they depict military confrontations. Though they embody the adventures of some hero of chivalry, and belong in matter and form to the ages of knighthood, they are essentially vehicles of fanatical propaganda in which the moral ideal of chivalry is subservient to the requirements of religion, politics, and ideology. Pagans are wrong and Christians are right whatever they do. The ideal held up to the audience is not courtly love or perfect knighthood. It is the triumph of Christianity over Islam (Metlitzki, 160).

the aesthetics of the romance, the conventional ideal heroine has to be beautiful in the European context: blonde, white, with light eyes. Blackness, depicted as ugly and pagan, shouldn‗t be attributed to her. To comply with her image, to suit her function in the plot, she has to be flayed out of her skin. But whitening her does not solve the problem, indeed it complicates the text further because it implies that the black (read ugly) are naturally inferior; and thus have to be elevated above their race. Her original identity has to be ‗erased‗ (ibid: 4) to become honorable, because the black women are annihilated, warriors or otherwise.

Yet another problem arises here: the whitened Saracen‗s conduct is not graceful enough. As a romance heroine, she has to be highly esteemed, to be identified with, not only physically but morally too. What is the audience to make of this ignoble metamorphosis who laughs in a loud voice when the knights slaughter dozens of Saracens (2600)? For her people she is indecent, a murderer, and a traitor, her father spits on her and calls her a whore, a venomous serpent. In fact at this point the reader can‗t help identifying with the betrayed honorable father. She is further demonized by practising magic. She does not have the traits of the archetypal Muslim woman of the age either: pious, respectful to her parents, and reserved.

The Christian knights refer to her as generous, but Guy reluctantly accepts her, and does not trust her (2309). Within the context of medieval female propriety she is not the typical courtly lady: resigned, disciplined, and self-effacing (Goodman, 124), but he ‗takes‗ her anyway because the enemy has to be degraded and victory has to be crowned by ‗taking‗ the enemies‗ women, which means a lot in a war context. ‗Saracen women marry Christians and convert…penetration symbolizes power. For men of one group to have sex with women of another is an assertion of power over the entire group‗ (Karras, 2005: 25) and she is the king‗s

daughter. Floripas is a figment in a wild imagination of how the enemy‘s woman is wished to be: the weak point in its arsenal. Various traits are cramped together to create a character, not good enough to be identified with, but with the potentials to be useful in the war. It is curious how moral values are manipulated, put upside down to serve the twisted discourse of propaganda so that honesty and fidelity are cruelly punished while treachery is praised and rewarded.

By the late fourteenth century, when Geoffrey Chaucer (well known to have great knowledge of Arabic sciences and philosophy, whose influence is evident in many of his works) wrote *The Canterbury Tales*[139], this situation has already changed. The Quran and many Arab and Muslim philosophers‘ works had been translated into Latin; and many contacts had been established through wars, commerce, and travels. This is obvious in the ‗Man of Law‘s Tale‘, in which the majority of the events take part in Syria. Muslims are no longer believed to be savage creatures, they are civilized, cultivated, rich, and they have their developed states, political systems, cultures, commerce and so forth. But ‗in spite of Chaucer‘s knowledge of Islam and his respect for its achievements, the story is full of contemporary prejudices‘ (Meyer-Hoffman, 2001: 130). They are represented in the image of the inferior Other ‗barbarous nation‘ (281) that the Crusades enforce.

The main Middle Eastern character in ‗The Man of Law‘s Tale‘[140] is the Sultana (female ruler of a Muslim country), who is represented as very intelligent, strong-willed, again deceitful,

[139] Published on eChaucer: Chaucer in the 21st Century. ‗The Man of Law's Tale‘, *The Canterbury Tales.* http://machias.edu/faculty/necastro/chaucer/ct/index.html , retrieved on August 10, 2010.

[140]Chaucer‘s earlier works show that he valued Islamic learning, particularly astronomy. Chaucer also expresses the importance of Islamic knowledge in his ‗General Prologue‘ to *The Canterbury Tales*. There, he establishes one pilgrim‘s knowledge by saying that he learned from the writings of Arabs, Greeks, Syrians, and Egyptians (Meyer-Hoffman, 2001: 130). In the ‗Monk‘s Tale‘, Chaucer represents another Oriental Syrian woman, Queen Zenobia of Palmyra, as a monstrous manly woman who lacks the feminine virtue of subordination. See Hamaguchi, 2005.

but defiant, thus demonized as a well of vices. The storyline is simple: for an incomprehensible reason, her son, the Sultan of Syria suddenly becomes infatuated with the Emperor of Rome‘s daughter, Constance, whom he has never seen before, only heard about her beauty and virtuosity from some merchants. But, like a spoiled child, he becomes so obsessed with the idea of having her that he would do anything at all; that unless he has her, he is no better than dead (209); that his woeful condition needs urgent remedy …

> ‗Rather than I loose
> Custánce, I will be christened, doubtëless.
> I must be hers, I may no other choose.
> I pray you hold your argument in peace;
> Saveth my life, and be not recchëless
> To geten her that hath my life in cure;
> For in this woe I may not long endure. ‗(225-31)

‗[T]he Sultan‘s infatuation with a Christian woman provides the Church with a golden opportunity to convert an Islamic King‘ (Lewis, 2008: 367); and he converts not only his religion, but his barons‘ and subjects‘, in obedience to the Emperor‘s prerequisite to marry his daughter to the Sultan. The marriage is in fact a religious and political deal on the Emperor‘s part, in which the Pope is involved, and it is justified by ‗the missionary zeal of Christianity against Islam in which Constance is decreed by the Pope to be the tool of Salvation‘(Metlitzki, 155):

> I say by treaties and ambassadry,
> And by the Popës mediatïon,
> And all the Church, and all the chivalry,
> That in destructïon of maumetry,
> And in increase of Christë‘s lawë dear,
> They been accorded, so as you shall hear (232-38)

The missionary bride, Constance, is sent accompanied by a host of bishops and politicians, with the ambitious agenda of converting a whole population. She is unhappy to be sent to a place worse than the unknown, but accepts her duty as a faithful Christian girl; ‗with sorrow all overcome' (264), pale and sad on the woeful fatal day, but ‗Alas! unto the barbarous nation, I must anon, since that it is your (her father's) will' (281-82). Her ‗behavior provides a model of female submission' (Schibanoff, 1996: 62)[141]. The Sultan, however is represented as ‗introverted and weak' (Kikuchi, 8). Amorous and politically fragile, he sells the country and its religion for a whim. The mother Sultana realizes that; she realizes the Roman Emperor's intentions too, and decides to stop it, even if it means killing her son in a kind of a bloody *coup d'état*.

Killing one's own son is unusual, but the Sultana is represented within the image of the ‗fantastic Other [whose] women deny patriarchal rule, who take joy in the death of offspring' (Niebrzydowski, 192). Contrary to Constance, who represents the perfect woman in the Christian saintly tradition: obedient, intensely religious, and innocently accused (Metlitizki, 155), the Sultana is ‗mannish', she transgresses the borderlines of womanhood: independent, cruel, who tops at nothing. Textually, the narrator lashes her with endless negative descriptions: nest of evil, scorpion, serpent…

> O sultaness, root of iniquity!
> Virago, thou Semirame the second!
> O serpent under femininity,
> Like to the serpent deep in hell y-bound!
> O feignëd woman, all that may confound
> Virtue and innocence, through thy malice,
> Is bred in thee, as nest of every vice

Then the narrator moves to condemn all women of her ilk, Satan's agent, he calls them

[141] For detailed study of Constance's moral qualities see Morgan, 2009:11-18, and for her politico-religious representation see Kikuchi 2000, 1-17.

> O Satan, envious since thilkë day
> That thou were chasëd from our heritáge,
> Well knowest thou women the oldë way!
> Thou madest Eva bring us in serváge;
> Thou wilt fordo this Christian marriáge.
> Thine instrument (so welaway the while!)
> Makest thou of women, when thou wilt beguile. (358-70)

While Constance willingly succumbs to man and his institutions, and passively accepts her position beneath them ‗Women are born to thralldom and penance, / and to been under mannes governance' (286-87), maintaining the traditional order; the Sultana, on the other hand, threatens this order by assuming a male's role..

> ‗Lordës,' quod she, you knowen every one,
> How that my son in point is for to let
> The holy lawës of our al-Koran,
> Given by Goddë's message Máhomet.
> But one avow to greatë God I hete,
> The life shall rather out of my body start
> Ere Máhomètë's law out of my heart! (330-36)

Here again the text falls in huge self-contradiction. While the pious Constance is highly praised for her patience and sacrifice for her religion, the Sultana is condemned for defending her religion which is actually threatened to be eradicated by the missionary marriage. Yet, the Sultana is given a fair chance to explain and justify her motives, which are neither envy nor ambition although this faith-based motivation is washed away by the narrator who accuses her of usurping the power from her son. Thus she is doubly othered: by race and by gender, in a flagrantly double-standard text.

The most relevant point in both early and late medieval examples is that the representations of Muslim woman are of a powerful figure that was dominant in all the texts of the period, no matter how this ‗powerfulness' is expressed: social rank, sexuality, wickedness of

mentality, wildness and so forth. She is not segregated, not covered or veiled, or victimized, if fact her rule is ‗needed' in defeating the enemy. She transgresses the bounds of medieval femininity, and ‗the rhetorical move of many medieval literary texts involving a Muslim woman is to subdue her, not to liberate her' (Kahf, 4). However, after the Middle Ages, with early European exploration, the commercial expansions, the Italian city-states, and the increased urbanization Islam was no longer a challenge to the West as it used to be. The growth of wealth, the slow decline of the Ottoman Empire, the beginning of empire building, and the discovery of the New World all participated in the decline of Islam as an enemy, and also of Muslim women as distinguished or alien creatures.

In the English Renaissance -or the Early Modern- texts those peculiar representations of Muslim women seemed to be ameliorated, but they have to be studied within the politico-religious moment in England, the literary tradition of the era, and the social change in women's status within English society itself. Politically, the English realm, excluded from Catholic Europe because of its turn to Protestantism, had to seek unorthodox diplomatic, economic, and military ties with the Ottoman Empire whose dominions stretched across Asia, Europe, the Arabian Peninsula, North Africa, Persia and Mediterranean realms (Andrea, 2007: 1). Tahar Bayouli refers to an ‗Elizabethan Orientalism': the diplomatic, economic, intellectual and artistic traditions of that time, ‗which did not only present the Orient as the negative Other -antipode of civilized Europe- … but also showed a real interest in exploring and understanding it' (2008: 109). Elizabethans' great ambition was initially to discover a North-east passage to the source of Oriental commerce, India and the Far East as a whole, a route which was not used by the Spanish; and a meeting with Soliman the Magnificent in 1553 was the beginning of intense

relations and exchange between England and the immense regions of the East, under the control of the Ottoman Empire (ibid: 111).

Elizabethans were also directed to the Islamic world since it promised lucrative markets and rich natural recourses (Maclean and Matar, 2011: 231). These are the roots of early colonial urge. But England still shared with other Europeans the fear of a war waged by Soliman, who was launching strong assaults at the heart of Europe, propagating fear of Turkish invasion ‗Now shalt thou feel the fore of Turkish arms/ Which lately made all Europe quake for fear' (*Tamburlaine the Great I*.3.3.131). In other words, England needed the Ottomans politically, but at the same time feared them religiously and strategically. However, Elizabethans ‗realized that there are several different Islams and Muslims: the North Africans were viewed as the most dangerous and confrontational because of piracy and the seizure of captives; the Ottomans, while imperial, tolerant, secure and powerful, still intensified fear and anxiety. The Savadis and the Mughals were little known in England' (ibid) [142]. The Turks, while interesting as allies, were barring the way to the Far East with their military power. ‗The English took sharper concern about the Turkish than the Persian and the Moghul power: Complacency about the latter, however, dissipated with contact' (Barbour, 2003: 15). Renaissance English interest in the Orient had many levels, then, and was the subject of investigation and study, reflected mainly in theater. According to Bayouli there were about fifty plays produced between 1580 and 1648 with plots or sub-plots involving Orientals, and quotes Maclean: ‗the Renaissance can be fully understood only in the light of Christian relations with the eastern and Islamic culture' (2008, 110-12).

[142] For detailed information about diplomatic and commercial relations between Britain and the Islamic world in the early modern period see G. Maclean and N. Matar, 2011.

In literature, the representations of the idyllic female, generally speaking, is best understood within the Renaissance literary context. Gordon Campbell says that the central theme of English Renaissance literature was love:

> From the cult of the Virgin Mary the Petrarchans adopted the veneration of the lady as a figure of spotless purity and virtue; from the neo-Platonic tradition they adopted the idea of love as an ennobling emotion which raised the mind above mere physical attraction. In the closing years of the sixteenth century a third influence, that of Ovidian eroticism, began to colour the literature of love (Campbell, 1989: xxiv)

A third dimension is the significant Renaissance transformation of the image and role of women in western Christendom. Women began to engage in polemical writings and to defend their rights to visible social functions, which provoked a consistent effort to ‗police' the female, in her apparel, speech and demeanor (Matar, 1996: 50). English writers began to look outside their own Euro-Christo-centric civilization for supporting models, as regards the status of women. It was a happy coincidence that simultaneously with the policing effort at home; they came across the model of female docility among the Muslims. They described in detail how women were treated among the ‗Turks' thereby proposing that English women should be treated similarly; they also satirized the behavior of women in England. Muslim women were presented as both the foil for English women and the hoped-for model in Christendom. The most distinctive feature about women in the Ottoman Empire was their familial submissiveness and their separation from political and religious affairs (ibid).

Part of the debate about the status of women in the English Renaissance focused on the theories used to legitimate female subordination, because the price of women's freedom in England was believed to be family disorder. English authors needed to assert male ascendancy over women and concurred in praising the unchallengeablity of the Muslim model. All women,

Christian and Muslim alike, could prove untrustworthy, for example, but only the Muslims had found a way to circumvent women's wiles. English men had allowed custom to subvert nature, which was destructive since custom wrought havoc on women's inherently degenerate nature. Furthermore, women in England were challenging both their social and their sexual status by the vulgar attire they wore, and excessive makeup. Muslim women, on the other hand were happy in their lives because they were fulfilling their duties as women. For the English, the Muslim woman was to be the model in their society because they were more dutiful and faithful to their husbands. Muslim women were acclaimed for their simple and natural beauty and decent apparel. Among the Turks, there were no women challenging the social norms of dress. For Christian writers, as the Turkish armies pushed into central Europe, they began to credit the military power of Muslims to their ascendancy over their women. (ibid: 51-57).

Nevertheless, Andrea investigates the cultural agency of early modern English women who ‗aligned themselves with patriarchal anglocentric discourses casting them as superior to the ‗other' women' (2007: 3). Turning Turk (coextensive with Muslim), for example, which was a common motif in early modern English literature, ‗includes not only abjuring one's religion, but also one's manhood' (ibid: 5). Similarly, Matar talks about Christians who ‗turn Turk', i.e. convert to Islam in English Renaissance thought, ‗not only as heinous apostate from religion: [they were] the living embodiment of Islam's triumph' (1994:33). Another important motif was of the woman who rules the empire because she rules the emperor, particularly in the representations of Asian and Islamic cultures. The powerful Ottoman woman became integral to English literary and cultural history. Andrea gives many examples of such ‗*valide sultan*' (mother queen), most famous of them was Safiya, a *kul* (a slave of non-Muslim origin) who later became the mother of Sultan Mehmed III, and had diplomatic correspondence with Queen

Elizabeth I. Such women were the origin of the later harem, especially when represented as powerful political players, but unlike the later harem they were not represented as belonging to a space of feminine oppression and masculine fantasy (20-6), and the Anglo-Ottoman relations of the 16th-17th centuries do not apply to the colonial balance of power of the 18th-19th centuries, still the racialized representation of the Other is noticeable, as demonstrated below.

Thus, Christopher Marlowe�**s representations of Muslim women in *Tamburlaine the Great I* and *II*, and the images of remote places and ‗alien‘ people, for example, should be contextualized within the complicated political literary and social discursive moments mentioned above. The historical and tragic hero Marlowe presented in *Tamburlaine the Great I* and *II* has all the masculine military virtues, strength of character, and soundness of judgment (Campbell: ibid), especially within the tradition of bloody scenes in revenge plays. Similarly, Zenocrate, his Muslim Egyptian wife, is actually idealized as typically very beautiful, virtuous, and the worthy wife of a hero like Tamburlaine.

However, for Stephen Greenblatt, Tamburlaine is ‗not so much heroic as grotesquely comic, if we accept Bergson‘s classic definition of the comic as the mechanical imposed upon the living. Tamburlaine is a machine…a *thing*… that produces violence and death‘ (1980: 195, emphasis in origin). In fact his actions suggest that he is either a psychopathic terminator or a killing robot, to use modern metaphors; he *exults* in humiliating, brutalizing, and subduing people, and many of his atrocities are unmotivated, unless for *sheer enjoyment of power unto enemies*, ‗Give me a map, then let me see how much/ Is left for me to conquer all the world‘ he says, and by conquering the world Marlow means the Islamic world (*Tamb II*, 5.3.124-5), whose map Tamburlaine would redraw with his sword and call after his name (*Tamb I* 4.4.81-6).

Tamburlaine is a wish fulfillment for the public and his discourse of power and conquest is against a mutual enemy of England: the Ottomans. Thus his representation is paradoxical and double standard[143]. He is glorified for eliminating the dangerous enemy, but demonized as a savage and his brutality had to be presented as that of an alien, a stranger, not to be identified with by the audience.

Tamburlaine raised himself from a shepherd and a bandit to become an emperor of the Eastern world through absolute violence and terror. His massacres are non-stop and his atrocities do not spare the innocent. He slaughters millions, burns or drowns cities, kills his son, cuts off his own arm, cheats, rapes, steals… It is no coincidence that Marlowe presents such a monstrous protagonist as a stranger in a remote land. But he achieved what England (and Europe) could not at that moment do: relieve it from the Ottoman danger, open the way to the Orient, and break the Islamic world from within. Thus Marlowe used Tamburlaine to mirror England‘s aspirations and anxieties as a young imperialist power. According to Barbour, ‗[h]is enemies are the Christendom‘s enemies: he lifts the Turks‘ siege of Constantinople‘, and vows to liberate ‗[t]hose Christian captives which you keep as slaves‘ (Barbour, 2003: 42). Marlowe also justifies Tamburlaine‘s evil by describing him as the ‗scourge of God and terror of the world‘ (*Tamb II*.4.1.156), an agent of divine justice against the sinful (Muslim kings), most notably the Turkish Sultan Bajazeth, whom he cages, feeds scraps like a dog, and whose body he uses as a footstool. Humiliated, Bajazeth bangs his head against the cage, so does his wife Zabina[144] (*Tamb I*

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[143] Adam Knobler studies how Tamburlaine‘s image changed in the Latin West from a noble savior in the 16th-17th century, to a villain when the British imperial interests moved to India and Central Asia (Knobler, 2001: 101-112).

[144] See William J. Brown ‗Marlowe‘s Debasement of Bajazeth‘ in *Renaissance Quarterly*, Vol.24, no. 1 (Spring 1971) p 38-48.

5.2.242). Other defeated Muslim kings are yoked to Tamburlaine's chariot, and he burns the Quran.

This double-standard stance of presenting a butcher as a hero is most obvious in Marlowe's representations of a host of Muslim women in *Tamburlaine I and II*, especially when they are compared to the female protagonist. Bartels suggests that ‗[i]n Marlowe's dramatic worlds women are conceptualized as objects and medium of power rather than its agents: these are plays which both expose and participate in the subjugation and objectification of women by men' (1993:25), which applies perfectly to Zenocrate. Indeed, for Tambourlaine women ‗must be flattered… [and] are good only in managing words, while men in arms' (*Tamb I* 3.3.131). However, Chedgzoy suggests that a few women do find ways to achieve some agency (2006: 249), those are the women who defied Tamburlaine's injustice. But this agency should be understood within the image of the female character in the 16th century Campbell delineated above: pure, virtuous, asexual, but also attractive.

Transgression of these limits should not be interpreted positively, as the case is with all Middle Eastern women who show significant agency as subjects of personal power confronting a tyrant here. Thus, Chedgzoy suggests that Zenocrate, the ideal gentle Renaissance woman, is supposed to be both the motive and reward of the masculine pursuits of war and conquest. I argue that she is not so much of a motive, because removing her altogether from the play, would not affect Tamburlaine's decisions (apart from sparing her father's life), or make him more or less human/monster. Indeed his indecent approach to her is yet another example of his violent nature and desire for power, as he threatens her with rape ‗Or else you shall be forc'd with slavery' (*Tamb I* 2.1.256). But within the context of Elizabethan proto-imperial ambitions this

ideal female would make a perfect reward, a trophy of victory: beautiful, obedient, silent and so forth. Compared to other female characters, she is no more than a doll, ‗only an ancillary or cheerleader' (Shepard, 1993: 740), or ‗an embodiment, an abstraction, or symbol …an assertion of man's will, rather than a living individual (Poirier qtd in Brooks, 1957: 2).

Similar to Floripas in the *Sultan of Babylon*, Zenocrate's infatuation with Tamburlaine is inexplicable; especially as she demonstrates humane verbal attitudes against many of his atrocities, but she reluctantly yields to him, indeed passively lets herself be subsumed in his scheme. The first time she meets him, she addresses him as ‗shepherd', a few flattering lines later, ‗my lord'. When her escort advises her not to make a ‗worthless concubine' of herself and live in ‗deadly servitude' (advice which costs him his life), she replies that she wants to live and die with Tamburlaine. She quickly starts to speak boastfully like Tamburlaine: ‗Thou wilt repent these lavish words of thine/ When thy great basso-master and thyself/ Must plead for mercy at his kingly feet' (*Tamb I*, 3.3. 172-4). The cruel show of humiliating the Turkish emperor and his wife makes her worry about Tamburlaine´s future, not his victims. When her father and her first-betrothed fight Tamburlaine for their country and for her honor, she wonders ‗Whom should I wish the fatal victory…/My father and my first-betrothed love/Must fight against my life and present love' (*Tamb I* 5.2.324-8), and on the dead body of her first-betrothed, she is crowned empress of Persia. However, she laments the brutality with which the Damascus virgins are killed, and in the second part she does try –in vain- to soften Tamburlaine´s viciousness.

Other women characters that show different agency of disobedience get different treatment. All are defiant to Tamburlaine, in fact they serve as foils to Zenorate as they share almost the same situation, but their reaction is radically different. Zabina, the Turkish empress, is

the most defiant even as a prisoner of war; and throws in Tamburlaine's face ‗outrageous curses', to which he replies ‗I glory in the curses of my foes' (*Tamb I* 4.4.29). She stands by her husband to his fatal end, and gets humiliated and made fun of. The four Damascus virgins take the initiative of forming a delegation to negotiate peace with Tamburlaine and to save their city and people, which proves to be a strategic mistake as horsemen killed them ‗and on Damascus walls/Have hoisted their slaughtered carcasses (*Tamb I* 5.2.67-8). Olympia would make the most important dramatic parallel to Zenocrate. She is also represented as the most intelligent and courageous woman in the play. When her husband, an unnamed Captain, is killed, she foresees her –and her son's- future at the enemies' hands, so she kills her son, but she is captured before killing herself. However, she tricks one of Tamburlaine's military commanders into slashing her neck before achieving his sexual assault (*Tamb II*, 3.4 and 4.3.). Other minor female characters are presented as group victims: giving soldiers captured concubines to be gang raped (*Tamb II* 4.3. 70-4), drowning all Babylonians' wives and children in a lake (*Tamb II*, 5.2169), or burning the whole town where Zenocrate dies (*Tamb II*. 3.2.17-8).

All the individual female characters assume transgression of the genteel image, although they still operate within the contemporary social system of faithful wives and chaste women. But they are aware that their act of defiance runs contrary to the tyrant's imperial scheme, thus their personal choice is simultaneously political resistance. Joanna Gibbs demonstrates how Tamburlaine reduces women to ‗signs' of his power, whether by benevolently sharing them as spoils of war with his soldiers, or hoisting them up on his horsemen's lances. Even in his panegyric to Zenocrate, Tamburlaine is actually marking out his empire by aestheticising her, by fashioning her as the object of his own and of his subjects' gaze. (2000: 172). Zenocrate would have received the same treatment had she shown some defiance, as Olympia did, who outscored

a strong enemy by her sheer will and by ‗managing words'. It is true that Olympia was in fact ‗effaced by male power' (ibid: 174), but her death is triumphant as she deprived the enemy of his victory.

For England, Tamburlaine is the enemy of a strong enemy, so the woman he loves is like an ideal contemporary English female. Although not so much demonized as the case was in earlier medieval examples, some traces are still identifiable in the fetishized Muslim woman's image: abandoning her man and collaborating with the enemy for love, for example, but again not so aggressively, rather more ‗civilized' and less masterful. Defiant women are ruthlessly treated, too, but are represented as strong-willed, politically active, not black giantesses, and no reference to their female physical beauty is made either. Significantly, defiant women are not demonized here, because Tamburlaine is just an enemy of the enemy, and does not belong to the West, so they don't seem so othered. Muslim women in Renaissance drama are still strong, with high social stature. Marlow's drama of empire takes place in the East, but it derives

> from the ever-shifting intersection of the two… it shows that the Orient's myths and realities had begun to capture and be captured, by Europe's imaginative and imperialist interests long before Orientalism became a distinctive category of thought…While these and other contemporary representations tended to exoticise their subject…they produced an East more civilized, more organized, and more knowable than Africa and the Americas... The discourse on the East was a ‗discourse of civilization', [where] its subjects were inscribed as overwhelmingly wealthy, wondrous, and exotic (Bartels 54-5).

‗[T]he immovable stereotypes of the Ottoman Turks as an ahistorical, irrational, despotic, and fanatical ‗Other' are more characteristic of nineteenth century Orientalism that of the early modern structures of thought (Burton, 2000: 125). Nevertheless, Kabbani suggests that it is in the Elizabethan era that the roots of later Orientalism originated.

> The Elizabethan stage, preoccupied as it was with the melodramatic, the passionate and the violent, drew heavily on the available stock of Eastern characters so vivid in the public imagination. The Saracens, the Turk, the Moor, the Blackmoor, and the Jew were key villains…drawn with more subtle gradation by a Marlow or a Shakespeare (1986: 19)

The _villains' Tamburlaine - and the Elizabethan stage in general- slaughtered, crudely presented Easterners as fanatical, violent and lusty souls. Shakespeare _whitewashes' Othello by making him a soldier fighting for Christian power, a noble savage, still his excitable nature, passionate instincts and jealousy flaw him. Mark Anthony _falls' into the East: the indulgence of the senses, oblivion to the world's affairs, and overwhelming sexual desire. Cleopatra's barge, a mixture of new delights: the pomp of pageant, the smell of perfume and incense, the luxurious brocades that shimmered in the sun, and most notably, the woman herself- queen, love-object, mistress and despot- was the East, the Orient created for the Western gaze…She is desire personified for the wandering hero, her royal stature only adding to her sexual desirability (ibid: 20-2).

According to Kahf, it is in the 17th century that the veil and the seraglio, or harem, enter into Western representations of Muslim women, but does not yet become a prop associated exclusively with Islam (1999: 5). Similarly, Andrea refers to

> a spate of stage plays in France and England recasting…the sort of tragic tale of oriental palace intrigue which became vastly popular in western Europe in the seventeenth century with the theme of the pernicious woman who rules the empire because she ruled the emperor persisted as an overdetermined motif in English drama into the 17th century, particularly in the representations of Asian and Islamic cultures (19-20).

Matar suggests that the model of Muslim women was still admired, but, simultaneously, started to be viewed from the perspective of the exotic, implicitly admitting not only the inability to understand Muslim social custom, but also the changes occurring at home. The Muslim model became exotic and _utopian' because it was not possible at home. The way in which Muslim

women were treated could only compare with imaginary domains and unreal worlds: they had lost their reality and had become totally inaccessible to the English Christian viewer. Ironically, the only place where they were still real was the harem. The isolation of Muslim women and their utopian world of separation were realized in the harem. Since Muslim women lived in a utopian world of separation and since the harem was just that world of separation, then utopia was the harem, as represented by Montagu below. The English seemed to have been fascinated by it. The image of women having to strain and strive in order to win the ‗Signiors affection', was widely read and repeatedly printed, and which fashioned the English representation of the women of Islam. The harem was transformed in English imagination from a place of incarceration to an exotic and romantic domain for women.

My argument so far has been that the representations of Middle Eastern women in English literature have been deeply implicated in the relevant politico-religious and cultural discourses of the encounter between two worlds. When Islamic power was at a high position, and Islam grew militarily, culturally, and religiously, women's archetypal image in the literary male imagination was of a powerful and wanton noblewoman who is sexually attracted to the enemy's men to the point of betraying her own people, religion and family, and actually taking part in their defeat. As a woman she was misused in two ways, as a sexualized individual and as the means to humiliate a formidable enemy. When the power equilibrium changed with the emergence of imperial Britain, and the final disintegration of the Turkish menace[145] and Islamic power altogether, the image of Middle Eastern women changed radically into a whole new scenario.

[145]The defeat of the Ottomans was in the second siege of Vienna (1683) and in the ‗Great Turkish War' (1683-1699).

In 1704, the *Arabian Nights* (folklore entertainment tales from different parts of the ME and South Asia) was translated by Antoine Galland, a Secretary in the French embassy in Constantinople[146]. Its protagonist and narrator Scheherazade, ‗took Europe by storm' (Kabbani, 22), for a good reason. This is the Age of Enlightenment, reason, empirical knowledge, and rejection of traditional political, religious and social structures; and the Orient depicted in Scheherazade's tales ‗became a decorative foil, a diverting contrast to the rationalism of the age' (ibid: 28). I argue that it was much more than just escapist entertainment.

After the European image of Islam had crystallized in the previous centuries as irrational and evil, philosophers of the Enlightenment often used those old stereotypes of Islam as an argument in their critique of religion- the Church in this case, and developed new images. Voltaire and Diderot linked Islam to fanaticism and represented it in the new context of being hostile to science and progress, that of the fanatical, ignorant, and obscurantist Muslim as the opposite of the enlightened and progressive European. Montesquieu introduced the idea of Oriental inclination to despotism due to *hot weather*; thus constructed an unbridgeable difference between Oriental societies with despotism and slavery as the antithesis of free European society. Travel writers sought evidence in the Middle East for their preconceived opinions of Oriental despotism and fanaticism, such as William Eton who presented the despotism of the Ottomans as

[146]These are outrageously imaginative narratives in prose and sometimes in poetry of different peoples: kings, and laymen; humans and jinns (spirits); rogues and noble men; poets, scientists, and merchants; old, young, fools, and wise men; lovers, enemies, despots…of different geographies and topographies, castles, cities, magic lamps and rings, flying carpets, spirits, devils…and above all women of all kinds. Sometimes the stories are sublime and full of wisdom, others no more than vulgar porn. The *Nights* was later translated into English by Richard Burton in 1885-8, in ten volumes that are now published on http://www.burtoniana.org/books/1885-Arabian%20Nights/index.htm

Another equally influential book appeared in 1697, Barthélemy d´Herbelot's *Bibliothéque orientale*, which is an encyclopedic dictionary of 8.000 entries covering almost all the contemporary knowledge about the Orient. It was considerably influential in the two following centuries, but it presented ‗Oriental' fictional narratives as the true Orient. Carnoy T. Dominique ‗Barthélemy and the Bibliothéuqe Orientale'. *Plume*; 2012; 7(15); 71-82.

the antithesis of England's form of governance, which was embedded in laws and rules (Konrad, 2011: 27). In 1758, the *Travels of Sir John Mandeville*, which was supposedly[147] written in 1356, were published too. ‗Encyclopaedic in scope Sir John includes all of the monstrous races…the human battery farms where cannibals fatten their victims' (Sardar, 1999: 27).

Often, a connection was also drawn between polygamy and despotism; indeed, Montesquieu had described the harem as despotism *en miniature*, because it made the woman a slave of the man. A much older set of arguments re-emerged, a dichotomy between progress and secular rationality in Europe, on the one hand, and backwardness, ignorance and religious and political irrationality in the Middle East, on the other. His argumentation was heavily tinged by a discourse of superiority. In this way, the 18th century provided a new discourse of alterity. Islamic societies were no longer defined as the ‗other' in terms of religious criteria, but in terms of secular criteria. The old discourse of alterity that had arisen from a feeling of being militarily threatened and of inferiority gave way to a new discourse of superiority. This discourse was based on a set of stereotypes that consisted of the cultural prejudices of despotism, fanaticism, hostility to the sciences, and backwardness, which were deployed to draw a distinction between the Muslim Orient and Europe (Konrad, ibid). Most importantly, despotism was connected to sexuality, as argued below.

Almost all scholars who studied West-East encounters emphasized the role travelogues played in consolidating this dichotomy. Michael Harrigan studies more than 60 seventeenth-century French travel narratives about the Levant and East Asia (Welch, 2009). Gerald M.

[147] Said (1978:58), Sardar (1999:25), and Konrad (2011), agree that Mandeville actually had never been to the Holy Land.

McLean dedicates his *The Rise of Oriental Travel: English Visitors to the Ottoman Empire, 1580-1720*[148] to analyze four of such travel books and to show ‗how travelers' accounts are variously inflicted by the rank, profession, and ethnographic literacy of each author'. Kabbani dedicated the best part of *Europe's Myths of Orient* to this genre, and emphasized the idea of ‗the Orient as an erotic space' (31), where Westerners found pleasures they no longer find at home. The most famous example of such ‗tales' is William Beckford's *Vathik*, where ‗Beckford's adulterous relationship with his cousin's wife Louisa is recreated as a relationship of Vathik and Nouronihar. The story of the over-indulged and vastly wealthy young Caliph…disregarding all moral restraints in pursuit of his appetites' (31).

Said suggests ‗[t]here was a kind of virtual epidemic of Orientalia affecting every major poet, essayist, and philosopher of the period' (1978:51), and invokes Gaston Bachelard's poetics of space, i.e. ‗[s]pace acquires emotional and even rational sense by a kind of poetic process, whereby the vacant or anonymous reaches of distance are converted into meaning for us here…it is there as something *more* than what appears to be merely positive knowledge' (ibid: 55). Lady Mary W. Montagu's *Turkish Embassy Letters* (1762) would make a perfect example of Bachelard's statement and Said's Orientalism. But before analyzing the *Letters*, it is essential to mention that by the *fin de siècle* leading to the 18th century, feminist and imperialist discourses

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[148] The books are: Thomas Dallam's manuscript journal titled ‗A brefe Relation of my Travell from the Royall Cittie of London towards The Straite of mariemediteranum and what happened by the waye' (1599); William Biddulph's *The Travels of Certaine Englishmen* (London, 1609); Sir Henry Blount's *A Voyage into the Levant* (London, 1636); and *The Adventures of (Mr T.S.) An English Merchant Taken Prisoner by the Turks of Argiers* (London, 1670). Jonathan Burton, review of *The Rise of Oriental Travel: English Visitors to the Ottoman Empire, 1580-1720* (Basingstoke, Palgrave: 2004), published on the website of *Reviews in History* in November 2009 and retrieved on March 11th from http://www.history.ac.uk/reviews/review/406.

had emerged in England and eventually culminated in the ‗feminist Orientalism' of the distinguished foremother of modern feminism according to Claudia Johnson (qtd in Andrea: 246), Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792). Wollstonecraft used the contemporary representation of Muslim women as an apt example of the very concept of patriarchal oppression ‗in the true Mahometan strain… [women are] deprived of souls…only designed by sweet attractive grace and docile blind obedience to gratify the senses of man' (qtd in Andrea: 78). She explicitly expressed her indignation, as a civilized, Western, Christian woman to be treated as the virtually enslaved Muslim women, or as Andrea puts it ‗the displacement of patriarchal oppression from the normative ‗freeborn' English woman onto an Orientalized other' (78).

Studies which trace the genealogy of feminist Orientalism normally refer to Montagu's iconic *Letters* in which she described the inner world of the Ottoman Harem, and claimed that *Turkish women have more liberty than British women*. Thus, some feminists[149] hail the *Letters* as an alternative or counter discourse to Wollstonecraft and her ilk. I argue that although Montagu presents a special relation to Orientalism through identifying herself with the Other, both Wollstonecraft's and Montagu's ostensibly paradoxical representations –negative and positive- of Muslim women say the same thing in different words. They criticized their own society through their representations of the Orient, in other words they used the ‗rhetoric of difference' (Yegenoglu, 1998: 80) or the binary structure in their discourse. Orientalism is not about writing negatively or positively on the Orient, it is about creating certain knowledge, about ‗the ways in which it constructs a certain regime of truth by transforming Other cultures into objects of

[149] See Andrea 80-81.

analysis‘ to serve the Same (ibid: 82), and the knowledge Montagu creates is of an exotic, erotic, mysterious, and incredibly wealthy space where women live in their own world, segregated and hidden in their ‗Mohamed ‗s paradise‘ (*Letters*, 91), hardly different from other ‗negative‘ Orientalists.

Montagu was the British ambassador‘s wife to the Ottoman court, thus her notion of liberty and her representation of Muslim women is best interpreted when situated within her social, economic and political position, and the fact that she was a traveler, an adventurer and a pioneer feminist. She criticized previous travelers and merchants, for example, for mingling with common Turks, not with people ‗of the first quality… as the speaker‘ (*Letters*, 58). She also ‗intended her letters to be published…and her most heartfelt praise was reserved for the Turkish women whom she considered the only free ones in the empire‘ (Desai, 1993: xxv). Montagu repeatedly said that she wrote her letters mainly to entertain and to *satisfy readers‘ curiosity* back home, ‗hoping at least that you will find the charm of novelty in my letters and no longer reproach me that I tell you nothing extraordinary‘ (ex. *Letters* 57, 60). For her visiting Turkey and trying *to watch* the situation of women is an adventure, and she enters women‘s space secretly ‗[d]esigning to go *incognito*‘ (ibid, my italics). Finally, she is well aware of her superiority and exclusiveness as English, a fact repeatedly manifested throughout the text, ‗[The Grand Signor] happened to stop under the window where we stood, and I suppose being told who we were, looked upon us very attentively, that we had full leisure to consider him‘ (*Letters*: 67). According to Jeanne Dubino Montagu‘s *Letters* is a perfect example of the Western invention of the East, namely Orientalism in the Saidian conceptual framework. It has become the most significant source for subsequent travel writers and continues to be one of the most

popular travel books three hundred years after they were first published in 1714, and as the abundance of critical references alone indicates. It has become canonical and has never been out of print. (2006: 139).

The Montagu gaze is very meticulous and selective. Although she insists that she was giving the English reader a ‗truer' image of the East, what she eventually did is confirm the imaginative world created in the folkloric tales of *The Arabian Nights*, which Montagu actually believed to be accurate descriptions of Oriental society (Kabbani, 28). Describing Kilar Aga (the chief guardian of the seraglio ladies), she says

> [In] deep yellow cloth (which suited very well to his black face) lined with sables and last his sublimity himself, in green lined with the fur of a back muscovite fox, which is supposed worth a thousand pounds sterling, mounted on a fine horse with furniture embroidered with jewels. Six more horses richly were led after him and two of his principle courtiers bore one his gold and the other his silver coffee pot, on a staff. Another carried a silver stool on his head for him to sit on. (*Letters*: 67)

Similarly, the Turkish coach is described in minute details: covered, painted, gilded and colorful silk and satin cushions where women would peep through the lattices. Fatima, the Kabya's Lady

> [sat] on a sofa raised three steps and covered with fine Persian carpets, leaning on cushions of white satin, embroidered … her beauty effaced everything…I never saw anything so gloriously beautiful…I was so struck with admiration that I could not for some time speak to her, *being wholly taken up in gazing*. The surprising harmony of features! That charming result of the whole! That exact proportion of the body! That lovely bloom of complexion, unsullied by art! The unutterable enchantment of her smile! But her eyes! Large and black, with all the soft languishment of the blue! Every turn of her face discovering some new charm! ...a behavior so full of grace and sweetness…could she suddenly be transported upon the most polite throne of Europe nobody would think her other than born and bred to be a queen, though educated in a country we call barbarous (*Letters*: 89, emphasis added)

Her twenty fair maids, who were ranged below the sofa reminded Montagu of the ancient nymphs (not a single word is said about the real life of these ‗nymphs‘, though), and her dress and jewels were all gold, silver, diamonds, silk very well fitted to her shape, showing her bosom, only shaded by thin gauze…and so forth. Montagu in this and other letters literally confirms Wollstonecraft‘s statement, and represents the Orient as a place of wealth, diamonds, slaves, and lethargy.

