ISSUES RELATED TO ARAB MUSLIM IDENTITY, NATIONALISM AND PROJECTION OF ISLAM IN POST 9/11 AMERICAN NOVEL

THESIS

Submitted to

GOA UNIVERSITY

for the award of the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

IN

ENGLISH

by

MUBARAK ABDULLAH ALTWAIJI

Guide

Dr. K. S. Bhat

(Head, Dept. of English, Goa University)

GOA UNIVERSITY

TALEIGAO PLATEAU

July 2013

DECLARATION

I, Mr. Mubarak Abdullah Altwaiji, hereby declare that the present thesis titled **Issues Related to Arab Muslim Identity, Nationalism and Projection of Islam in Post 9/11 American Novel**, is the fruit of my own research undertaken under the guidance of Dr. K. S. Bhat, Head, Dept. of English, Goa University. All the sources used in this work have been duly acknowledged in the thesis. This work has not been previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or certificate of this or any other university.

Mubarak Abdullah Altwaiji

CERTIFACATE

I hereby certify that the thesis entitled **Issues Related to Arab Muslim Identity, Nationalism and Projection of Islam in Post 9/11 American Novel**, submitted by MR. Mubarak Abdullah Altwaiji for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English, has been completed under my guidance. The thesis is a record of the research work conducted by the candidate during the period of his study and has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or certificate of this or any other University.

Dr. K. S. Bhat
Research Guide
Head, Dept. of English,
Goa University.

Acknowledgements

There are many I have to thank for making this thesis possible. First and foremost I have to thank God for giving me the strength and perseverance to complete this work.

I firmly believe that the completion of this thesis would never have been possible without the patience of my guide Prof. Dr. K. S. Bhat, my first literary mentor. I strongly believe I am honored to have him a PhD guide. You are a meaning–maker of the highest order. Thank you for your dedicated guidance, for your meticulous written and oral comments that always worked to enhance my arguments.

I owe a lot to Dr. Rafael Fernandes. You have been of an ultimate help through the years of my research. Thank you for your close and graceful role in the whole journey.

I would like to give my heartfelt thanks to Madam Geetha Shastri for her kindness and dedication, her attentive readings of my work and for the wise comments and suggestions.

My thank is due to my doctoral committee and all the faculty members of the department of English, Goa University whose comments were both kind and thoughtful.

I am also grateful to my close friend Dr. Abdulsalam Alkawri, who was the first person to encourage me to publish my papers. I thank Dr. Isabel Vas who has provided me with insightful comments.

A personal thank goes to my excessively patient wife- Muna Telha- whose love, passion and sacrifice always give me vigor to march on. She is the best painkiller whenever I feel homesick. My lovely daughter, Aliya, has endured my occasional impatience, crankiness and the many hours away from her writing my thesis. My eternal love shall follow her for she keeps me work undisturbed.

Special thanks are extended to my parents, Abdullah Saif and Ruqia Al-Barakani, to whom I owe everything today. My father taught me to overcome difficulties of life. My mom instilled in me a passion for success and taught me to never give up my dreams. My gratitude is extended to my loving sisters and brothers, especially Afif. I owe a lot to my mother-in-law Malikah, whom I consider my second mom.

Last but not least, I wish to thank all my friends Muwafaq Altwaiji, Shaker Altwaiji, Walid Telha, Muhammed Al-jarmouzi and Dr. Muhammad AlSafani who, throughout the years, have generously showered me with their suggestions and support.

Mubarak Abdullah Altwaiji

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to:

The victims of the 9/11 terrorist attacks of 2001: civilians and non-civilians, Americans and non-Americans.

Those men, women and children of Iraq and Afghanistan who have lost their lives and to those who will lose their lives due to the subsequent American retaliation to the 9/11 terrorist attacks in places across the Islamic world.

And to:

Late Scholar, **Edward Awad Said,** the writer of *Orientalism* who toiled to make sense of the Imperial representation of the Orient.

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Chapter I

Historical and Theoretical Framework

We should admit rather that power produces knowledge; that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no 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

---*Michel Foucault*

1.1 Introduction

On 11 September, 2001, the Americans were attacked for the first time, in a long while, in the depth of their own territory by nineteen terrorists claimed to be members of Al-Qaeda, a terrorist network. The attacks were carried out in a random and senseless way that put the majority of American citizens, not just the armed forces, in temporary fear of their lives and the lives of their loved ones. As security was tightened, American nationalism reached its peak to confront the perpetrators of the attacks and the faith they belonged to as appeared in the inauguration speech delivered by Franklin Graham, an American Christian evangelist and missionary, who was chosen by George Bush to deliver the prayers at his presidential inauguration on November 16, 2001: "We're not attacking Islam but Islam has attacked us. The God of Islam is not the same God. He's not the son of God of the Christian or Judeo-Christian faith. It's a different God, and I believe it is a very evil and wicked religion...I believe the Qur'an teaches violence. It doesn't teach peace, it teaches violence."[1] While other such statements had been as overt and widely publicized as those of Franklin Graham, plenty of other military leaders and policy makers share similar views.

Soon after the attacks, Muslim scholars across the globe condemned the act and considered it a barbaric one. In North America, American and Canadian Islamic councils issued a statement shortly after the attacks stating: "We are grief-stricken at these horrifying events…the murder of innocents can never be justified and must not be tolerated…Anger and frustration are completely understandable and shared by us all…yet that anger must not be directed at individuals utterly innocent of these terrible crimes."[2] In Saudi Arabia, the Chairman of Supreme Judicial Council declared the Islamic view on terror that Islam rejects such acts and forbids killing of civilians even during times of war. It called for collective efforts to fight the evil of terrorism.

The first American response to these attacks came soon as George W. Bush declared Crusades against the enemy: "This *crusade*, this war on terrorism is going to take a while."[3] To the entire Islamic world that rejected the terrorist attacks of 9/11, Bush's reference to the language of Crusade evoked collective memories of the centuries-old and centuries-long Christian invasion of Muslim Arabia. Subsequently, the United States attacked Afghanistan the same year in October 2001 to eradicate Al-Qaeda and soon after it invaded Iraq under the claim of pulling out the weapons of mass destruction without the approval of the United Nations. At this particular point, crisis began to develop and attempts of reconciliation started fading. Many critics suggested the year 2001 as a "year zero" in Islamic world-American relationship in which the Westerners see Muslims as fanatical, violent and lacking in tolerance. On the other hand, Muslims in the Middle East and Asia generally see Westerners as selfish, immoral and greedy as well as violent and fanatical.

As far as the Arab-U.S relationship is concerned, the tense relationship cannot at all be said to be a result of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. In fact, the Barbary Wars fought between Arab pirates of North Africa and the American sailors from 1785 to 1815 are the first actual encounter between Middle East Arab Muslims and the young American republic. Therefore, this period marks the initial important impact of the Islamic Orient on American culture and literature. The American writers' perception of the Barbary wars generally relied on traditional European views and stereotypes because the East was totally alien to them. These wars along with available European references on the Orient furnished themes of such works as Susanna Rowson's *Slaves in Algiers* (1794), Joseph Stevens Jones's *The Usurper* (1855?), and Washington Irving's works such as *Conquest of Granada* (1829), *The Alhambra* (1832), *Mahomet and His Successors* (1849) and Mark Twain's *The Innocents Abroad* (1869). These works provide reductionist perceptions of all Arab Muslims and introduce them to the Western readers through horrific images.