But Montagu‘s privilege is not only of being ‗of the first quality‘ of social class, but also of being a woman, thus had a rare access to places where ‗no man has been before‘ (*Letters*: 104) i.e. the private harem lives in the Ottoman court; and as a feminist, thus contesting previous men‘s representations as inaccurate. ‗They never fail to give you an account of the women, which it is certain they never saw‘ (ibid), and again ‗harems are always forbidden ground…the inner gardens, the high walls, the women‘s apartments always built backward, removed from sight‘ (ibid: 85). But studying the supplementary role many female Orientalists played in closing the gap left by men‘s inability to enter Oriental women‘s spaces, Yegenoglu suggests that ‗Montagu‘s account of the Orient, the Oriental women, and their customs cannot be disentangled from the masculinist and imperialist accounts offered by male travelers‘ (1998: 82).

This supplementary role is best demonstrated in her famous piece on women‘s *hammam* (public bath) where ‗[i]t is no less than death for a man to be found in one of these places‘ (*Letters*: 60). After describing windowless domes, fountains, marble pavements, basins, channels and rich sofas, cushions, and carpets, she seemed *astonished* at the Turkish women‘s politeness and civility, and for not showing any curiosity for her riding dress. There were 200 *stark naked* ladies…

> They walked and moved with the same majestic Grace … as ever any Goddess… and most of their skins shiningly white, only adorned by their beautiful hair, braided either with pearl or ribbon, perfectly representing the figures of the Graces…with the finest skins and most delicate shapes had the greatest share of my admiration…*I had wickedness enough to wish secretly that Mr Gervase could have been there invisible*. I fancy it would have very much improved his art to see so many fine women naked in different postures, some in conversation, some working, others drinking coffee or sherbet, and many negligently lying on their cushions while their slaves (generally pretty girls of 17 or 18) were employed in braiding their hair in several pretty manners. In short, it is the Women's coffee house, where all the news of the town is told, scandal invented, etc… The Lady that seemed the most considerable amongst them entreated me to sit by her and would fain have undressed me. I excused myself with some difficulty, they being all so earnest in persuading me. *I was at last forced to open my skirt and show them my stays*, which satisfied them very well, for I saw they believed I was so locked up in that machine that it was not in my own power to open it, which contrivance they attributed to my husband (*Letters:* 59-60, my emphasis).

This description inspired one of the most Orientalist paintings, Jean Ingres‘s ‗*Le Bain Turk*‘ 1862, where heaps and heaps of naked breasts, bellies, thighs and backs are seen through a closed dark circle, suggesting a viewer peeping through a hole at oblivious women. These women, like Fatima and all the other ladies depicted in Montagu‘s *Letters* seem to do nothing apart from sitting, chatting, drinking, eating, entertaining themselves, and ‗[t]hey simply prepare themselves for the absent male, and wait‘ (Kabbani: 84).

Montagu believes that these women have more liberty than their European counterparts, for they ‗don‘t commit one sin less for not being Christians‘, thanks for the disguise once they are outside the harem utopia Montagu describes; the veil guarantees that they are totally concealed. ‗It is impossible for the most jealous husband to know his wife when he meets her in the street‘ (71), thus they can do whatever they want, i.e. love affairs, without the fear of being discovered. Regardless of the fact that Montagu‘s ‗feminist‘ position is curious enough - disguise denies identity, so how is it possible to consider a person free, if his/her identity is denied?- her

representation of Turkish women as free to be licentious is paradoxical because it falls squarely in -and reproduces- the contemporary Orientalist representation she is trying to refute, she confines them in the same cultural ghetto of Wollstonecraft, and uses them as a space where English feminist aspirations are projected and imagined solutions unavailable in actual practice. Moreover, in her curiosity to (dis/un)cover Oriental women and their interior world, she is treating them as an object of her gaze and knowledge - which happens to be quite superficial and limited. Even her apparent feminist solidarity proves to be ethically false as she eventually betrays them by dismantling their veil and exposing them to the male European gaze. In short Montagu represents herself similar to Turkish women in gender but different ethnically as English. She articulates her identity as an aristocratic English woman who lacks the freedom that the high class women of the Other/Oriental have, as *she* sees them in ‗a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences' (Said, 1978:1). In other words, she articulates her difference by identifying herself with the Other, or as Spivak says ‗in the sense that they must be understood as unlike – non-identical with- it yet with reference to it' (1986:225).

Similarly, the *founding mothers of US feminism* in the 18th century used Muslim women as an alternative site for their liberating discourse, albeit within different contexts. Here the Orientalist discourse ‗begins in the post revolutionary period and derives its sociopolitical impetus from different imperial discourses about the Orient that are central to ideas of U.S. nationhood' (Schueller, 1998: viii). U.S. novelists, dramatists, poets, and essayists constructed an Orient through many contexts: moral, missionary, economic, and imperial expansion. The U.S. proto-imperial narrative for the nation was based on versions of dichotomies of a nation that was

‗variously embodied as vigorous, active, masculinized, and morally upright Columbia-as-empire, against versions of a decaying, passive, demasculinized, deviant, or spiritual Orient…it created an indigenous Orientalism premised on the [Hegelian[150]] idea of civilization and empire moving west, from Asia through Europe to culmination in the New World' (ibid: 3).

Timothy Marr argues that instead of installing a colonial regime, the early Americans celebrated the example of their own civil society and the vitality of an emergent public sphere, which modeled republican virtue through a complex variety of organizations and cultural expressions, as the nation's most visible triumph over despotism. The cultural imaginary was most creatively produced through four transatlantic genres of fictional imagination: the Oriental tale, the Muslim spy narrative, the Barbary captive narrative, and dramatic plays set in the Islamic Mediterranean (2006: 35). Moreover, in the absence of real colonial power and a capable navy, and the tense divisions between Republicans and Federalists, the power of the US was unified and expressed through ‗the dramatic creativity of the literary imagination that preserved visions of global relevance of both democracy and Christianity…the ‗imperialism of virtue'' (ibid: 34-5, inverted commas in the original). It produced many literary works[151] that dealt with

[150] In *The Philosophy of History* (1837), G.W.F. Hegel, suggested that the history of the world travels from East to West, like the sun, and concluded that reason found its highest manifestation in the Germanic world, while unreflected consciousness forms the basis in the East, the childhood of history. Moreover, in the East individuals remain as mere accidents revolving round a centre, the sovereign who stands at the head. Thus the Oriental empires were assumed to display all the characteristics later associated in the European mind with the Orient: irrationality, immutability, despotism, childishness, sensuality, feminization, capriciousness, backwardness, cruelty, and barbarism (Macfie, 2000: 14-15).

[151] Over 100 editions of a wide variety of autobiographical, fictional, and dramatic Barbary captivity were printed and performed in America between 1790-and the mid-1800 (Baepler in Dillon, 2004: 408). Sixteen plays and three novels were written, the most well-known among them are: Royall Tyler's *The Algerian Captive* (1797), Davis Everett's *Slaves in Barbary* (1797), James Allison's *The American Captive* (1812), and Peter Markoe's *The Algerian Spy in Pennsylvania* (1787), all participate in the official narrative of the United States as a virtuous empire spreading the light of freedom in a dissipated Orient' (Schueller, 14).

the conflict between the U.S. and the ‗Barbary States‘ (North Africa) late in the 18th century, ‗works that were polemically structured around racialized and gendered distinctions between liberty and slavery, morality and licentiousness‘ (ibid: 45).

Again I choose a feminist‘s text, Susanna Rowson‘s musical comedy *Slaves in Algiers: or, Struggle for Freedom* (1794) to demonstrate that US post-revolutionary feminist advocates also used the Orient to critique their own gender systems without transgressing the limits of propriety and religion, thus creating the same imperial image their male counterparts constructed of the Orient, which demonstrates that Orientalism was not always a male area. Female writers, as in the case of Wollstonecraft and Montagu, criticized the patriarchal system in their own countries by displacing them onto a racialized Other. *Slaves* also ‗indicates how national citizenship and the dynamics of race and gender were shaped through a transatlantic economy linked to a broader international link in which race was an operative term as well‘ (Dillon,409). Rowson was a prolific best-selling novelist, playwright, poet, actress, essayist, and educator through her own Young Ladies Academy. However, as a vehement feminist, she was attacked by contemporary critics who found *Slaves* ‗notable for the overt comparison it makes between marriage and slavery and between patriarchal power and the power of the ruling despot... [she] was called the ‗American Sappho‘ and was accused of false opportunistic patriotism‘ (Kritzer, 2005: 9-10). Significantly, she had to assert that she never ‗promulgated a sentence that could militate against the best interests of religion, virtue, and morality‘ (qtd in Schueller, 2004: 64).

Within the context of a young, benevolent, and holding-the-banner-of-freedom country, the newly born independent nation of the US was presented as ‗revitalizing the world with messages of liberty and virtue or in terms of a radical historical shift through which the US

becomes the newest seat of empire to which the Orient needs to turn‘ (ibid: 10). For the founding fathers, such as Jefferson, creating a strong internal union among the states was crucial to enabling the US to operate as a sovereign power on the international level (Dillon, 2004: 409) and frequently used the antonymous phrase of ‗empire for liberty‘. However, women were not given political equality, and were regarded as guardians of manners and virtue, which put restraints on their literature. Thus Rowson found that in *Slaves* she could remold the rhetoric of the righteous empire in terms of slavery/liberty of women, voice her feminist expectations of the revolution, and ‗dispense with many of those restraints because of the Oriental setting and the major roles played by women of mixed racial/cultural origins‘ (Schueller, 2004: 64).

The African Orient signified despotism and slavery, thus adding the abolitionist cause as an extra impetus for the imperial expansion, and ‗continuing in the Orient the original quest of Columbus, served both to distinguish this new empire from those of Europe and to mystify and contain internal racial schisms, conflicts, and violence‘ (ibid: 20). The plot of *Slaves*[152] revolves around a number of Americans who have been held hostage and are enslaved by the Algerian Dey (ruler), and Ben Hassen, a Jewish British usurer who had cheated on a bank, escaped persecution, went to Algeria and converted to Islam. Two American women are among the enslaved captives: Olivia, who is trying to escape with her father and her fiancé, held prisoners in the Dey‘s dungeon, and Rebecca, who waits for her ransom to come from the US, unaware that Ben has already received it, while he keeps her and tries to convince her to marry him. The slaves, led by American captives, rebel and capture Ben, discover that the ransoms have been paid, but the Dey refuses to accept any money for Olivia, because he wants to marry her too –

[152] A summary of the plot is presented as the play is not normally available.

both Ben and the Dey are already married. One of the American captives and the rebellion leader, Frederic, arrive with other slaves, surround the Dey‘s palace and set everybody free.

There are three Arab women in the play: Fetnah, the main character -a daughter of Ben who had sold her to the Dey to become one of his concubines, Selima, her servant, and Zoriana, the Dey‘s daughter. Zoriana is the stereotypical Arab and Muslim princess mentioned earlier, who betrays her father and her people and steals their money to help the enemy because she loves a Christian captive: ‗I am a Christian in my heart and I love a Christian slave to whom I have conveyed money and jewels…I am fixed to leave this place and embrace Christianity…I wish to be a Christian, and I will‘ (Rowson: 20, 24, 27)[153] among many other similar statements. She hates her religion and her people, and wants to go to America. Again no motives are given for her prejudice; apart from the education in women‘s rights she gets from Olivia, her father‘s American captive.

More important, though, is Fetnah, whose name *is* Arabic (i.e. *seduction*), unlike Zoriana‘s, which is not an Arabic word[154]. Being a British Jew by origin, Christian by inclination, and Muslim by chance, Fetnah regularly refers to her aversion to the Arabs, their customs, manners and ‗Moorish‘ religion, and again she loves a Christian[155] captive with whom she wants to run away to the land ‗where women do just what they desire‘ (32). She has all the

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[153] Henceforth, quotations from the play are referred to by page number.

[154] Zoriana‘s name is probably derived from an Arabic female name in Cervantes‘ *Don Quixote*, Zoreida, which in turn is a variation of Zobeida, granddaughter of the third Abbasid Caliph Al-Mansur, and wife of the fifth Abbasid Caliph Harun Al-Rashid. Zobeida is one of the most distinguished women in Iraqi history, well known for her wisdom and exceptional beauty. She was a poet, and distinguished debater of her contemporary philosophers, and most importantly her role in educating women.

[155] Throughout the play American captives are referred to as Christians, not as Americans.

potentialities to play a major role in the slaves' rebellion: intelligent, courageous, strong-willed, excellent strategist, quick with solutions in crucial moments and so forth, but most importantly she has been educated by Rebecca, the American woman whom Ben captures. Thanks to Rebecca, Fetnah worships liberty. Hardly any of her speeches lack a reference to liberty, her – and the play's- opening lines for example are

> I don't like to be confined…I wish for liberty… [my] little heart pants for liberty (5). [I]t was she [Rebecca] who nourished in my mind the love of liberty, and taught me, woman was never formed to be the abject slave of man. Nature made us equal with them, and gave us the power to render ourselves superior… her instructions are engraven [sic] on my heart (9)… and so forth

Selima, is a minor character, but she is represented as the typical Arab woman in the Western imaginary. She is good, but she accepts her fate submissively and silently ‗we are accustomed to it' (40). She has many questions that no one helps her answer, and even if she hears the correct answers from Fetnah, she lacks the courage to carry out her will. She is not born free (9), neither does she have a spirit. The most relevant scene here is a dialogue between Fetnah and Selima (39-41). While Selima finds the Dey good, generous, kind, and amiable, Fetnah sarcastically answers

> Oh! To be sure he is a most amiable creature; I think I see him now, seated on his cushion, a bowl of sherbet by his side, and a long pipe in his mouth. Oh! How charmingly the tobacco must perfume his whiskers - here, Mustapha, says he, ‗Go bid the slave Selima to come to me'- …that word slave does so stick in my throat- I wonder how any woman of spirit can gulp it down…how sadly depressed must the soul be, to whom custom has rendered bondage supportable…I am sure the woman must be blind and stupid, who would not prefer a young, handsome, good humoured Christian, to an old, ugly, ill natured Turk …we'll get my dear instructress from my fathers, and fly together, from this land of captivity to the regions of Peace and Liberty (39-41)

Rebecca, Fetnah's instructress, is the voice of America, whose men ‗purchased their freedom with their blood' she says (11), whose ‗sons and daughters of liberty, take justice, truth,

and mercy, for their leaders, when they list under her glorious banner' (13) and so on. Similarly, Olivia, (whom we discover later to be Rebecca's daughter and had been separated from her during the civil war), is all patriotic, feminist, and altruistic. When she discovers that her friend Zoriana is in love with her fiancé, Henry, she gives him up in sisterly solidarity, but also in a political scheme to manipulate the Dey. Both Rebecca and Olivia are very virtuous, honest, and staunch freedom fighters, who would happily sacrifice their lives for liberty. They represent ‗the American ideals of independence and self-sufficiency even when they are deprived of personal freedom' (Kritzer,1996: 152).

Men are no less stereotyped. American captives are embarrassingly romanticized as chivalric, courteous, handsome, intelligent, brave, very humane, with high sense of morality and above all very respectful to women, American or Moorish. Significantly, apart from the Dey and the Jewish moneylender Ben, there are no other Algerian men in the play, only servants and guards. The Dey, as a despot, gets very harsh treatment and is ridiculed until the end when he surrenders, apologizes and joins the American liberty mission, culture, and religion, and actually thanks them. He is presented as old, ugly, hairy, ‗and when he makes love, he looks so grave and stately that, I declare if it was not for fear of his huge scimitar, I should burst out laughing in his face' says Fetnah (6). He is typically exoticized as a barbaric Oriental ruler, depicted in much of contemporary paintings. But he is very weak in front of Olivia, for whom he is willing to do anything ‗I live but to obey you' (62). His people are represented, as frightening, black, stupid, easily manipulated, but above all cruel ‗If you stay here you will certainly be bastinadoed, impaled - burnt' (38), says Fredric, and they have many wives and concubines (46).

Ben gets the most grotesque representation possible. He embodies sheer evil but lacking any depth. He is treacherous and, as a greedy usurer and a gold worshiper, he would sell his own daughter Fetnah, traffic slaves, cheat, lie, and serve a despot; even his way of speaking is different. For any modern reader, Rowson is an outright anti-Semite, but even this vicious creature looks down at the Arabs as ‗uncharitable dogs' (16). He cheats them, and finds among them a safe haven. In short, ‗Rowson's description of the Orient and the Arabic culture is her device to show the superiority of American values… as the Orient lacks everything which is positive about America (Bürkle, 2005:1, 5). However, her strategy- and that of the whole captivity narrative- of showing her patriotism through investing in the theme of white slavery of American people and their values of life, democracy, and liberty is hugely paradoxical, because she does not condemn the slavery of African people in her own country. ‗White slaves could be liberated by paying ransom…while black slaves could not, because they are considered as property' (ibid: 3).

Moreover, in her attempt to reinscribe American women's role against the gendered constructions of patriotism, the excision of women's contribution to the American Revolution from public memory and pushing them to distaff sides (Erhard, 2005: 507), Rowson uses the barbarian Other as a backdrop onto which she projects her political aspirations and critiques of her own culture, as a way of facilitating her way through a prejudiced male society, thus simultaneously complicating her feminist message further. In *Slaves*, an American woman would kill herself rather than marry an Arab, while *all* Arab women who have any sensibility yearn to marry a Christian American. Sex and racism, in this sense, expose Rowson's prejudice and actually undermine her sisterly solidarity and notion of women's superiority to men altogether,

i.e. an American who marries an Arab woman would elevate her to a better level of humanity and ‗civilize' her; while an American woman who marries an Arab would be degraded and deprived of her people‘s civilizational achievements. Notwithstanding the implicit gender prejudice (men can, women can‘t), Rowson *literally* proves Said‘s metaphor of the feminized Orient in the Western imaginary. Moreover, her racial representation of the Other is a perfect example of Said‘s idea of ‗inventing‘ the oriental Other, again *literally* speaking, because of the absolute absence of any specific topographical, social, or cultural, reference to Algeria in Rowson‘s text. According to Marr, She never visited North Africa, neither were there any women amongst the captives in reality (2002: 112), still she used it to highlight ‗the distinction between virtuous empire and despotic empire, virtuous body and licentious body‘ (Schueller 2004:49). Such dichotomies between demonized captors and idealized captives reveal ‗an early national culture operating within a set of global relations and indicates the way in which the national imaginary depends upon people beyond the enclosure it seeks to make immanent‘ (Dillon, 2004: 207).

Significantly, it is in the second half of the 18th century and the 19th century -the age of colonialism in the ME- that the representation of Arab and Muslim women shrank from a strong queen or princess into an abject sex-slave or harem in need of rescue. Said details the important role played by scholarly Orientalism and the study of Oriental languages and literatures, as practiced by Sir William Jones ‗the undisputed founder of Orientalism‘ (A.J. Arberry qtd in Said, 1978: 78), in the British colonial expansion in the East, especially after it lost America as a colony. Similarly, scholars of Romantic literature have acknowledged the significant role played by Orientalists in popular culture, including literature, painting, home decoration, garden design, architecture, hairdressing and fashion and so on (Taylor, 2004: 4-5). Such cultural fashion is

integrally connected to the overarching culture of British imperialism. In the Romantic era (1780-1830), the strategy of using the Orient as a vehicle for political and cultural self-critique, and for discussing the position of women was taken to new extremes.

> The Romantic vogue for both Orientalist fictional tales and purportedly non-fictional scholarly works and travel narratives about the ‗East' results in multiple visions of these other cultures and tell us much about British writers and readers of the period…[O]rientalist texts present Eastern cultures as exotic, mysterious, dangerous and uncivilized-as tantalizing different regions where harems and political despotism are prominent…[but also] viewed as Other, as utopia, as exotic fantasy, as metaphor, and as source of land, labor, and material goods, to name a few' (ibid:1).

In 1950, Raymond Schwab refers to Orientalism as ‗a *second* renaissance… a revival of an atmosphere in the nineteenth century which, in contrast to the first, produced an effect equal to that produced in the fifteenth century by the arrival of Greek manuscripts and Byzantine commentators' (1984:11, emphasis in origin). However, more recent studies argue Said's totalizing attitude regarding Romanticism. Jenny Sharpe, for example, notes that in the historical example of India, sympathy and identity are equally constitutive of Orientalist discourse as hostility and alterity; Lisa Lowe reminds us that Orientalism may well be an apparatus through which a variety of concerns with difference is figured (Taylor, 2004: 4); and Nigel Leask, despite his high admiration for Said, focuses upon anxieties and instabilities in the Romantic discourse rather than its positivities and its totalities (1992: 2). Sardar too emphasizes the idea that the Orient was a space where Western writers projected their fears and desires:

> When the rationalist temper of the Enlightenment succumbed to the blood-soaked horrors of the French Revolution, Western disillusion with its own self produced the reaction of romanticism, with its renewed emphasis on nostalgia for rustic antique; a nostalgia that increased as industrialism changed the face of Europe. It provided a new rationale for interest in the unchanging Orient (1999: 41).

Among the Romantics, Byron‘s *Turkish Tales* (verse narratives published in 1813-1816)[156] are chosen for many reasons: Firstly, to demonstrate how the unconscious Romantic prejudice worked against its manifest interest in the purity, novelty, originality and so forth of Oriental cultures, i.e. what Said called latent Orientalism (1978: 201-225). Secondly, Byron regretted imperialism as the harbinger of social and cultural corruption (despite his admiration for Napoleon Bonaparte who invaded Egypt)[157]. Thirdly, not only was Byron an avid reader of Oriental literatures and Cultures, he had first-hand experience of the Orient as he visited -and lived in- it. Fourthly and most importantly, there are many Oriental female characters in the *Tales*: *The Giaour* (Leila), *The Bride of Abydos* (Zuleika*) The Corsair* (Gulnare*), Lara* (Gulnare again, named Kaled here).

Muslim female characters in the *Tales* are *sex slaves*, or harem. They fall in love with Christian heroes who try to *save* them from the misery of living imprisoned in the Turkish Sultan‘s palace. There is a kind of critical consensus that the Byronic Muslim heroines in the *Tales* share the characteristics of being *passive victims*, silently accepting their fate and their Muslim master‘s tyranny. However, Michela Calderaro argues that rhetorically ‗[t]hey voice

[156] Some scholars call the *Tales* Oriental and add *Prisina*, others don‘t as neither its theme nor the location are Oriental. Also in *The Siege of Corinth,* the female protagonist, Francesca, is a Venetian princess of the Shakespearean Juliette type, so she is irrelevant here.

[157] Leask argues that as a part of a broader cultural engagement with the question of imperialism, Byron‘s political and poetical policies in general typify his cynicism. Byron‘s letters show that he wrote the *Tales* to make the most of the saleability of the poetry with an ‗oriental‘ flavor. Indeed they made him the most popular poet in Briton and established the ‗Byron Myth‘ as a European phenomenon. Moreover, through the *Tales* he indirectly joined many of his Whig contemporaries in the discourse of imperialism which appeared as ‗manifest destiny‘ of the nation, the extension of the classical values of ‗Pax Britannica‘. In one of his letters he actually said that Greece would be better off as a British colony. Later he would describe the *Tales* as ‗exaggerated nonsense‘ with ‗false stilted trashy style, which is a mixture of all the styles of the day, which are all *bombastic*‘ (1992: 14-16, emphasis in origin). See also Kabbani on Byron‘s role in publishing Thomas Moore‘s *Lalla Rookh* and Coleridge‘s *Kubla Khan*, both of which represented the Orient as a space for sensuality, seductive sonority, and startling contradictions, among other things (33-36).

their desires; they actively pursue happiness and demand their share of it from the male hero. Indeed, they die just because they are not passive, just because they challenge the patriarchal order' (2009: 1). I argue that even if this is the case in some tales, the heroines' challenge to tyranny takes the form of *escape* and search for a Christian hero to save them from injustice. On the other hand, their pursuit of happiness is limited to their *love/sexual desire*; there seems no other meaning for happiness in their imagination- such as achieving a personal goal, for example, or change their condition through trying to change the cultural and religious discourses- apart from living happily with their Christian lover/savior. ‗Byron's oriental women appear more libidinous than his occidental ones…and wouldn't have merely their genes to blame' (Cochran, 2006: 15).

In *The Giaour* (Arabic Kafir, i.e. infidel), we never meet the beautiful Leila[158] as she is savagely killed by drowning at the very beginning of the tale, as punishment for her elopement with a Christian ‗infidel'. Alice Levine joins many scholars in their allegorical reading of the *Tales*: Leila's ‗rebellion' against her Turkish master taking the form of love for a European suggests the plight of Greece under Turkish rule, and Britain's self-serving, imperialist policies (2010:122). Similarly, Zuleika in *The Bride of Abydos*, is silenced and ‗is completely killed to subjectivity /ere her lip, or even her eye, / Essayed to speak, or look reply/…She is frozen into the pure form of an object' (Kahf, 153), and she is copied in Medora, who will be discussed below. Hull studies these female characters as Byronic heroines, and emphasizes their characterization as essentially unrealistic, ‗bright creations of my fancy' as she quotes Byron's saying (1987:72).

[158] Leila is a typical Arabic female name, heavily symbolic of unfulfilled love.

Byron elegizes the loss of contact of Modern European civilization with its Hellenistic origin, which is rather ironic, as he considers contemporary Greece Oriental. Moreover he considers the tragedy of Modern Greece is that it is controlled by Turks. Another ‗great irony of early nineteenth-century liberal imperialism was the manner in which it employed enlightenment attacks on the tyranny and priestcraft of the *ancien régime* to justify the conquest of non-European societies and culture…Byron was entrapped in an ideological cul-de-sac' (Leask: 24-5), reflected in his characters' ambivalence, above all the Byronic hero[159], to whom the Oriental women are so attracted. Conrad of *The Corsair* is extravagantly described – 175 lines of the first canto only for introducing him - as a typical Byronic hero. For example:

> He hated men too much to feel remorse, / And thought the voice of wrath a sacred call, / To pay the injuries of some on all. / He Knew himself a villain- but he deem'd/ The rest no better than the thing he seem'd; / And scorn'd the best as hypocrites who hid / Those deeds the bolder spirit plainly did./ He knew himself detested, but he knew / The hearts that loath'd him, crouch'd and dreaded too. / Lone, wild, and strange, he stood alike exempt / From all affection and from all contempt / His name could sadden, and his act surprise;/ But they that fear'd him dared not to despise (*Byron: Poetical Works*, ‗The Corsair' Canto I, verse x, lines 262-271)[160].

He is a powerful and enigmatic outlaw ‗of a thousand crimes' (III, xxiv, 696). He raids the palace of a Turk Pasha, Seyd (i.e. master), kills many of his -and Seyd's- men, sets the palace on fire and almost gets away with his crimes. But being chivalrous, he tries to rescue the harem, a

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[159] Over the entire body of his work, Byron presented a rebel with characteristic doubleness, filled with vengefulness and pride, had aspects of flawed grandeur, frequently alluded to the example of Milton's ‗enemy of mankind', an adventurer, exiled, and doomed to an inevitable downfall. Sometimes he is depicted as a young man, prematurely sated by sin, who wanders about in an attempt to escape society and his own memories. Conrad, the hero of *The Corsair* and *Lara*, has become more isolated, darker, more complex in his history and inner conflict. Later he became the model for the behavior of avant-garde young men and gave focus to the yearnings of emancipated young women. See ‗The Satanic and Byronic Hero' in the *Norton Anthology of English Literature Online*, retrieved on May 27, 2013 from http://www.wwnorton.com/college/english/nael/romantic/topic_5/

[160] Henceforth quotations from the *The Corsiar* are referred to by numbers of canto, verse and line.

deed which causes his defeat and capture. The *harem's queen* (II, v, 224), Gulnare (i.e. red rose), falls in love with Conrad, and even after realizing that he is already in love with another woman, she seizes the opportunity of liberty, so she kills Seyd, saves the noble captive corsair and runs away with him. In *The Corsair*, Byron presents two paradoxical female characters: The blue-eyed, fair and Greek Medora, Conrad's bride, and the dark-eyed auburn-haired and Turkish Gulnare, Seyd's favorite concubine, i.e. a sex slave.

Medora's representation is not different from the idealized celestial creatures Leila and Zuleika of other *Tales*. She is almost silenced and killed, textually and contextually. The lines that introduce her confirm her passivity, silence, loneliness, loss, despair (I, xiv, 348-53) indeed her death in life: ‗Remember me-Oh! Pass not thou my grave/ Without one thought whose relics there recline: / The only pang my bosom dare not brave Must be to find forgetfulness in thine.'(I, xiv, 355-8). When we meet her next, she dies heartbroken after hearing of Conrad's defeat. Textually, death evacuates her to give space for the heroine, Gulnare, who is quite different from other ‗rescued' oriental women. She is similar to Fetnah in Rowson's *Slaves*, in the sense that she turns out to be a savior, rather than a saved, albeit in a different context. As demonstrated above, Rowson's paradoxical feminism arises from her ambivalent attitude to the contemporary slavery in Africa and in the US. Byron's liberating attitude is equally complicated by his ambivalent chivalrous (Byronic/anti) hero. Trying to rescue the concubine Gulnare from slavery implies activating her agency as a free human being, which she actually achieves by saving herself and the captive corsair, to whom she owes her life (ironically jeopardized by fire the corsair himself lights). But being female –let alone a Turkish sex slave- makes all the difference, because she can't/shouldn't trespass the feminine ideal. Conrad's successful raid on the Seyd's

palace is thwarted by his chivalrous aid for a damsel-in-distress, but when the same ‗damsel' eventually shows intelligence and courage to liberate herself and rescue the captive, she symbolically deprives him of his *raison d'être* as a hero, and emasculates him.

Byron's representation of Gulnare -and of Conrad's attitude to her murder of Seyd- is extremely significant within the rescue discourse, because Byron strategizes the use of gender-race-class categories to uphold his hero. Gulnare, as a female oriental slave, would stab Seyd because Conrad honorably shuns from killing a sleeping man ‗But since the dagger suits thee less than a brand, / I'll try the firmness of a female hand' (III, viii, 380-1). Conrad eventually rejects the liberated slave, on moral grounds, as the beautiful helpless Gulnare suddenly metamorphoses into a Lady Macbeth. ‗That spot of blood, that light but guilty streak, / Had banished all the beauty from her cheek' (III, x, 426-7), and again ‗He thought on her afar, his lonely bride: / He turned and saw - Gulnare, the homicide!' (III, xiii, 462-3). Rather than proving her virtue, Gulnare's spot of blood identifies her as a murderer, highlighted in the rhyming bride/homicide. Being unconventional and pragmatic –especially when it became a matter of life and death after Seyd discovers her intentions- Gulnare's revolutionary act against a demonized tyrant is contrary to the chivalrous corsair whose noble morality paralyzes, and prevents, him from stabbing Seyd. ‗To smite the smiter with the scimitar; / Such is my weapon- not the secret knife- / Who spares a woman's seeks not slumber's life' (III, viii, 363-5).

Leask suggests that Gulnare, ‗unhampered by the aristocratic code of honour…is Byron's solution of discontinuity in rendering the libertarian rhetoric of all the *Tales* a practical possibility…the European Self is mimicked and ultimately absorbed by its oriental Other' (1992:51). Byron twisted the plot in a way to make Gulnare murder the Pasha, rather than have

Conrad kill him in a fair fight, a twist that could be explained in several ways[161]. What is relevant here is that this twist, meant to confirm Conrad‘s moral masculine superiority and the Byronic hero‘s nobility, has ironically dismantled the whole system of values on which the *Tale* is built, and exposes Byron‘s cynicism. If Gulnare is so astute and powerful and deserves a better life, as the text presents her, why didn‘t she try to liberate herself before and without the help of a corsair - a thief and a murderer- especially as she has access to the Pasha‘s stamp, i.e. authority? And if Conrad gives her a chance for liberty, why does he enslave her anew by his masculinity? ‗And now he turned him to that *dark-eyed slave* / Whose *brow was bowed beneath the glance he gave‘* (III, xvi, 352-3, my italics). In fact it is Byron who silences the freed Gulnare and re-incarcerates her in his text.

In *The Corsair,* Conrad‘s heroism is viable only when projected on the backdrop of Gulnare‘s helplessness. This is clearly demonstrated in Canto III when Conrad *forgives* Gulnare (for a crime he initially raided the palace to commit) and *allows* her to kiss him, after she saves and helps him escape and join what is left of the crew. Byron suddenly disempowers Gulnare and reduces her back to the meek, trembling and crying *veiled* creature, ‗the weaker prey…defenseless beauty‘ he met in the harem at the beginning of the tale (II, v, 206-18). Naturally, nothing is revealed to the crew about her real role in the rescue scenario, in order to save Conrad‘s pride. Frightened by his fierce features, she even denies herself. ‗She knelt beside him and his hand she press‘d, / Thou may‘st forgive…for that deed of darkness…*I am not what I seem* / this fearful night‘ (III, xiv, 468-72).

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[161] To make the *Tale* more exotic and mysterious, for example, especially with a dangerous oriental concubine; simply for saleability; because of haste as all sources consulted here refer to the fact that Byron wrote *The Corsair* in few days; or on a symbolic level: the Asiatics should destroy their despots with their own hands.

> To Conrad turns her *faint imploring* eye,
> She *drops her veil*, and stands *in silence by*;
> Her arms are *meekly* folded on that breast,
> Which—Conrad safe—*to Fate resigned* the rest…
> The worst of crimes had left her *Woman still*…
>
> And he was free!—and she for him had given
> *Her all on earth, and more than all in heaven*! ...
>
> Who now seemed changed and *humbled, faint and meek*,
> But varying oft the colour of her cheek
> He took that hand—*it trembled*—now too late—
> So soft in love—so wildly nerved in hate;
> He clasped that hand—it *trembled*—…
> ‗Gulnare!'—but *she replied not*—'dear Gulnare!'
> She raised her eye—her *only answer there*—
> At once she sought and sunk in his embrace (III, xvi-I, 516-43, emphasis added)

Significantly, after being silenced in this scene, Gulnare disappears from the text, she evaporates. Giuliano interprets her disappearance as a failure on the part of the text. ‗Softness was not natural to Gulnare, but the poem, having no language for her character, abandons her' (1993: 795). Hull suggests that ‗after having painted this bold portrait of a dark heroine…[Byron] felt that there was room enough for only one such character…his male hero' (1978: 81). But for this oriental slave to be liberated and accepted within the contemporary culture she has to reidentify herself, to be refeminized, i.e. subdued, which is paradoxical. Byron metamorphoses her throughout the text many times as it suits his plot, but his final retreat represents ‗a capitulation to the orthodoxy of his genre and society, and also his own ambiguous feelings about bold, strongly individualistic women' (ibid: 81).

In all cases she remains strikingly obscure, dangerous, manipulative, and an exotically beautiful enslaved female, who asks ‗What sudden spell hath made this man [Conrad] so dear?' (II, xiii, 424). It is also significant to refer to the gaze that makes the Oriental body so enigmatic,

referred to as ‗*tis* an earthly form with heavenly face! / …That form, with eye so dark, and cheek so fair, / And auburn waves of gemm‘d and braided hair; / With shape of fairy lightness-naked foot, / That shines like snow, and falls on earth like mute/…Ah! rather ask what will not woman dare‘ (II, xii, 397-407), and again ‗She stopp‘d- threw back her dark far-floating hair / That nearly veil‘d her face and bosom fair‘ (III, ix, 409-10) and so forth, probably the murder scene is the most revealing in this sense[162].

Byron‘s confusion, and his paradoxical text, and its unprecedented[163] success reflect two contradictory European trends towards the Middle East in the 19th century. Numerous stereotypes circulated about states, social systems and knowledge of the Orient, most importantly that *Islam oppresses women and is anti-modern* and that Islam is the reason why it was inferior in political, military, economic and, ultimately, cultural terms. These negative images stood in contrast to the idea of the Orient as the source of mysticism and spirituality for which many Europeans longed[164]. It was an image that fluctuated between idealization and demonization, a space in which desires and fears were simultaneously projected, as mentioned above. But its image in literature was dominated by negative stereotypes containing partially religious connotations

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[162] Cochran suggests that ‗Conrad‘s coolness towards Medora, the complete unbelievability of the scene between him and Gulnare in the dungeon, and the way that he identifies with his enemy can best be explained by his preference to men… What frightens him is that the heroine may really be a hero. The fact that he‘s been rescued from impalement by a woman, at the price of his worst enemy‘s death, unmans him. Byron‘s ‗romantic‘ heroes, so far from being seductive, as in the cliché, operate in reality as patriarchal oppressors and deferrers of all desire, including their own‘ (May 2013: 5-6)

[163] According to his publisher, *The Corsair* sold 10.000 copies on the day of its publication (Cochran, n.d.).

[164] England‘s chief concern was to create wealth, and to that end, promoted the extension and consolidation of empire after the accession of Queen Victoria. Utilitarians and political economists such as J. S. Mill and Jeremy Bentham, were confronted by writers such as Carlyle, Kingsley, Tennyson and Dickens. Pursuit of material gain often than not stifled the interest of the soul, aesthetic sensibility, and faculties of artistic creation and appreciation. (Martin, 1989: xxi).

which postulated the moral superiority of Christianity and Europe. These stereotypes included cruelty and despotism, religious militancy and fanaticism, idleness and disorder, lustfulness and sensuality embodied by the harem and polygamy. Stereotypical images of this type served to stabilize European identity and culture – by showing how different and superior European culture was. (Konrad, 2011: 34-6)

Said suggests that from 1312 when The Church Council of Vienna established a series of chairs in Arabic, Greek, Hebrew, and Syriac at Paris, Oxford, Bologna, Avignon, and Salamanca until the mid-eighteenth century Orientalists were Biblical scholars, students of Semitic languages, Islamic specialists and Sinologists (1978: 50)[165]. In the 19th century, however, one of the important developments in Orientalism was ‗the distillation of essential ideas about the Orient- its sensuality, its tendency to despotism, its aberrant mentality, its habits of inaccuracy, its backwardness- into a separate and unchallenged coherence' (ibid, 205). Konrad, too, demonstrates how academic European knowledge was used in the 19th century, the age of European imperialism, to legitimize rule over other societies, and fantastic racist theories were added to the stereotypes of Islam that went back to the age of Enlightenment (fanaticism, hostility to science, despotism, stagnation and backwardness), theories which were used again to prove the superiority of Europe (ibid). This discourse of alterity regarding Islam was repeated and defended by academic, literary and political authorities, what Said studied in details in *Orientalism*[166], among many others (Abdul-Malik, Macfie, Mcalister, Sardar, Schueller, Tibawi,

[165] Tibawi argues that in the 19th century too, Christian missionaries formed a close alliance with academic Orientalists, thus failed to display a proper sense of ‗scientific detachment' in their work. (2000:57)

[166] ‗The official intellectual genealogy of Orientalism would certainly include Gobineau, Renan, Humboldt, Burnouf, Remusat, Palmer, Weil, Dozy, Muir, to mention a few famous names almost at random …It would also include the Société asiatique (1822), the Royal Asiatic Society (1823), the American Oriental Society (1842) and so

and others cited here). An emblematic example of this politico-scholarly phenomenon would be Ernest Renan, a philologist and scholar of religion, for whom Muslims are the first victims of Islam, which hindered scientific thought within Islamic societies due to religious orthodoxy, in comparison to the free use of science as part of Judeo-Christian life (Norman 2011: 693). As a philologist, Renan defended the concept of a hierarchy of peoples, languages and civilizations. The ‗Semitic spirit' had produced monotheism, but everything else was a creation of the ‗Arian (sic) spirit'. His views of European superiority over Muslims were popular in the 19th century (ibid).