Therefore, the American Orientalist interest in the Middle East did not originate at home; rather it was as an extension and imitation of a movement that widely prevailed in the European literary scene. Further, catching up with the fervour of the European writers, American Orientalists also got involved in writing and talking about the East. This interest in the Muslim East has a unique significance for American literary scholarship because it coincided with the rise of the American nationalist search for both identity and independence. The East became part and parcel of the emerging American identity. The spirit of this period is embodied in Ralph Waldo Emerson's *The American Scholar*, a lecture he gave on forming American identity on August 31, 1837: "If there is any period one

would desire to be born in, is it not the age of Revolution; when the old and the new stand side by side, and admit of being compared; when the energies of all men are searched by fear and by hope; when the historic glories of the old can be compensated by the rich possibilities of the new era?"[4] In this particular era, America was a perfect embodiment of longing for identity. This early American Orientalist style remains to be a continuation of what the Orientalists have already started in Europe. Like their European counterparts, the American writers were genuinely interested in identifying with the Orient as a place of romance where exotic people live.

Even though England and France faded away as imperial powers in the wake of World War II, the United States emerged as a neo-imperial power operating in the neocolonial form through newer mechanisms of exploitation and control like transnational corporations and global institutional arrangements on trade and economy. As many Arab countries achieved their independence from the European colonizer, the United States filled the vacuum in the whole region especially the Gulf countries. It is America that ended Europe's obsession with Islam as its ultimate nemesis and alter ego. Therefore, if Europe was in the forefront of Orientalist scholarship, that position was taken over by the United States since World War II. It is not by accident that imperialism and scholarship dwell on together and traverse simultaneously. A reader of Orientalist discourse must then be aware of the continuity and the change both in imperialism and Orientalism. Further, a reader has to keep in mind that if a change takes place in the nature of imperialism, it is less so in the case of Orientalism because the stream of continuity in representing Arab Muslims remains in European discourses even after European imperialism faded.

As one of the first scholars to systematically analyze the imagery of Islam and Arab Muslims in the pre 9/11 American culture, Edward Said states in his book *Covering Islam* (1997): ""Islam" as it is used today seems to mean one simple thing but in fact is part fiction, part ideological label, part minimal designation of a religion called Islam."[5] Said contends that the image of Islam in the American culture has always been influenced by a framework of politics and hidden interests and is therefore loaded with "not only patent inaccuracy but also expressions of unrestrained ethnocentrism, cultural and even racial hatred, deep yet paradoxically free-floating hostility."[6] Accordingly, Said finds that this image always involves highly exaggerated stereotyping and belligerent hostility.

If this is the image before 9/11, things take a big turn for the worse after the fateful attacks of 2001 because Arab Muslim's character and thought become a major subject of perusal for the American public. Bookstores in American are filled with shabby screeds bearing screaming headlines about Islamic terrorism and the Arab Muslims' threat and the Muslim menace; all of them are written by political polemicists. Despite the fact that all Arab countries condemn the attacks, for the most part, many writers fail to differentiate between Arabs and Muslims, on the one hand, and terrorists, on the other. On September 17, 2001, *Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting* (FAIR) reports that American media focused on the theme of retaliation only and did not bother to investigate who bears the brunt of an American attack.[7] For instance, on September 12, 2001, Steve Dunleavy writes in the *New York Post*: "The response to this unimaginable 21st-century Pearl Harbor should be as simple as it is swift-kill the bastards…As for cities or countries that host these worms, bomb them into basketball courts."[8]

On September 11, former U.S. Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger comments to CNN, "There is only one way to begin to deal with people like this, and that is you have to kill some of them even if they are not immediately directly involved in this thing."[9] On September 13, Bill O'Reilly, a prominent an American television host, articulates his opinion to the Fox News Channel: "[I]t doesn't make any difference who you kill in the process of retaliation against the attacks."[10] On the same day, Ann Coulter, an American lawyer, writes in Universal Press Syndicate: "This is no time to be precious about locating the exact individuals directly involved in this particular terrorist attack....We should invade their countries, kill their leaders and convert them to Christianity."[11]