A Muslim is incapable of learning and of thinking for himself, of accepting new ideas, sciences and the teachings that constitute the ‗European spirit'; and Muslims had always fought rational thought and had finally ‗suffocated' science and philosophy in the 13th century. Even when Thomas Carlyle chose Mohammad to talk about the hero as a prophet, he did so because Mohammad was ‗the one we are freest to speak of… there is no danger of our becoming, any of us, Mahometans' (1894: 49). Carlyle's argument is that Mohammad's heroism lies in his imperfection: he was illiterate, uncultured, spontaneous, passionate, yet a true-meaning man, working out his life-task in the depths of the Desert. According to Carlyle's stereotypical depiction, Mahomet (sic) is not so much of a hero that should inspire Europeans, but one that could inspire Muslims. Mahomet is a compelling example of a hero precisely because of what Carlyle sees as his lack of education, spontaneity and primitivism. Carlyle repeatedly used

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on… [T]he great contribution of imaginative and travel literature…in building the Orientalist discourse includes work by Goethe, Hugo, Lamartine, Chateaubriand, Kinglake, Nerval, Flaubert, Lane, Burton, Scott, Byron, Vigny, Disraeli, Geroge Eliott, Gautier. Later, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, we could add Doughty, Barrès, Loti, T.E. Lawrence, [and] Forster. All these writers give a bolder outline to Disraeli's ‗great Asiatic mystery'…By the end of the nineteenth century these achievements were materially abetted by the European occupation of the entire Near Orient' (Said, 1978: 99).

adjectives to imply his belief in the superiority of a white Christian man like himself, who is educated, cautious and ‗cultured.' As for the Quran, Carlyle thinks that it is ‗[a] wearisome confused jumble, crude, incondite; endless iterations, long-windedness, entanglement; most crude, incondite; — insupportable stupidity, in short!' (ibid: 72).

Similarly Lord Cromer, who held office from 1883 to 1907 as the British Consul-General in Cairo, believed that the Oriental generally acts, speaks, and thinks in a manner exactly opposite to the European, i.e. *entirely irrational*, a perception that was widely accepted at the time. For Cromer, the differences in thought, customs, religion and political ideas created insurmountable barriers between Egyptians and Englishmen, so that mutual understanding was as good as impossible. According to Cromer, these differences were due to the race of the dark-skinned Eastern as compared to the fair-skinned Western. Apart from race, Cromer identified Islam as the reason why Egyptians were fundamentally different and backward, too: ‗as a social system, Islam is a complete failure'. The reasons were the following: the *subordinate position of women, polygamy and the separation of the spheres of men and women, which had devastating consequences not only for women, but – morally – also for men*; the rigidity and irrationality of the religious and legal traditions that permitted no separation of state and religion, obstructed the development of capitalism and brutalized people by issuing severe sentences; slavery, which is immoral but permitted in Islamic law; and, finally, intolerance, which is inherent to the Islamic religion (Konrad, 2011).

In general, Orientals were lethargic and conservative to such a degree that they resisted any innovation. Nevertheless, the English – an ‗imperial race' with ‗sterling national qualities', driven by selfless Christian morality – had a mission in Egypt: *to bring order to chaos, to educate the immature Egyptians, who were not capable of governing themselves, and to elevate*

them morally and materially to a higher level, and to fight corruption. In other words, the English were the doctors of a sick society; their rule over the Egyptians, who were inferior due to race and religion, was not only legitimate, but even necessary. Sardar says that ‗[t]he nineteenth century was *par excellence* a new kind of missionary century' (1999:41).

The 19th century is also one of the richest periods in literature, especially in the novel and also the time of the strong tradition of women novelists which includes Jane Austen, the Brontes, and George Eliot (Martin, 1989: xxiv) [167]. In *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), Said argues that the novel is

> immensely important in the formation of imperial attitude, references, and experiences… The prototypical modern realistic novel is *Robinson Crusoe*, and certainly not accidently it is about a European who creates a fiefdom for himself on a distant, non-European island… [Novels] were manifestly and unconcealedly a part of the imperial process (xxii)

Postcolonial readings of the 19th century English novel hardly exclude any of the canonical works of Dickens, Thackeray, the Brontes, Jane Austen, Eliot, Disraeli, Henry James, and ‗when we come to Kipling, Conrad, Arthur Conan Doyle, Rider Haggard, R.L. Stevenson, George Orwell, Joyce Cary, E.M. Forster, and T.E. Lawrence, the empire is everywhere a crucial setting' (ibid: 63). Imperial possessions as represented in these novels are looked upon as ‗usefully *there*, anonymous and collective, as the outcast populations of transient workers, part-time employees, seasonal artisans, their existence always counts though their names and identities do not…people whose reality has not historically or culturally required attention' (ibid: 64, italics in origin). In Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park* (1814), for example, the colonial

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[167] Scholars of Orientalism also study the role painting and photography played in consolidating the above mentioned images. See for example: Sarah Graham-Brown *Images of Women: The Portrayal of Women in Photography of the Middle East*, 1860-1950. (New York: Columbia University Press; and London: Quartet Books, 1988); Malek Alloula *The Colonial Harem* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986); *Inscriptions*, Special Issue on ‗Feminism and the Critique of Colonial Discourse', nos. 3/4 (1988), and Kabbani (1986).

possessions of Sir Thomas are crucial to sustain Mansfield, but Antigua, where he has his sugar plantation, is mentioned only in passing. Although ‗it most certainly belongs to great literary masterpieces, [*Mansfield*] steadily, if unobtrusively, opens up a broad expanse of domestic imperialist culture without which Britain‘s subsequent acquisition of territory would not have been possible‘ (ibid: 95). Similarly, the social position of Charlotte Bronte‘s Jane Eyre is elevated when her recently deceased uncle leaves her all his wealth in the colonies.

In the *anonymous and collective populations out there*[168], the female subject is rarely seen, if at all. According to Elleke Boehmer, the colonialist mission of 19th century Europe, and of Britain in particular, was first the industrial and military power that underpinned it; and secondly the often explicit ideologies of moral, cultural and racial supremacy which backed its interpretative ventures. But

> …while the Empire could signify far realms of possibility, fantasy, and wish-fulfillment where identities and fortunes might be transformed, the colonies were also places of banishment, unlawful practice, oppression, and social disgrace, dark lands where worthy citizens might not wish to stay. In this sense… colonial territories took on the aspect of its unconscious or hidden self (2005:26)

Spivak analyzes such presence/absence in the figure of Bertha Mason, the Jamaican Creole, in Bronte‘s *Jean Eyre* (1847), ‗that has become a cult text of feminism‘ (1985: 244). In her reading of nineteenth-century British (and European) literature and its role in representing imperialism as England‘s social mission, Spivak tries to produce a narrative, in literary history, of the ‗worlding‘ of ‗the Third World‘, and argues that Bronte‘s domestic novel ‗reproduces the axiomatics of imperialism‘ (247). Thus, she finds it particularly unfortunate that the emergent perspective of feminist criticism reproduces the same axioms, and that admiration for the

[168]Said refers to the fact that the Orientalist presence is enabled by the Orient‘s effective absence (1987:208)

literature of the female subject in Europe and Anglo-America establishes the high feminist norm especially in terms of female access to individualism. For example, for Jane's ultimate triumph, it is inevitable that Bertha is eliminated altogether. ‗Narratively speaking, the plantation woman is sacrificed so that an upwardly mobile English woman of an ambiguous class can replace her as Rochester's wife' (Sharpe, 1993: 46). Bronte's representational strategy of reducing Bertha to a mad woman in the attic, even an animal, has been highlighted by almost all scholars cited here

> In the deep shade, at the further end of the room, a figure ran backwards and forwards. What it was, whether beast or human being, one could not ... tell: it grovelled, seemingly, on all fours; it snatched and growled like some strange wild animal: but it was covered with clothing, and a quantity of dark, grizzled hair, wild as a mane, hid its head and face. (*JE,* 289-90)

Joyce Zonana analyzes the Orientalist aspect of *Jane Eyre's* feminism, too: ‗I never can bear to be dressed like a doll…I thought his smile was such as a *sultan* might, in a blissful and fond moment, bestow on a *slave* his gold and gems had enriched' (*JE*, 267, emphasis in origin). This is a culturally acceptable simile to understand and combat patriarchal despotism, and to figure out the objectionable aspects of life in the West as ‗Eastern'. Feminist Western writers rhetorically define their project as the removal of Eastern elements from Western life. Intertwining of Orientalist knowledge with colonial power is all over 19th century feminist discourse. From Wollstonecraft to Elizabeth Barrett Browning to Margaret Fuller and Florence Nightingale, one discovers writer after writer turning to images of oriental life-and specifically the ‗Mahometan' or ‗Arabian'- harem in order to articulate their critiques of the life of women in the West (1993: 592-5). Moreover, Jane's ‗plainness' emphasizes her inner rather than physical beauty, while the Muslim woman, here implicitly depicted as a harem inmate, is appreciated simply for her outward appearance and therefore enslaved by masculine lasciviousness. Her

British counterpart is fortunate indeed to be valued for a beauty founded in her moral and intellectual capacities (Johns-Putra, 2006: 4).

The narrative scenario of imperialist America controlling the Orient during the 19th century is rather different. The U.S. is a *postcolonial* state that initiated its nation-building on the idea of an *empire* of virtue and moral power, and its writers' indignation about American captives in Algeria mentioned above reflected this nationalistic and revolutionary enthusiasm. It was also a time of a highly racial debate about both Native American dispossession and slavery, and the Middle East with its mixture of cultures and races attracted writers who ‗labored amid much greater awareness and popular interest in the Near East fueled by Egyptology, the lure of the Holy Land, and an insatiable appetite for travel' (Schueller, 1998: 76).

Douglas Little suggests that Mark Twain was the most influential writer to shape the nineteenth-century U.S. views of the ME with a darkly humorous account of his calamitous tour there, which sold nearly 100,000 copies in two years. *The Innocents Abroad* is a saga of his adventures in Palestine, Syria and Egypt in 1866, which he represented as ‗mired in dirt, rags, and vermin', and the Arabs and Muslims as ‗a people by nature and training filthy, brutish, ignorant, unprogressive, [and] superstitious'. But as a master of irony, Twain satirized his fellow travelers too, most of whom he found guilty of tactlessness, excessive pride, and what twentieth-century critics would call cultural imperialism (2008: 13).

In fact he was one of the leading American citizens who ‗expressed a straightforward support for democratic self-rule' (McAlister: 30). But Twain's disappointment with the East reflects that of many American travelers who expected to see biblical illustrations in the Holy Land, as if nineteen centuries had not passed since Jesus Christ. Anne McClintock talks about a paradoxical attitude towards time in the 19th century, a phenomenon she called the invention of

an anachronistic space where the colonized are ‗disavowed and projected: prehistoric, atavistic, and irrational, inherently out of place in the historical time of modernity…Geographical difference across *space* is figured as a historical difference across *time*‘ (1995:40, emphasis in origin). Kabbani says that Twain, in his effort ‗to satirise the genre of Eastern travelogue, managed only to confirm every prejudice in the book…and although he wanted to deromanticise the Orient, he did so…with inhuman humour‘ (139).

She also studies a tradition, from the Victorian age until well into the 20th century, of individual travelers–whether they upheld the percepts of colonialism or not- whose narratives became a medium that ultimately served to forge myths of imperialism. Many of them lived in the East, disguised as Arabs, spoke Arabic, and used Arabic pseudonyms, but they did not actually wish to be Arabs, just to collect *facts*. Edward W. Lane, Richard F. Burton, T.E. Lawrence of Arabia, Charles Doughty, Wilfrid S. Blunt and Albert Smith are just a few examples, although the last two vehemently criticized colonial Britain. Lawrence in fact played the role of a hero who wanted to liberate the Arabs from the despotic Ottomans (86-128). Most importantly, those travelogues dispelled the magic, what they brought back was disillusionment that the Orient is not actually *Oriental* enough. It is no more than a cruel desert, filthy towns, and lazy peoples. Needless to say, it takes a superior eye to see this inferiority.

Boehmer suggests such narratives that are directly concerned with the colonial experience revolve around ‗the introversion of the colonial mission, or *colonial drama*; the masculine aspect of that drama; the representation of other peoples; and the resistant incomprehensibility or unreadability of the colonized beyond‘ (2005: 58). In *fin-de-siècle* Britain, Joseph Conrad‘s dubious characters, for example, express the contradictions of the white man‘s mission. *Lord Jim* (1990) and (especially) *Heart of Darkness* (1899) are now emblematic in studying ‗the vanity,

unfathomable cruelty…and the illusion of a civilizing act of philanthropy…what [Conrad/Marlow] found when he got there [Kurtz's Inner Station] was that the opening process had cast the region not into light, but into darkness' (Butcher, 2007: xii).

Schueller, Little, Kabbani, McClintock, McAlister and other postcolonial scholars cited here emphasize the extraordinary role that narratives of American missionaries who wanted to save Muslims and Christians -contaminated by their proximity to Muslims- played in producing colonial knowledge about the lethargic heathen mind. Churchwomen in particular seized the opportunity to transgress the defined domestic sphere and gain access to power and social visibility through working in the East from the very beginning of the century, to uplift the downtrodden and degraded Oriental women. The Society for Promoting Female Education in the East, for example, was formed in 1839, and by 1866 The Syrian Protestant College was opened in Beirut. The evangelists, too, concerned themselves with the Holy Land because, according to a biblical prophecy, God had a distinct plan for the Jews at the end of time to be restored to Palestine to rebuild the Temple of Jerusalem. They thought of themselves in biblical terms as the chosen people, the new Israel and the new Zion (i.e. Jewish State).

Writers on their part capitalized both on the popular interests in Egyptology and on the attraction of missionary activity in the racial-cultural borderlines. In these narratives Eastern women were frivolous, indolent and suppressed, while missionary women were independent and intelligent. Rescuing harem women was the task of both the Western man and woman. However, some of those writers, while invoking the same representations of Eastern people, they caricatured the ideological presumptions of characters embodying the nationhood. Thus even if

> …the imperial body was constructed through racial alterity, these texts revealed the precariousness of such a construction by introducing moments when this body was transformed through interracial contact…Self-consciousness about the raced and

> gendered distinctions of missionary and archeological imperialism was thus an important feature of many of these writings. Beginning with the writings of Henry Brent, Maturin Murray Ballou, John Deforest, Maria Susanna Cummins, William Ware, and David F. Dorr, Near Eastern Orientalism writing finds its most self-conscious expression and critique of the archeological imperial body in the tales of Edgar Allan Poe and Harriet Prescott and in Herman Melville‗s *Clarel* (Schueller, 2004: 80).

In Poe‗s twenty-five *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque* (1840), twenty have Middle Eastern references. ‗Ligeia' (1838), for example, would make a good example of the ME women in the 19th century American imaginary, within the context of antebellum racial polarization. According to Schueller, the Southerner Poe parodies the American expansionist policy under the rubric of the empire of freedom, practiced by missionaries, Egyptologists, traders, and tourists to the Holy Land, as mentioned above. Ligeia, the main and only protagonist of the story, is not a human being, but rather an abstraction, or a symbol of everything Oriental as perceived by the Americans. Her name is derived from Greek *λiγυς* (Ligys) one of the Sirens in Greek legends: beautiful but dangerous creatures, portrayed as *femme fatales* who lured sailors with their enchanting music and voices to shipwreck on the rocky coast of their island[169]. ‗Ligeia clearly represents Near Eastern Oriental Knowledge, the control over which was a defining feature of USAmerican (sic) nationhood' (Schueller, 2004: 113).

Ligeia as an abstraction *is* the Orient in the US imagination; and the unnamed and self-admitting unreliable narrator –her lover and husband- represents an obsessed and intoxicated Orientalist. John C. Gruesser suggests that ‗not only is ‗Ligeia' saturated with ‗Orientalism', but in the tale Poe, like Said, reflects on and depicts the hazards of the European fascination with the imaginative geography of the Orient' (1989:145). It is significant that the Orient is represented as a woman, again literally confirming Said‗s argument that the East is feminized and sexualized

[169] *Dictionary of Etymology and History of First Names Online* and *Greek and Roman Names*, retrieved on June 1st 2013, from http://www.behindthename.com/ , http://www.nameandfame.org/greek4.html

in the Western (Orientalist) imagination. Ligeia is a superhumanly exceptional woman, especially when contrasted to the narrator‘s second wife, the blonde, blue-eyed English Rowena. The 20-page tale is divided into two parts; the first is dedicated to a deliberately lavish description of Ligeia, the second, to the narrator‘s bridal room, which is linked to her too, in many ways. Ligeia‘s super humanity lies in her exotic beauty, her passionate and domineering love, her intelligence, her knowledge of ancient languages and history, her wealth, and above all her strong will which defeats death itself, as she resurrects in Rowena‘s body.

The narrator knows everything about Ligeia, but he simultaneously ‗has never known her parental name‘[170] or where, when and how he met her, ‗Was it a playful charge on the part of my Ligeia...a test of my strength of affection...or a caprice of my own that I should institute no inquiries upon this point?‘ Everything about her is frighteningly outworldly, ‗the wan and misty-winged *Ashtophet*[171] of idolatrous Egypt‘. Five pages are dedicated just to describe her ‗strange‘ beauty: apart from the ‗sweetness of her name‘, she is tall and slender, to the point of emaciation; her demeanor is majestic and her steps are light; ‗she came and departed as a shadow. I was never made aware of her entrance into my closed study, save by the dear music of her low sweet voice‘…, as well as her strange but exquisite features, pale skin ‗rivalling the purest ivory‘, and the ‗raven-black, the luxuriant and naturally-curling tresses‘. Her forehead, nose, mouth, voluptuous lips, chin, dimples ‗nowhere but in the graceful medallions of the Hebrews had I

[170] Phrases in single inverted comas are quotes from the tale, and all italics are in origin.

[171]Ashtophet refers to ‗Ashtoreth, the Phoenician and Egyptian goddess of love and fertility and ‗Tophet‘, a version of hell associated in the Old Testament with the Egyptian worship of Moloch. Retrieved on June 18, 201 3 from http://ligeiabypoe.wikispaces.com/Ashtophet,.

beheld a similar perfection‘. But the secret lay in her large eyes –described on two pages- which both ‗delighted and appalled‘ the narrator, ‗fuller than the fullest of the gazelle eyes of the tribe of the valley of Nourjahad…either above or apart from the earth- the beauty of the fabulous Houri of the Turks‘ (i.e. a female angel in Islam). Ligeia's eyes are brilliantly black that hide a fierce ‗*expression*…of the spiritual…more profound of the well of Democritus…what *was* it? I was possessed with a passion to discover‘. The Narrator‘s obsession with Ligeia‘s eyes, and his ridiculously elongated gaze which extends to the next pages, are a clear parody of the Orientalist obsession with the Eastern female, viewed as mysterious beauty to be discovered.

The ‗*intensity*‘ of her character is more enigmatic, her defiance to death by sheer strength of will is mentioned at least four times, and her struggle is relentless until the ultimate triumph. She ‗was the most violently a prey to the tumultuous vultures of stern passion‘; her words are wild and made more effective with the magical melody of her low voice. She writes poetry, and as a ‗partner of his studies‘ her learning surpassed his own knowledge thus she helps him understand ‗the chaotic world of metaphysical studies‘. She was deeply proficient in classical tongues, moral, physical, and mathematical sciences. He resigned to her perfection, with a ‗childlike confidence through the chaotic world of metaphysical investigation…down all untrodden path to the goal of wisdom…have I *ever* found Ligeia at fault?‘ and so on and so forth.

The second part of the tale is dedicated to the bridal chamber, an Orientalist‘s temple where the European blonde is suffocated and dies within two months, due to Ligeia‘s supernatural power in the narrator‘s opium-ridden imagination. The chamber is a pentagonal (Islamic five-angled star) room in the ‗high turret of the castellated abbey‘, which is gloomy,

dreary and almost savagely old in ‗the wildest and least frequented portions of fair England'. The ‗gorgeous fantastic draperies in the solemn cravings of Egypt' on a *facing-the-south* window ‗tinted of a leaden hue, so as to give a ghastly light'; a vaulted oak ceiling with Gothic and Druidical designs, where a single Saracenic in pattern chain, and with many perforations so contrived as if endued with a serpent vitality. The furniture is of Eastern design; a gigantic black granite sarcophagi from Luxor (Egypt), and ‗massive-looking; gold tapestries hang from summit to foot, of a material which was found alike as a carpet on the floor, as a covering for the ottoman and the ebony bed, spotted with arabesque figures, give a phantasmagoric effect'. Artificial introduction of a strong continual current of wind behind vastly heightened the effect, giving a hideous and uneasy animation to the whole. Rowena does not love her husband and fears his temper, but he loathes her and does not care. Instead, he indulges in opium and dreams of Ligeia's beauty and love, and finally when he tears away Rowena's funeral shroud, he finds that her hair is black and her eyes are Ligeia's.

As a satirical parody, the frustration of unfulfilled longing and the struggle between a dying West and a resurrecting East in the Orientalist's imagination are quasi-farcical, especially on the last pages where two dead women struggle for life. Nevertheless, the reader hardly misses Poe's enjoyment in his fantastic, drenched-in-opium-representation of the feminine Orient, which is completely silenced, disoriented, and mummified. Moreover, Ligeia's ultimate success in ‗penetrating' Rowena's shrouded body should not be read as triumph for a highly learned women on the innocent, conventionally submissive, and victimized English wife, Rowena; given the facts that Ligeia's learning is confined in the abbey solely to the service of her husband, and that Poe advocated ‗the roles of wife and mother against women entering the public domain' (Scueller, 2004: 120). In fact, Ligeia's body and the lofty abbey (serving as a bridal chamber) are

highly and peculiarly fethishized as closed and isolated Oriental spaces of sexual perversity, because the only ‗physical‘ contact is actually between Ligeia and Rowena, which in turn brings to mind the closed spaces of the Oriental harem in the Western imagination, and the sexual relations between enslaved women who were segregated in that space. It is as if Poe holds a distorting mirror that reflects a deconstructed image of the whole vogue of the age. Ligeia‘s superhuman knowledge and domineering beauty, and the outrageously furnished-with-Oriental-artifacts abbey mock the intellectual and popular fashion. In short, the imagined female Oriental body is used again as a background for social and literary critique.

According to McAlister, ‗[r]epresentations of the Middle East frequently mobilized its historical and religious significance to serve as narratives of American national identity…and cultural products have been central to that project‘ (2005: xviii, 2). However, when it comes to empire, Amy Kaplan complains about a pattern of denial and about three salient absences which contribute to this pattern, across several disciplines: ‗the absence of culture from the history of U.S. imperialism; the absence of empire from the study of American culture; and the absence of the United States from the postcolonial study of imperialism‘ (1993:11). More recent postcolonial studies (several of which are cited here) have started to fill these vacuums. Still, there is a kind of scholarly agreement that the cultural representation of the American empire fully articulated itself in the 20th century after the US displaced Europe as an imperial superpower; and as far as the ME is concerned, Said says that ‗it can be dated roughly from the period immediately following World War II … that the US knowledge of the Orient never passed through the refining and reticulating and reconstructing process…that it went through in Europe‘ (1978:290).

Nevertheless, Amy Kaplan�: critique of the ‗salient absences‘ can be applied to the modernist British literary production of the 20th century as regards the ME. Britain overstretched its imperial possessions radically after World War I, although it had just signed the Versailles Peace Treaty of 1919, which supposedly granted colonized countries the right to self-government. Britain (and other European allies) occupied the ME and North Africa as war spoils, and although the WWI carnage shattered European pride in scientific and technological superiority, ‗the colonial centers rarely turned into anti-colonial critique…citations of foreign cultures was an expression of Europe‘s concern with itself. Colonized cultures were catalytic agents for metropolitan self-questioning…Indeed it helped to preserve more fundamental continuities‘ (Boehmer: 139, 149). She argues that aesthetic encounters with the East were little more than ‗decorative *approximation*‘ (her italics) where primitive symbols did not mean that Western ideological categories were thrown into question, but rather an objectifying interest in the curious and the exotic held firm. These were the years when decolonization movements took the ME by storm, but they were literally non-existent in English modernist narratives[172]. Boehmer hardly spares any canonical name of the era her critique. Similar to the 19th century novel which had mapped a world in which Britain was central, 20th century metropolitan writing did not interfere with the general picture, where ‗European sovereignty remained largely unquestioned, as did the cultural authority of the West‘ (ibid:133). Nationalist self-articulations were defined against the self-absorption of the colonies‘ metropolitan interlocutors. Boehmer studies ‗the Woolfian uncertainty…[and concern] about the self-importance and exclusivity manifested in the English upper classes…the novel replicates exactly the imperial geography

[172] In her insightful analysis of colonial and post-colonial narratives, Boehmer does not include the ME at any point of her study, apart from a passing reference to the huge influence the *Arabian Nights* had on 19th century narratives.

which sustained that exclusivity' (ibid: 137). Orwell and Greene would uphold colonial perspectives ‗even as they sought to challenge them' (ibid), Forester or Lawrence took other cultures on their own terms, but the Other remained the same barbarian hero or civilized savage (ibid: 139)

Historically, three important turning points have shaped the US-ME relationship: the US ascension to global super power, the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, and the discovery of oil as a major economic factor in the geopolitically influential ME. The idea of race was an important factor too, as people who emigrated from northern Europe were looked upon as superior to those from the (southern) Mediterranean region. McAlister confirms that ‗the Middle East has been both strategically important and metaphorically central in the construction of US global power' (2005: 4). Ironically, this importance and centrality have been expressed through cinema, media, and popular culture by an overall distorted and negative picture of the Arabs and Muslims, as all scholars consulted here agree, and as demonstrated in CH III of this dissertation. Best-selling popular novels such as Lew Wallace's *Ben-Hur* (1880), Wilson Barrett*'s Signs of the Cross* (1896), Nobel laureate Henryk Sienkiewicz*'s Quo Vadis* (1895) and the British Robert Hitchens' *Garden of Allah* (1904) –a melodrama of an English woman who finds sexual adventure in the desert, which had been a failure in England but was extremely successful in the US- have their settings or themes in the ME and often included photos and drawings of attractions of the area, including scenery, pottery, jewelry, animals, and typical natives.

The emerging consumer society produced goods, decorations, and pictures associated with the Orient which also invaded shops, all of which were not simply promotion, but rather motifs of popular culture ‗linked to the exotic pleasures of the Orient that allowed a new

discourse of commodity culture to simultaneously praise the practice of indulgence and disavow it, by linking it to foreignness…[and also] to the rhetoric of emancipation of the new woman, companionate marriage, modernity, and consumerism‘ (ibid: 22). Silent films such as *The Arab* (1915), *Intolerance* (1916), *Cleopatra* (1917), *Salome* (1918), *An Arabian Knight* (1920), *The Sheikh* (1921), *A Son of the Sahara* (1924), *Son of the Sheikh* (1926) and *A Son of the Desert* (1928) created specific cultural symbols of the Orient. Many of these films presented powerful Oriental women who were alluring and dangerous, ‗woman vamps‘ and excessive sexuality which Hollywood produced associating the sexually of voracious woman with the East, on one hand; and ‗the olive-skinned idol‘ Rudolf Valentino in his Oriental films provided unprecedented expressions of female desire ‗a woman-made-man‘ (ibid: 25), on the other. This created an Orientalist trope that connected exoticism, sexuality, consumption, and the lure of danger and decadence, a trope that was different from the 19th century associations with religious and archaeological knowledge, although in *The Ten Commandments* (1923), Hollywood invested in the Hebrew exodus theme, too.

It is also the age of US imperialism, when ‗Manifest Destiny‘, ‗liberal developmentalism‘, ‗dollar diplomacy‘, and ‗Trade follows the movies‘, are signifiers of political, economic, and cultural frameworks of a single goal: that the world should replicate the US model of development. The bottom line is that the US business expansion helps to improve living standards all over the world -especially the Third World- and the US money-making business simultaneously, while Hollywood represents the world to the US audience, and cultivates world audiences for American products and lifestyle. As newly decolonized Middle Eastern countries became arenas of struggle for influence within the Cold War, the unlimited US support for Israel, and oil at favorable prices, as mentioned above, new US Orientalist studies

emerged to promote that goal. They inherit the European and the 19th century US Orientalist attitudes, but they are no longer interested in the ancient and Islamic civilizations, but rather in the contemporary ME as a matter of policy objectives: facts, attitudes, trends and statistics in the service of political, military and economic interests:

> Genealogically speaking, modern American Orientalism derives from such things as the army language schools…sudden government and corporate interest in the non-Western world…Cold War competition…and residual missionary attitudes towards Orientals who are considered ripe for reform and reeducation (Said, 1978: 291) [173].

The post-WWII US discourse of benevolent supremacy was articulated through the theme of liberation from slavery. Hollywood (re)produced earlier mentioned best-sellers: *Quo Vadis* (1952)*, The Robe* (1953), and *Ben Hur* (1959), among many other similar films[174] which invoke historical and biblical epics. *The Ten Commandments* (1956) reproduction, for example, was very timely on the backdrop of the attack of the allied forces of France, Britain and Israel on Egypt because of the Suez Canal nationalization the same year. The anti-slavery theme, too, suited as an allegory of the democratic US against the Soviet ‗red fascism and totalitarianism' (Nadel, 1993:427) within the cold war context. Most importantly, the newly created State of Israel and the still fresh memories of the Holocaust were essential in the political background. A melodramatic account of the biblical story of Moses and the Hebrew exodus turned out to be an unprecedented success in the history of cinema.

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[173] Many institutions were established: Near Eastern Studies (1927), Middle East Institute in Washington (1946), the Middle East Institute (1958), Middle East Studies Association (1967), and many research groups carried out by the Defense Department, the RAND Corporation, the Hudson Institutes, and centers of Middle Eastern Studies in several universities, to mention just a few.

[174] *Samson and Delilah* (1949), *David and Bathsheba* (1951), *The Egyptian* (1954), *Demetrius and the Gladiators* (1954), and the *Land of the Pharaohs* (1956).

The film presents unabashedly racially biased representations in the interest of Hebrews against Egyptians, and Moses is represented as a typical American superhero. The enslaved Hebrews are all humane, honest, hardworking, peaceful and patient people. They are the real builders of Pharaoh's Egypt, while there are literally no Egyptian people in the film, apart from Pharaohs and soldiers. The Pharaohs, especially Ramses, are despotic, cruel, sensual, and unjust. They treat women as things, even as animals, for their own sexual gratification. The soldiers are savage masses chasing innocent Hebrews. The court women, especially Princess Nefertiri[175], are stereotypically represented as libidinous, treacherous, selfish and manipulating. Nefertiri kills her loving elderly maid by shoving her into the Nile (just like Floripas in the Sultan of Babylon) and starts immediately to seduce Moses. She goes to brick-making pits looking for big men among slaves but she is also enslaved by the man.

‗The racial slavery of the people is paralleled by, and made available through, representations of the problem of the sexual slavery of individual characters…the Egyptians are consistently marked as tyrannical in sex as well as in politics' (ibid:74). In a famous scene where Ramses kisses Nefertiri then pushes her away violently saying ‗You are a sharp-clawed treacherous peacock; you are food for the Gods. I am going to have all of you', she vengefully says ‗I could never love you', and he replies ‗Does that matter? You will be my wife. You will come to me whenever I call you, and I will enjoy that very much. Whether you enjoy it or not is your own affair, but I think you will'. Princess Nefertiri's position in this sense is not different from the Hebrew slave Lilia's, when one of the court men forcibly takes her from the brick-making pits. Nevertheless, the slave-liberating discourse of the film is itself built on a racist

[175] The name of the Egyptian princess is Nefertiti, but the film gives her this name.

premise that self destructs: If Hebrews are enslaved by the Pharaohs, what about other Egyptian people? Are they enslaved too? If they are, why does the film not include them in the antislavery discourse? If not, where are they and what is their attitude to despotism? On the other hand, Moses *the pharaoh*, unlike his brother Ramses, is represented as benevolent and noble, only because he has Hebrew blood in him, and it is only after he realizes that he is of a Hebrew origin, not Egyptian, that he joins the slaves.

Another extraordinarily influential narrative about history, which shaped the US popular perception of the ME to a considerable extent, is Leon Uris‘s *Exodus* (1958), a 600-page ‗blockbuster…a run-away bestseller [that] was made into an extremely popular movie‘ (Tuerk, 2003: 587). Over the next 20 years the novel went through more than 80 printings, and sold 20 million copies (McAlister: 159). The film, especially after it was sold to 100 television stations each of which shows the film an average of twice a year, reinforced and broadened the novel‘s influence. *Exodus* reached several generations with little knowledge of the ME which was confused by a highly fictionalized and distorted history (Terry, 1985:15). *Exodus,* which has become in many ways a prototype for contemporary novels dealing with the ME (ibid: 5), examines the early history of Israel against the background of the Holocaust and through the personal and political dramas of a super hero. A Zionist fanatic Mossad asset Ari Ben Canaan, who works in smuggling Jews into Palestine, is represented as strong but gentle and intelligent, capable of enduring any hardship in the service of his cause. Critics suggest that Uris, in his attempt to destroy the image of the male Jew as a weak intellectual afraid of anything physical, created a one-sided image of the Jew as a superman and demonized the Arab (Tuerk: 588). Uris presents the very existence of Israel as a miracle because Jews survived all kinds of pogroms.

‗We outlived the Romans, and the Greeks and even Hitler. We outlived every oppressor and we will outlive the British Empire‘ (*Exodus*: 25).

As war propaganda, *Exodus* is built on multilayered strategies of fact distortion and stereotyping. To analyze the colonial/postcolonial historical facts of the ME for the last 150 years that Uris deformed, is beyond the scope of this chapter[176], but I will analyze the myths on which the novel is built. The wasteland myth prevalent in many US narratives, for example, i.e. before Israel, Palestine was an empty desert, ‗ancient and abandoned…heaps of rubble, broken walls, [or] moss-covered harbor which was in use four hundred years before the Christian era (*Exodus*: 91), and again:

> The village was as it must have been a thousand years before…The distant beauty of the village faded with each step they took nearer and was soon replaced by an overwhelming stench. Suspicious eyes watched from the fields and the houses of the village as they entered the dirt street. Life moved in slow motion in the blistering sun. The road was filled with camel and donkey excrement. Swarms of giant flies engulfed the brothers. A lazy dog lay motionless in the water of the open sewer to cool himself. *Veiled women ducked for cover into squalid one-room houses made of mud*; half the huts were in state of near collapse and held a dozen or more people, as well as pigs, chickens, mules, and goats…Straight-backed girls balanced enormous urns of water on their heads or were busy kneeling and scrubbing clothing and exchanging gossip.(ibid: 213).

The ‗returning‘ Jews are embittered by seeing ‗Their Promised Land was not the land of milk and honey but a land of festering stagnation swamps and eroded hills and rock-filled fields and unfertile earth caused by a thousand years of Arab and Turkish neglect…a land denuded of its richness…lay bleeding and fallow‘ (ibid: 216). Such images are relentlessly repeated and invoke the 19th century religious tourists‘ disappointment when they travelled to the Holy Land. But the Jews are *back to restore* it ‗They drove through the timeless Arab villages into the fertile carpet

[176] For a comprehensive review of the Middle East within the context of global 20th century history, see Richard Goff et al *The Twentieth Century: A Brief Global History*, New York: A. Knopf, 1983, also Little 2004.

of the Jezreel Valley, which the Jews had turned from swamp into the finest farmland in the Middle East. As the road wound out of the Jezreel towards Nazareth again, they moved backwards in time' (ibid: 334). Similarly, the empty land myth, miles and miles of unpeopled worthless land waiting for Israel to flourish in a new modern state, brings to mind the pioneer Westerners in the US. In fact Uris considers Arabs who were 90% of the Palestinian population, as intruders. ‗Both the film and the novel are decisively anti-Arab. The novel is simply vicious, littered with every imaginable stereotype- from Arabs who smell of goat to the once-beloved Arab who dares to desire a Jewish woman' (McAlister, 2004: 161). In fact Uris never refers to the Palestinians as such, only the Jews have the right to call themselves like that. Ironically, the novel *is* about smuggling immigrant Jews from Europe and settling them in Palestine.

Part of this racism is the sexist discourse against Palestinian women, especially when compared to the American Kitty, and the Israeli Jordana. Arab women are typically represented as both victimized and treacherous. A daughter of a poverty-stricken peasant, whom the Arab Kammal loves, suffers from trachoma, but his father the landowner refuses to help. The girl goes blind and dies at the age of eighteen. The landlord's reasoning is that Kammal can marry four beautiful women, so why bother about a miserable peasant. In Nazareth a Christian Arab beggar tries to sell Ari his virgin sister for a coin.

> He [Jossi] thought the position of Arab women intolerable; they were held in absolute bondage, never seen, never consulted. Women often *sought quick and vicious revenge by dagger or poison*. Greed and lust, hatred and cunning, shrewdness and violence, friendliness and warmth were all part of that fantastic brew that made the Arab character such an enormous mystery to an outsider (*Exodus*: 229, emphasis added).

Despite his enlightenment, Kammal's failure is that ‗he is heart and soul an Arab'. He has three wives, whom he never mentions, for the servitude of women is traditional. He can't comprehend any means of rule that is not absolute, and double dealing schemes seem perfectly legitimate to

him (227). Uris silences the Palestinian woman equally; she never speaks or does absolutely anything in the novel, and she is always spoken about. Israeli women on the other hand, are flames of intelligence, beauty, action, and above all nationalism. Jordana is ‗tall and straight, with a statuesque carriage and long shapely legs. Her red hair hanging free below her shoulders, had a striking and classic beauty' (335). She is a member of an armed organization, and her job is training child newcomers in spying, messenger work, arms cleaning and firing, stick fighting, and hiking, apart from her work on the secret radio, Voice of Israel. She gallops bareback in shorts full speed on a white Arab stallion. She sends Arab villagers scurrying for safety (336).

The *Exodus* cultural phenomenon[177] made the Zionist story of Israel an American tale of a good fight and victory. The real history of political, financial and military imperialist support for Zionists for a century is eliminated, so are the massacres committed by the Hagana, Irgun and Stern terrorist organization against entire Palestinian villages to force them out of their lands, or similar activities against Jews in other countries to force them to immigrate to Israel; all these histories are not mentioned at all. The typical colonial amnesia, the binary representation of a nation of ‗good guys' and another degenerate one, and the civilizing mission, make *Exodus* an exemplary colonial text, only in this case the colonial considers him/herself a returning native, and the native an intruder.

The bestseller-movies-mainstream media triangle is a popular cultural phenomenon that has accompanied US imperialism in the 20th century, and has served WOT. Books aimed at a

[177]Another US cultural phenomenon is Hal Lindsey's *The Late Great Planet Earth* (1970), a tiny religious book that talks about an Armageddon and a second appearance of Christ, had sold 28 million copies by 1998. 200 television stations around the country sold an hour airtime weekly for evangelical teachings, and 28% of the public claimed to watch religious broadcasts. The introduction of VCR in 1975 also expanded preaching visibility. It became a political bible for the white evangelicals, who had a passionate interest and consistent support for Zionism for more than a century. By the time Jimmy Carter was the first 20th century president to claim membership in an evangelical denomination, Lindsey had already published seven more books, selling 21million copies. It became the political bible of WOT advocates.

mass audience form and reinforce attitudes held by the public. Popular books with eye-catching colors and titles (normally with a crescent, a dagger, and a checkered *kuffiyeh*), autobiographies, instant histories[178], travel accounts[179], novels of adventure[180], of mystery and espionage[181] romances, and so forth, are sold everywhere not only in bookstore chains. They are publicized in journals, daily newspapers, and book clubs. A website of 5000 historical novels has a special link to ‗mysteries set in the Middle East' where tens of bestsellers are presented and reviewed[182]. In many of these narratives there is always a sexual component as regards Arabs, ‗they attribute greater voluptuousness to women and greater libidinous drive to the men. The unknown, exotic, or mysterious is portrayed as having an excessive sexuality…women are described as dark temptresses' who are cruelly treated (Terry, 1985: 79). Probably the most famous of the mystery genre is the British novelist and journalist John Le Carré, considered to be its contemporary master. He is well-known for his staunch opposition to WOT, which he considers sheer madness

[178] These are histories written by well-known journalists, military men, or politicians, normally lacking in documentary evidence or reference, but which assume first-hand knowledge. Ex. Moshe Dayan's *Diary of the Sinai Campaign* (New York: Harper& Row, 1966); Murdechai Gur ‗s *The Battle of Jerusalem*, (New York: Popular Library, 1974), and William Stevenson's *Strike Zion* and *Zanek*,(New York: Bantam, 1967) to mention just a few. Within WOT, accounts of Paul Bremer, Condolleezza Rice, Donald Rumsfeld are bestsellers.

[179] Ex. V.S. Naipaul's *Among the Believers* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1981), Jonathan Raban's *Arabia Through the Looking Glass* (London: William Collins, 1979); Rory Stewart's *The Places in Between* (Orlando: Harcourt Books, 2004) and *The Prince of the Marshes: And Other Occupational Hazards of a Year in Iraq* (Orlando: Harcourt Books, 2006).

[180] Ex. C.A. Haddad, *The Moroccan* (New York: Harper and Row 1975); Andrew Sugar, *Israeli Commandos* (New York: Manor Books, 1975), *The Jerusalem Conspiracy* (New York:Dell/Bryans, 1979); Maggie Smith, *The Sheik* (New York: Fawcett, 1977); Edward Radley, *The Eichmann Syndrome* (New York: Leisure Books, 1977), Vince Flynn *Protect and Defend* (London: Simon& Schuster, 1997); and Robert Baer *Blow the House Down* (New York: Crown Publishing Group: 2006).

[181] Dozens of narratives of ‗thrillers' use American and Israeli heroes fighting Arab and Russian villains with the familiar background of sexually charged background in the ME, ex. Isser Harel *Jihad* (London: Corgi, 1978); The Leonard Harris *Masada Plan ;* Alfred Coppel *The Apocalypse Bridge* (New York: Holt, 1088)*;* Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre *The Fifth Horseman* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1980)*;* and so forth…

[182] http://www.historicalnovels.info/Middle-East.html#MEMyst

(2006: 8). In his bestseller *Little Drummer Girl* (1983), he presents for the first time in American popular literature conflicting emotions and historical motivation behind the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. An English actress, Charlie, is recruited by the Mossad to infiltrate the Palestinian Liberation Organization. Charlie is torn between guilt over the Holocaust and belief in Israel, and her sympathy with the Palestinians. Le Carré shows similar ambivalence, although he presents a realistic account, where ‗bulldozers were brought in to bury the bodies and complete what the tanks and the artillery bombing raids had started…thousands of dead…only the chicken and the tangerine orchard remained' (1983:425). This ambivalence towards the ME will be elaborated further in Chapter VIII. Similarly, bestsellers, especially written by well-known authors, attract attention. John Updike's *Terrorist* is an example analyzed in detail later, too.

Chapter VII

The Victim's 'Authentic' Voice

1- Azar Nafisi

When friends ask him after our first meeting what is the lady professor like? He had said ‗she is very American, like an American version of Alice in Wonderland' …It was merely a fact.

Azar Nafisi, *Reading Lolita in Tehran* (2003, 175-6)

After 9/11, a phenomenon of many bestsellers, a subgenre of diasporic (auto)biographical narratives of oppressed Muslim women spread in the US and Europe[183]. They talk about their suffering within the patriarchal misogynist cultures of Muslim societies, and support the idea that the single reason behind violent tendencies in the ME is Islam, of which women are the most miserable victims. While this idea is not new, coming from the ‗victims' themselves, it gains certain authenticity and legitimacy. After all, these are the voices of the indigenous, the insiders, not of some Orientalist Western imagination, although they manifest all its tropes. Thus they present native testimonies that confirm what the discourse of WOT claims. As bestsellers are not necessarily good literature, more often than not these writings lack literary ingenuity, intellectual insight and creative imagination, still they gain curious acclaim, and their authors get huge opportunities within political and cultural Western institutions. This chapter analyses some examples of this phenomenon to show how they serve as war propaganda through their representation of women in the ME as monolithic oppressed victims badly in need of Western rescue.

[183] According to Jelodar et al, nearly six hundred books of this type have been published since 2000 (2011, 36).

One of the most famous of these examples is Azar Nafisi‗s memoir *Reading Lolita in Tehran* (2003), the author‗s personal account of her two-decade academic life as a professor of English literature at universities in the Islamic Republic of Iran. It achieved surprising success, even for its author, immediately after it was published. It ‗has been on the *New York Times* bestseller list for over one hundred and seventeen weeks, has been translated into more than thirty-two languages and has won a number of prominent awards (Mahmood, 2008: 85). Tens of articles have been written about it in different international periodicals. Politically, Nafisi has openly supported the Bush agenda of regime change in other countries after Iran was considered part of the ‗axis of evil‗, and has deep links with leading neoconservative think tanks and figures such as Bernard Lewis and Fuad Ajami, both prominent ideologues of WOT. She was also given a prestigious position in the Johns Hopkins School of International Studies. She publishes in the biggest American dailies including *The New York Times, The Washington Post* and *The Wall Street Journal*. She has become an activist and is regularly invited to talk in many international conferences on the Middle East, apart from radio and TV shows, according to her official website.

Nevertheless, *Reading Lolita in Tehran* has also been fiercely critiqued by several scholars on the basis of inaccuracy (Mardani 2008); of Nafisi being a comprador intellectual for hire and a native informer (Dabashi, 2011); of deforming and defaming Iranian culture (Keshavarz, 2007); of Orientalist feminism in the service of WOT (Bahramitash, 2005), of literary triviality (Lewis-Kraus 2006), of using the tropes of freedom and gender equality to facilitate the Euro-American interventions in the ME and of liberal feminist complicity in their schemes (Mahmood, 2008), of distorting truths and presenting selective reality processed

through her ideological, political and class stands, and portraying the Muslim woman as a virtual prisoner (Milani, 2008), and so forth.

Although *RLT* is a quite simple narrative, it is problematic on many levels. Its literary genre, for example, hesitates between fiction and non-fiction: memoirs (in which case the reader expects factual, chronological presentations, especially as it is avowedly political) and novel (where inventions distance the author from the narrator). The title page says it is a memoir, but the following page says ‗The facts in this *story* are true insofar as any memory is ever truthful‘ and in the epilogue she says ‗Each morning I wake up and put my veil on… and become a part of what is called reality, I also know of another ‗I‘ that has become naked on the pages of a book: in a *fictional* world‘ (343, emphasis added). We don‘t know, for example, if one of the main characters in the book, the magician, is real or imaginary, as the author/narrator herself doubts his existence. Mardani accuses her of using ‗quotes and references which are inaccurate, misleading, or even wholly invented‘ (2008: 179), the most flagrant of which is a non-existent Iranian organization called Islamic Jihad. Nafisi claims that some of her students were among its members; or when she repeatedly claims that the chief film censor in Iran was physically blind, again such a kafkaesque character in fact does not exist (ibid: 185). She claims that there is a law that obliges non-Muslim restaurant owners to put up a sign saying ‗Religious Minority‘, because a good Muslim considers them dirty when in fact there is no such law (Jelodar et al, 2011:41), among many other examples of misinformation.

What is problematic about *RLT* is more than invalidated or fabricated information, because in totalitarian theocracies, ideology blinded censors do exist, so does brutality against dissenting organizations. The Iranian ultra-theocratic regime does impose stringent rules on

people, especially women, and Nafisi‘s resistance is genuine in this respect. But in the process she generalizes and exaggerates to the point of consciously distorting reality in the interest of the official US discourse. She represents what she sees with her *mind‘s eye*. In *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (1961), Wayne Booth has shown that objectivity in narration is impossible. Nafisi‘s stand is overtly prejudiced. Still, her point of view is essential because her positionality (class, gender, religion and personal traits) is pivotal in determining her representation of Iranian women, and by extension Middle Easterners, and their agency. In this aspect, Nafisi represents a flesh and blood embodiment of Frantz Fanon‘s black man in *Black Skin, White Masks* (1967), as demonstrated below.

According to her autobiography, *Things I Have Been Silent About: Memories of a Prodigal Daughter* (2008), Nafisi comes from an extremely wealthy and previously privileged family of the Pahlavi era. Her mother, a French educated housewife who later became a member of parliament, ‗boasted that she was a descendant of the Qajar Kings (1794-1925)…I would picture her coming down the stairs in her red chiffon dress…her hair immaculately done‘, with all her jewelry, French perfumes, travels, parties and so forth (*TIHBSA* 6-8). Similarly, her father, a mayor of Tehran, would boast of being a descendant of Ibn-Nafis, a physician and philosopher of the 13th century, and of being close to the Shah, ‗these distinguished ancestors…only after the revolution did my family‘s past suddenly become important to me‘ (ibid: 44). She was brought up in a high-class-conscious home, where ‗distant relatives hoping to cultivate high connections and former functionaries who had fallen from grace‘ would visit (ibid: 42). As a child her problems were of being forced to eat fruit and of a nanny she detested. As a teenager, she was educated in a prestigious school in Switzerland, in England and, later, the US where she would live on and off until 1979 when she returned to Iran with a PhD in English

literature. Her house maid ‗would sometimes join in and tell us stories about *her part of town*' (*RLT*: 58, emphasis added).

Politically, she and her family have supported the nationalist political line of the Qajars and especially the Pahlavis who, following the example of Turkey's Ataturk, tried to modernize Iran by discarding the Islamic identity and introducing Western science, technology and culture, changing the name of Persia to Iran (land of Aryans), and maintaining close relations with Britain and later the US. Nafisi claims that her literary bible is *Shahnameh* (Book of Kings) (*TIHBSA*:14-21), a national epic written in the tenth century by the classical Iranian poet Ferdowsi, who narrated the history of Persia since the creation down to the Islamic conquest in the 7th century,

> [A] most humiliating defeat that marked the end of the ancient Persian Empire and the shift of our religion from Zoroastrianism to Islam…The Arabs were pervasive conquerors…they insisted on an almost perfect annihilation of Persian culture, especially the written word... many Persians turned to embrace those whom they considered wild barbarians. Ferdowsi sought to convert and interrogate an irretrievable past…the passing of a great civilization… I would return time and again… to this poet in order to trace the invisible thread that had led to the creation of the Islamic state (ibid 17-18)

Apart from her social and ideologically haughty positionality, Nafisi has a deep sense of cultural superiority towards her people due to her education in Europe and the US, and her conscious cultural belongingness to the West, repeatedly confirmed throughout *RLT*. She has internalized the same cultural superiority that Western colonialists and Orientalists show towards the ME, and projects it as her own. Moreover, her feeling of superiority towards Iranians simultaneously reflects a deep sense of inferiority towards the West, and she assumes the moral responsibility of elevating her people from their misery by exposing them to Western culture. This feeling of cultural superiority is enforced by her family's alleged intellectual history, and

authority as a professor, ‗My students were more respectful, less aggressive than I had been when I argued a point- they were talking to their professor after all‘ (*RLT* 113). Fanon tells us that the black man who has been to the *métropole* is a demigod…he returns home to be deified‘ (1967, 5). The superior/inferior stance explains the admittedly obsessive and passionate admiration of English literature, glaringly visible in *RLT*. At the same time, one of the major critiques of *RLT* is her absolute disregard for Iranian literature, classic and modern. She complains that in Iran ‗the censor was the poet‘s rival in rearranging and reshaping reality…where any merit to literary works is denied‘ (25).

A part of her infatuation with the West and high-class consciousness is her rituals which she demonstrates self-congratulatingly: long morning showers and mugs of coffee, ham sandwiches, vacations in the mountains and seaside, curtainless windows; ‗until I was finally *reminded* that this is an Islamic country and windows needed to be dressed‘ (*RLT*: 6, emphasis added), her father‘s photo in *Paris Match* with General De Gaulle, who ‗had taken a special liking to him after my father‘s welcoming speech, which was delivered in French and filled with allusions to great French writers such as Chateaubriand and Victor Hugo‘ (ibid:45). As such she is also a typical example of Elleke Boehmer‘s colonized elites: ‗Nationalists in particular reached for that which was progressive, ‗modern‘, and improving in a Western sense as vehicles of political mobilization…They mimicked Europeans and were ridiculed for their mimicry‘ (2005:111). Nafisi‘s representation of Iran is unabashedly that of an outsider, even touristic: the detailed description of typical Iranian tea glasses: ‗*slim-waisted* whose honey-colored liquid *trembles seductively*‘ (*RLT*, 20, emphasis added to highlight the Orientalist shade). She describes Tehran‘s streets, libraries, airport, Persian gardens in a *National Geographic* introductory style, of weekend days being Thursday and Friday, of the chador (the typical Iranian veil) and aborted

handshakes with the opposite sex (ibid, 98), the typical Iranian dance, her shock at the low academic standards in Iranian universities (ibid, 31) and several other examples. In fact she repeatedly reminds us that she does not feel at home in Iran, a feeling that she never experienced in the US (ex. *RLT*, 145).

Essential to Nafisi's outsider stance is language. Nafisi writes in English, not in Persian. This is not because she doubts that Persian is capable of conveying her ideas and images; on the contrary, one of her reasons for admiring Ferdowsi is his important role in preserving the Persian language. She has written and published in Persian before. It is because writing in English makes her get ‗whiter…closer to becoming a true human being' (Fanon, 1967, 2) and because in *RLT*, she does not need to write in Persian as she is not addressing her people, she is *reporting* on them to an English-speaking audience, a crucial point in the rescue theme. She is well aware that the majority of Iranian women, whom she is supposedly helping out, but whose voice is actually absent in the book, would not be able to read it (also because it would be banned inside Iran as it presents an enormously negative image of the regime). Thus, even the theory of the transformative capacity of literature through imagination - a theory she diligently advocates throughout the book in her pursuit of changing the hearts and minds of Iranian women through Anglo-American novels- is annulled by her choice of a foreign language for the very women she supposedly targets. But ‗The primary target of this propaganda is first and foremost the Americans themselves…ordained to rescue the world from its evils…Western civilization, Western literature, even the English language become the vehicle of this humanitarian mission to rescue Muslim women (Dabashi 2011, 18).

Critics have universally highlighted Nafisi‘s bias against and contempt of her native Persian culture in the interest of the West. I would suggest that, as much as she shows off her superior Western culture, still she assumes a vehement nationalist countenance. She proudly and repeatedly glorifies the Persian culture and language in *Things I Have Been Silent About*, although she barely shows that in *RLT*. What she is against and despises is Islam *per se,* a major constituent of Iranian culture, and against what she considers a second Iranian betrayal of their own ancient religion (Zoroastrianism) in the interest of a historical enemy: Islam, and a usurper regime: the Islamic Revolution

> [W]hen the Arabs attacked Iran they won because the Persians themselves had betrayed their king and opened the doors to their enemies…*in a sense we had done it again.* This time we had opened the gates not to foreign invaders but to domestic ones, to those who had come to us *in the name of our past but who had now distorted every inch of it* and robbed us of Ferdowsi and Hafez. (*RLT*, 172 emphasis added)

Her grudge against Islam and the Iranian Muslim people is neither philosophical nor feminist; it appears to be personally motivated. The Islamic revolution deprived her of previous economic and social privileges, which is too hard for a woman who, according to her autobiography, is brought up on her word being heard and her wishes being fulfilled. It is especially humiliating because she disdains Arab Muslims whom she holds responsible for the fall of Persia. At least twenty times throughout the book, Nafisi repeats that she acutely feels *irrelevant*. She joins some Iranian nationalists who believe that the Islamic conquest with its ‗backwardness' had perverted Persian culture. ‗[W]e had become the figments of someone else‘s dreams. A stern ayatollah, a self-proclaimed philosopher-king, had come to rule our land…Was it any consolation, and did we even wish to remember, that what he did to us was what we allowed him to do?‘ (*RLT*: 28).

This standpoint puts Nafisi directly in the heart of the discourse of war on terrorism, and explains her harmony with all its claims to the smallest details. Iranian scholars who critique Nafisi suggest that Persian culture before Islam had been great indeed, and that Islam added to (rather than destroyed) it, because historical facts show that the Islamic Iran produced the most prominent masterpieces of its literary and scientific achievements (including *Shahnameh*) and made enormous contributions to Islamic culture. In any case, she repeatedly ridicules the cultural production of Islamic Iran, ‗this saccharine rhetoric, putrid and deceptive hyperbole, reeked of too much cheap rosewater' (ibid, 172), its aesthetic impotence, its music ‗people without the least knowledge of music are running around calling themselves musicians' (ibid, 301), and the whole educational system: ‗this revolution has emptied [students'] heads of any form or thought, and our own intelligentsia, the cream of the crop, is no better' (ibid, 200). She has the financial recourses that enable her to morally outbid her colleagues and resign over principles, a privilege beyond many of them.

Given the fact that Nafisi is a teacher of literature, what is striking in *RLT* is her negligence and disregard of its history, and more importantly, of decades of postcolonial, Orientalist, and feminist literatures, several of which are cited in previous chapters here. The scholarly achievements in deconstructing colonial discourse and its fantasies, and opening the eyes of the colonized to its tropes and mechanisms, are simply non-existent to Nafisi. She is not ignorant though, she does refer to the ‗myth of Islamic feminism' but she quickly dismisses it as an oxymoronic phrase, so that *they* ‗could claim to be progressive and Islamic' (ibid, 262). She

does refer to Edward Said's postcolonial critique of *Mansfield Park*[184], but from the mouth of Mr. Nahvi, the most stupid and insensitive character of the book, nicknamed ‗the Mr. Collins of the university', after Elizabeth's flunkey cousin in *Pride and Prejudice* (*RLT*, 290-91). Through such reductionist dismissing, and the whole blind stance to half a century of postcolonial literatures, Nafisi ridicules not only Islamic culture and religion, but she implicitly erases whole histories of peoples' struggle of national independence, for no obvious reason apart from appeasing the American advocates of its imperialist wars.

As a memoir, *RLT* has a curious plot as it is narrated through specific novels. She justifies her choices of those specific writers in a way that leads to discrediting Islamic Iranian culture as a whole, including its secular production. Although the title suggests an Iranian interpretation of an American novel, *Lolita*; the book is in fact a reading of Islam *through the keyhole* of Western literature. Dabashi deconstructed the cover picture and found ‗a tantalizing addition of an oriental twist to the most notorious case of pedophilia in modern literary imagination' (2006). The cover shows two Muslim girls interestedly reading -the title suggests- *Lolita*; and evokes ‗one of the most common clichés of the desirable orient: the under-aged men and women' Dabashi says, a theme that has been thoroughly theorized by Malek Alloula in *The Colonial Harem* (1987), where he ‗uncovers the nature and the meaning of the colonial gaze, and subverts the stereotype that is so tenaciously attached to the bodies of women' (5) through deconstructing tens of postcards and photographs of Algerian women, sent by French soldiers, colonialists, and tourists back home. In fact the picture on the cover of *RLT* was taken from a news report, and the

[184] In *Culture and Imperialism* (1994), Said shows how the position of Sir Thomas Bertram in England is sustained by his position in Antigua as an owner of a plantation maintained by the ‗uncivilized' slaves (80-97), as discussed in Chapter VI, here.

girls were actually on campus reading a newspaper where the election results had appeared, other students and election posters could be seen in the background. By lifting the picture from its background, and framing it within the ‗Lolita' theme, the publisher ‗strips the girls of their moral intelligence and their participation in the democratic aspirations of their homeland, ushering them into a colonial harem' (Dabashi, ibid).

The text of *RLT* does exactly the same. It chops selected slices of reality, re-edits and represents them in a way that serves the author's message of informing about the miserable condition of women in Islamic Iran. The book is divided into four parts; each demonstrates an aspect of Iranian social and political life narrated in the light shed by English literature, British or American novelists: Nabokov, Fitzgerald, James and Austen, which is an extremely problematic angle to approach one's and other's identities. The protagonist/ narrator, after resigning or being fired from three Iranian universities, and feeling irrelevant, creates a private class for seven girls whom *she chooses*. They meet on Thursdays in the professor's living room to discuss English and American novels of the 19th and 20th centuries; ‗that living room became a sanctuary, our self-contained universe, mocking the reality of black-scarved, timid faces in the city that sprawled below' (*RLT*, 6).

Nafisi builds a binary world of her living room on one hand, and of the city below on the other, and maintains it to the end. Imitating Nabokov's technique of demonstrating banality and brutality in *The Real Life of Sebastian Knight,* where Sebastian discovers two pictures in his dead brother's library *RLT* opens with two photographs of a group of seven women. In the first they are veiled, in the second they are not. ‗I could not get over the shock of seeing them shed their mandatory veils and robes and burst into color' she says ‗ When my students came into that

room, they took off more than their scarves and robes… each one gained an outline and a shape, becoming her own inimitable self‛ (ibid, 6). It is as if the scarf makes the girls invisible to her, echoing the Orientalist notion of the marginality of veiled women. More than any character, the living room is a protagonist, ‗a space of our own‘ (ibid, 12). It is not Foucault‘s limited and peripheral space of the ‗other‘ within the bigger space of the same, on the contrary, for her the living room becomes the open space (through Western literary imagination) of the same against the limited space of the ‗Other‘ (the Iranians). The timing of creating the class two years before leaving the country, the way Nafisi keenly keeps her notes/minutes, how she chooses/recruits the girls, watches them and registers their smallest reactions and comments, give the impression that the class is organized specifically to document important information and impressions for some future project. In this sense the book is not written in hindsight, and the living room is actually a workshop. At a goodbye meeting before she leaves for the US, her intimate friend, the magician, tells her: ‗Don‘t ever write this [her feelings] in your book…we don‘t need your truths but your fiction- if you are any good, perhaps you can trickle in some sort of truth, but spare us your feelings‘ (ibid, 338).

The living room is spacious, sparsely and incongruously furnished, with paintings leaning against the wall and vases of flowers on the floor, reflecting the childish spontaneity of its owner who refuses to act as a grown-up lady (ibid, 7). It is on the second floor, symbolically emphasizing the *de haut en bas* position, looking on ‗the former American hospital, once small and exclusive, now noisy, overcrowded…with visitors who came as if for a picnic with sandwiches and children‘ (ibid, 8), children who would attack the neighbor‘s garden and destroy his beloved roses, while mothers shout, call names, and threaten with punishment. She sits with her back to the window, thus could only see the outside world as a reflection framed on an

antique mirror on the opposite wall. Significantly it was a gift from her father, ‗which intensified my impression that the noise came from some far-off place we refused to acknowledge (ibid, 8), the outside world where ‗bad witches and furies were waiting to transform us into hooded creatures' (ibid, 24).

The class becomes ‗an attempt to escape the gaze of the blind censor…to create our own little pocket of freedom' a ‗place of transgression' ((ibid, 25, 8) where the eight women can enjoy tea party gossip, wear their make-up, bright lipstick and nail polish and where they can shake their abundant hair from side to side freely while they read and discuss English novels. It is hardly ‗transgressive' to wear make-up and to discard the veil indoors, as it is common in conservative Islamic communities. For a reader in the ME, Nafisi's endeavor is hopelessly quixotic, an unintentional masterpiece parody of feminist struggle, ‗all the necessary components were there: Misty windows, steaming mugs of coffee, a crackling fire, languorous cream puffs, thick wool sweaters, and the mingling smells of smoke, coffee and oranges' (ibid, 257). For an American or European reader, brought up on Orientalist representations of Muslim women, what she creates is no more than a modern harem excluded in their walled spaces, deprived of their simplest rights of individual freedom, waiting to be saved by American knights. Ironically, Nafisi gives the impression of creating some dangerous underground society. She is even worried that one of her students might betray her (ibid, 3). The fact is that all the novels discussed inside this ‗secret society' are actually taught in Iranian universities, as she herself says, and indeed she had actually published a book on Nabokov *inside Iran*. Afary and Anderson describe the intellectual atmosphere in Tehran as the following

> During a visit to Tehran in the spring of 2005, we were impressed by the degree of intellectual freedom Iranians had carved out within the Islamic Republic. The numerous bookstores on Enqelab Avenue across from Tehran University carried an array of newly

> translated books by Immanuel Kant, Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud, Hannah Arendt and Michel Foucault, among others. A lecture on ‗Foucault and Feminism' at Alzahra Women's University elicited enthusiastic responses, including one from a high university official clad from head to toe in a black chador. A visit to the literary editors of the country's most prestigious newspaper, *Shargh* (daily circulation 100,000), led to a conversation that ranged easily from religion and politics to Continental philosophers like Foucault, Theodor Adorno and Giorgio Agamben… Of course this was not the whole picture (2007).

Indeed, this is not to say that Iranian people enjoy all kinds of freedom, or that Iranian women have gained all their rights, rather it is to show how Nafisi abuses a legitimate cause of fighting for democracy and freedom of expression to serve an illegitimate cause of foreign intervention by using stereotypical images prevalent in the Western media. She draws an illusionary line between two worlds of her own creation, and relentlessly applies a dichotomous technique dividing everything into two paradoxical camps, which I would call the politics of exclusion and omission[185]. Iranian people, for example, are either pre-revolution, Western educated and oriented (often well-off) or ‗villains', pro Islamic revolution and ayatollahs. We hardly find any other people outside these two categories. In both of her books, people outside the high-class category do not exist, and if they do, they appear as voiceless servants, notorious moral squads, ridiculed or pedophilic mullahs on one hand, and their victims on the other, such as Rezieh, a poor, brilliant girl executed by the regime.

Similarly, students are either like hers, well-off and wholly committed to the study of English literature who ‗would stay on and sit in on her classes long after they graduate' or ‗regular students who take classes for credit' ‗who thought an English degree would be a good career move' (ibid, 20, 10); girls are either ‗loners who do not belong…who survive because of their solitary lives' (ibid, 12) or obedient who conform to the regime and veil; such as the girls of

[185] Mahmood refers to selective omissions (2008:91), and Dabashi to selective memory (2006, 2011).

Allamah Tabatabaii university: ‗Most of these girls have never had any one praise them for anything. They have never been told that they are any good or that they should think independently' (ibid, 221). Authors are those who believe in the magical power of literature or those who don't, like an ignorant foremost Iranian novelist she calls Mr. Davaii, who does not know who wrote *Daisy Miller* or that James died in 1916 (ibid, 201). Even within English (and world) literature, subversive writers[186] are excluded. Readers are either good who ‗inhale' literature, or ordinary who simply read. The first group is of the distinguished, the elite and well off, like herself, the students she chooses for her class, and the magician, the *same part* that is thoroughly represented as the whole. The second category is ‗them', often referred to in italics or between inverted comas, even when articulated by her five-year daughter, the *Other group* that is excluded and/or deleted.

The first part of *RLT* which is dedicated to Nabokov, sets the grounds for the book's two major interrelated themes: women's victimization by the clerics' regime represented as unbelievably regressive and oppressive, and the theory of emancipation through literary imagination. In this sense, Nafisi rightly refers to Scheherazade of the *Thousand and One Nights* who saved her life and all the girls' of her city by sheer narration. Confronting a certain death at the hand of a brutal king who, betrayed by his wife, decided to revenge himself against all women by marrying a virgin every night and killing her the next morning, Scheherazade decided to marry him and instead of using her female beauty to save herself and her sisters' lives, she distracted him every night by starting a story and not finishing it until the following, for a

[186] Dabashi refers to generations of Iranians who were tortured and brutalized under both the Shah and Khomeini regimes because they were in possession of texts by, say, Brecht, Ibsen, Gorky, Arthur Miller, Jack London, Mayakovsky, Nazim Hikmat, Pablo Neruda, Faiz Ahmad Faiz, Mahmoud Darwish and so forth (2011: 77).

thousand and one nights. Thus, she went out to confront the enemy in its den, armed by nothing but stories of her own culture. Scheherazade�017s feminist agency is an act of fighting by narration, which would perfectly fit in Nafisi‘s theory of transformation-through-imagination, because the king finally changes his mind and is actually cured of his obsession. Scheherazade was telling her own story, in her own language, addressing her own people in her successful task of saving them.

Unlike Scheherazade, Nafisi does not seem to be threatened by any one, after all nothing happens to her. In fact she could travel to America and Europe to give lectures and participate in conferences and return home without any problem. She could have walks in Tehran streets and meet with her male friends in cafés. Yet she seeks an escape, a hiding place for herself and her students from a brutal regime through literature of a different, supposedly superior culture. She looks at herself and her people, and judges them as good or evil through those borrowed narrations. Her ‗girls‘ recognize the regime‘s hypocrisy and oppose it. They are already convinced from the very beginning, and they *all* want to leave the country to go to America (ibid, 32). In fact the living room becomes a hall of mirrors where she herself is reflected on the students‘ faces, except one: the religious Mahshid, discussed shortly. They do not change due to their exposure to the light of English novels. In fact all the people seem frustratingly one-dimensional and static, they are beyond any possibility of change. However, one of the subordinate characters, Miss Ruhi, who is of the villains‘ category, does change. We meet her twice in the book. At first, she is a rigid pro regime student activist in Allamah Tabatabai‘ University, who joins some militia and almost terrorizes professor Nafisi with her moral observations against Henry James‘s Daisy. On the second occasion, quite at the end of the book, we meet her again. She is now the mother of a baby girl. She runs into her professor and tells her

that she had had fun in class, and she now has changed her opinion to the point that she secretly names her baby Daisy. Nafisi fails to show how this villain changes her mind and heart so dramatically.

Similar to the nightmarish world of the prison cell in Nabokov�घs *Invitation to a Beheading,* the principle characteristics of Islamic Iran are arbitrariness and falsehood, where the ayatollahs‘ absurdity makes their cruelty more tragic, where the only possible heroism is ‗to refuse to become like all the rest‘ (ibid, 23), which may explain her insistence on maintaining an outsider attitude as mentioned above. The only way out is Western literature (presented as world literature) that becomes a necessity, not a luxury. According to Nafisi, *all Iranian girls* are (potential) Lolitas, literally as she claims that the Islamic regime legalized pedophilia when it reduced the minimum marriage age to nine years[187], and as many of them have actually been harassed by ‗bearded and God-fearing men‘ (ibid, 27) including the young Nafisi herself (*TIHBSA:* 49-57); and metaphorically as they are all victimized by a misogynist regime which has confiscated their individual lives and left them absolutely nowhere to go, like Humbert did to the vulgar but victimized Lolita. Both Humbert and Khomeini are mythmakers, they try to fashion reality out of their dreams, and in the end they destroy both reality and dreams, according to Nafisi (*RLT*, 246).

But unlike Lolita, her students do not belong ‗to a category of victims who have no defense and are never given the chance to articulate their own story‘ (ibid, 41), they are attending that class to prevent themselves from falling victim to the second crime of silence, and

[187] According to the Iranian law ‗The minimum age of marriage in Iran is 18 for men and 16 for women and in the last year the average age when people got married was 26 for men and 23 for women‘. Payvand Iran News, April 18,2010, retrieved on August 3, 2012 from http://www.payvand.com/news/10/apr/1174.html.

Nafisi is giving them voice, an exclusive voice. Novels of ‗the revered names of James, Nabokov, Woolf, Bellow, Austen, and Joyce…led us finally to question and prod our own realities, about which we felt so helplessly speechless' (ibid, 39). Mitra, the painter, describes her feelings about coming to the literature class: ‗She said that step by step she could feel herself gradually leaving reality behind her, leaving the dark, dank cell she lived in to surface for few hours into open air and sunshine', and Nafisi continues: ‗We felt free to discuss our pains and our joys, our personal hang-ups and weaknesses …to share so much of our secret life with one another. *Madame Bovary* had done what years of teaching at the university had not: it created a shared intimacy' (ibid, 57-8). On another occasion she advises her regular students to be sensually involved in the world of the English novel, to enter it, to hold one's breath, and empathize, ‗empathy is at the heart of the novel. This is how you read a novel. You inhale the experience. So start breathing' (ibid, 111). Mitra's description of reading Western novels as open air and sunshine, and Nafisi's recurrent reference to it as breathing are stark reminders of Fanon's description of the black man's feeling ‗the call of Europe like a breath of fresh air'. (1967, 5)

Nafisi draws a *heart-breaking* image of Iranian women's stolen lives and their utter helplessness. She tells us that Mahshid is a devout Muslim who observed the veil. Before the revolution she felt neglected and ignored in her fashionable college, but she took pride in her isolation. After the revolution the veil lost its meaning as it was imposed on everybody. Here, Nafisi presents a curious reading of voluntary veiling as a means of showing distinction, while in fact Muslim girls who choose to veil often do it out of humility and modesty, as a spiritual practice. Mahshid was jailed but that does not matter as ‗everyday life does not have fewer horrors than prison' (*RLT*, 13). She keeps her faith until the end, which puts her in awkward

situations with the others in the private class. She is presented as timid, never smiles and always lowers her eyes silently and recoils into her shell. Yassi comes from an enlightened religious family too, which was badly hurt by the revolution. Her cousins survived jail and torture but could not escape the bonds of traditional marriage. Too brilliant to be satisfied within low educational standards and ideological limitations, she suffers migraine headaches (ibid, 31). Her only friend is her uncle who lives in the States and who nurtures her dream of living there.

Manna the poet has lost her paradise: the blue swimming pool in her father‘s house which was confiscated by the regime, she dreams of swimming again. Sanaz is angry because women in her mother‘s generation (during the Shah era) could ‗walk the streets freely, enjoy the company of the opposite sex, join the police force, become pilots, live under laws that were among the most progressive in the world regarding women‘ (ibid, 27). She does not know what she wants to do with her life. Azin with her three marriages ‗because it is impossible to have boyfriends in Iran‘ (271), flirtatious looks, big golden earrings, cigarettes, and bright tomato red finger nails, suffers from a jealous husband who beats her. Mitra the painter does not suffer from any particular problem, but she shares the same nightmares with her classmates and her professor. They *all* see themselves running away for having forgotten to put on the veil. Nassrin is the daughter of an American educated mother and a father of a religious background. As a child of 11, she was sexually abused by a very pious uncle while teaching her the *Arabic* tenses, an experience which leaves her traumatized forever. Curiously, at 13 she could discuss American novels in fluent English, lead political demonstrations, and attend university classes as auditor.

Through Nabokov Nafisi analogizes Stalinist totalitarianism to Islamic Iran, *The Great Gatsby* demonstrates yet another link between the two: disillusionment, disappointment and

betrayal when the fundamentalists turned against their earlier comrades in the revolution, other parties and organizations including the leftist. Moreover, like the Islamists, ‗Gatsby wanted to fulfill a dream by repeating the past, and in the end discovered that the past was dead, the present a sham, and there was no future. Was this not similar to our revolution?' (ibid, 144). However, *Gatsby* is about the American dream; but ‗We in ancient countries have our past- we obsess over the past. They, the Americans, have a dream: they feel nostalgia about the promise of the future' (ibid, 109). The idea of Muslims being enchanted by a glorious past is a cornerstone in the discourse of WOT, as mentioned in previous chapters[188]. However, Nafisi's rejection of retrieving-the-past notion is problematic too, because she herself laments the loss of a glorious pre-Islamic Persian past, and calls for its resurrection.

But the betrayal is not only of previous comrades, more importantly it is of women.

> My students were slightly baffled by *Gatsby*. The story of an idealistic guy, so much in love with this beautiful rich girl who betrays him, could not be satisfying to those for whom sacrifice was defined by words such as *masses, revolution, and Islam*. Passion and betrayal were for them political emotions, and love far removed from the stirrings of Jay Gatsby for Mrs. Tom Buchanan. Adultery in Tehran was one of so many other crimes, and the law dealt with it accordingly: public stoning (ibid, 108, emphasis in origin)

Nafisi spends several pages to explain how she reluctantly joined the left and opposed the Shah after her father was imprisoned for embezzlement of public money, how she quickly abdicated revolutionary thought later because of ‗the lifestyle she most enjoyed and the counterrevolutionary writers she always loved' (ibid*, 85*). In this part she bitterly regrets her earlier leftist inclinations, ‗[a]rguing with my leftist students, I had a funny feeling that I was talking to a younger version of myself' (ibid, 113). She criticizes the leftists for supporting the

[188] Huntington, Lewis, and Batai cited here.

regime, especially on the veil, ‗if the leftists had come to power, they would have done the same thing' (ibid, 147). This analogy between the Islamists and the leftists is paralleled by a similar analogy with the Nazis. ‗So was wearing the yellow star in Nazi Germany' one of the students says referring to the law of veiling in Iran, ‗should all the Jews have worn the star because it was the blasted law?' and another one comments mockingly ‗don't even try to talk like that…he would call them all Zionists who deserve what they got' (ibid, 134), another basic argument of the discourse of WOT, of comparing the Islamists to Nazis.

In this part we are introduced to Mr. Bahri, the main male character of *them*, the villains' category. He is an Islamic revolutionary student who attracts his professor Nafisi by his intelligence, powerful arguments, and respectful manners, but irritates her by what she considers *his arrogance*, because he does not respond to her hints. She describes him as a ‗naturally shy and reserved young man who had discovered an absolutist refuge called Islam' (ibid, 103). Yet again, this is a typical example of a celebrated hypothesis (within the discourse of WOT) of cultural schizophrenia that Muslim men are supposed to suffer from[189]; they like liberated women but their Islamic upbringing and conservative culture prevent them from expressing their emotions openly. Nafisi uses the typical fairy tale motif of poor-boy-loves-beautiful-princess and tells us that he follows her like her shadow, secretly defends her before the authorities, and a colleague of hers refers to him as ‗the lover'. Events, however, tell us that she tries to locate him among students in the university gardens, misses him in class, and runs to him every time she is annoyed by *his* people, an implicit reminder of the colonial lady (a role Nafisi openly claims) and the colonized boy. Men in *RLT* are either stupid, hence ridiculed, abusive, aggressive,

[189] Perviously discussed: Shayegan and Lewis in Chapter III.

sexually pervert, domineering, and arrogant, or intelligent British or American educated, who see the reality of the situation but are too cowered, helpless, or indifferent to do anything about it. The only positively represented male character is the magician, a kind of nihilistic guru, ‗a perfectly equipped failure' she says, who consciously chooses failure in order to preserve his own sense of integrity (ibid, 202). He resigns from his job as a professor and artist, and keeps to his apartment. Nafisi withholds any information about her relation to him.

Peculiar illicit sexual undercurrents run throughout *RLT*. Apart from the adulterous affairs lengthily discussed through the English novels, the pervert mullahs, the pedophilic religious men, the sexually sick young men, there are the female guards who searched women from head to foot; ‗of the many sexual molestations I have had to suffer in my life, this was among the worst…[she] told me to hold my hands up, up and up, as she started to search me meticulously, going over every part of my body' (ibid, 168). There are also the repeated virginity tests, the curious relationship to the magician in whose apartment she would spend hours, have drinks and walks with in Tehran against all odds, the professors who would go out of their way to praise the virginity of Muslim girls, and Khomeini's alleged explanation of sex with animals, sadistic floggings and rapes. Even political demonstrations and mourning ceremonies are sexually described, ‗that was the first time I experienced the desperate, orgiastic pleasure of this form of public mourning: it was the one place where people mingled and touched bodies and shared emotions without restraint or guilt. There was a wild, sexually flavored frenzy in the air' (90) and again mourning Khomeini, the ceremony seemed ‗oddly sexual' (244). Living in Iran altogether ‗is like having sex with a man you loathe…you tend to forget your body, you hate your body' (329). Sexual deprivation is all over the book, most of the time connected to

violence, confirming the Orientalist cliché of eroticism and the theory of WOT that the alleged violent tendencies among Muslims are a result of sexual suppression.