Thus, the media plays an important role in foregrounding issues related to Muslims in the American public domain after the terrorist attacks of 9/11. Ten months after 9/11 at a meeting of the Global Policy Forum that aimed at providing a picture of how the world has been portrayed, Directorate of Berghof Conflict Research, criticizes the American media for how it fully attributed blame for the September attacks on the Muslims in general. Prophet Muhammad and religious figures become the focus of these interviews and debates in American media: "This man was an absolute wild-eyed fanatic…He was a robber and a brigand...Adolph Hitler was bad, but what the Muslims want to do to the Jews is worse."[12] It is apparent that the media has accepted the side effects of a stigmatization of Islam, Islamic states and the Muslims and paved the way for prejudices and offensive statements appearing regularly in televised interviews with leading evangelists and politicians.

American literature of this period witnesses an increase in American awareness to meet the new reality imposed by the 9/11 affair. Literature of this

period assumes that the fight against terrorism is the nation's first priority. A shift from an aesthetically pleasant literature to a more morally instructional and informative dominates literary texts because consumers after 9/11 wanted literature that would give them information on what had just happened. Feelings of fear, horror and vulnerability help in extending subject matter that aims at realizing and confronting the outside threats and result in a very strong curiosity and eagerness of the American public to know more about their assailants: "After the attacks, people showed greater interest in books which provided them with information relevant to the attacks and books which offered spiritual comfort—both functional characteristics."[13] This interest in functional and informative contents after 9/11 enables readers to interpret narratives on real past events which are still alive in their memory, something they can relate to.

On the literary front, Islam and Arab Muslims, particularly religious figures like Prophet Muhammad, his wife A'isha, Abi Bakr, Omar and Khalid become the subject matter for many novels. On September 18, 2001, Emily Eakin, a reporter for the *New York Times*, notes that the attacks raise the reader's curiosity to know more about Islam and Muslims: "Within hours after last Tuesday's terrorist attacks, sales of books related to the disaster surged as people desperate for information and explanations rushed to purchase treatises on terrorism and the Arab world."[14] Eakin goes on to quote Harabin, a supervisor at a bookstore in Washington saying "Our Islam section has really emptied out."[15] This inquiry into the history of Islam, Prophet Muhammad, his wives and his Successors becomes the target of many fiction novels such as *The Jewel of Medina*, *Mother of the Believers* and *Khalifah*. This interest in these Islamic figures demonstrates the attitude of writers toward informative literature at this particular time.

Similarly, modern ordinary Muslims are part of the American literary focus because this literary production, argues Gustafson, becomes "an aid of living" in the American society. Texts like *Terrorist*, *The Scorpion's Gate*, *The Teeth of the Tiger*, *Once in a Promised Land*, *Finding Nouf*, *Dawn of Saudi*…etc, share the common image that an Arab Muslim is a terrorist, anti-America and an oppressor of woman. To an Arab reader, how can this generalization be justified when the terrorist attacks are carried out by a very small fraction of fanatic Muslims? Similarly, why do Islam and its sacred figures become the focus of literary inquiry only after the 9/11 events?

No doubt, 9/11 events shape a new era of the relationship between Arab Muslims and the West, particularly, the United States and manufacture stereotypes out of the Muslim: a terrorist, intolerant and violent character. In his evaluation of the American cultural dimensions in the post 9/11 period, Richard Crockatt asserts that 2001 is the year of "the great divide" in the Islam-American relationship: "Events since 9/11 have provided continuous fuel for animosity and mistrust, from the invasion of Iraq, the terrorist attacks across the globe, involving the almost routine use of suicide bombings by jihadists."[16] Therefore, the current thesis raises the following questions: what is the impact of 9/11 in shaping the image of Islam and Muslims in literary texts? Are there similarities between Arab images in pre-9/11 and post 9/11? If yes, can a reader consider the post 9/11 representations as part of a long process called Orientalizing the Orient through which post 9/11 writers imitate and follow their European predecessors? Before attempting an answer to these questions, a detailed analysis of the theoretical and historical framework on the same issue is provided in this chapter.