Nafisi chooses to talk about the eight-year Iraqi-Iranian war (1980-1988) through Henry James, in the third part of her book. James participated in the First World War and was ‗radically transformed by it', she says (216). He became socially and politically active in supporting the British and appealing to America to join the war, on ethical grounds. ‗His affinity with England and with Europe in general, came from that sense of civilization, a tradition of culture and humaneness' (ibid). Both the WWI and the Iraqi–Iranian war were generally described as meaningless, including by Nafisi herself. Thus praising James's stance on the WWI is highly problematic, especially coming from a Middle Easterner. It was precisely in the name of humaneness and civilization (liberating the ME from the Ottoman Empire) that in the WWI the imperialist powers of the time divided the region into colonial protectorates among themselves, *gave* Palestine to the Zionists, and started long wars that cost its peoples millions of lives for a century to come, apart from the twenty millions that were lost during that war[190].

James gets the longest part of the book, a hundred pages in which Nafisi covers many topics: her expulsion from the university and her eventual return after she was summoned and *pressured* by colleagues to *save* the young from corrupt ideologies, and English literature (in Iran) from a hopeless condition (ibid, 179-80, emphasis added); the beginning of her writing career; the disillusionment of young revolutionaries, and most importantly her trauma with

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[190] According to the Sykes-Picot agreement between the United Kingdom and France (May 16, 1916), the Middle East was divided into colonial zones between the two; http://wwi.lib.byu.edu/index.php/Sykes-Picot_Agreement, (retrieved on August 2, 2012); and the Balfour Declaration (November 2, 1917), in which the British Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour promised Walter Rothschild, a leader of the British Jewish community, a Jewish homeland in Palestine: ‗His Majesty's government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object' (See Jonathan Schneer, *The Balfour Declaration: The Origins of the Arab-Israeli Conflict,* London: Bloomsbury, 2010), pp 152-163.

veiling. She gives us the story of Rezieh, a James fan who was executed, Mina, a James scholar who was expelled, Nessrin another fan who was arrested for joining the opposition, and Nima, a gentleman who is studying James, who would hold roses and march in front of her house in protest for not being included in the private class.

Nafisi chooses *Daisy Miller* and *Washington Square* to talk about courageous girls who defy conventions, but James proves to be too challenging for *Other* students who cannot make up their minds if Daisy is good or bad. The villains, hostile and ignorant, find her immoral and unreasonable. Good students are not sure or too timid to talk. James solves the problem, according to *RLT*, through the struggle for the power of culture, through the ‗independence of thought', through resisting socially accepted norms to achieve integrity and recognition, and above all through creating the reader's own ‗counter reality' (213-16), all through Western literature. The Iranian regime is like Catherine's father in *Washington Square*, it lacks compassion and empathy, and it takes moral courage to resist it, although it may cost life and happiness. Why would students in Islamic Iran solve their existential problems by creating counter realities through the narration of an imperialist war advocate a century ago? Nafisi fails to explain.

Jane Austen's part demonstrates many Orientalist aspects. Expectedly, it is all feminine fun: stories of love, marriage, passion, reading fortune in coffee cups, gossip, Persian lusty and flirtatious dance ‗in a way Miss Daisy Miler and her likes could never dream of ‗(Ibid, 268) and so on. Austen is invoked to satirize Muslim men and marriage laws in Islamic Iran, compared to late 18th century England and the Shah's Iran, both presented as far more progressive. The chapter opens with a sarcastic parody of Austen's opening sentence in *Pride and Prejudice*: ‗It is

a truth universally acknowledged that a Muslim man, regardless of his fortune, must be in want of a nine-year-old virgin wife' (ibid, 257). The ‗good old days' of the Shah are remembered throughout the book, when ‗there was little difference between my rights and the rights of women in Western democracies. We all wanted opportunities and freedom…By the time my daughter was born…the laws had regressed to what they had been before my grandmother's time' (ibid, 261). All the evils prevalent in the discourse of WOT regarding Muslim women are listed here: veiling, young and temporary marriages, stoning and flogging and so forth. This is because the Iranian revolution came in the name of the past, to which the supposedly democratic aspect of Austen's novels lay, because of the spaces for opposition she opens. Nafisi also presumes a dangerous position for herself as one of the self-appointed guardians of Iranian culture (ibid, 276). Abusive attitudes towards women exist all over the world, regardless of cultures, and Iran is no exception. But the problem with *RLT* is that abusive realities are the only ones highlighted here.

In fact what Nafisi does in *RLT is dangerous*. By presenting women's freedom on individual levels in selected Western literary texts, and using them as a starting point to attack Iranians through tendentious interpretations and harsh criticism, she puts fundamentalists on the defensive and gives them ammunition for counterattacking the notion of Western women's freedom, and for glorifying Muslim women as guardians of tradition and family on moral grounds, a standpoint that misrepresents both Western and Iranian women. Couples in Nabokov, Gatsby and James's novels have complicated relationships precisely because they are illicit, decadent or transgressive, and social relations in Austen's world are void of any political or economic analysis, while colonial Britain was actually controlling the world's seas and lands. Nafisi confirms the stereotypical image of Western women that Muslim communities have as no

more than commodified and undignified bodies, and morally lenient. Thus, her students would slip papers under her office door calling her immoral names, or would vehemently argue against her, defending Muslim girls' modesty.

To sum up, Nafisi consistently demonizes her people and ridicules their culture, especially men, for no stated reason apart from the fact that they are Muslims, framing them either as fanatics belonging to the regime, or as victims. They are stereotypically represented as misogynist, violent and sexually deviant. Thus she plays an essential role in the propaganda for WOT by justifying an imperialist project and giving it a humanitarian face: removing the thugs and saving their victims. Her message is enforced by an even worse misrepresentation of women as passive, doubly victimized by a fanatical regime and worthless men protected by laws of a backward religion and the patriarchal culture it propagates. But the girls whose souls she chooses to save are all from the upper middle-class; bright girls from the English department of Tehran university. Other women are deliberately excluded from her representation. Nafisi feels alienated among poor students from Al-Zahra *girls'* university who could not understand James's heroines, so she decides to leave them in darkness forever. She also excludes students whom she does not consider committed enough to English literature, or who are from other departments, colleges and universities (over two hundred of them in Iran, according to Mardani, 182). Also excluded are women who do not have a university education, and women from her maid's ‗part of town, *whose language she does not know well* (*RLT*, 64, my emphasis), too vulgar for her taste. Iranian women writers, artists and activists are completely absent. All these women do not belong to Nafisi's category, and their voices have to be silenced, otherwise they would tell a different story, not necessarily of passive victims. Her privileged voice dims the others', indeed silences it. In this sense, her voice is literally of Macaulay's ‗class of persons, Indians [in this

case Iranians] in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect' (Spivak, 1988: 283).

According to Bahramitash, Iranian women experienced the Revolution differently depending on their social class. The *hijab,* for example, is not necessarily a frustrating restriction as it is for Nafisi and her students. For the majority of rural and urban Iranian women of low income, it provided them the opportunity to enter the very public space from which they had been excluded before, precisely because they wore the chador (2005, 234). Many Muslim women all over the world, who reject veiling as a matter of principle, put it on for practical reasons if necessary to go out to study or work. Others keep it for economic reasons. But most Muslim women choose to veil as a spiritual practice and out of religious humility, as mentioned above. Moreover, Nafisi sarcastically mentions that leftist and educated Iranian women voluntarily veiled in the early years of the revolution as a symbolic political resistance to the Shah's dictatorship (ibid, 97), and in support of massive women's participation. Bahramitash gives much data from international reports that defy Nafisi's monolithic representation of Iranian women. Illiteracy among young women, for example, declined from 55% in 1970 to 8.70% in 1999, while 60% of Iranian students of higher education are girls. Bahramitash accuses Nafisi of supporting Islamphobia and Iranphobia in the name of feminist heroism.

Completely absent from Nafisi's partial representation too is any hint of the historical, economic, or political background of the people's and women's struggles in Iran, let alone in other countries. In fact she wipes out a whole history of resistance against the military dictatorship of the Shah, who was one of the West's strongest allies in the ME, whose era she praises as democratic and women friendly; and at the same time she uses the tyranny of

totalitarian theocracy to justify her backlash against her own people, for the purpose of inviting a foreign intervention. In *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), Edward Said shows how the political and the cultural overlap in the colonial imagination, how ‗the power to narrate, or block other narratives from forming and emerging, is very important to culture and imperialism, and constitutes one of the main connections between them' (xiii).

2- Khaled Hosseini

This book [A Thousand Splendid Suns] helped me decide on what I want to do with my life which is help those women in Africa, Iraq, Afghanistan, Turkey, and whereever else they are starved, tortured and deprived. I may not be able to save every woman but I will lay down at night knowing I did my best.

Anonymous American Student[191]

The only enemy an Afghan can't defeat is himself

A Thousand Splendid Suns

According to his official website, Khaled Hosseini's father was an Afghan diplomat and his mother a high school teacher. While his father was an ambassador to Paris, the 1978 coup d'état and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (1979) took place. The Hosseinis were granted political asylum in the United States. He became a medical doctor in 1993. His first novel, *The Kite Runner* (2003) has become an international bestseller, a contemporary classic, published in 70 countries. His second novel, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007) is currently published in 60 countries. He has been working to provide humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan.

The Kite Runner is a semi-autobiography where Hosseini presents his version of recent Afghanistan history, from the final days of the monarchy in 1973 to 9/11. Historically, Afghanistan is an emblematic example of Third World countries marred by the conflicts between two super powers during the Cold War. During the monarchy, there were desultory attempts to modernize the country on the Western model, and after that, progressive attempts to build it on

[191] A commentry on John M. Formy-Duval's review of *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, published on Contemporary Literature website http://contemporarylit.about.com/od/fiction/fr/1000suns.htm, retrieved September 2, 2012.

the Soviet model. In both cases the traditional and religious elites were alienated. The Soviets supported the government, and the US supported the *Mujahedeen* (religious fighters) militarily, politically and financially. Both ideologies failed to contain the country‘s ethnic diversity and devastated it beyond repair. Hosseini represents the two decade wars as communist and Islamist aggressions, referred to as the red and the green menace within the discourse of WOT, excluding absolutely any role for the US in maintaining them, a role recurrently documented in any book on the modern history of Afghanistan[192]. According to Hosseini, *The Kite Runner* is, in fact, built on the idea of the US abandoning Afghanistan after the Soviet withdrawal in 1989, as discussed below.

On one level, it is a story of two friends, Amir and Hassan. Amir (prince)[193] the son of one of the richest men in Kabul close to king Zahir Shah (1933-73) and a grandson of a judge closely related to king Nadir Shah (1929-33). Amir‘s mother too was of royal blood. Hassan (good), the son of their servant, is a member of the demeaned Hazara ethnic minority. *The Kite Runner‘s* reviewers agree that it is a *bildungsroman*: Amir‘s trajectory through sin and redemption, highlighting the old fashion of story-telling, with its cliché plotting, flashbacks, foreshadowings, and implicit reassurance that justice would ultimately prevail. Often, the emotional scenes are of soap opera melodrama, and ‗embarrassingly hokey [=too sentimental] scenes that feel as if they were lifted from a B movie' (Kakutani, 2007). Another reviewer says that Hosseini writes ‗popular fiction of the first rank, which is plenty good enough, but it is not literature and should not be mistaken for such�' (Yardley, 2007). But no reviewer, yet, has

[192] See for example Angelo Rasanayagam *Afghanistan: A Modern History*, especially Chapter 9 ‗Pakistan, the United States, and the Afghan Resistance'. (London and New York: Tauris, 2003).

[193] Most names in the book are Arabic, and they have meaning, usually indicating traits of their characters.

analyzed how this *bildungsroman* evolves and which direction it takes, because the novel and its heavy-handed emotionality are much more than just the surface relation between two boys.

According to the author it is the story of Afghanistan, and the pivotal ‗rape scene', where the protagonist Amir witnesses -in hiding- the rape of his friend/servant Hassan in an alley and does not intervene, ‗has an allegorical and symbolic meaning to it'. Hosseini says, ‗that scene is reminiscent to what happened in Afghanistan after the Soviets left… the US stood by and watched as Afghanistan was brutalized by one regime after another' [194]. Thus the master/servant friendship is in fact the relationship between the US and Afghanistan in the decades that the novel covers. Afghanistan is represented as a ‗hopeless place' (289), a country whose people are incapable of any kind of statecraft, or to come to terms with each other, blinded by a traditional culture and a cruel medieval religion. They overthrew the monarchy and embraced the communists first, and later, the Islamists, brutalizing each other inhumanly, leaving their devastated country dangling in an abysmal limbo, waiting for some kind of superpower to pull it out. Significantly, Hassan's son, who is repeatedly raped by a Taliban decades later, is finally rescued by Amir, and the sin of abandonment is redeemed.

The novel is littered with scenes of unspeakable misery, villainy, and violence. Afghanistan, to which Amir returns to atone for betraying Hassan, is a wasteland of rubble and beggars, where injustice pervades against the most vulnerable: children, women, the poor and ethnic minorities. ‗[A]n old man dressed in ragged clothes trudging down a dirt path, a large burlap pack filled with scrub grass tied to his back. That's the real Afghanistan' (*KR*, 252). But even before that, it was a rotten country, symbolized by the complicated relationship between

[194] http://www.khaledhosseini.com/hosseini-bookgroupdiscussion.html, retrieved September 13, 2012.

Amir and his father, a traditional powerful Pashtun. *The Kite Runner* represents the Afghani people as illiterate, backward, and uncivilized. They don't have birth or death certificates. They live outside history: ‗Wars were waged, the Internet was invented, and a robot had rolled on the surface of Mars, and in Afghanistan we are still telling Mullah Nasruddin jokes' (ibid, 288), and jokes are macabre: A man beats his wife and sends her crying to her father, who beats her again and sends her back to the husband with a message: if the bastard was going to beat my daughter I would beat his wife in return.

Afghans also eat with their hands from the same platter, sitting on the ground. Their TV sets are manual -no remote- unlike in America where there are at least 500 channels (ibid, 288). Even entertainment in Afghanistan is violent: Kite flying[195], hunting, Buzkashi tournament[196], Qurban Eid[197], stoning the adulterous in football halftime intervals, and so forth. ‗[M]ay be what people said about Afghanistan was true. May be it *was* a hopeless place' (*KR*, 289, emphasis in origin). Hassan, symbolizing victimized Afghans, is absolutely good, thus he is brutalized, raped, and finally killed, precisely because he would not betray his master/friend, although he knows that his master has betrayed him in the ally. But he is powerless and accepts his victimization contentedly. He could only be saved (through his son) by the awakening of conscience on the part of his privileged master, Amir, and by joining him in America.

The Kite Runner is built on this rescue motif, not for the sake of the victim, but for the rescuer's redemption, in order to get his peace of mind. Hosseini's world is of charitable

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[195] In the matches of kite flying, the winner is the one who downs all other kites.

[196] A National game where horsemen compete by spearing cattle carcasses, carrying them around and dropping them at full gallop in a scoring circle (*KR* 22).

[197] Muslim feast where sheep are slaughtered.

humanism where there is absolutely no chance for the subaltern to speak, let alone defend their rights. He seems to ignore the fact that the defective social, political and economic systems that victimize Hassan and render him miserable (poor, illiterate, and a disadvantaged Hazara servant) are precisely the same systems that privilege the benevolent masters (rich, educated, powerful, racist Pashtuns). Hassan, it turns out, is Amir‘s half brother. Their father had taken advantage of his servant‘s wife, but he is too arrogant to jeopardize his reputation and acknowledge his second son, and would rather exploit (and be benevolent to) him as a servant. Hassan‘s subaltern inferiority is so ingrained in his mind that even when he is given the chance to speak, he only defends his master and confirms Amir‘s false story which tarnishes him as a thief and a liar (ibid, 114). He is an embodiment of the passive victim. In the rape scene ‗Hassan didn‘t struggle. Didn‘t even whimper. He moved his head slightly and I caught a glimpse of his face. Saw the resignation in it. It was the look of the lamb [being slaughtered]… a look of acceptance in the animal‘s eye, I imagine the animal sees that its imminent demise is for a higher purpose‘ (83-4). Textually Hassan is silenced too; the novel is narrated from Amir‘s point of view, not his. Moreover, in the game of kite flying Hassan assumes the secondary role of a kite runner who assists in providing thread and runs after downed kites, not of a kite flyer that actually holds the thread and controls the game- a role attributed to Amir. When Hassan is asked to look after his master‘s empty mansion after he emigrates, Hassan refuses to stay inside the house, and insists on staying in the servants‘ hut in the garden.

Hosseini, like Nafisi, represents the monarchy as an era of peace and prosperity, ‗none of us had ever heard gunshots in the streets. They were foreign sounds to us then.‘ (39), although built on ethnic and class discrimination. For him the 1973 White Revolution was ‗the beginning of the end‘. He sarcastically mentions that ‗*economic development* and *reform* danced on a lot of

lips in Kabul…people spoke of women‘s rights and modern technology‘ (47, emphasis in origin). However, Spivak says that

> There is no possibility, in an American protectorate, of gender holding the repeated and effortful turning of capital into social…That happened in the era of the seventies‘ new social movements in what we now call the ‗global south…Middle-class women are emerging from where they were before the Taliban sent them underground. Everybody knows the US created the Taliban…But why were these women flourishing as professionals under the Soviet regime? There is a singular ignoring of the history of the development of the Afghan intelligentsia and its genuine involvement with the left (2004 a: 85).

It is in the seventies that the US started supporting religious and ethnic groups against the Soviet-backed government. They are the same groups that dismantled the country in a ferocious civil war after the Soviet withdrawal until the Taliban took over in 1996. Amir is absent from Afghanistan during those years, as he emigrates to the US and does not return until months before the 2001 American invasion. During the monarchy, religious people are referred to as ‗bearded idiots and self-righteous monkeys…do nothing but thumb their prayer beads and recite a book written in a tongue they don‘t understand, God help us all if Afghanistan ever falls into their hands‘ (ibid, 18), these sentences are repeated and confirmed almost to the end of the book (292). In America, Amir‘s father believes that there are only three real men in the world: America the brash savior, Britain and Israel, which he considers an island of real men in a sea of Arabs too busy getting fat off their oil (ibid, 136-7). He would hang a picture of President Reagan after he called Afghanistan ‗the Evil Empire‘, next to a picture of himself shaking hands with king Zahir Shah, and he would put a Reagan/Bush sticker on his car.

Religious people, especially the Talibans get the worse representation possible: They are responsible for all the damage inflicted on Kabul which they shower with rockets (265). They prevent women from working and beat them in the street if their voices are heard, they stone

them to death, they harass people, kill them and rob their properties…and so forth. But we never meet any of them, never hear them present themselves, except one of their leaders, Assef the Ear Eater. As a young boy, Assef (i.e. tempestuous) is represented as a sociopathic Nazi and a rapist. Through his admiration of Hitler he has a vision of Afghanistan as the land of Pashtuns, only. It is hard to see how a ten-year-old Afghan boy would discuss Nazism and apply its racist ideology to Afghanistan, however he even advises Afghan president Daoud Khan, his father‗s friend, ‗if they had let Hitler finish what he had started, the world would be a better place' (43). As a man Assef becomes a Taliban *mujahed* and commits ethnic cleansing massacres, executes women, and blackmails an orphanage director to give him a child now and then to satisfy his pedophilic desires. He is a hashish adict and a maniac murderer.

> His hands were shaking…He spoke rapidly. ‗Door to door we went, calling for the men and the boys. We'd shoot them right there in front of their families. Let them see. Let them remember who they were, where they belonged'. He was almost panting now. ‗I'd…*I'd sweep the barrel of my machine gun around the room and fire and fire* until the smoke blinded me…you don't know the meaning of the word ‗liberating' until you've done that, stood in a roomful of targets, *let the bullets fly, free of guilt and remorse, knowing you are virtuous, good, and decent*. *Knowing you're doing God's work*. It's breathtaking…we only rested for food and prayer' (299, emphasis added).

This demon is the only Taliban voice we hear in the novel, he is the one who rapes Hassan as a child, and molests his son, Sohrab, two decades later, and with whom Amir has a deadly fight to save the child. However, it is significant to notice how the Amir-Hassan-Assef triangle represents the American-Afghanistan relation within the discourse of WOT. Hassan (Afghanistan) is represented as inferior to Amir (America), and victimized by Assef (Islam). In both cases of rape and rescue, Afghanistan is feminized, degraded, and textually brutalized. Hosseini does not hide his whole-hearted support of the policy of military intervention through human rights' justifications. *The Kite Runner* is outright propaganda in this sense, which

explains its melodramatic emotional aspect. Paradoxically, it lacks any historical and political contextualization within the Cold War geopolitical conflicts between the super powers in the 1970s and the 1980s. Similar to Nafisi, he omits all historical facts, all postcolonial knowledge, and even three centuries' traditions of novel writing.

Hosseini does not hesitate to make many comparisons between the US and Afghanistan, in which the latter always lags far behind. Similar to Nafisi's America, everything is beautiful, vast and abundant in Hosseini's US. In ‗any grocery store there are fifteen or twenty different types of cereal. The lamb was always fresh and the milk cold, the fruit plentiful and water clear. Every home had TV.' (*KR*, 288). They have credit cards to pay with, while in Kabul they have wooden sticks where they carve notches and pay for their number at the end of the month. In America cars are big and new, in Kabul they are just Russian Volgas and old Opels. Kabul, even

> long before the *Roussi* army marched in, had become a city of ghosts…American was different. America was a river, roaring along, unmindful of the past. I could wade into this river, let my sins drown to the bottom, let the waters carry me someplace far. Some place with no ghosts, no memories, and no sins. If for nothing else, for that, I embrace America (148).

What makes America great is its optimism, while in Afghanistan ‗We're melancholic… we wallow too much in self-pity. We give in to loss, to suffering, accept it as a fact of life, even see it as necessary. *Zendaghi migzara,* (life goes on) we say' (ibid, 217). Amir tells a taxi driver ‗I feel like a tourist in my own country', and the driver replies ‗You still think of this place as your country? …You've always been a tourist here, you just didn't know it' (ibid, 251-2).

Women in *The Kite Runner* are all subordinate characters and seem to vanish as soon as they appear, they are either non-existent or otherwise victims, and in both cases the reader never meets them or hears their voices, except after they emigrate to the US. There are five of them.

Sofia, Amir's mother who dies at childbirth, was a ‗princess… a highly educated woman universally regarded as one of Kabul's most respected, beautiful, and virtuous ladies' (17). Sanaubar, Hassan's mother, is an extremely beautiful young woman with a bad reputation. She is married off to a deformed and paralyzed cousin twenty years her senior, and runs away five days after her (and her master's) child is born. She reappears three decades later at her son's door

> [A] toothless woman with stringy graying hair and sores on her arms. She looked like she had not eaten for days. But the worst of it by far was her face. Someone had taken a knife to it and…the slashes cut this way and that way. One of the cuts went from cheekbone to hairline and it had not spared her left eye on the way (226).

Sanaubar is the only character who is somewhat rounded, but she is not given more than few lines of space. Hassan's wife is executed with him by the Taliban when he refuses to let them occupy his master's house. Another unknown woman is stoned to death in a stadium. In the US Afghan women could survive, although still bullied by ruthless fathers, husbands, and traditions they respect. Amir's wife, Soraya, couldn't escape ‗the Afghan double standard that favored my gender' (159) Amir says. Her father, a former general, forces her at gun point to leave the boyfriend she eloped with, and to cut off all her hair, so that she wouldn't be able to step out of the house. But Amir decides to marry her despite her ‗tarnished reputation'. ‗I am so lucky to have found you' she tells him ‗You're so different from *every Afghan guy I've met*', (194, emphasis added). The general brutalizes his talented wife who has an enchanting voice, and prevents her from singing, although he appreciated music. That was his condition when they had married.

In *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2006), Hosseini attends to the absence of women in his first novel, and re-narrates the last three decades of Afghanistan history through a network, women's gridlike visibility of the burqa (the typical Afghani veil). It is a fictional biography of

two women: Mariam, similar to Hassan in *The Kite Runner*, is an ‗illegitimate' daughter of a wealthy man who takes advantage of his epileptic maid; and Laila, the daughter of a liberal man who supports women's rights. Mariam does not know anything about what goes on outside her house, Laila knows all about it. Both women are victimized by a beast of a husband, and both are stereotypically represented:

> [T]he characters are so one-dimensional that they feel like cartoons. Laila is the great beauty, with a doting father and a protective boyfriend — a lucky girl whose luck abruptly runs out. Mariam is the illegitimate daughter of a bitter woman and a disloyal father — an unlucky girl whose luck turns from bad to worse. And Rasheed is the evil bully, a misogynist intent on debasing his two wives (Kakutani, 2007).

Through these three characters, Husseini presents the same abuser-victim-savior triangle of his first novel, but this time the novel is practically a dark tunnel, endless melodramatic scenes of abuse and injustice inflicted by misogynist men supported by medieval traditions and thuggish regimes, without the slightest light at the end, only after the American invasion of the country. Similar to Nafisi, Hosseini gives the daily life in Afghanistan a touristic representation of abandoned cities and streets, exotic bazaars, costumes, and food…even using understandable terms and expressions, whether in Pashtu or Persian (often translated inside the text).

Written from women's point of view, it is a representation of an Afghan female mentality of three generations. Nana, Mariam's mother, is probably the novel's most challenging character, had she been given some more textual space. Similar to Hassan's mother, Nana is an outcast, not only because of her bad reputation as she has been violated, discarded and practically incarcerated by her master in the middle of nowhere across the river; but also because she is haunted by jinni: epilepsy imagined by a backward society as an evil spirit. Nana *sees* the truth of both men and traditions, thus is deeply embittered. ‗Man's heart is a wretched, wretched

thing, Mariam. It isn‘t like a mother‘s womb. It won‘t bleed, it won‘t stretch to make room for you‘ (*TSS,* 26). She tries to open her daughter‘s eye to this wisdom. ‗Learn this now and learn it well, my daughter: Like a compass needle that points north, a man‘s accusing finger always finds a woman. Always. You remember that‘ (7) and again ‗It‘s our lot in life, Mariam. Women like us. We endure. It‘s all we have. Do you understand?‘ (18), but she fails in making Mariam understand, as the latter *goes* to her father‘s house in the city, so Nana kills herself. However, it is through her mother‘s suicide that Mariam finally *sees* her father‘s lies, ‗for the first time she could hear him with Nana‘s ears… she knew that Nana had spoken the truth‘ (36-8). This is the distilled truth and the traditional knowledge about the situation of Afghan women that Mariam - and the reader- get from their own mouths.

Being an intelligent, sensitive and valiant child, especially now that she understands her mother‘s plight, Mariam is expected to resist, but Hosseini decides otherwise and makes her succumb to her father‘s three cruel wives, marries her off at fourteen to a widower thirty years her senior, and destines her to a life of misery. (Similarly, at the end, she would reject an opportunity to escape execution at the hands of the Taliban). Thus both her knowledge and her mother‘s tragic death become meaningless, confirming Hosseini‘s inclination to victimize them. Rasheed, her groom is ‗healthy, has a home and job…that‘s what really matters, isn‘t it‘ one of her stepmothers says (44):

> Mariam smelled him before she saw him. Cigarette smoke and thick sweet cologne…tall man, thick-bellied and broad shouldered, stooping in the doorway. The size of him almost made her gasp…Then his slow, heavy-footed movement across the room. The candy bowl on the table clinked in tune with his steps. With a thick grunt, he dropped on a chair beside her. He breathed noisily…the big, square, ruddy face, the hooked nose…watery, bloodshot eyes; the crowded teeth, the front too pushed together like a gabled roof; the impossibly low hairline, barely two fingers widths above the bushy eyebrows; the wall of

thick, coarse, salt-and-pepper hair…This is the face of my husband, Mariam thought. (47-9)

As in children‘s tales, repugnant physiognomy reflects evil and repulsive mannerism, epitomized by Rasheed. In his house Mariam is imprisoned again. She would ‗feel uprooted, displaced, like an intruder on someone else‘s life‘ (56). In bed he is violent and practically rapes her: ‗She sucked air through her teeth and bit on the knuckle of her thumb…stared, wide-eyed, at the ceiling above his shoulder, shivering, lips pursed…the air between them smelled of tobacco, of onion and grilled lamb‘ (69), coupling becomes an exercise in tolerating pain (ibid, 75). He tortures her in the name of Islam whose teachings he barely follows. He forces her to wear a burqa, lock herself in when he has visitors, and feel guilty for repeated miscarriages; after which Rasheed treats her as an unwanted object. No matter what she does, no matter how thoroughly she submits to his demands, nothing pleases him. She dreads the sound of him coming home. He breaks her teeth. He insults her for her ignorance, although he doesn‘t seem to know better. When she asks what communism is, he fails to answer. He despises educated men who let their women be seen and spoil their honor and pride; for him those men are no more than mice. Men who don‘t control their wives embarrass him, and a woman‘s face is her husband‘s only. However, in his drawer he has nothing but porn magazines and a gun. He is an embodiment of the Wild Man in Medieval texts, as described by Hayden White: ‗He is desire incarnate…glutton, lascivious, and promiscuous, without even consciousness of sin or perversion. His physical power conceived to increase in direct ratio to the diminution of his conscience‘ (1978, 167).

Moreover, Rasheed‘s physical and psychological dominance makes Mariam accept it as destiny and internalize her subjugation as normal, a familiar notion in the discourse of WOT.

The burqa comforts her because it frees her from shame. She feels guilty for her miscarriages which she considers God‘s punishment for being a treacherous daughter, leaving her mother alone. She thinks that she does not deserve to be a mother. She feels flattered that Rasheed locks her in, and that he sees sanctity in what they have together, and is thrilled with pride if he likes her cooking. His abhorrent sexual manners are only natural, ‗could she fault him for being the way God had created him?‘ (75), or for what the Prophet did with his wives, as he tells her. Educated and working women make her aware of her own loneliness, her plain looks, her lack of aspirations, her ignorance of so many things‘ (68), she would get lost in the street of her own house. In short she learns how to endure quietly all that falls upon her. Still,

> it was not easy tolerating his scorn, his ridicule, his insults, his walking past her like she was nothing but a house cat. But after four years of marriage, Mariam saw clearly how much a woman could tolerate when she was afraid. And Mariam was afraid. She lived in fear of his shifting moods, his volatile temperament, his insistence on steering even mundane exchanges down to confrontational paths that, on occasion would resolve with punches, slaps, kicks (89).

Hosseini explains that Rasheed‘s verbal and physical abuses of powerless Mariam is due to her failure to give him a son to hold his name, which is hardly her fault, but this is how a traditional culture sees it. Even before that he has been brutish and has treated her as an inferior human being. She is represented as totally crushed by her gender, class, religion and upbringing.

Laila on the other hand, is a beautiful copy of Mariam, as far as endurance is concerned, but she is brave. She too is harassed by her people‘s biased attitude to girls, and a mother psychologically tormented by the loss of two sons. But Laila is lucky enough to have the support of two liberal-minded men: a father and a boy friend, both of whom have taught her how to stand for her rights. The father, Hakim (intellectual wise man), believes that education is the absolute top priority ‗marriage can wait, education can‘t…You‘re a very, very bright girl…when this war

is over, Afghanistan is going to need you as much as its men, maybe even more. Because society has no chance of success if its women are uneducated, Laila, No chance' (103). Significantly, he takes his daughter and her sweetheart to see the Bamiyan Buddha statues which the *Muslim Arabs* had attacked more than a thousand years ago, he explains, and which the Talibans have destroyed now. On the top of the huge Buddhas, he reads Hemingway, and tells the young lovers about his dream of going to America, somewhere near the sea (unlike Afghanistan), and believes that the American people are generous. They would help him with money and food for a while, until he could get on his feet and fulfill his romantic dream of opening a small restaurant, a space for Afghan people in California, where they can live peacefully and have happy celebrations.

But all dreams shatter after his two sons who join the jihad are killed fighting the Soviets, and when he himself and his wife are killed by the mujahedeen rockets that rain Kabul after the Soviet withdrawal. At fourteen, Laila is left alone and pregnant with her boyfriend's child. She marries Rasheed, now in his sixties, but she does fight to have a relatively better life. She argues, stands up to, and prevents him from beating Mariam or treating both of them badly; she steals his money and tries to run away with Mariam but is betrayed by a trustworthy-looking man. She thinks again of saving herself and her children, but Rasheed brutalizes her almost to death. It is Mariam who kills him, sets everybody free, and gets executed. Like her mother, it is only through her death that she is finally liberated, and it is only through Rasheed's death that life can continue. Most significantly, it is the victimized woman who puts an end to his existence, with the help of Laila:

> [T]his little girl [Mariam] will be a woman who will make small demands on life, who will never burden others, who will never let on that she too has had sorrows, disappointments, dreams that have been ridiculed. A woman who will be like a rock in a riverbed, enduring without complaint, her grace not sullied but *shaped* by the turbulences

> that washes over her… something behind this young girl‘s eyes, something deep in her core, that neither Rasheed nor the Taliban will be able to break. Something as hard and unyielding as a block of limestone. Something that, in the end, will be her undoing and Laila‘s salvation. (355, emphasis in origin).

Laila decides to leave ‗this unforgiving city… this despondent country altogether‘ (ibid), and does not return until after the American invasion, the drought ends and the Kabul river flows once again into the wasteland. Children can now go to schools and play in parks; people rebuild their damaged city, and plant flowers in empty shells of old mujahedeen rockets.

Hosseini presents only stereotyped individuals and themes of Muslim societies prevalent in Western media: polygamous and abusive husbands, powerless and disadvantaged young girls married off to older men, forced veiling, marriage relations limited to men‘s pleasure, preference of boy babies to girls, hypocritical religious men and fanatical Taliban, unjust laws for women and so forth. It is as if Hosseini has a task of putting faces on a set of characteristics needed to confirm the official American reasoning of the war, fleshing out abstractions about political and cultural systems that the discourse of WOT condemns. Through a handful of strikingly similar sets of character in his two novels: the liberal America-oriented father bringing up a child who would welcome the American invasion: Baba and Amir / Hakim and Laila, the unrelentingly evil Islamic villain: Assef / Rasheed, and the socially downtrodden victims: Hasan and his father Ali / Mariam and her mother Nana, liberal valiant girls who don‘t mind having sexual relations before marriage: Soraya / Laila, and their tormented mothers in both novels. Through these sets Hosseini draws horrible images of Muslim societies as rotten with medieval concepts that can‘t be cured, only blown away and got rid of outside of the modern world.

What is peculiar about Hosseini is his representation of the Afghan people‘s bodies (women in particular), which is textually violent and spectacular in both of his novels, and which

may partly explain their popularity. Given the fact that he is a physician by profession his violent tendency in representing the human body could be interpreted as an attempt to highlight its victimization. Nevertheless, his inclination to extreme textual deformation and degradation of the victim�id body is especially problematic. In *The Kite Runner*, the Hazara ethnic minority is mercilessly brutalized by and through the text. The spectacular beauty of Hassan‘s mother, for example, is degraded by obscene references (8) and her face is cut by slashes and damaged beyond recognition at the end. His father, is nicknamed ‗bogeyman‘ because ‗congenital paralysis rendered him perpetually grim-faced…and polio had left him with a twisted, atrophied right leg that was sallow skin over bone…I watched him swing his scraggy leg in a sweeping arc, his whole body tilt impossibly to the right every time he planted his foot‘ (*KR*, 9). Hassan is flat-nosed and hare-lipped, and his rape scene is repeatedly presented in cruel details. Sohrab‘s feminizing dance is painful to watch, so are Assef‘s pedophilic practices with him (*KR*, 302-5), and the Hazara massacre scene (quoted above), all these textual brutalities are supposedly intended to pity the Hazara and to call for their rescue. But in his attempt to raise sympathy with them against ethnic injustices practiced by the powerful Pashtun, Hosseini in fact used their bodies to inflict double infamy and degradation upon them. Thus he tells us that he has had many problems with Hazara tribes after the novel was published because they claimed that Hosseini dishonored and humiliated them[198].

Similarly, his representation of Afghan women‘s bodies is peculiarly violent and humiliating; they are brutalized in every possible manner, sensationally and melodramatically demonstrated. In the stoning scene in the football stadium

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[198] http://www.khaledhosseini.com/hosseini-bookgroupdiscussion.html, retrieved September 13, 2012.

> The woman‘s *knees buckled* under her and she *slumped to the ground*. The soldiers *pulled her* up and she *slumped again*. When they tried to lift her again, she *screamed and kicked*…It was the cry of a *wild animal* trying to pry its mangled leg free from the *bear trap*. Two more Talibs joined in and helped *force her* into one of the chest-deep *holes*… [Later] the bodies were *tossed* into the backs of red pickups…One of [the men] made a *passing attempt* at covering up the large bloodstains by *kicking dirt* over them. A few minutes later the teams took the field. Second half was underway (*KR*, 291- 4, my emphasis).

The imagery of an entrapped and entangled animal is emphasized; i.e. when a human body, supposed to be superior to all beings, is represented as a trapped animal, it is treated as inferior. What is at work here is practicing an extremely violent power of coercion, rendering the natural (animal) a disciplined being. Needless to say, the woman involved is *not* the target of discipline and knowledge, it is the audience in the stadium (and more importantly in the novel), her body in particular ‗serves as an instrument or intermediary' (Foucault 1995, 11), a space of coercion, discussed shortly. A similar stadium execution scene is repeated in *Splendid Suns* with Mariam as the victim. In this respect, Mariam‘s body gets the most outrageous of textual degradation any character gets in either novel. First of all she is an unwanted *harami* (bastard), just like a *cockroach or a pest* (4, 199). She and her mother, Nana, are socially and physically outcaste in a ‗*rathole*' (9). Nana is rejected first by her fiancé and his family after they discover that she is epileptic and later by Jalil who discards her as soon as her belly begins to swell. Hosseini presents her as

> a tall, boney, barefoot woman…her lazy eye narrowed to a slit…her short-cropped, sunlit hair uncombed…she would wear an ill-fitting gray shirt buttoned to the throat. The pockets were filled with walnut-sized rocks… When Jalil visited she sat quietly hands folded in her lap. She didn‘t look at him directly in the eye…she covered her mouth with a fist to hide the bad tooth ((13, 20).

Mariam is not represented as a beauty either. The archless, unshapely eyebrows, the flat hair, the eyes, mirthless green and set so closely together that one might mistake her for being

cross-eyed. Her skin is coarse and had a dull, spotty appearance, her brow too high, the chin too narrow, the lips too thin. The overall impression is of a triangular face, a bit *houndlike* (48). Her voice is silenced, her eyes never raised, her body covered, incarcerated, often disoriented. Walking in the street, she would stumble with her burqa, practically run to catch up with Rasheed who would always walk quickly a few feet ahead. Sex is violent and painful as mentioned above. But worst of all are the beatings and violent abuses: ‗His powerful hands clasped her jaw open, then forced the cold, hard pebbles into it…he kept pushing the pebbles in, his upper lip curled in a sneer ‗Now chew' he said. Mariam mumbled a plea…tears were leaking out of the corners of her eyes' (94). When he is gone Mariam would spit out pebbles, blood, and fragments of two broken molars.

Laila commits the unforgivable sin of giving Rasheed a daughter, not a son. Trying to escape she and Mariam are savagely beaten

> Laila didn't see the punch coming…she was *on all fours*, wide-eyed and red-faced, trying to draw a breath…in the tender place between the lower tip of the breastbone and the belly button…tried to breathe again and could only make a husky, choking sound. Dribble hung from her mouth …She saw Rasheed leading Mariam across the yard by the nape of her neck. Mariam was barefoot and doubled over. There was blood on his hands, blood on Mariam's face, her hair, down her neck and back. Her shirt had been ripped down the front (239-40).

There are other kinds of violence: Mammy, Laila's mother, is deeply depressed, she spends her days and nights in bed, dreaming of her sons' return from jihad, a dream that never comes true as everybody is eventually killed. Girls' bodies are often found around Kabul, beaten, raped, and throats slashed, dismembered by mujahedeen bombings or die because of horrible conditions in refugee camps. Women kill themselves out of fear of being raped, and men kill them in the name of honor if they are. Women would kill their children for fear of starvation.

They are practically house arrested for life. They are starved, widowed, forced into begging and prostitution, sell their children or put them in orphanages. Women give birth alone, without any (medical or midwife) help, they have to fight *like animals* to get a bed in a hospital, or they have caesarians without anesthetic

> Mariam saw the doctor‘s shadow move…She could feel Laila‘s teeth rattling…Laila‘s lips had stretched all the way back. Spit bubbles formed and popped on the surface of her clenched teeth. She made quick, little *hissing sounds*…[her] eyes snapped open. Then her mouth opened. She held like this, held, held, shivering, the cords in her neck stretched, sweat dripping from her face, her fingers crushing Mariam‘s (256).

Such scenes of absolute physical and mental violence against women‘s bodies go on and on, inside home and outside. But these few examples should be sufficient to show how Hosseini uses women‘s bodies as spaces for demonstrating the brutalities of ‗Taliban *wahshis* (savages)‘ (283). In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault says that punishment as a spectacle was practised almost until the mid-19th century in Europe, and convicts were also used in public works, cleaning city streets or repairing the highways, distinguished by their infamous dress, and shaven heads, with iron collars and chains to which bombshells were attached

> [The ceremonial of punishment] was thought to equal, if not to exceed, in savagery the crime itself, to accustom the spectators to a ferocity from which one wished to divert them, to show them the frequency of crime, to make the executioner resemble a criminal, judges murderers, to reverse roles at the last moment, to make the tortured criminal an object of pity (9).

Similarly, by spectacularly exposing abuses committed against women‘s bodies in such horrible scenes, Hosseini practices the same display. He aims at scandalizing the Taliban and warning the democratic world of their savagery if they are let go without punishment or control. He represents women as convicted by a brutally misogynistic culture, as objects of oppression, and their mutilated bodies and souls are textually displayed and used as spaces for shaming

oppressors and warning spectators, which makes the ceremonial scenes even more melodramatic. Afghan women, manipulated in Hosseini's fictional world as no more than bloodied bodies, agonized souls, and stumbling figures are used exactly as Foucault's convicts in their infamous uniform and iron shackles were used for correction and education. In this sense, how far representations are truthful to reality becomes irrelevant, and Hazara's angry protest understandable.

Representation is never gratuitous or innocent, and body politics, Foucault says, invests human bodies and subjugates them by turning them into objects of knowledge (1977, 28). As such, Hosseini textually puts Afghan women's bodies squarely in the machinery of power (within the discourse of WOT), that explores them, breaks them down and rearranges them, ‗not only so that they may do what one wishes, but so that they may operate as one wishes...[He] produces subjected and practiced bodies, ‗dœcile' bodies' (ibid, 138). This is most obvious in a scene in *Splendid Suns* where Mariam kills Rasheed and saves Laila from certain death. During an extraordinarily bloody scene where Rasheed beats Laila, Mariam has long soliloquies in which all his brutalities (recurrent in the discourse of WOT) pass in front of her eyes and she decides that she does not deserve his meanness. She knocks him with a shovel off Laila whom he is suffocating, but she does not kill him. So she hits again

> Mariam raised the shovel high, raised it as high as she could, arching it so it touched the small of her back. She turned it so the sharp edge was vertical, and, as she did, *it occurred to her that this was the first time that she was deciding the course of her own life*.
>
> And with that Mariam brought down the shovel. This time, she gave it everything she had (311, emphasis added)

In solidarity with Laila, Mariam�Hs textually docile body surpasses its life-long subjugation and deeply internalized helplessness and becomes a savior not only of Laila, but more importantly of herself, albeit she loses her life in the process. This is exactly what the message that the discourse of WOT tries to discipline Muslim women into doing: to discard their fear and dismantle the patriarchal system of values once and forever. They should not just confront it, they have to exterminate it. Textually, Hosseini brutalizes women‘s bodies exactly as the wars waged by the US and its allies have brutalized them in Iraq and Afghanistan, in the name of saving them.

Hosseini suggests that evils have always been practiced against women -and people in general- behind closed doors in Afghanistan, no matter what the political system is. What the Taliban did is only exposing -and aggravating- the hardships women go through within a culture of a medieval religion. He does mention that during the communist era, women were given many rights, especially in education, but ironically the same system persecuted liberal-minded men such as Laila‘s father. Both right and left fanatics exploited women. His representation of the Marxist teacher, for example, is again stereotypical of crude communist women lacking any feminine touch and encouraging girls to spy on their families. It is hard to decide which of the US enemies gets a worse representation: the communists are brutal Soviet puppets, which terrorize political opponents; or the mujahedeen who are no more than terrorists without a cause, ‗They learned to walk with a milk bottle in one hand and a gun in the other… [during the Soviet occupation] they had an enemy to fight against, after that they found it in each other (*TSS*, 155). They ‗would crush [boy‘s] balls with pliers, make the boys lead them to their homes. Then they break in, kill fathers, rape their sisters and mothers‘ (277).

But Hosseini does not apply the same critical approach against the US foreign policy of military interventions which caused Afghanistan -and the ME in general- millions of deaths, refugees, and destruction of countries[199]. He does hint at the fact that the same religious leaders targeted in the 2001 invasion had been previously supported by the US governments. It is significant to notice that he doesn't say a single word about the impact of the American invasion on the situation of women, or the Afghan civilians killed by the American troops, or the devastation that resulted from their bombings, nor does he say anything about the disappointment Afghan women feel when no real change takes place in their lives afterwards.

Military casualties and other war victims are not even the main occupation-related threat facing most Afghan women, Harvey Thompson says, ‗Seven years after the US and the UK ‗freed' Afghan women from the oppressive Taliban regime, reports prove that life is just as bad for most, and worse in some cases' (2009). According to a UN report on the situation of Afghani women: Every 30 minutes, a woman dies during childbirth, 87 percent are illiterate, 1 in every 3 experience physical, psychological or sexual violence, 44 years is now the average life expectancy for women across the country, and 70 to 80 percent face forced marriages in Afghanistan. Another report said that worsening insecurity in large swathes of the country, a growing culture of criminal impunity, weak law enforcement institutions, poverty, and many other factors had contributed to increasing violence against women, such as rape and torture, as well as their being forced into marriages against their will. An attempt by the Afghan parliament—with President Hamid Karzai's support—to enact a law that would forbid women

[199] As of mid-December 2009, the UN Population Division data estimated that in post-2001 Afghanistan non-violent avoidable deaths total 3.4 million; and post-invasion violent deaths total 1.1 million. Retrieved on September 11, 2012 from https://sites.google.com/site/afghanholocaustafghangenocide/,

from leaving their homes without male consent and would sanctify marital rape, recalls Taliban era edicts (ibid).

Chapter VIII

Saturday: Stumbling about in the Dark at Midday

In the nature of things he was bound to win

McEwan, *Saturday*

Ian McEwan�never's *Saturday* (2005) is an attempt to represent the cultural, political and psychological atmosphere in Britain after 9/11, and to suggest that domestic terrorism inflicted by the British themselves against their own people is, ironically, no less dangerous than - or separable from- the outside global Islamic terrorism. McEwan strategizes the use of the routine and quotidian details of a single day in the protagonist‘s life, to demonstrate that the real danger lurks around the corner, because it is part of a condescending system that excludes the Other, that holds on to a colonial, binary, Eurocentric mindset. I argue that the novel‘s essentially binary division is not only between the West and Islam as some scholars cited here have suggested, it is also between scientific rationalism and enlightened imagination. The identity of the Self and the Other, our and Others‘ terrorisms, become crucial in understanding the novel‘s humanist, ethical message of understanding and empathy, as well as *its failure*, because at the end of the day both rational determinism and visionary imagination, which spring from the same imperialist discourse, triumph through violence. This message is distilled in a quotation from Saul Bellow‘s *Hertzog* (1964), an epigraph with which McEwan opens *Saturday*, on the postmodern human *Western* condition

> ….what it means to be a man. In a city. In a century. In a mass. Transformed by science. Under organized power. Subject to tremendous control…Which made the self negligible. Which spent military billions against foreign enemies…Which permitted *savagery and*

> *barbarism* in its own cities…As megatons of water shape organisms on the ocean floor… supermachinery opening a new life for innumerable mankind' (my emphasis).

McEwan dissects the postmodern human British condition by deliberately using both a typical Victorian structure of the novel of domesticity, which drew a curtain on the ugly colonial reality of the 19th century, and also a typical modernist style of daily -seemingly insignificant- details exposing deeper and gloomier anxieties of the individual consciousness in postcolonial Britain, as mentioned in Chapter VI. Moreover, an analysis through a race-class-gender prism fractures the protagonist's prejudices in relation to the (female) Other, as well as the limitations of his scientific rationality, deeply shaken by the unrepresentable event of 9/11.

From the first line of the novel, the protagonist, neurosurgeon Henry Perowne shows inexplicable anxiety when he wakes up, fully alert some hours before dawn, ‗He's never done such a thing before' (1)[200]. Sleeping naked beside his wife, in his bedroom, in his house, in his high-class neighborhood, he feels very contented with his physical and emotional health, a London marathon winner, a brilliant surgeon, and a happy husband and father. Moreover he is consciously and insistently aware of his contentedness which implicitly *denies anxiety* behind dawn insomnia, ‗he has no need to relieve himself, nor is he disturbed by a dream or some element of the day before, or even by the state of the world. It's as if he materialized out of nothing [like a god], fully formed, unencumbered…empty-headed…and elated' (1, 2). But his bafflement about this sudden, distorting euphoria, his worry about losing the moment soon give him away; and his mental and moral trajectory during the hours of the day undermine these certainties.

[200] Quotations from *Saturday* are indicated by page numbers.

The day before, he was dragged back by ‗unfamiliar lack of fluency. He prides himself on speed and sleek, wry style…Now he was stumbling' (11). McEwan utilizes such details strategically to expose Henry's self-deception and trauma[201], of which he himself is seemingly unaware, or at least ambivalent. Magali Michael argues that, rather than representing a simplistic binary model of conflict between the West and Islam, ‗*Saturday* seeks to engage and represent the larger picture by focusing on the local and particular…on a day in the life of one upper class London man' (26-7). In this respect, Michael finds that in *Saturday*, McEwan uses the narrative strategies developed by Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925). Other scholars suggest another modernist hypercanonical work: James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922)[202], both historically located after World War I, and the eclipse of the British Empire. Post 9/11 *Saturday*, too deals ‗with the unease and uncertainty that stem from the ending of an established order and the beginning of a new one… the mélange of anxiety and anger that make up the West's fuzzy understanding of the current crisis, our inextricably interwoven contemporary world' (Eaglestone, 2007: 19). Saturday is not about women per se, it is about the Other's culture that upholds terrorism and subjugates women, as an objective correlative of one's own culture. Significantly, the English terrorist, too, intends to rape the daughter by using her mother as hostage. The *female body in both cases is used to denote the terrorists' ethical degeneration*.

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[201] According to the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders,* the most common symptoms of trauma (that Henry shows) are: Feeling irritated more than usual; sleeping less, but still have a lot of energy; doing lots of things more than usual or doing more risky things; feeling nervous, anxious, frightened, worried, or on edge; avoiding situation that make one anxious; unexplained aches and pains; thoughts of actually hurting oneself; problems with sleep, feeling driven to perform certain mental acts over and over again, and drinking alcohol more than usual. Published on the website of: *American Psychiatric Association*, retrieved on July 15, 2013 http://www.dsm5.org/Pages/Default.aspx.

[202] Hilard suggests that the last words of *Saturday* — ‗And at last, faintly, falling: this day's over' (289) —reprise James Joyce's conclusion to ‗The Dead' (1914): ‗he heard the snow falling faintly through the universe and faintly falling, like the descent of their last end upon all the living and the dead' (2008:188), also Groes (2013: Loc 2560, CH 7). I am using the e-book version of Groes's, quotations are marked by location and chapter number.

The third person omniscient narrator lets us see the world through Henry‘s medicalized mind-eye, partly in the modernist technique of stream of consciousness, but more conventional in the Victorian indirect narration, using the present tense, in tracking Henry‘s Odyssey in the London streets and at home within a single day. Having disturbed night-sleep, talking to his son, making love, morning rituals of tidying up his bedroom and showering, having a minor car accident, escaping a serious beating, losing a squash game to an American colleague, shopping for dinner, visiting his demented mother in a nursing house and then his son's band rehearsal, cooking for a family dinner-reunion, arguing with his daughter about war, experiencing a dangerous and humiliating act of terrorism by an intruder, with whom he had the accident, and finally being himself involved in an act of violence while encountering the intruder, all these events takes place on Saturday, his day off with huge demonstrations in the background. But this is not any other Saturday; it is February 15, 2003, when millions of peoples all over the world, especially in Europe and the US, took to the streets protesting the impending war on Iraq within the War on Terrorism campaign. But Henry, the rationalist, materialist, proud -of everything he has and has achieved- neurosurgeon *excludes himself and pretends* to be unconcerned. He explains his dawn euphoria/anxiety away as a ‗chemical accident at the molecular level in his brain…or it‘s the prospect of a Saturday‘ (4). However his circular trip in time and space exposes his ambivalent, disturbed consciousness.

Henry, 48, also shows sudden middle-age anxiety. He takes longer examining his body in a large bathroom mirror, and he recurrently refers to his depleting energy and fear of aging. He has married his wealthy and beautiful patient, Rosalind, now a lawyer who gave him a three-floor house ‗with a library‘ she inherited, in a posh London neighborhood. He is a loving husband and a devoted father –permissive but also little possessive, though (187) - of two

wonderful young artists: Daisy, 23, an Oxford-educated young poet who has just published her first collection, and Theo, a talented eighteen-year-old musician. Most importantly, Henry is a brilliant *brain surgeon*. He practices his profession with exceptional joy and even aesthetic exaltation, with piano works by Bach or Mozart in the operating theater, where he is at his best, where he experiences a *superhuman or god-like capacity* (repeatedly mentioned on pp.10, 12, 23, 77, 160…), or in wards checking on his patients, although he is *not* so good in establishing human contact with them, as his colleagues are (9). Nevertheless, ‗he can‘t deny the egotistical joy in his own skills, or the pleasure he still takes in the relief of the relatives when he *comes down* from the operating room *like a god‘* (23).

Both literally and metaphorically, the narrator represents Henry in this *god-like* image. In the opening scene, hours before dawn, he stands naked in his *high* window, admiring the aesthetic perfection of London he sees *below*, the product of generations of geniuses like himself, naturally displacing its dark side. On seeing two women crossing the square he reflects ‗with his *advantage of height*…he not only watches them, but watches *over* them, supervising their progress, with the remote *possessiveness of a god*…In the lifeless cold, they pass through the night, hot little biological *engines*…their breath rises like *train* steam‘ (12, my emphasis). On the other hand he treats his embarrassingly expensive silver Mercedes as a pet, as an animal *breathing in the garage*. By profession, he *is* a kind of god as he controls the brain, the highest and most important part of the body, within this mechanical imagery. After all as a surgeon, not only a neurologist, he literally works with *his hands*. They are the same hands that would push down Baxter, the mentally disadvantaged enemy, from Henry‘s library room upstairs to the ground floor into total destruction; and they are the same hands that would repair Baxter‘s fatal

injury inflicted by Henry himself, in other words a benevolent god *resurrecting* Baxter from physical death, but only into the torture of mental death.

For Henry, any transgressive action is explained away by some brain impairment, and consequently, possible to be repaired with the help of advanced technology, unless it is totally broken. The Nigerian teenager's violent tendencies, for example, when she ‗took to drugs, got drunk, shoplifted, bunked off school, hated authority' are probably due to a tumor pressing down on some part of her brain. Readers can't escape his othering gaze at the African girl. He ‗had his own difficulties talking her through the ordeals that lay ahead. She affected to talk like a rapper on MTV…. But he admired her spirit, and the fierce dark eyes, the perfect teeth, and the clean pink tongue lashing itself round the words it formed'(9). He goes on and on for pages describing his miraculous victories in complicated surgical operations on open skulls of absolutely helpless anesthetized patients. Textually, bored readers of medical jargon also feel helpless as they do not understand what is being said about these surgeries, unless they are surgeons too. It is not a coincidence that in the blink of an eye when Henry turns from the window to reach his woollen gown that Saturday dawn, something happens in the London sky. At first he thinks it is a comet, and then he realizes that it is a plane on fire, and he immediately imagines a terrorist attack by some Muslim fanatics on London, eighteenth months after 9/11. He is deeply disturbed, and can't retain his euphoria.

As typical of gods who control human fates, Henry does not care much about their feelings, because he *knows* what is best for them. He does show capacity for empathy sometimes, but only when he feels how incredibly lucky he is. He would banish a student in shame for not using exact terms even if the answer is correct. In committees he is an effective chairman, likes

precision, all items addressed and disposed within the set of time, musings and anecdotes are intolerable for him, ‗it‘s not possible to be an unassertive brain surgeon‘ (21). It is not a coincidence, too, that his ‗too literate daughter‘ (4) Daisy calls him a Gradgrind[203], insensitive, lacking in imagination, a coarse and unredeemable materialist. He admits that he barely touches non-medical books. He finds in novels, for example ‗a childish evasion of the difficulties and wonders of the real, of the demanding re-enactment of the plausible‘ (66). She dedicates herself to re-educating him, and gives him a list of books: a Conrad novel, in which he is not interested because he thinks it is about seafaring, nor is he interested in *Madame Bovary* or *Anna Karenina* because ‗he thinks he‘s seen enough death, fear, courage, and suffering to supply half a dozen literatures‘ (4). On a performative level, McEwan‘s choices of Conrad -extraordinary depiction of colonial anxieties and paradoxes- along with works by Flaubert, Tolstoy, and Henry James that explore women‘s human condition and consciousness, inevitably suggest a relation between colonialism and women that Henry is unaware of, and foreshadowing his attitude to Muslim women in relation to the War on Terrorism, later in the day. The fact that these 19th century masterpieces are recommended by his daughter, not his son or his father-in-law, for example, is another indicator of their performative significance as more than just great literature.

Typically, Henry does not find in *Bovary* more than adultery or in *Karenina* more than the difficult situation of women. Still, he thinks, ‗[t]hey have the virtue, at least, of representing reality‘, unlike the magical realists whom he considers ‗irksome confections‘ (66). Flaubert, Daisy tells him, ‗was warning the world from people *just like you*‘ (67, emphasis in origin). In fact *Saturday* is crowded with references or allusions to big literary (mainly) English names in

[203] Gradgrind in Dickens‘ *Hard Times* (1854) is a no-nonsense figure of the industrial age whose name has become an allusion to cold calculation and mechanical perceptions void of any human considerations.

the 19th and 20th centuries. Apart from the seven[204] mentioned above, Groes lists: Sophocles, Thomas Wyatt, Shakespeare, John Milton, William Blake, Mary Shelley, Jane Austen, Charlotte Bronte, Dickens, Darwin, George Elliot, Robert Browning, Matthew Arnold, Kafka, Philip Larkin, James Fenton, Ted Hughes, Craig Raine, and Andrew Motion (2013: L 2495, Ch. 7). These pillars of the English -and European- literary empire do not concern Henry, indeed they bother him. He can't see how ‗poetry –rather occasional work it appears, like grape picking- can occupy a whole working life, or how such an edifice of reputation and self-regard can rest on so little' (201). But he submits to Daisy's reading list all the same as a way of maintaining the family, of ‗remaining in touch as she grows away from her family into unknowable womanhood in a suburb of Paris' (4). He does not try to honestly discuss it with her, convince or be convinced by her point of view about literature.

Paradoxically, dreams do not interest him, given the fact that he is a brain surgeon, only ‗to know the boundaries is the essence of sanity', he thinks (2). References to his psychiatric colleagues always bear a touch of sarcasm. He prefers the most abstract of arts, music. In short, McEwan's narrator implicitly undermines the supremacy of rational objectivity and scientific reason that Henry embodies, through such details. ‗[T]he book shows Perowne's relentless loyalty to the demand for plausibility, as he often reflects on the ‗reasonableness' of the bizarre events of this particular Saturday. The narrative as a whole sets the determined rationalism of its protagonist at a slight angle to the mind / brain / body problem' (Knapp, 2007:126). Indeed Henry looks fatigued by his own reasoning, and is nostalgic to a time when ‗an all-knowing super-natural force had allotted people to their stations in life…a form of anosognosia…a lack of awareness of one's own condition' (74). Ironically, ‗the problem for Westerners like Henry

[204] Saul Bellow, Joseph Conrad, Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, Gustave Flaubert, Lev Tolstoy, and Henry James.

Perowne is that they seem fated to live out their lives as idiots. They cannot imagine how things could be made better‘ (Rorty, 2005:92).

Contrary to Henry, his son Theo, his father-in-law, the great poet John Grammaticus, and above all his daughter Daisy represent the enlightened, visionary imagination as irreducible to cold rationality, and threaten his conceptual framework of the outside world. Theo rejects the whole educational system, so he abandons his formal education and dedicates himself to music, with his grandfather‘s support. When Theo hears how his father humiliated the thug Baxter after realizing that he has Huntington‘s disorder[205], he says ‗These street guys can be proud. Also‘ (154). He finds the anti-war demonstrations ‗Truly amazing. Naturally, Theo is against the war in Iraq. His attitude is as strong and pure as his bones and skin‘(153). When late that Saturday, he unintentionally helps his father destroy the intruder, he asks the detective whether he had committed a crime, a question to which the detective, significantly, ‗laughed out loud…He touched Baxter [‘s body] with the tip of his shoe. ‗I doubt if he‘ll be making a complaint. And we certainly won‘t‘ (240). Theo‘s motto in life is ‗think small‘, i.e. know your limitations.

John is an old disillusioned –at times cynical- poet, an early fan of Mrs. Thatcher, and an admirer of Matthew Arnold who was -like John is- a staunch believer in culture‘s power in confronting radical social changes of his post-industrial-revolution times. Arnold defined culture as a ‗harmonious expansion of all the powers which make the beauty and worth of humanity….it

[205] Huntington‘s disease is a genetically programmed degeneration of brain cells in certain areas of the brain. It causes uncontrolled movements, loss of intellectual faculties, and emotional disturbance. *National Institute of Neurotical Disorder and Stroke Website*. http://www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/huntington/huntington.htm retrieved on July 17, 2003

helps us to judge correctly and to discover our best self‘[206]. For John, his son-in-law is ‗an un cultured and tedious medic, a class of men and women he distrusts more as his dependency on it grows with age‘ (201). John‘s understanding of culture is demonstrated by his choice of ‗Dover Beach‘ to save the day, a symbol of the aesthetic morality of Victorian liberalism advocated by Arnold.

But Arnold was one of the major contributors to Victorian culture -when the British empire was at its peak- who overlooked its unpleasant aspects. Edward Said says that Arnold supported a British massacre of ‗Blacks‘ in Jamaica in 1865, strongly approved tough British policies towards colonial *Eire*, ‗and what he had to say about culture was specifically believed to be deterrent to rampant disorder- colonial, Irish, and domestic…but most Anglo-American readers… see that as irrelevant to the more important theory [of culture] that Arnold appears to be promoting for all ages‘ (1993:130-1). Similarly, Elaine Hadley argues that *Saturday* clearly shows the ineffectiveness of Victorian and present-day liberalisms. She traces Arnold‘s appeal to culture, in the sense of cultivating a self that invests in literature and love to engage with the Other. ‗Perowne's child-in-the-womb-like lapse into unconsciousness at the end of his day and at the end of the novel—‘there's only this‘ (289) — records liberalism's incapacity rather well‘ (2005:100). Frances Ferguson also argues that it is precisely the Victorian liberal values that McEwan challenges (2007: 47). Metaphorically, McEwan inflicts a resounding defeat on John by giving him a broken, bloody nose at the end. Henry does not like John either; but for different reasons. His feelings towards his father-in-law are a mixture of fear, jealousy and envy. But it is John who secretly and rightly hints to Daisy to read Arnold‘s anguished ‗Dover Beach‘,

[206] Matthew Arnold *Culture and Anarchy* , retrieved on July 14, 2013 from *Athorama: Public Domain Books* http://www.authorama.com/culture-and-anarchy-1.html

pretending that it is hers, instead of reading one of her poems to calm the intruder down. Thus at the end of the day both the rational and the imaginative participate in cheating the Other, the terrorist, and destroying him.

Saturday is simply a celebration of English women‘s power. Practically, it is Daisy who saves the day, while she is in her most vulnerable moment: pregnant, forced to strip naked, threatened with rape, her mother‘s life threatened at knifepoint, and humiliated in front of her family and strangers. She pacifies the terrorist‘s agitated temper by confidently and seductively reading the poem suggested by her grandfather. Rosalind, a female copy of her husband, is also intelligent, hard-working, and successful, and a sensitive woman, wife and mother. Whenever Henry passes through an unusual or difficult situation, he looks for her support like a child, talks to her, or even just hears her voice to feel secure. Henry can‘t believe that he is so *lucky* to have her as a wife and a companion. When Baxter approaches Daisy, ‗Rosalind says quickly: You come near her, you‘ll have to kill me first‘ (222), a violent hint that actually gives Baxter the idea of taking her hostage.

Henry‘s mother is a prize-winning swimmer and a meticulous housewife. Now he realizes how much he owes her for being the successful surgeon he is, ‗[s]urely it was because of her that Henry feels at home in an operating theater‘ (158). As a school boy, he would choke with pride while his friends witness and applaud ‗her superhuman nature in which he shared‘ and her demonic speed (160-1). And again, ‗[t]here was nothing small-minded about her interests… [s]he wasn‘t stupid or trivial, her life wasn‘t unfortunate, and he had no business as a young man being condescending towards her. But it‘s too late for apologies now‘ (159). Nevertheless, he does not invest this late wisdom on seeing three Muslim women; he does not include the Other in

his human empathy towards his mother. On the contrary his limited imagination runs into the opposite direction, nurtured by a brain-washed mentality, and haughty ego. Compared to his overly positive attitude towards women in his family, Henry definitely maintains the same old condescending attitude, which deserves a longer quotation here

> Waiting at red traffic lights he *watches* three *figures* in black burkhas (sic)…*huddle together* on the pavement comparing the number on a door with a card one of them holds. The one in the middle, the likely invalid, whose form is somewhat *bent*, *totters* as she *clings* to the forearms of her companions. The *three black columns*, stark against the canyon of creamy stucco and brick, *heads bobbing*, clearly arguing about the address, have a *farcical* appearance, *like kids* lurking about at Halloween. Or like Theo's school production of *Macbeth* when the *hollowed trees* of Birnam Wood waited in the wings to *clump* across the stage... They are sisters perhaps, bringing their mother to *her last chance*. The lights remain *stubbornly* red. Perowne pushes the gearshift into park. *What's he doing*, pushing down so hard on the brake, tensing up his tender quadriceps? *He can't help his distaste, it's visceral. How dismal, that anyone should be obliged to walk around so entirely obliterated.* At least these ladies don't have the leather beaks…
>
> The changed lights at last,…new porticoes…these constricting thoughts. He's caught himself in a nascent rant. Let Islamic dress code be! What should he care about burkas (sic)? Veil for his irritation. No irritation is too narrow a word (124-5, italics mine).

This is the essentialized stereotypical image of the ME women within the discourse of WOT, condensed in a paragraph or two. McEwan does not need to say anything more about Muslim women, because the knowledge the image invokes is already there, ingrained in the Western imagination through centuries of accumulations; it is taken for granted at face value. Henry's attitude is supposed to be taken as empathy towards women victimized by a backward culture/religion, and the reader is supposed to accept his anger as justification for war against backward men who oblige their women to ‗stumble about in the dark at midday' (ibid). Indeed before the traffic lights change Henry invokes several images of Saudi men in suits, trainers, tracksuits, baggy shorts, and Rolexes, entirely charming and worldly and thoroughly educated in both traditions. Seeing Muslim women, he immediately considers them Saudis, forced into hijab.

His European-centered mentality can't accept a different discourse. He can't realize that people's identities and choices, himself included, are culturally constructed, nor does he realize that by objectifying and essentializing these women, he is equally obliterating them.

The narrator does not objectively say: Henry sees three Muslim women, which would be sufficient enough, rather he deliberately replaces the involuntary action of seeing by the voluntary act of ‗*watching*' which implies interested, long gaze at something unusual, different, or out of place . ‗*Figures*', mentioned in the quotation above, implies as regards the human body, the following meanings according to the *Oxford Dictionary*:

> a bodily shape, a person seen indistinctly or from a distance; a representation of a human or animal form in drawing or sculpture; a person of a particular kind, especially one who is distinctive in some way; a shape which is defined by one or more lines in two dimensions, or one or more surfaces in three dimensions used as a decorative design; a diagram or illustrative drawing, especially in a book or magazine; a pattern formed by the movements of a group of people, for example in country dancing, as part of a longer dance or display; and *archaic* the external form or shape of something.

The common element in all these meanings is a ‗distinctive shape' that could be grasped within a dim, vague, or ornamental space, which denies it a clear human identity, something vague, not understandable, and strange. This hazy image is an expected representation coming from McEwan who, like almost all Anglo-American writers, *does not know* Arab/Muslim women. But the recurrent objectifying and condescending metaphors highlighted above: black figures, three black columns, stage hollowed trees, leather beaks, and Halloween disguised kids strip these women further of their human dignity. Moreover, the verbs and adjectives used to describe their actions present them in a pathetic appearance, rather than *farcical* as the text suggests: huddle together, bend, totter, cling, bob, clump, be obliged and obliterated, stumble…and so on, let alone the implicit hint at *Macbeth*'s witches. Heidi Butler argues that

Henry‘s ‗objectification of the novel‘s nonwhite characters demonstrate how essentialism reinforces the ‗master narratives‘ of financial wealth, professional success, and family bliss‘ (2011:101).

The fact that these women are looking for an address represents them as disoriented or lost in a city where millions are demonstrating against a war that concerns them directly, even partly waged in their names; but it seems that they are unaware or not concerned, but in any case they are not participating in the march, because they are entangled in their immediate personal needs, with no one to provide help. They are represented as detached from the world‘s reality, separated from the outside world even though they are physically *outside* their supposedly closed and segregated spaces. In this sense, the burka (which is a specific kind of veiling used only in Afghanistan, and does not apply to the description McEwan gives- and spells differently in two places) becomes more than just a cloth that covers the body, but rather a closed space which incarcerates women even if they are physically free. No wonder then that Henry feels sick watching them. ‗He can‘t help his distaste, it‘s visceral…they really turn his stomach‘ (124).

Because Henry is so materialist and rationalist, he can‘t imagine their situation, or imagine himself in the Other‘s situation. His prejudiced prejudgments are images constructed and disseminated by mainstream media –with which he is obsessed- that presents the outside image without any depth, any story, or imagination. In fact, his brain is so washed by war propaganda that he -with all his rationality- creates his own story, unsubstantiated by any ‗facts‘ to support it, as he has already done earlier at dawn when he took a mechanical failure in a cargo plane as a terrorist Islamist attack on London. He presumes that the woman in the middle is an elderly mother taken by her two daughters to her ‗last chance‘, while their men enjoy their time, not caring about ‗carrying the folkloric torch‘. This is a paradox of WOT, which assume a

masculine chivalric role in rescuing a damsel-in-distress, the ME woman in this case, in the name of liberating her. But Henry‘s chivalric ‗rant‘ translated into physical reaction when he pushes the brakes hard tensing his quadriceps, while the car is already stopped, soon gives way when he remembers that this is Saturday, his day of leisure. ‗They [Muslim women] and the Chinese Republic serve the gently tilting negative pitch of his mood. Saturdays he‘s accustomed to being thoughtlessly content, and there he is for the second time this morning shifting the elements of a darker mood. What‘s giving him the shiver?‘ (125). Typically, the discourse of WOT, connects Islam with Communism as the major enemies of the liberal civilized West. The landing cargo plane on fire, too, has to be Russian, for no reason other than the narrator‘s wish.

There is no female Middle Eastern character in *Saturday* to represent herself, to *speak* for herself, in front of the narrator‘s essentializing representation. If Henry translated his chivalric anger, not into feeling sick or pushing the brakes violently, but rather into *talking to* the ‗ladies‘, asking if he can help, as he is a doctor, and they are looking for a clinic -he imagines- he would have *known* their story. Perhaps they *don‘t need help* in the first place, or they do need help, in which case he would make himself useful. But the narrator decides that the ME women should be silenced, spoken for, represented as a small detail at the fringes of the world outside Henry‘s, although they occupy quite a big space within the discourse of WOT.

Such essentialization also obliterates huge literatures written by the 21st century on culture and its role in drawing lines between communities, and how inclusion and exclusion, i.e. constructing the Other, could be equally benevolent or damaging when it comes to practising power. Henry‘s self-congratulating sense of luck, rationality, and authority inevitably excludes the Other, whether it is colored, less fortunate, poor, or female. Watching an elderly man sweeping the street thoroughly makes Henry feel uncomfortable, but ‗having to sweep the streets

for a living looks simple bad luck. It‗s not visionary. The streets need to be clean. Let the unlucky enlist‘ (74). Henry does not consider how such ideas are constructed about people. Feeling uncomfortable about the sweeper and Muslim women satisfies his humanitarian tendencies towards the Other, the unlucky, and foreshadows the introduction of an Iraqi archeologist and a university professor, Miri Taleb, whom he treated earlier for an aneurysm due to torture by Saddam Hussein‗s regime.

The demonstration scene makes Henry feel that they are naïve, and he imagines Saddam surveying the crowd with satisfaction: ‗the good-hearted electorates of the Western democracies will never allow their governments to attack his country. But he is wrong. The one thing Perowne thinks he knows about this war is that it‗s going to happen. With or without the UN‘ (60). What makes him feel that *he knows better* than millions of demonstrators is Miri, his Iraqi patient. But also one of those demonstrators is his daughter Daisy who joins them in Hyde Park directly from the station after arriving from Paris, on her way home. In their eight-page fierce argument, McEwan summarizes both Henry‗s pro-war and Daisy‗s anti-war arguments. Henry‗s is built on political and humanist basis: that repressive and corrupt regimes in the ME should be removed, starting with Iraq, to plant the seeds of democracy, thus rescuing its people, curbing terrorism and protecting the West. It might take five years and some victims, but these people are already victimized by Saddam.

Daisy rejects the war on principle: it won‗t solve any problem, it would create a humanitarian catastrophe, and it would create more hatred and violence as millions of young people would bear arms against the invasion, and it would jeopardize the West further (which proved to be true as London was attacked a few weeks after the war). ‗So ordinary Iraqis get it from Saddam, and now they have to take it from the American missiles… you don‗t plant seeds

with cruise missiles‘ she tells her father (194-8). In his heart, Henry agrees with all her arguments, and knows all about the lies, but he is ambivalent, that‘s why he is on the defensive whenever confronted by an opposite point of view. He recoils ‗whenever he talks to Jay. Henry finds himself tending toward the anti-war camp‘ (102), but when he talks to Daisy, he is whole heartedly pro-war, ‗he has a hollow feeling from arguing only half of what he feels. He‘s a dove with Jay Strauss, and a hawk with his daughter‘ (198).

In this context, McEwan‘s representation of the Iraqi professor as a victim is strikingly similar to that of the three Muslim women. The story of Miri‘s torture is certainly troubling by any criteria, but the way it is used by Henry to ease his political conscience, and to construct his own story of benevolence and self-esteem by reducing the Other‘s identity, body, and whole existence into mere justification for supporting war in the name of humanity, suggests that the Western Self is immune to such degradation. The Iraqi professor is represented as mentally and physically meek, a victim to be protected, but still worthy of the same human rights and democracy that Henry thrives in. Had Henry been presented bluntly and whole heartedly for the war, as his US colleague Jay Strauss is, for example, his prejudice wouldn‘t have made any difference. But Miri has to be pushed into a lower position to be pitied: He is described as

> a man of slight, almost girlish build, with a nervous laugh, a whinnying giggle that could have something to do with his time in prison…for a man approaching his seventieth birthday, Taleb has an unusual appearance-a childlike smooth skin and long eyelashes, and a carefully groomed moustache- surely dyed. He had no interest or involvement in politics…giggled mirthlessly [while talking about torture] (61-2).

By representing Miri as a woman, a child, and a mentally disturbed person, thus diminishing his subjectivity and his ability to protect himself, Henry automatically situates himself in a higher powerful position, in the doctor-patient relation, living in a democratic country, capable of repairing and protecting the unfortunate Other. As discussed earlier, Henry lacks human empathy

unless it enhances his superiority. His special interest in Miri‘s story among hundreds of patients is totally selfish (as will be discussed further in Baxter‘s case), and embodies Foucault‘s knowledge/power/discourse nexus.

Miri and the three covered women *have to* be essentialized and homogenized as weak, otherwise they won‘t serve Henry‘s subject construction as *superior/rescuer*. The fact they are Muslim Arabs puts their story in a wider scope of secular West-Islamic East conflict theory, thus Dasiy tells him ‗Dad, Bali was Al-Qaeda, not Saddam' (197). In fact Henry does not care about Miri, the women, or the victimized Iraqi people, because he is ready to slaughter them to prove his theory. When Daisy talks about millions of Iraqis dead through bombing and famine, about refugees and flattened Baghdad, about possible invasions by Turkey, Iran and Israel…and so on, he replies ‗in five years we might not regret it…You‘re right, it could be a disaster…but it could be a beginning of something better. It‘s all about outcomes, and no one knows what they‘ll be…in five years we‘ll know' (192). He is willing to kill a whole nation, use them as guinea pigs in his political laboratory research. ‗That‘s so typical …of you', Daisy says (193). Ironically, the Iraq invasion was described by mainstream media and military discourses as *surgical,* and millions of victims as *collateral damage*.

Henry is an already annoyed outsider of the February 15th demonstrations, because they block the way to enjoy his day off, but more importantly he is irritated because they block his rationalist understanding and actual being in the world, ‗our whole way of life' (39), outside the secure domestic sphere of his house and his operating theater. As the day proceeds, Henry‘s observations show that he is deeply shocked by the 9/11 attack, and finds in the War on Terrorism the best answer to his fears and anxieties. ‗There are people around the planet, well-connected and organised, who would like to kill him and his family and friends to make a point'

(80). His attitude to 9/11 is typically arrogant, imperial, and western-centered, as is the mainstream media discourse of WOT, analyzed in Chapter III, here. Indeed he is addicted to watching and listening to the news. McEwan�0s six-page treatise on post-9/11 Western media, through Henry‘s contemplations while cooking fish stew for his family, analyzes the role the media plays in creating a ‗docile citizen‘

> He takes a step towards the CD player, then changes his mind for he‘s feeling the pull, like gravity, of the approaching TV news. It‘s a condition of the times, this compulsion…to be joined to the generality, to a community of anxiety. The habit‘s grown stronger these past two years; a different scale of news value has been set by monstrous and spectacular scenes…The possibility of their recurrence is one thread that binds the days…Have his anxieties been making a fool of him? He suspects he‘s becoming a dupe, the willing, the febrile consumer of news fodder…all the crumbs the authorities let fall. He is a docile citizen. His nerves… vibrate obediently with each news ‗release‘. He‘s lost the habits of skepticism, he‘s becoming dim with contradictory opinion, he isn‘t thinking clearly, and just as bad, he senses he isn‘t thinking independently. (180-185)

But his attitude to the war is still ambiguous. He knows that the war is waged for the wrong motivations. In fact many of his recurrent silent comments on certain items in the news suggest that he understands perfectly the lies and manipulations. When Prime Minister Tony Blair talks about human rights in Iraq, ‗the only case worth making‘ (68), Henry thinks, ‗Too late now. After Blix it looks tactical‘[207]. But his fear is unbearable, and his imperialist, rationalist humanism still makes him believe that righting wrongs in the ME, could prevent Islamic terrorism. Having showered the day before, he listens to the Blix report, but he turns the radio off and goes back to his book on Darwin. He is always suspicious of the Middle Easterners across the square, and assumes they are dealers, ‗running a pavement café in cocaine perhaps, or ecstasy

[207] Hans Blix is the United Nations‘ former chief weapons inspector in Iraq, who testified in the UN that Iraq has no weapons of mass destruction before the 2003 invasion. See Hans Blix *Disarming Iraq: the Search for Weapons of Mass Destruction* (London, Bloomsbury: 2004).

and marijuana‛. It was Theo who corrected him. They just run innocent small businesses. Henry always feels that he owes them an apology; buy something from them (148).

He decides that ‗the three people in the world that he loves, and who most love him, are about to come home. So what‛s wrong with him? Nothing, nothing at all. He is fine, everything is fine‛ (186). But Henry‛s anxieties burst while he is cooking and looking forward to seeing those he loves most reunite in his house, celebrating his daughter‛s book, and her reconciliation with her grandfather, on the same day of the demonstrations. The safe haven of familial atmosphere should absorb his anxiety. But the perfect Victorian tranquility of the domestic sphere does not work for Henry in his postcolonial high-class home, because it is already invaded by TVs, radios, newspapers, everywhere: in the kitchen, bathroom, bedroom, living room…and so on. Significantly, Henry tries to silence the outside world by muting the TV while he is cooking, but the pictures keep on attracting/attacking him. Thus, with all his intelligence and professional experience ‗repairing‛ human bodies, he *can‛t* realize that the love he has towards his family and the human empathy towards the innocent victims of the 9/11 attack, apply to the equally innocent victims of WOT. Similarly, as he can‛t learn from the accident in the London sky, he can‛t imagine Baxter as harmless. Had he listened to him and shown him some respect, instead of using his authority as a doctor to cheat a patient, Henry might have been able to appreciate how harmless Baxter actually was. He does not see the Other‛s humanity and dignity. But Baxter, representing a micro-terrorist attack, transgresses a red line when he rightly distrusts Henry.

Baxter is the lesser Other within Henry‛s epistemological system, and his representation is even more reductionist than those of Iraqis, Muslim women, demonstrators, the street sweeper,

and the Nigerian girl. ‗The only person he hates in the world is sitting in the car behind… [who accidently scratched his Mercedes which] will never be the same again. It‘s ruinously altered, and so his Saturday. He‘ll never make his game' (82). He soon realizes that his car is not damaged at all, not a blemish. The Other‘s car is a BMW, ‗a vehicle associated with criminality and drug-dealers', (83) he thinks. Physically, Baxter‘s representation is grotesque: a foot shorter than Henry, his dancing-like gait is distinctive, fidgety, and he is small-faced with thick eyebrows. His mouth is set bulbously with an effect of muzzle, simian air compounded with sloping shoulder, and his pores exude a perfume, an oily essence of smoking. But this monkey-faced, smelly little man ‗gives an impression of fretful impatience, of destructive energy waiting to be released' (88), and Henry associates him again with drug dealers and pimps. The clear savagery element in Baxter is set against the narrator‘s celebration of Henry‘s statuesque body in the opening scene of the novel, and body politics in both cases denotes class ethics. ‗Baxter and Perowne confront one another as class opposites: the lower-class tough, whose angry intention is all fists and kicks, and the upper-class professional, all brain, no brawn, and now bloodied, who yet has the last word' (Hadley, 2005: 92). After diagnosing Baxter‘s jerky movements and inability to make saccades as symptoms of Huntington‘s disease, thus gaining power over him, Henry cruelly and condescendingly uses his knowledge to cheat and humiliate Baxter before his sidekicks. He cuts him short and walks away from him.

The novel culminates when Baxter shows up in the evening, raiding Henry‘s house, armed with a knife, to recuperate his dignity and seeking revenge. Typically, the terrorist is mentally –and in consequence- psychologically ill. Baxter is deeply insecure and lacks self-esteem, due to his illness, and when he feels that he is being mocked, he turns extremely violent. But McEwan consistently highlights his humane aspects. Baxter listens when talked to, and is

willing to cooperate; his situation is hopeless but he refuses to give up. He is intelligent but dismayed that he was living the wrong life. Henry knows that and has troubled feelings about it. ‗Did he, Henry Perowne, act unprofessionally, using his medical knowledge to undermine a man suffering from a neurodegenerative disorder? Yes.' (113). Most importantly, Baxter shows more sensitivity to artistic beauty than Henry. Seeing that the girl he obliged to strip is pregnant, he looks away, and picks a book. Listening to ‗Dover Beach', he is so touched that ‗his right hand has moved from Rosalind's shoulder and his knife is already back in his pocket' (230). Realizing wrongly, that Daisy wrote the beautifully sad poem, he asks her to get dressed. ‗Suddenly, Baxter turns. He's licking his lips, his smile is wet and beatific, his eyes are bright. The voice warm, and trembles with exalted feeling' (233). Thus, Arnold's theory that culture helps the development of correct judgements and the discovery of our best self applies to Baxter rather than to Henry. Indeed, ‗Daisy's re-reading of ‗Dover Beach' is a metaphor for the novel as a whole' (Hilard, 2008: 204).

In fact Henry interprets Baxter's appreciation of poetry as ‗the essence of a degenerating mind, periodically to lose all senses of continuous self…In the sudden emotional rush of his mood swing, he inhabits the confining bright spotlight of the present…This is the moment to rush him' (232). Again, it is only after Henry destroys Baxter totally, that the latter ‗becomes the catalyst for Perowne recognizing, if not realizing, a wider community from which he has shielded himself' (Hilard, 2008 :192). The dawning sense of mutuality comes ever more insistently at last

> Where's Henry's appetite for removing a tyrant now? At the end of this day… he's timid, vulnerable, he keeps drawing his dressing gown more tightly around him. . . . Harder now to recall, or to inhabit, the vigour of his row with Daisy — the certainties have dissolved into debating points. . . . A pregnant woman has her own authority. All he feels now is fear. He's weak and ignorant, scared of the way the consequences of an action leap away from your control and breed new events . . . a knife at the throat' (287).

The Search for Sana

Suspended Identities: Palestinian Women as Enigma

Richard Zimler belongs to the second -and third- generation of American Jewish writers[208] after the Holocaust[209], who tackled issues of exile, displacement, loss, and the paradox of orthodoxy in the Jewish narrative. They show ‗a conspicuous shift from community to the isolated individual, from a communal sense of a shared identity and past – if only an imagined one – to a disconcerting sense of isolation and fragmentation' (Aarons, 2012: 135). They are separated from the historically long-established tradition of Jewish storytelling -scriptural and secular- marked by ongoing narratives that locate the protagonist within a communal history. On the other hand, in *The Search for Sana*, Zimler writes within the ideological trend of Jewish narratives epitomized by Israeli writer Amos Oz, especially after the Camp David Peace Accords were signed between Egypt and Israel in 1979[210].

This trend destabilizes the Zionist ideology of exceptionalism on which the State of Israel has been built, namely the persecution of Jews and the relentless insistence on politically investing in it, Jewish supremacy, the danger of Jewish integration with non-Jewish

[208] There is long debate of terminology about the literary identity of tens of Jewish writers who tackle the issue of Jewish persecution, the State of Israel, and the Zionist ideology, especially in relation to Palestinians and Arabs. Some use the term Hebrew, Israeli, Zionist, or Jewish literature. I prefer to use the latter, used by Victoria Aarons, as it is the most inclusive among them. See Aarons (2012:129).

[209] Second- and third-generation Holocaust Jewish writers, such as Thane Rosenbaum, Ehud Havazelet, Nathan Auslander, Melvin Jules Bukiet, Art Spiegelman, Aryeh Lev Stollman, Jonathan Safran Foer, and Harvey Grossinger are singularly preoccupied in their work with the memory of the Holocaust, which they did not experience. (ibid: 138).

[210] Subsequently other peace treaties were signed with other Arab countries; it was also the beginning of a normalization process, and the mutual recognition between the Palestinian Liberation Organization and the State of Israel in 1993.

communities, and the Jewish identity in a racial entity against the whole world (Helessa: 1995, 36). The destabilization of these ideological premises is pivotal to the Israeli peace movement which calls for withdrawal from Palestinian occupied lands, and the evacuation of settlements, and advocates two states and the return of seven millions of diasporic Palestinians. I argue that Zimler‘s narrative tackles all these premises through its Israeli protagonist, Helena, but the stereotypical individuals, mainly women, paradoxically confirm the colonial discourse rather than challenge it in the interest of showing peaceful Jews and Palestinians as victims of both Israeli and resistance terrorism, outside historical facts and the imperialist nature of the occupation.

According to Israeli writer and critic Ehud Ben-Ezer, who traces the representation of Arabs in Jewish literature through the twentieth century in his book *Sleepwalkers and Other Stories: The Arab in Hebrew Fiction* (1999), Jewish writing has gone through distinct stages. Starting with Theodor Herzl‘s *Altneuland* (1902), and until World War I, there appeared the motif of Arabs who appreciated Zionism as a source of economic development for themselves and who saw Zionists as Semitic brothers with whom to form a political alliance. This sentimental view shattered on the hard rock of the 1920s, when the fullness of Palestinian resistance to colonialism became clear. In the struggle between the romantic, biblical view of the East, and the bitter reality, pessimism emerged that emphasized the grimmer aspects of the Jewish national experience in Palestine. But success in establishing the State of Israel in 1948 turned the Arab from an enemy into a moral problem: what to do about a *neighbor* (the colonized native in this case) who does not wish to live in peaceful coexistence? That Israelis had to fight and kill Arabs only exacerbated this dimension. ‗We came, shot, conquered, burnt, blew up, shoved away, pushed and banished. What the hell are we doing here?‘ (Pipes, 1999). As, year

after year, Israel met with unrelenting resistance, the Arab loomed larger as a threat, eventually becoming ‗an existential nightmare, devoid of illusions.' Personal characteristics dissolved away, replaced by an abstracted menace. With the victory of 1967 and the sudden confrontation with large numbers of Arabs under Israeli colonial rule, the picture again became more nuanced, with ‗living and breathing' individuals taking the place of earlier caricatures. Through all that has happened in the thirty-plus years since 1967, the fictional Arab is increasingly a complex entity, one whose characteristics result more from the views of an individual author than from the temper of the times (ibid).

In any case, the Arab has always been the Other in Jewish (literary) discourse, from the early years of Zionism to the 21st century, represented as: the noble, heroic Bedouin, the sexual predator, the suicide bomber, and the ally (Harris, 2012). Palestinian women are generally represented as suppressed and marginalized by traditional family relations and society, or as courageous individuals trying to create peace but are torn by divided and conflicted societies. Under the title of ‗The Abjection of the Marginalized', Sara Zamir and Sara Hauphtman suggest that the portrait of the Arab (Palestinian) woman is mostly archaic because it is based mainly on her traditional and conservative profile. It complies with the sexual code of Bedouin society, namely that perceptions of honor and shame dictate behavior. The Bedouin sexual code affects every aspect of a girl's upbringing, from childhood to marriage. As a vehicle of procreation, the woman is both marginalized and venerated. Her primary role of reproduction emphasizes her connection to uncontrolled nature, which restricts her ability to be perceived as morally equal to men. As a wife she is again a marginal character, her status is low, nevertheless she acts assertively, to build a bridge between the Arab and the Jewish populations in Israel during the

complicated days of the pre-state and the 1948-1949 war, conveying the sensitive encounters and relationships between Jews and Arabs. There is an *absence of the contemporary, capable, and even revolutionary woman*, which becomes a form of presence that imparts awareness to the origin and effects of the actual exclusion. Modern Arab women struggle between merging identities within a perplexed society living at the shadow of continued conflict. They choose peace, but contrary to the peaceful relationships and the discourse of peace between women, the male protagonists cannot break the cycle of war. However, dilemmas concerning the evolving identity of contemporary Arab women may function as genuine agents for a renewed society (Zamir and Hauphtman, 2009).

Pipes suggests that there are two dominant contemporary Israeli approaches to the political conflict: the ‗rigid' or ‗hawkish' approach, and the ‗soft' or ‗dovish' one. The point of departure of the ‗rigid,' ‗hawkish,' or ‗nationalist' approach was the historical right of the Jews to the Land of Israel. Its proponents more or less expected that the Arabs would recognize that right and waive their claim to the land. This view entails a strong feeling of superiority and belief that Jewish victory is not only the result of superior strength but also of moral virtues. It does not fear a prolonged conflict, it shows no tendency to relax its severity, and it offers no proposal for a peaceful solution. Rather, it anticipates the continuation of the struggle until the enemy is weary of it. The dovish visions of peace expounded by A. B. Yehoshua, Amos Oz, David Grossman, Yosi Beilin, Yosi Sarid, and their like, ‗are sure that we are the guilty side, that our concessions have the power to put an end to our conflict with the Arab and Muslim world, and that we are in no danger of destruction by our enemies, if we are only ‗good'' (Pipes, 1999).

If fact, there is a clear intertextuality between Zimler's *Sana* and Amos Oz's *My Michael* (1968). Oz's is a story of a female student in Jerusalem. She is married and has a child, and is going mad. The shadow within her and the growing madness revolve around her childhood Arab playmates. Their presence grows strong in her hallucinations; they become terrorists, sowing destruction and death. Their empowerment in her hallucinations grows and reaches its climax at the story's end, indicating the protagonist's acceptance of her madness. *Sana,* on the other hand is the other way round, a story of a Palestinian woman, deeply traumatized because of her mother's tragedy and the torture and murder of her mentally disabled brother in an Israeli prison, but also torn by her childhood memories and friendship with the Jewish Helena.

Sana is an auto-fiction, of which Richard Zimler is the author, narrator, and protagonist, writing in the first person. However, Zimler claims that

> [s]ome people and events are based on fact, but it is a work of fiction…characters tell their own version of events without having to censor themselves…about how to fulfil their obligations to themselves, their families, and their communities. These complex characters are not representations of any particular viewpoint or illustrations of any theory…there are no easy villains and saints. It's left for each reader to draw his or her own conclusions (245)

Fictional autobiography as a term is problematic enough. Zimler blurs the conventional boundaries between fact and fiction by insisting on presenting facts as fiction or vice versa, and asks the reader to conclude whatever (s)he thinks. I suggest a fictional reading in order to deduce the author's representational strategy. I also suggest that his claim of *not* representing any theory is challenged by his relatively long political treatise on terrorism, the immorality of journalism, his recurrent references to the Holocaust, the pioneer Israelis, and the brutality of the military occupation of Palestine, before and after the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. Through the political discourse and writings of the female Jewish protagonist Helena, Zimler shows great affinity with the discourse of the Israeli peace movement. In fact Helena is a perfect embodiment

of the moral anxieties of the movement. On the other hand, Sana‘s representation depicts the psychological plight of the Palestinian peace advocates, and their existential dilemma under hostile authorities.

Sana opens with Zimler, an American writer, meeting a woman one afternoon in February 2000, while he is taking part in the Perth Writers‘ Festival and doing a promotional tour for a new novel. She is participating in a performance of a Brazilian dance and mime group presenting *Lysistrata*. In their second and last meeting, she gives him an impression that she is Jewish, and her name is Helena. Later that afternoon, she commits suicide in front of him, throwing herself from the seventh floor of the hotel, and launching him into an intense three-year investigation of her life. The mysterious encounter takes place out of space and time, in the restaurant of a remote hotel in Perth, Australia. Both are on the verge of a nervous breakdown. He had a panic attack and presentiment of death while taking the plane from London, and feels out of place in Perth which looks like ‗it had been modeled on a Hollywood set of a Victorian outpost town…I didn‘t seem to be anywhere except outside my real life‘ (4). Sana‘s introduction is stunningly otherworldly and conspicuous. A slender woman in her fifties, an admirer who tells him that one of his novels influenced her life tremendously. He describes her as having prickly black hair, stern profile, sharp brown eyes, dark olive skin, a scar below her hairline, and tightly-pressed-together lips ‗as though to censor her thoughts‘ (5). She would swipe at the air as if to seize tiny birds darting across the room, play with, talk to, and feed the imaginary birds. She feigns a clown-like stumble, supposedly to attract the attention of the American author, which she does. She listens to the whispers of a hibiscus blossom behind her ear, and finally she pulls invisible stones from her pockets and tosses them to the side, and walks on tiptoes, arms unfurling as though to fly (4-9).

Sana is unmistakably introduced as abnormal. The novel is partly a detective story and one of suspense, and partly full of political and moral contemplations on friendship, solidarity, injustice, revenge, and suicidal terrorism. It tracks the author‘s three-year investigation of the reason behind Sana‘s suicide, a quest through which Zimler takes the reader to several countries and cities around the world, especially Israel, Australia, Paris and London, Italy, and many others. The reader also meets several people along the way through these different locations, only to discover at the end that Sana is involved in a terrorist network, and it is not sure if her death was suicide or murder, but as the story unfolds the reader finds him/herself in New York and the denouement is an interpretation of the 9/11 attacks.

Zimler draws symmetrical parallels between two families, tracking their lives in the tremulous history of occupied Palestine. Helena‘s and Sana‘s families are neighbors in Haifa, ‗a city that exemplifies co-existence' (Zamir and Hauphtman, 2009). Helena‘s father, Samuel, is represented in the stereotypical image of the early Zionist Jews who came to the wasteland of Palestine to revive it, ‗eager to create a green paradise out of the desert sands' (30), and again ‗[t]he land there is just rocks and sand from the time of Moses. All those feijoa bushes he‘s planted…they are very beautiful' (130), and later, ‗all the good [Israelis] who built this country from nothing' (229). He is an Oxford educated botanist, a peaceful little Polish man who had served as a British intelligence agent in the ME. But now he is just an old lonely man taking care of his plants in Israel. Her mother Rosa is an extremely strong Greek Jew, the only survivor of her family of four which was deported to death camps. She made her way to Palestine on her own. She is represented as hard-working and highly educated, ‗Reading was her favorite pastime…She devoured Erich Maria Remarque, Thomas Mann, Kafka, Dostoevsky…She liked good stories…She hated happy endings'(31), and has a very high sense of morality and justice.

Helena is a younger copy of her parents, only traumatized by the violent treatment the Palestinians receive from the Israeli authorities, so she leaves Israel and lives in Paris, preparing her PhD on Sephardic music, ‗I am not unusual in France. In Israel, I am' (94). Sana's family, on the other hand, are Palestinians who had emigrated to Egypt generations ago, but returned – supposedly- to fight the Zionist occupation. Her father, Mahmoud, is stereotyped as a typical proud Arab man, with a high sense of religious nationalism. ‗Olive-skinned, sad-eyed, exceedingly polite and…liked silence…the kind of man you respected but did not feel comfortable with' (32). The reader never meets or hears him representing himself. He is only reported by Helena and her father; both hate him for different reasons: Samuel for his politics, and Helena for his cruelty to Sana and her mother, Zeinab.

Rosa, Zeinab, Helena and Sana are the female quadrate on which the peace message of the novel is built. They create their own heaven, full of laughter, stories, afternoon teas, and visits to the cinema where they would watch classical Hollywood glories, all in midst of violence and hatred, a feminine utopia free of men's aggressiveness. Zeinab, Helena says, ‗was all comic parts of life…she was music. And she was light. Yes. But it's more than that- it is everything. She was the person who could always make us smile- me and Sana…She made everyone in our neighborhood smile' (29). She does not mind being captured, because she believes that ‗they'd stop searching for Sana once they had captured her' (37). She makes Rosa promise that Sana will go to university if she is gone, and she does not mind if Sana marries a Jew ‗as far as he is handsome and kind and can make a good future' (37). Rosa and Zeinab become sisters by circumstances. They would talk in lowered voices, sleeping in Rosa's back garden on hot nights, ‗forging a winking complicity against the international conspiracy of men, led in their cases by their husbands' (26).

Zeinab‘s family runs away from the bombing, when they return back after the barrage is over, they are denied legal Israeli authorization. Nevertheless they sneak back, and are always protected by their Jewish neighbors. Samuel and Rosa create a secret hiding place in their house, and cover its entrance with a wardrobe. Rosa would confront Israeli soldiers with a gun to protect her Palestinian neighbors, and when an Israeli officer grabs her gun, she stabs him with a kitchen knife. But Mahmoud is too proud and uncomfortable being protected by the Jews. Before leaving Palestine forever, he tells Samuel that he hopes that he won‘t be obliged to shoot him when he comes back home. This representation of the colonizer as a humanist protector, and the colonized as ungrateful and violent is quietly troubling, and biased. But it is gender that makes all the difference here. The peaceful heaven created by women is shattered, as well as everybody‘s life especially Sana‘s, when her mother is gang raped by Israeli soldiers.

Rape plays a pivotal role in the novel, both literally and symbolically. Sana‘s mentally ‗retarded‘ younger brother is also raped, brutalized, and his hand chopped off by the Israeli prison authorities for a mistaken charge. Literally, it is at each rape that Sana descends deeper down her fatal path of torment until she jumps from the window. In fact, Zimler hints at an ‗original‘ rape of Sana by her father when she was a child, which should be the cause behind her ‗strange‘ behavior. But Zimler uses a peculiar strategy of neither confirming nor suspecting the Palestinian characters‘ actions. We are never certain if this or that event actually happens or not, thus the readers‘ judgment and the character‘s identity are always held in suspension. Symbolically, anti-colonization movements always refer to occupation as rape, and the men of the resistance are considered honorable, as they defend the honor of their nation. Indeed Palestine is always referred to as raped or violated in political and cultural discourses. Women symbolize the land, and occupying one‘s land is violating his honor, exactly as women‘s honor.

Thus after Zeinab is raped, Mahmoud loses his honor, becomes violent and then disappears. He is supposed to be in Italy working in a bank, but at the end of the novel the reader discovers that he is nowhere, supposedly killed while fighting. Sana always refers to him as dead.

Nothing is clear about the Palestinians' history or victimization on the individual level and, consequently, on the symbolic level. None of them is there to tell her/his story. All are dead. All are represented by the Jews, who again are not sure of why what happens, happens. The only Palestinians alive are the terrorists. The reader never knows if Mahmoud actually fought the Israelis, raped his daughter, hated his disabled son, or despised his wife as the narrative implicitly suggests, but denies at the same time. The same goes for Zeinab. The reader never knows if she loved her husband or hated him, why she was arrested and raped, how she felt, what her family's reaction was and so on and so forth. Sana is the most mysterious character, typical of the representations of terrorists, within the discourse of WOT. All we are told about her is that she is *strange, abnormal, indecipherable* due to some life-changing childhood experience which we are not sure of. This identity suspension reveals the narrative's failure to represent the Other, not only as characters, but also of what they stand for, i.e. the colonized Other.

Sana is represented by her friend Helena as a very intelligent, highly sensitive child with a vivid imagination, thus her reactions are as strong as her agony. Even before her mother's rape, Sana is haunted by mysterious fears to which she refers to as Queen Bee, the sum of all evils. The hiding place becomes her shelter where she would invent endless stories and games with her friend Helena. These fears could be attributed to her grandmother's death in stampede while running away from the Israeli bombing, her family's escape to south Lebanon, or having to hide every time they hear the words ‗*no papers*'[211], which becomes another word in her special

[211] A reference to having no legal documents mentioned above.

repertoire of a language, significantly meaning: senseless. It is after her mother‘s rape that Sana starts the first of her strikes. But it is after her disgraced and ridden-with-guilt father, who couldn‘t protect his wife, and ‗couldn‘t resist the violence inside himself‘ either (68), starts beating her that she would close herself up in a room and keep on crying, talking about Queen Bee who would hurt her some way or another.

Zeinab loses her mind, and begins ‗to sense problems that *didn‘t exist*. According to Helena, she believed that she had special powers. She and Sana always wanted to have magic- you know, and unfortunately they wanted me to have it. She thought she could see your future…she saw bad things everywhere, in everyone‘ (66, emphasis added to highlight the irony). She hears the walls and the wind whispering to her about catastrophes to come. She puts crosses of tape over the windows, as there will be bombing, and they would be broken. Her fear makes her too worried about Sana, so that if she stays out to play with other children ‗her father would spank her till she screamed for help. One day, she closed her eyes and became silent- as if a door had shut inside her…she went on strike again‘ (67). Zeinab ends tragically when she gets breast cancer, as Rosa thinks, which spreads quickly in her body due to the lack of any medical care (95). Zeinab‘s representation is a perfect example of what Foucault calls in *The History of Sexuality* ‗hysterization of women‘s bodies…where the Mother, with her negative image of ‗nervous woman‘ constituted the most visible form of this hysterization (104).

Sana‘s voice, as *the* protagonist, is never heard in the novel as she is literally and textually killed in the first few pages, i.e. silenced. Helena recurrently repeats that ‗there is so much about Sana I don‘t understand‘, still Helena is the only source of information we have. The humanist colonizer, again represents the colonized who does not know or is incapable of representing him/herself. Sana, traumatized by her mother‘s and brother‘s tragedies and the

beatings of her father, and later by a violent partner, becomes a very complicated person, and chooses strikes and silences. She starts to go to the hiding place for hours not saying a word and believing that people who are stopped from saying what they really think sometimes stop saying anything and eventually ‗they make believe they have no voice' (68).

Significantly, Helena too stops talking after her friend‗s suicide, but thanks to Zimler who wants Sana‗s story, she starts to talk, ‗don't you see I am on strike too…I say nothing to no one. Nothing. But I have to tell someone these things. They are killing me. I have to get them out before they make me jump too' (ibid). And again, ‗[g]iving you part of the story made me so much lighter and able to go on. I was feeling more free (sic) than I had in an entire year' (94). Thus Zimler‗s novel actually becomes therapy for Helena, to save her from the guilt of not being there to help her friend. Sana chooses mime and dancing, to say what she wants to say in the only way possible for a voiceless victim. She silences herself doubly. As an actor she can hide her real identity, as she did in the opening and only scene where she is present; but even as an actor she chooses mime. Language failure for Sana, symbolizes failure of any narrative, whether pacifist or military, as far as it is built on injustice. Thus acting becomes Sana‗s reality, she lives her life

> behind that shield she made inside her head…she stayed even more in her own world – all alone. She did crazy things. I was scared of her…She would pass hour after hour just playing by herself, gesturing with her hands, telling stories to herself, moving her lips to say things I couldn‗t hear. She did not want to be interrupted by me or by anyone. It was like she was living in a universe where no one else was welcome- like she was deaf and dumb (93).

Sana would maintain her childhood characterizations through her adulthood, particularly her tendency to retreat into her walled universe, masking her feelings brilliantly, and never revealing them openly. Her partner describes her as an opal ‗with so many beautiful colors deep inside. But

hard too – as though you could never quite make a lasting impression no matter how much you tried‘ (124).

Zimler chooses Aristophanes‘ comedy of *Lysistrata*[212], for Sana to perform in mime and dance. The earliest known play written in 411 B.C, the third and concluding play of Aristophanes' war and peace trilogy is a comic account of one woman's uncommon mission to end the Peloponnesian War between Athens and Sparta. The heroine Lysistrata, conveying her feminist and pacifist ideas, convinces the women of Greece to withhold sexual privileges from their husbands and lovers as a means of forcing the men to bring an end to the war and to negotiate peace. At the end of the play, the device of the bold Lysistrata proves entirely effective and peace is concluded. Sana‘s production of the comedy is the only key to understanding her. Her interpretation is about betrayal rather than solidarity. She moves the action from ancient Athens to Haifa in the 1950s. The women are all in black and wear Palestinian scarves, Lysistrata is Zeinab played by Sana. The men all wear Jewish prayer shawls, and the Commissioner a white yarmulke, and a Jewish star is on the roof. While in the original comedy the men are defeated, here it is the other way round. Men are given all the graceful movements and the women move as though carrying great weights around their necks – or fearing every movement- except for Lysistrata, who darts around the stage, outdoing the men. But she is betrayed by the Commissioner, All the women are murdered, except her; she is caged, bloodied, beaten, and naked. The curtain drops on her with a veil suffocating her, ‗[e]ach time she breathed in, the fabric drawn torturously over her nose and eyes, giving her face a cadaverous

[212] Full English text retrieved on July 28, 2013 from *The EServer Drama Collection*, http://drama.eserver.org/plays/classical/aristophanes/lysistrata.txt

appearance… [l]ike a bird with its wings broken' (109). The strike-for-peace motif is revealing, only in Sana's case it is a strike from life.

More importantly though, is her crisis of identity-negation and pretence that she is Helena, which becomes part of living/acting her life. After she leaves Palestine, she invents a new past for herself. Rosa also resorts to the same strategy of identity-negation. She does not tell people that she was in Auschwitz, but rather tells them that she had spent the war on a beach near Smyrna- making her skin tan, eating baklava and learning to drink Turkish coffee. Rosa hates the Israelis using what the Nazis did to the Jews as a justification for killing Palestinians and stealing their land. Helena explains her mother's identity crisis as ‗it is easier to invent a simple past because people are not interested in how anyone feels' (111), and applies this theory to Sana. But Rosa's negation of her past, morally explained as a rejection of being used as an excuse for practicing injustice, and symbolically as a rejection of an unwanted past, does not apply exactly to Sana. What Helena does not realize is that *she* is the Other for Sana, the aggressor; a friend but also an enemy at the same time, and this is what tears her apart. Sana seeks escape from her own feelings, not the others', whether temporarily by acting, or permanently by death. Acting helps her detach herself from reality, and pretending that she *is* Helena detaches her from a real identity, which suffers schisms in many ways. She is also crushed by love/hate feelings to claim any identity of her own.

Sana chooses a Jewish partner whom she has never loved; in fact she calls him Queen Bee, symbolizing all her fears, and claims Helena's history as her own before him. The reason that Helena has everything in Israel: a family, a home, a country and a stable life, is exactly the same reason that Sana does not have any of them. Zimler refers to an American writer, Theodore Zeldin, who says that those who are too traumatized do not escape even if the door is opened.

Still ‗[w]hen circumstances do not permit you to escape physically, you can do so in your thought…You may be powerless, but in your imagination you can transform the world' (118). What is a better transformation for Sana than being Helena, in Haifa, at home, reinventing the history that existed before all the calamities had befallen her? The outside universe Sana creates through silent stories and pretence provides her with a sanctuary since she hid in a hole behind the wardrobe. Ironically, the hole that protects her is the same that entraps her, hence the aviary motif that runs through the whole narrative. The question is: what happened in Perth to shatter this protecting shield, leaving her so vulnerable so as to jump through the window. It is not because she can't raise her voice, which she has been prevented from doing since she was a little child, as the text suggests (118), but because she loses any faith that human solidarity can help, and chooses violence.

Structurally, *Sana* is divided into two halves. On page 128, Jamal[213], Sana's brother, appears out of the blue. So far, Zimler has written Sana's story as of a tormented child of a ruthless father and a beloved but disturbed mother, living in a violent atmosphere, the result of which Sana becomes an indecipherable manipulative character. However, her heartbreaking experience with a disabled brother turns her into a terrorist. When Jamal is first arrested, he is literally a *child* of 25 years; the world for him is no more than the dogs he walks, his sister, and ice cream. He thinks that he is arrested because he lets go of the dogs he is responsible for. When Sana visits him in prison for the first time she couldn't bear it, ‗he looked like he'd been run over by a truck…crust all over his [slit] nose and lips. And those burns- I remember next flies feeding at them …he was like a tortured saint' (142). She faints when she sees him next with a ‗bulb of

[213] Jamal is a very common Arab name especially in the late 1950s and 1960s, after Egyptian President Jamal Abdul-Nassir, symbolizing Arabic post-colonial and developmental nationalism. In political Israeli discourse Nassir is generally considered the worst enemy.

flesh sticking out of his coat sleeves. She hit her head hard on the ground and suffered a nasty gash. It was the scar below her hairline that I noticed in Perth' (144). The last blow for Sana is when Jamal's body is found in a garbage dump, shot twice in the head from very close range. She never finds out who did it.

Zimler represents Jamal as a victim of both Israelis who torture him and Palestinian terrorists who mischievously make use of him to carry out their attacks and convey their messages, and finally assassinate him for unknowingly giving them away to the Israelis. Sana starts digging for those who tortured her brother, using her talents of impersonation. In the process she is involved with a terrorist network in Italy, and ultimately finds out the identity and the address of the culprit: in Perth. She blows up his house, but her revenge backfires, because the only person hurt in the whole drama is a little child, the culprit's innocent son. Thus the vicious circle of terrorism is completed by killing the innocent and not achieving anything, apart from more agony and destruction. Sana symbolically kills her brother anew. Hypersensitive and traumatized as she is, there is no hope for her other than flying away with broken wings.

Zimler presents a host of stereotyped characters. The Arabs get the worst representations, especially those who fight the occupation. Zimler literally applies Patai's essentialist depiction of Arabs in *The Arab Mind* reviewed in Chapter III, as vengeful, deceitful, and psychologically and culturally schismatic who cling to ancient systems of morality that does not serve them in the modern world, thus they restore to violence, and oppress women. Arab women, on the other hand are represented as enigmatic, disturbed, void of any critical or political stand, and harshly crushed. They practice their life as a reaction to the injustice inflicted by oppressive men and out-of-date social and ethical systems. According to Zimler, Sana personifies the modern Arab

woman who struggles between merging identities within a perplexed society, living at the shadow of continued conflicts. His representation of Sana displaces the real political, economic, and anti-colonial motivations for her act of terrorism, and overshadows them by cultural and psychological tendencies, as Said puts it:

> In the West, there's been such repetitious and unedifying attention paid to Palestinian suicide bombing that a gross distortion in reality has completely obscured what is much worse: the official Israeli… evil that has been visited so deliberately and so methodically on the Palestinian people. Suicide bombing is reprehensible but it is a direct and, in my opinion, a consciously programmed result of years of abuse, powerlessness and despair. It has as little to do with the Arab or Muslim supposed propensity for violence as the man in the moon…But for all its horror, Palestinian violence, the response of a desperate and horribly oppressed people, has been stripped of its context and the terrible suffering from which it arises: a failure to see that is a failure in humanity, which doesn't make it any less terrible but at least situates it in a real history and real geography (2002).

Terrorist

Women as Unclean Meat

> Updike examines our struggle to maintain viable center for our inner life while enduring the most revolutionary force in history- American capitalism.
>
> Robert Stone*

As mentioned earlier, the discourse of WOT has essentialized the androcentric and misogynist representations of women and practices against them within the establishment and the fundamentalist Islam in the ME, as evidence and justification of wars. Similar to all the writers and novelists mentioned here, John Updike uses the same prejudices, but from a terrorist point of view, which coincides with WOT objectives. In this regard, *Terrorist* (2006) engages in a peculiar case of representation: a fundamentalist�*s portrayal of - and attitude to - women, filtered through the Western eye of a prominent American writer who supports WOT. The ME woman, her existence and her relation to man within Islam, are *the* essential issues around which the terrorist‘s anxiety revolves. Updike‘s narrative, again, uses women in the terrorists‘ imagination as a vehicle to condemn them, their religion, but above all the decadent culture within which they grow.

Updike is widely regarded as one of the prominent literary American figures of the post-war era[214], although the *Cambridge Companion to American Fiction after 1945* does not

*Updike‘s Other America‘, *The New York Times* (June 18, 2006).

[214] Winner of the Rosenthal Award (the National Institute of Arts and Letters), a Guggenheim fellowship in 1959, the National Book Award for *The Centaur* (1963), the O. Henry award for his short fiction, a Pulitzer Prize and National Book Critics Circle Award for both *Rabbit Is Rich* (1981) and *Rabbit at Rest* (1990), and a National Book Critics Circle Award for *Hugging the Shore* (1983). Updike was elected to the National Institute of Arts and Letters in 1964 and the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 1977, and was honored with the National Medal of the

consider him among the five major novelists[215], but rather one of the major realist writers (Rebein, 2011: 33). *Terrorist* is Updike‗s 22nd novel, a bestseller which has had extremely paradoxical critical receptions[216]. A literary depiction and an attempt to get inside -and dissect- the mindset of a would-be suicide terrorist/martyr teenager, Ahmad, turns out to be scathing criticism of the postmodern inhabitants of a decaying US town, ironically named New Prospect. Tony Tanner categorizes Updike among the American writers who share the vision of ‗entropy‗: the feeling of everything running down (1971: 141). ‗[H]is characters who ‗run‗ do so, among other things, from the entropic facts of life…[they are] professionally obsessed with decay‗ (ibid: 293). Updike represents ‗homegrown‗ terrorism – as US terrorist individuals are referred to in the media- as an inevitable consequence, a ‗subversive cell in a compromised environment‗ (ibid: 294), of a degenerate middle class exposed to a severe existentialist crisis, highlighted in Robert Stone‗s epigraph above. Within this context, I argue that Updike falls squarely in the same intellectual orbit of projecting Western anxieties and paradoxes on the Other, the ethnic ME minority within a dominant Anglo-Saxon culture, using women in the process.

The plot revolves around the 18-year-Ahmad‗s radicalization by the hand of a Yemeni American Sheikh Rashid. Ahmad is the only child of an absent Egyptian father, an exchange student who had left behind his infant son and a wife and returned to his country, and an Irish-American mother who works as a nurse aide and a - once hippie - painter. He lets himself be

Arts in 1989. http://blogs.iwu.edu/johnupdikesociety/2009/12/08/its-official-alvernia-to-host-societys-first-conference/ (The John Updike Society, retrieved on September 3, 2013)

[215] Ralph Allison, Flannery O‗Connor, Thomas Pynchon, Toni Morrison, and Don DeLillo

[216] Some critics considered *Terrorist* Updike‗s masterpiece for the 21st century (Hartwig: 2006), Hitchens said that he ‗had sent *Terrorist* windmilling across the room in a spasm of boredom and annoyance‗ (2006), and Walsh described it as ‗poorly conceived and unconvincingly written (2006); and Erik Tarloff called it ‗masterful failure‗ (qtd in Banerjee, 2008).

doubly used by two Arabs: the Sheikh, to commit a terrorist act of driving a truck bomb inside Lincoln Tunnel, and by a CIA agent, Charlie Chehab, to unconsciously infiltrate a terrorist organization. But Ahmad is miraculously saved at the last minute by his guidance counselor in the high school, Jack Levy. In this scheme, the terrorist becomes a victim of a malicious Islamic conspiracy against the US, rescued by a not-proud-of-it Jew (23). Ahmad becomes a space where two contradictory mindsets conflict: one of a medieval belief that is absolutely useless and dysfunctional, and another secular one that is embittered and that finds a new hope through saving the young victim from being a terrorist.

Terrorist opens with a two-page soliloquy where the narrator summarizes Ahmad‘s thoughts on religion, sex, and American ethics.

> *Devils. These devils seek to take away my God*…girls sway and sneer and expose their soft bodies and alluring hair. Their bare bellies adorned with shining navel studs and low-down purple tattoos, *What else there to see?* Boys strut and saunter along and look dead-eyed…Teachers, weak Christians and nonobservant Jews, make a show of teaching virtue and righteous self-restraints, but their shifty eyes and hollow voices betray their lack of belief… They lack true faith; they are unclean. Infidels, they think safety lies in accumulation of the things of this world, and in the corrupting diversions the television set…slaves to false images of happiness and affluence. But even true images are sinful imitations of God (3-4, emphasis in origin).

This is a condensed summary of the Sheikh‘s and Jack‘s thoughts, both joined in Ahmad‘s mind, but what makes him a terrorist is the Sheikh‘s Islamic teachings. In many ways, Ahmad is a younger version of Dostoyevsky‘s Raskolnikov in *Crime and Punishment*, before he commits the crime. Both suffer from an intense existentialist, psychological crisis, they are socially alienated and feel superior to others, they have a universal God-like vision of correctness and justice, and they have a prostitute as a sweetheart, whose soul they feel responsible to save. But Ahmad‘s

existentialism is Kierkegaardian religious, especially in the individual‘s direct relation with God. He is too ascetic for his age, and he has no political ideology behind his act of terrorism. He hates people because they ‗mock and ignore God‘ (270), *his only companion*, an invisible but palpable God is ever with him, in him, at his side (39, 42) ‗[m]y teacher at the mosque says that all unbelievers are our enemies. The prophet said that eventually all unbelievers must be destroyed‘ (68). At the end, when his attempt is discouraged, he thinks ‗[t]hese devils have taken away my God‘ (310).

Psychologically, Ahmad‘s problem stems from the absence of his father, who is represented as a villain. By seeking refuge in Islam, Ahmad is looking for an identity after he realizes that his father is a Muslim-Arab. He feels that he has found a father figure in the Sheikh who has nurtured in him unwavering views of Americans as morally loose and materialistic, and has brainwashed him by a strict version of Islam, concentrating on specific lines of the Quran, especially those which deal with violence and women. The Sheikh taught him to hate the infidel America, ‗everything about the West is Godless, it is obsessed with sex and luxury goods‘ (38).

Terrorist is built on an unmistakable racist stance, as many critics cited here agree (Morton: 2010, Banerjee: 2008, and Savage: 2007, among others). It deals with issues of identity, ethnicity, color, hybridity and multiculturalism. *All* Arab characters are negatively and stereotypically represented: they are mischievous, treacherous, and violent. They exploit Ahmad‘s vulnerability as an innocent lonely teenager and his need for a job, for their own criminal ends, and eventually abandon him. They are hypocrites because they hate the country they have come to, and its culture, but seek US citizenship for convenience and selfish interests. His father is ‗an opportunistic, clueless loser‘ (89). He married for convenience the girl who had loved him, but left her with a baby when he ‗failed to crack America‘s riddle and fled‘ (163).

According to the Home Secretary the ‗so-called Arab-Americans' have replaced the whites in the cities and in the factories and most of them live on state welfare and ‗have too many rights and not enough duties' (260-261). For him, they cannot believe that democracy and consumerism are fever in the blood of Everyman: they are eager to die (48). They are like cockroaches and bats, they hate light, according to his secretary (ibid). Morton says that literary representations such as John Updike's *Terrorist* tends to ‗reinforce the view of Islam as a religion of violent fanatics…the binaries of counter-terrorist discourse between Islam and the secular West… between native and alien…transforming them into a living, breathing space in which the human consequences of such rigid and lethal polarities become visible (2010:247). Arab-Americans such as Ahmad it are represented as fanatic, crazy and scary. Even in Arabic language ‗there's something weird—it makes them feeble-minded, somehow' (259). The Sheikh, on his part, also thinks of infidel Americans as unclean and vexing cockroaches and flies (76).

The obvious racial prejudice is also practiced by other ethnic groups, not only the superior Whites, who despise Arabs. His African American classmate, Tylenol pejoratively calls Ahmad ‗Hey, you Arab' (15, 97); ‗You are an Arab. You don't go there' (97); ‗black Muslims I don't' diss, but you, not black, you not anything but a poor shithead. You no raghead, you a *shit*head'(16), and again ‗You all faggots, man' (98). But Tylenol himself is pejoratively presented, named after a headache tablet, ‗his mother, having delivered a ten-pound infant, saw the name in a television commercial for painkiller and liked the sound of it' (15). Banerjee finds that naming a boy after a painkiller is a clear hint at the African American woman's lack of cultural literacy (2008: 22). Muslims and Arabs are represented as being against all forms of progress and modern technology. Updike represents Ahmad as a fanatic with a strong determination to condemn and attack what he considers American lasciviousness and moral and

spiritual decadence. Attributing Ahmad's inclinations to hatred, violence and destruction to the teachings of Islam and to his Islamic doctrine, and to his psychological problems, is surprisingly propagandist and prejudiced, coming from an outstanding figure in US fiction.

Within this racialized representations of the colored Other, Ahmad is a lost soul in the middle of an identity crisis, *unlucky* enough to have a Muslim-Arab as a non-existent father, and ‗a shaky woman who married … a nigger. Not a woman who‘d give a lot of firm guidance‘ as a mother (87). In his desperate search for his roots he finds guidance in Islamic fundamentalism. This psychological and cultural dilemma of identity is most obvious in his attitude to women. The sex-religion-violence discursive formation presented in Chapter III[217], runs throughout Updike‘s *Terrorist*, confirming the theory that a terrorist‘s psychological trouble is mainly sexual. It is not a coincidence that his soul search starts at puberty, when he is separated from his mother. On the other hand, the cultural schizophrenia and identity crisis to which Shayegan attributes Muslims‘ inclination to violence is embodied here in Ahmad‘s search for a father, representing a root or a history, to support him against the unbearable lightness of his existence.

But Updike represents Ahmad as a surprisingly non-violent fanatic or a would-be terrorist, either verbally or physically, foreshadowing his eventual failure. Ahmad does not even like or trust the Sheikh, his unconvincing voice, and his resort to metaphor as a shield against reality (77). He ‗feels in his own self a desire to rise up and crush him…The student‘s faith exceeds the master‘s‘ (7), and again, ‗Ahmad is not utterly comfortable with his master‘ (101), but he listens to him because he is the only Muslim man to talk to, and the mosque took him in as a child of eleven; it let him be born again‘ (99). From the very beginning, an insect metaphor is

[217] Lewis, Huntington, Patai, Shayegan and others.

repeatedly invoked throughout the novel. _The deaths of insects and worms…tell Ahmad that his own death will be just as small and final' (5). He pities them, and is _fascinated by the vast insect population teeming at the feet of godlike men' (77). His mother refers to his inability to hurt an insect, and, observing a black beetle struggling on its back on the concrete of the parking lot, he identifies with, and goes out of his way to help it (252), and so on. His mother loves him dearly for not being a demanding child, never making trouble, and for being so alone (117). When Tylenol insults him he does not insult back, and does his best to avoid physical violence. Even when everybody abandons him at the end, he does not react violently, and tries to convince himself that something wrong must have happened, that he is not betrayed, after all.

His apparent misogyny is represented as an infliction of Islam. As quoted above, in the first line of the novel, women are connected to the devil, typical of a fundamentalist's mindset. There are too many *devils* that Ahmad hates about America, to which he thinks Islam has rendered him immune, above all consumerism, aggravated by his poverty, and sex, which tortures him. The existence of two women in Ahmad's life: Terry, his mother, and Joryleen, the girl he likes, are simply a continuous agony that he does not know how to deal with. Ironically, Updike's other non-fanatic male characters do not show less misogyny. Moreover, as he uses the US women's freedom as a means of exposing the fundamentalist's prejudice, none of the free women he represents shows a convincing discourse, in fact they are all _losers', to use his own term. The four female characters: Terry, Joryleen, Jack's wife, Beth, and her sister Hermione are portrayed as _extremely unflattering, [even] obnoxious' (Savage, 2007). Beth - once a ballet dancer, now weighs more than 240 pounds - is hatefully described on several pages: her blubber, the smell and heat her flesh emits, her inability to rise from her rocking chair: _A scent rises to her nostrils from the deep creases between the rolls of fat, where dark pellets of sweat

accumulate; in the bathtub her flesh floats around her like a set of giant bubbles, semi-liquid in their sway and sluggish buoyancy' (135). ‗With descriptions like these, it's no wonder the male characters within these pages feel alienated from the females in their lives. It's a little troublesome that *all* the females are so unpleasant, and there seems to be a strain of misogyny afoot in these portraits' (ibid).

Joryleen is a ‗Little Miss Popular' (9) at high school, an attractive classmate that his religion keeps him away from, and in fact holds him aloof from all classmates. Ahmad's misogyny is most obvious when he is physically close to Joryleen, triggered by his self-imposed repression of desire. The narrator invokes Ahmad's sexually interested gaze repeatedly and exaggeratedly. Her ‗endearing self-confidence in how compactly her cocoa-brown roundnesses fill her clothes…a ribbed magenta shorty top both lower and higher than it should be' (8) makes him picture ‗the crease between her breasts', ‗the fat of her belly and the contour of her deep navel' and her ‗smooth body darker than caramel but paler than chocolate' and so on and so forth, ‗roasting in that vault of flames and being scorched into blisters' (9). He experiences a shiver of pity since she is trying to be nice to him. Similar carnal images invoking violent thoughts, endlessly repeated throughout the book, accumulate anger, because they make the world difficult, he thinks, ‗*because devils are busy in it, confusing things and making the Straight Path crooked*' (11, emphasis in origin).

For him, girls such as Joryleen, who indecently dress and approach men, are little whores, bad and fallen (17-18), and his hatred of them is the same as of his mother. Such girls are responsible for his agony too, because they will soon be mothers to fatherless children (17). Unlike decent Muslim women who follow the Prophet's injunctions ‗to cover their ornaments',

Ahmad tells Joryleen when she asked him if he likes her piercing, ‗[The Prophet] says good women are for good men and unclean women for unclean men'. And again, the Prophet tells women ‗to throw veils over their bosoms' (169). When she betrays him to her boyfriend who bullies Ahmad, ‗why do girls have to *tell* all the time? To make themselves important, like those fat-lettered graffiti' (17, emphasis in origin). Ahmad's obsession with cleanliness is compulsive, metaphorically emphasized by his carefully ironed and immaculately white shirt, which could also be interpreted as a symbol of a martyr's shroud. But although his hygienic cleanliness and tidiness is spiritual too, ‗purity is its own end, both being good and feeling good' he says (71), he does find a woman's body impure, and the narrator attributes this notion to the Quranic reference to women's impurity during menstruation, adding impetus to his affront to women. The narrator links the notion of ‗women's *pollution*' and Ahmad's religious feeling of shame and guilt as regards sex to his preference of truck driving, a link that is strikingly strange. The text refers to Ahmad's dreams of flying down hallways or skimming sidewalks, a few feet off the ground ‗and sometimes would awake with an erection or, more shamefully still, a large wet spot on the inside of his pajama fly…Ahmad feels clean in the truck, cut off from the base world…he feels clean and free' (156-7). As Ahmad uses the truck in his attempted terrorist attack, the link becomes obvious, albeit forced: the act of terror becomes compensation for sexual deprivation, a cliché generously used within the mainstream discourse of WOT.

Islamic teachings entrap Ahmad in a vicious circle of prohibitions and defenses. He finds girls' glances of lingering interest at school, unholy and impure (18). This is the only strategy of defense a Muslim has against temptations, to hold women responsible for leading him to the edge of betraying his belief. Ahmad is aware of his ‗ripened manhood, his lengthened limbs, the upright, dense, and wavy crown of his hair, his flawless dun skin paler than his father's but not

the freckled, blotchy pink of his red-haired mother…who in white-bread America [is] considered the acme of beauty‘ (18), thus his shield is to believe that it is a sin to be vain, that ‗self-love is a form of competition with God‘ (ibid). Whenever he is attracted, he immediately thinks of hell or paradise, and convinces himself that he is defying weakness while walking on the Straight Path. Joryleen tells him that he hates life, and hates his body, to which he replies that he does not want to be his body‘s slave. ‗I look around me, and see slaves, slaves to drugs, slaves to fads, slaves to television, slaves to sports heroes…slaves to unholy meaningless opinion of others. You have a good heart, Joryleen, but you are heading straight to Hell, the lazy way you think‘ (72).

Ahmad shows typical masculine ambivalence as he grows and gets closer to committing his terrorist crime. Although he abhors his physical attraction to Joryleen‘s beauty, he also knows that she is good and intelligent enough to read his mind, his psychology, and his situation. She perfectly understands his self-deception (72), and later others‘ deception too, and rightly warns him of the people to whom he is employed as a truck driver (227). Thus although she lets herself be prostituted by her bullying boyfriend,Tylenol, Ahmad tells her that he likes and respects her too well to treat her like a whore (221), and that if he thinks of getting married one day it is her that he would chose. The huge paradox between Ahmad‘s Islamic thinking, especially his obsession with cleanliness, and his choice of a ‗fallen, dirty‘ woman exposes the whole fallacy of his fundamentalist thinking.

He shows the same ambivalence to another woman who has a greater influence on him, his mother, Terry. He sympathizes with her, but he describes her as ‗trashy and immoral‘ (35). She is a typical mother who makes sacrifices for an ungrateful son, and excuses his dryness and silence as a natural need for a father, but without trying to address this need. She does not worry

about his relation to the Sheikh, of which Jack warns her. She never tries to undermine his faith, if fact she finds it beautiful, because she understands his point of searching for meaning against the backdrop of a materialist Western culture, and a society that is indifferent, mechanical, and oppressive, ‗he doesn‘t want more than he can‘t avoid‘ she tells Jack, ‗he sees his *teachers* as trouble makers, worldly and cynical and just in it for the paycheck…he thinks they set a poor example. You‘ve heard the expression, ‗above it all‘? My son is above it all‘ (85, emphasis in origin).

But Ahmad does not see that she understands, all he sees is that she is his opposite, morally and religiously speaking. He does show respect - and has never been rude - to her, as the Quran demands every good Muslim to be and behave towards parents, but now her sexual promiscuity shames him. When he gets his first job, he removes her name from his and takes his father‘s, Omar, who is represented as extremely misogynist. Omar was not a practicing Muslim, never went to a mosque, and was bothered whenever his wife, Terry, raised the subject:

> he‘d clam up, and look sore, as if I was pushing in where I had no business. ‗*A woman should serve a man, not try to own him*,‘ he‘d say, as if he were quoting some kind of Holy Writ. He‘d made it up. What a pompous, chauvinistic horse‘s ass he was, really. But I was young and in love - in love mostly with him being, you know, *exotic, third-world, put-upon, and my marrying him showing how liberal and liberated* I was…[Ahmad] has no illusions about his father. I‘ve made it very clear to him what a loser his father was‘ (86-7, emphasis added).

Typical of Arabs who can not survive in a technologically advanced society, Omar could not drive a car or solve the riddle of civilization and fled home. In fact, she herself lives in a liberal illusion, and has never learned her lesson. She is still fascinated by her ex-husband‘s refinement, tidiness, his curly hair, his smooth dark skin and so forth, although he was such a hypocrite that, being a hopeless driver, for example, he would ask his supposedly submissive wife to take the wheel (90). Thus, she explains her passivity and self–indulgence away as an aesthetic embrace of

life, although this ‗embrace' has cost too much: her son's respect, and the best years of her life spent in passing relations ? with a chain of unreliable men. She sees that Ahmad returns disturbed from his sessions with the Sheikh; she notices that the Sheikh does not show enough conviction anyway, that he has never showed the slightest interest in converting her, and she finds him creepy and could feel his hatred ‗to him I was a piece of meat - unclean meat' (166). Despite all these facts, religion to her is ‗all a matter of attitude. It's saying *yes* to life… [and] life isn't something to be *controlled*. We don't control our breathing, our digestion, our heartbeat. Let it *happen*' (91, emphasis in origin).

Ahmad finds his mother's excessive sexuality disgusting and embarrassing, that he tries to hide her, and ‗her insatiable desire to press upon the world her sentimental vision of herself' (94). He hates that ‗[h]is flighty mother, who never went to mass, and deplored the restraints of her own religion, humored him by driving him to this mosque' (99), and he asks her to wear a head scarf for his graduation, ‗not to look like a whore' (116). Updike's representation of the scarf is quite disturbing:

> [Terry's] face seems in the scarf to look at him *around a corner; its covering poses provocation, implying a dazzling nakedness*. Her head scarf speaks of *submission, which stirs him*. He moves closer…as if taking her under his *protection*… ‗You were a good mom, to humor Ahmad' he says quietly. [To which she replies] ‗I resented that he cared so much about a father who didn't do squat for him. For us. But I guess a boy needs a father, and if he doesn't have one he'll invent one. How's that for cut-rate Freud?'
> Does she know she is doing this to him, making him want her? (117, emphasis added).

The ‗making him want her' motif is repeated many times within the narrative. Ahmad is also aware of his mother's flirtatious nature, to his shame and anger, especially that he judges her tendency to accumulate boyfriends, according to Islamic propriety. She seems to ‗flaunt her poverty, her everyday failure to blend into the middle class, as if such a failure were intrinsic to the artistic life and the personal freedom so precious to infidel Americans' (141). Accompanying

him to the testing facility to get his commercial-driver‘s-license, in her odd clothes of factory-blotched jeans and vest of purple-dyed leather, she ‗flirted with the elderly man, this miserable minion of the state, who administrated the exam…[t]his was the sort of hopeless creature his mother lavished her flirtations upon, at the expense of her son‘s dignity‘(ibid).

Ahmad‘s poverty makes him taste ‗American plenty by licking its underside. *Devils*… [t]he mother and son were besieged on all sides by attractive, ingenious things they didn‘t need and couldn‘t afford‘ (151). But it is American women‘s freedom that he loathes most.

> His mother, he sees now, looking back, a typical American, lacking in strong convictions and the courage and comfort they bring. She is a victim of the American religion of freedom, freedom above all, though freedom to do what and to what purpose is left up in the air. *Bombs bursting in air* - empty air is the perfect symbol of American freedom. There is no *ummah* here…no encompassing structure of divine law that brings men rich and poor to bow down shoulder to shoulder, no code of self-sacrifice, no exalted submission such as lies at the heart of Islam, its vey name (168, emphasis in origin).

But his hatred of American freedom goes beyond the idea of being a bubble. The freedom his mother practices at home challenges his manhood and integrity as *the* man of the house. He considers his mother a child, ‗playing with art and love‘ (168). As a painter, she competes with his God as *the* Creator, and as a lover she brings men around to the apartment to

> vie with Ahmad for dominance of the premises. *She may be your mother but I fuck her*, their manner said, and this too was American. This valuing of sexual performance over all family ties. Even the parents conspire in this, welcoming signs of independence from the child and laughing at disobedience…Ahmad does not hate his mother, she is too scattered to hate, too distracted by her pursuit of happiness (168-9).

Physical proximity, even to his mother disturbs Ahmad. Sharing the limited space of the apartment has been awkward for him, especially that her American ‗ideas of healthy behavior include appearing in her underwear or summer nightie that allows the shadows of her private parts to show through‘ (169). Her halters, miniskirts, blouses unbuttoned at the top, and low-slung jeans bother him, and ‗when he rebukes her attire as improper and provocative, she mocks

and teases him as if he is flirting with her‘ (ibid). He would rejoice to see her in the decently baggy scrubs of the hospital, where some rich doctor would enjoy ‗his *harem* of comely attendants‘ (ibid, emphasis added). The narrator implicitly hints at a more disturbing attitude of Ahmad‘s, though. The annoyance he feels with his mother looking and acting younger than she should, borders on jealousy and sexual desire.

> Praise Allah, Ahmad never dreamed of sleeping with his mother, never undressed her in those spaces of his brain where Satan thrusts vileness upon the dreaming and the daydreaming…she is not his type. Her flesh, mottled with pink and dotted with freckles, seems unnaturally white, like leper‘s… his taste is for darker skin, and for the alluring mystery of [black eyes]. The Book promises: *And theirs shall be the dark-eyed houris, chaste as hidden pearls*. Ahmad regards his mother as a mistake that his father made but that he never would (170, emphasis in origin).

Ahmad‘s negation confirms the fact, typical of children caught in the act. Updike is suggesting that Islam renders men psychologically crooked. Ahmad is American, he has never been to the ME, or any other place for that matter. He was brought up by an American woman, studied in American schools, he never saw his father, so he is not the product of an Eastern culture. The only influence that has molded his personality has been fundamentalist Islam.

Just before committing his crime, Updike makes Ahmad go through considerable change, in his attitude to God, and to women. He likes Joryleen‘s uncleanness and singing, and asks her for more (228). His deep love of God makes Ahmad identify himself with - and imagine - him very lonely, ultimate in his solitude. He even pities God, all alone ‗in his starry space, the emptiness...I have this yearning to join God, to alleviate his loneliness… people are always thinking of themselves. Nobody thinks of God – if He suffers or not, if He likes being what He is. What does He see in the world, to take any pleasure in it? But what are we? Smelly animals‘ (225). His arrogance turns him against everything, most obviously his mother

> [She] is too self-absorbed to spare me much curiosity…we come and go in our apartment as strangers…the other night she produced a flurry of interest in me, as if remembering that I was still there… We have never communicated well, my father's absence stood between us, and then my faith…She is a warm-natured woman…but I think has little talent for motherhood as a cat. Cats let the kittens suckle for a time and then treat them as enemies (212).

In his portrait of the terrorist as a young man, Updike presents Ahmad as passionate, brilliant, idealistic but misguided in his search for identity amidst an indifferent modern world. According to Jack, his guidance counselor, ‗kids like Ahmad need to have something they don't get from society any more. Society doesn't let them be innocent any more. The crazy Arabs are right—hedonism, nihilism, that's all we offer' (205). In New Prospect, a symbol of contemporary US, whites are treated as the elite, blacks are shown as the cause of many problems; they are linked to crime and corruption and many of them end up in jail (148). "At night, after a few choice ethnic restaurants have discharged their suburban clientele, a police car will stop and question white pedestrians, on the assumption that they are looking for a drug deal or else need to be advised on the dangers of this environment"(12). Almost all characters are presented in terms of their color or ethnic origin. Ahmad's color, mixed origin and Muslim Arab descent is presented from a racial perspective, treated as a stranger or intruder. Arab-Muslim societies are severely attacked for their backwardness, patriarchy, and above all violation of women's rights. For the imam, "women are animals easily led" (10); "movies are sinful and stupid" (144) and "the American way" (39) is hateful.

The question remains why the obsession with skin color? Why does psychological profiling slip into racial profiling? Mita Bannerjee asks, and answers ‗because September 11 triggers long-submerged cultural fears – fears which are also racial anxieties. *Terrorist* engages in peculiar racial psychography, not only in presenting Ahmad in racist terms by dwelling on his

skin color and his religious practice (2008: 16, 19), but also by presenting him as a racist, in what Bannerjee calls reversed racism, returning the racist gaze (ibid, 22). I suggest that colonialist racism fires back, in denigrating Ahmad by representing him as a racist, Updike in fact exposed his own narrative to its own fire, as the colored Other is mercilessly racialized.

Conclusions

This dissertation is my answer to the questions raised at the beginning: why would the cause of emancipating the Middle Eastern woman be an issue in waging a war against terror? How could it serve as justification of war? And how was it reflected in literature? After presenting the subject matter of my research – (mis)using the emancipation of women in the ME as war propaganda– I presented the theoretical grounds on which I built my arguments. By critically analyzing the discourse and the politics of representation of the ME women within WOT, I have suggested that it has two levels of manifest justifications, and ‗hidden' hegemonic political motives, and that the first has been used to conceal the second. Victimized women's images are part of the discursive arsenal of manifest justifications, thus it involved too many contradictions, literally and textually hurting women, in the name of rescuing them.

To answer these questions, I have highlighted the incongruities of the discourse of WOT itself, by deconstructing it and showing its relation to power, rather than presenting the realities of ME women to refute it, for two reasons. Firstly, this study falls under the discipline of critical discourse analysis, rather than under social sciences, and secondly, as Mohanty has shown, one can't talk about women as a homogeneous category. Thus I have presented a single case study of Iraqi women as an example of my thesis. And although I have presented some political arguments, it is again to show the contradictions within the discourse of WOT, not to present historical or political data *per se*. Such data is presented, when necessary, in footnotes. The discourse of WOT has reenacted the same old colonialist racist notion of the white man's responsibility of civilizing and liberating the Other, the stereotyped primitive man of color, from

his own backwardness. Re-writing Spivak's sentence ‗if you are poor, black, and female you get it in three ways' (1988: 295), I would say: if you are Arab, Muslim and female you get it in *all* ways, within your own culture, and from outside where you become an Achille's heel in the war against your people.

I have shown that the discourse of WOT is not new, and it has *not* been constructed after 9/11. Adopting the premises of Critical Terrorism Studies (CTS), in Chapter III I demonstrate how this discourse has created a phantasmagorical media phenomenon of terrorism which, statistically, is less dangerous than the flu. I also highlighted the fact that until this moment there is no legal international agreement on what terrorism is. Thus I have elaborated my own definition of terrorism as *a kind of political violence practiced by states or non-state organizations randomly targeting innocent civilians as a means of coercion by instilling fear*- to proceed with my analysis. Empire has been a state of being for the US, and through assuming the identity of benevolent power of global reach, hegemonic practices of WOT have had to be presented in a carefully constructed discourse, designed to represent it as essential, inevitable, and having goals that are achievable and good for world peace and progress.

According to CTS, orthodox discourses of war on terror are state-centered and have made terrorism a major trait of Third World peoples. It has silenced and decontextualized the political and social dimensions in which armed movements operate, where moderate voices on all sides of the conflict are necessarily marginalized, foreclosing all peaceful alternatives, using a common sense aspect. The myth of a global network of thousands of Muslim extremists persists through the dominant discursive structure as a consequence of the ‗embedded' or ‗organic' nature of many leading experts who are directly linked to state institutions. Other major elements that

constitute this meta-narrative are presented too: the construction of the enemy as essentially evil-doer against innocent U.S. citizens; clearing the government‘s responsibility of 9/11; presenting WOT as a sacred crusade for freedom and justice; and globalizing it under the leadership of the US. Its assumptions, symbolic systems, rhetorical modes and tropes, metaphors, narratives and meanings, are cited as ideological narratives used to write the American identity, structure the overall foreign policy, reflexively construct external threats, and discipline internal and external opponents.

9/11 has been iconized within the war trope. Modern terrorism has been largely associated with Islam and represented generally as a confrontation between the Western world and Islamic culture where violence is supposed to be endemic. Images of ‗brown-skinned Arab/Muslim looking' men, a gruesome bearded mullah, a young Palestinian with angry eyes, and a heavily armed, turbaned Afghani jihadist, who hate the West and who are willing to hurt its innocent civilians, are immediately invoked. I introduce the major narratives that represented the terrorist as evil, barbarian, and *mad*, who hates American civilization which respects human rights. I also present the doctrine of soft power on which the post-modern civilizing American mission operates.

Thus the discourse of WOT has naturalized violence and hatred in Middle Eastern identity, relegating all the problems that the people there have to face to defects in their character, resulting from the backwardness of their culture that does not fit with the modern civilization of the West. By foreclosing any reading of the concrete political, economic, and social facts in the region, perceived by its people partly as results of the US policies of supporting repressive regimes (which Nye actually admits), WOT legitimized war to solve the

terrorism problem, thus actually aggravating it by serving the American imperial project of the 21st century. Bush‗s exclamatory statement ‗I can‗t believe it‗ replicated by many similar statements and writings about ‗why do they hate us?‗ rewrites 9/11. While it is terrorism against terrorism, evil against evil, hatred against injustice, the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center is discursively represented as pure evil against innocence. Evil, read barbarism, backwardness, fanaticism, envy and so forth, against the civilized world; thus the only solution is exterminating the terrorists and reshaping ME cultures. The 9/11 attack has been put in a war trope, rather than in the judicial and legal fields.

The humanitarian civilizing mission goes beyond the hegemonic notion of defending the Other‗s human rights, to the notion of waging war-as-self-defense: protecting the democratic and civilized from the Other‗s backwardness. Women‗s liberation comes here. They have been represented as the worst victims of ME societies, which are homogenized as backward. The solution lies in promoting Western values of freedom and liberty through religious and cultural reforms so that the Muslim might be taught to discard fundamentalist propensities and adopt more enlightened version of Islam. The US assumes a global responsibility of bringing democracy to the ‗Others‗ who lack it, with the help of the very women who are to be rescued. Significantly, it is only after the energy crisis in the 1970s, scholarly and otherw narratives on the situation of women in Muslim societies, which disproportionately focused on the ME, have exploded and grown voluminous in all areas of social science and humanities, creating a sort of theoretical ghetto, to use Lazrag‗s term (1988: 84), where Arab women are so different (read lesser) that they are deemed unable to understand or develop any form of feminism, thus they are badly in need of sisterly help. Therefore, there is no pure space left from which counter-

narratives can be constructed to capture the complexity obscured and denied by recurrent archetypes.

My essential thesis is that ME women are silenced by the discourses of both WOT and native cultural establishments –including religion- equally, building on two postcolonial feminist theories: Spivak's and Leila Ahmed's. I review the three-decades-evolution of Spivak's notions of the subaltern woman as doubly muted in the colonial era, removed from lines of social mobility in the postcolonial era, and violently crushed by multinationals in the globalized world. Within WOT, ‗subalternist essentialism' reproduces and consolidates gender oppression. The images that have been coming out from ruined Afghanistan for more than a decade have nothing to do with gender justice and are different from what the women's emancipation movements that started late in the 19th century had in mind. The discourse of WOT has generalized establishment Islam's representations of ME women as the only existing reality.

The Arab women's liberation movements started late in the 19th century, too. Although religious intellectuals initiated the women's liberation movement, it was mainly calls for women's education as a part of the anti-colonial struggle (educated mothers bring up good patriots), and while the original Islam was a humanitarian reforming social movement, I have argued that Islamic feminists' stance of reinterpreting the Quranic verses in negotiating women's position 14 centuries later does not work, as the Quran is historically and culturally specific. I have introduced and incorporated the concept of neo-Orientalism in its different approaches to define the cultural discourse of WOT as essentially neo-colonialist, and the identity of the Oriental Other remains derogatorily stereotyped, inferiorly positioned and oppositionally situated vis-a-vis the West. A new essential trait added to the Orientalist clichés of irrationality,

exoticism, eroticism and inertia and so forth is that the neo-Oriental is *dangerously psychopathic,* who threatens the lives and cultures of civilized people, because he/she is essentially sick, culturally and psychologically disturbed, suffering from an acute ‗inferiority complex‘ and schizophrenia.

Through several narratives, the media, the cinema, official statements, scholarly texts, feminist and otherwise, I have shown how the neo-colonial, neo–Orientalist Western gaze presents ahistorical generalizations and homogenizations about ME women using a rhetorical strategy of pushing them back in time and producing partial knowledge, thus aggravating the social and cultural injustice inflicted on them, and distorting their image to justify the benevolent enterprise, by turning a blind eye to over a century of native feminist achievements. As objects of investigation, ME women are totally silenced, unless they complain of some negative practice, then they are welcomed and generously quoted as native testimonies confirming the imperialist discourse of rescue. The authoritative Western knower practices epistemic violence, mutes the victims, confiscates their voices, distort their images when she/he assumes a role model and presumes that she/he knows what is best for the Others, and explicitly calls upon them to displace their own norms, and replace them with the Western ones, established as universal. She/he is simply telling the ‗lesser‘ ME women to erase their identities and inscribe Western ones on them. Such feminists represent ME women as a negative deviant of the universal norm, the Western ideal in this case. Normative blindness is never more obvious than in Western dealings with the rights of women *elsewhere* as American anthropologist Laura Nader argues, who also introduces the concept of ‗siege mentality‘ referring to Muslim men who try to protect ‗their‘ women‘s virtuosity from Western influences.

I have also explored typical phenomena of WOT, namely ‗embedded feminism‘, which refers to feminists who are politically, even physically, involved in WOT, and anti-WOT feminism which is feminist literatures that have critiqued WOT and contested its arguments especially the narratives of victimized ME women. They introduce enlightened, valid, and varied insights that could be clearly classified within post-colonial theory. Representational politics that recolonize knowledge production are being countered globally as part of a growing anticolonial movement by (some indigenous) feminist scholars who are attempting to redefine the epistemological space through which their realities have come to be known.

The case study of Iraq, one of the countries targeted by WOT, has shown how a biased policy of a super power has constructed an image of Iraqi women as victims, while itself playing the major role in victimizing those women through wars and 13 years of criminal comprehensive sanctions[218]. A women‘s native movement that managed to create its own identity and project of liberation and its achievements for a century within a conservative culture has been eroded by WOT, and phony organizations have been imported only to show off, and to disappear immediately after the occupation was achieved. The answer I have come up with for the questions raised above is that the Middle Eastern woman has been used by an imperialist super power as a dusting rag[219] to polish the old colonial face of WOT, in the name of rescuing her. Hyper-technologically advanced weaponry has been used, destroying the country, killing, maiming, displacing, and impoverishing its people. I have also shown how veteran native

[218] Susan Lindauer, the liaison between the US and the Iraqi delegations to the UN, has explained in detail how the US government did its best to maintain the comprehensive sanctions (1990-2013) even after Iraq complied with all the UN requirements to lift them, and even after the ‗humanitarian‘ disaster had killed 2 million Iraqis (2010).

[219] Iraqis (and Arabs in general) are pejoratively referred to as ‗ragheads‘ by US soldiers.

feminists were killed, silenced, excluded, and replaced by conservative women who, due to their affiliation with regressive political forces, declare that they are against women‘s equality and liberty. Thus not only has WOT not rescued women, it has deprived them of their own opportunities, stolen their struggle, and literally pushed them back into pre-modern conditions in the name of modernizing them.

In the second part I have analyzed literary texts according to all the theoretical premises mentioned above. Chapter VI shows that, historically, the evolving ME woman archetype has undergone several transmutations. Her textual representations have embodied and symbolized the political, economic, cultural, and ideological relations between Europe and the ME at particular historical ruptures. In the textual accounts presented, ME women have been produced discursively as products of both the male and the feminist gaze within the context of varying relations of power and domination. Neither construction has spoken to the diverse realities and experiences constituting the existences of ME. Yet these paradigms have had an essentializing effect on representing all ME women as being part of a single undifferentiated category marked by a common trope of oppression. Therefore, the western/Orientalist construction of ME women has maintained currency despite the fact that it presents distorted and static images. Yet, the concrete social category of the ME woman absorbs many meanings and incorporates various individual, cultural, and sectarian interpretations. As such, there is a disjuncture between the various discursive paradigms that attempt to contain ME realities (including those equally limiting constructions from fundamentalist perspectives) and their varied ontological experiences. No single construct has been able to include the social differences and dimensions that constitute the ME woman as a subject and actor.

In the Western politics of knowledge production the identity of ME women has already been determined discursively. This chapter studied how the image evolved through specific moments in English literature from medieval times to the present, albeit much of the literary production that participated in creating the victim image was also written in other European languages. I have presented a short introduction on the cultural, political and military medieval confrontations between the West and the ME, which were reflected in the literary production of the age. Gender politics in texts from romance and Chaucer show that ME women are represented as intelligent, strong-willed and powerful, but their identity is twisted by a biased narrative within the war propaganda. On the other hand, women who defend their people's cause are demonized, a practice that is repeated through colonial histories[220]. Texts from later eras show anxieties and contradictions, the Romantics for example, and nascent feminism project those anxieties and contradictions especially in representing Other women. It is not clear when exactly ME women started to be viewed as victims in the Western literary production. Some scholars go back to the Enlightenment when Islam was considered antipathetic to scientific spirit and polygamy was considered a symbol of its despotism. But it is certainly in the 18th and 19th centuries, the age of colonialism and the beginning of feminism that ME women's image shrank from a strong queen to a sex slave, and prevailed in almost all the texts that represented her, although the narrative scenarios are different in Britain from the US. What is significant as regards US imperialism is its pattern of denial and absence from cultural studies, as Amy Kaplan

[220] One of the famous stories of WOT as regards the female enemy is the story of Iraqi microbiologist Rihab Taha Al-Azzawi, duped by Western media as Miss Germ, and Huda Salih Ammash, duped as Miss Anthrax. Both were deans in Baghdad University, both accused by the US occupation authorities of participating in building Iraq's WMD. British MP, and member of the UN weapons inspection team, David Kelly, testified later that the Iraqi WMD dossier was manipulated, including these women's stories. His body was found two days later, allegedly having committed suicide. See Norman Baker, MP *The Strange Death of David Kelly* (York, Methuen Publishing: 2007).

complains (1993:11). But it is after WWII and the US ascension to global super power that American imperialism has been fully shaped by a specific phenomenon of cultural mass production through the media, the cinema and bestsellers. After the energy crisis in the West, ME women have been incarcerated in the subservient image for ever, an easy and ready tool, accumulated through centuries, to defame their people's culture.

In the next two chapters specific texts are analyzed. Some are written by American writers of ME origin, and serve as native testimonies to serve WOT as war propaganda. Although generally lacking in literary merit, these narratives have gained peculiar international claim as they are translated into dozens of languages. They serve as native testimonies that confirm WOT discourse. Class and education play a great role in these writers' prejudiced attitudes to their people's culture. Nafisi and Hosseini are both of the political and social elite of their countries. Again I don't query the empirical details they present, but rather the knowledge their narratives produce, which is clearly condescending.

I have chosen Anglo-American writers who present ME women from very different positionalties, but maintain the same representational strategies. In my reading of McEwan's *Saturday*, I argue that it is not only the famous irony between international terrorism and home terrorism that many scholars have highlighted, but rather it is the irony between scientific rationalism and enlightened imagination. Again the novel's humanist, ethical message of understanding and empathy marks its failure too, because both reason and imagination spring from the same imperialist discourse, and triumph through violence. This is most obvious in the representation of the ME woman. Henry, McEwan's protagonist, used her stereotyped image just

to defame her culture, because taking her altogether out of the novel wouldn't affect it at all. She is used only to construct an image of the ME of which she is a victim.

The same irony applies to Zimler who presents a highly feminist attitude: women as holders of the peace banner amidst a world of men who create violence and hatred, but Arab women are defeated, indeed turned into terrorists by Arab men stereotyped as psychologically and culturally traumatized, abusers of wives and daughters, on the one hand, and hawkish Israeli cruelty, on the other. Contrary to Zimler, Updike's representation of women in general is criticized as misogynist. In *Terrorist*, the image of the ME woman is implied as a contrast of the negative image of the liberated American woman. Within a Terrorist's mind-set, women are considered to be evil that diverts true believers from the Straight Path, and submissive Muslim women are idealized, because religion protects them from promiscuity. In a shockingly racialized representation of the colored Other, especially the Muslim Arabs, Updike creates deep cultural ruptures, built on ethnic apartheid, and warns (white) American people from fanatics, especially because they hate women, apart from their aversion to modernity, technological progress and democracy.

Working on the representations of ME women within the discourse of WOT, I have realized that it is darker in the Western imagination than their reality is, but at the same time there are valiant attempts to dismantle the old colonial discourse as part of the anti-imperialist approach to knowledge production. Critical Terrorism Studies have done a great job deconstructing the mainstream discourse of WOT, but not yet as regards ME women. Still, the dominant stereotypes and hegemonic ways of knowing about ME women has started to be challenged by some (ME) feminist scholars who contest the unidimensional way in which they have come to be represented and perceived. Leila Ahmed's breakthrough and Saba Mahmoud's definition of freedom are huge

steps in appreciating the egalitarian spirit of Islam outside the establishment, but ME feminist scholars still have to cross the taboo line of recognizing the historical and cultural specificity of Islam.

This dissertation is an attempt to open a new space within the current political and social context following 9/11, which has brought contemporary geopolitics, globalization, and representation together. The project for ME women must now shift toward decolonizing the epistemological spaces through which they can reclaim their own identities and realities. More ‗authentic' modes of representation need to be claimed by ME women themselves as a means to develop counter-narratives that challenge the hegemonic ways in which their identities have been scripted historically. Western writers don't know ME women, they rely on the historical representation and the media, it is *ME women's duty* to speak out and represent themselves. No one will give them a voice, if and when it is given, then it is simultaneously hijacked for other interests, as I have been arguing. Thus my next investigation is going to be how ME women represent themselves. Again I am going to use literary production, written by women and men from the Arab ME.

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