1.2 Historical Background (Literature Review)

Historically, Arabs and Muslims have felt that they are always at the receiving end due to the fact that their religion, culture, and beliefs have been negatively portrayed to the Western audience. This awareness of anti-Arab and anti-Muslim portrayals has been growing ever since Muslims started to have more access to Western writings and Western media, which reveal longstanding modes of representation that the West has used in talking about the East. Historical texts show that representation of Arabs in the West is old and predates the emergence of Islam in Arabia. Prior to the coming of Islam, certain images of Arabs are found in the Bible and historical texts. In his book, *The Sum of All Heresies*, Frederick Quinn, an American diplomat and historian, writes: "The Bible was the great anti-Islamic text. Compiled centuries before the Prophet's birth, it made no mention of Muslims, but its apocalyptical passages would soon be used against Islam."[17] Quinn quotes from the book of Matthew some phrases which certainly indicate the coming of a false prophet [Muhammad]: "Then if anyone says to you, "look! Here is the Messiah!" or "There he is! For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and produce great signs and omens, to lead astray."[18] Quinn summarizes the Western Christian perceptions of Prophet Muhammad that were common in the Middle Ages and continue to exist in the present in the following words:

> …religiously, Muhammad was either the Antichrist or a fallen Lucifer-like figure, a cardinal who failed to be elected pope, so he turned on the church. Personally, he was a flawed human being, unable or unwilling to contain his sexuality; he was polygamous or a predator, depending on the account. Politically, he was either a major leader who united the desert tribes for the first time ever or a

greedy despot. Finally, and contradicting what had been said before, he was an original source of the wisdom of the East.[19]

Long before the discourse of representing the Eastern people emerges as an "institution" called Orientalism, malicious representations of Muslims and Arabs widely circulated among the Christian religious elites creating a demonic image of Islam and Arabs. Ismail Patel notes that John of Damascus (675-749) can be called 'The father of anti-Islamic polemics' for his tradition of demonizing Islam and Muslims: "He claimed, in his book *De Haeresbius*, that the Quran was not revealed but created by the Prophet…He also claimed that the Prophet created verses of the *Quran* to fulfill his own wants, and these were usually to do with lust and sexual deviancy."[20] Similarly, Protestant Christians and Lutherans follow the same approach in their perception of that Islam is a devilish religion that was lapsed from Christianity.

Ania Loomba finds that this racial/religious stereotyping is not a product of modern colonialism alone, rather it goes back to the Greek and Roman periods which provide some abiding templates for subsequent European images of 'Barbarians' and outsiders. Loomba argues that "since the Bible held that all human beings were brothers descended from the same parents, the presence of 'savages' and 'monsters' [Arabs] was not easy to explain."[21] In the Biblical narratives Arabs are defined in inferior terms as sons of Hagar, an Egyptian handmaid, from her son Ishmael who are both cast out to the desert by Abraham who prefers the company of Sarah and her son Isaac: "And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, mocking. Wherefore she said unto Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac."[22] Thus, Arabs are and

should remain as the outcast, the savage, the backward and the inferior race that descended from Ishmael, the less-favored offspring of the patriarch Abraham compared to the civilized and superior Westerners, descendants of Isaac.

The earliest Western perception of Islam and Arabs is largely grounded on religious basis that resulted from the Christian rejection of Islam as a religion in the eighth century. On this ground, many Christian priests and theologians consider Muslims as apostates who spread messages closely resembling traditional Christian beliefs. Moreover, the rapid spread of Islam to areas under the Christian rule in the East till it reaches the Balkans and sieges Vienna rings the alarm of the Islamic threat. Hence, Loomba asserts: "In early medieval and early modern Europe, Christian identities were constructed in opposition to Islam….Above all it was Islam that functioned as the predominant binary opposite of and threat to Christianity…The term 'Moors' at first referred to Arab Muslims, but although not all Muslims were dark-skinned."[23] This rejection of the religion and the awareness to its threat become the main factors that define the nature of the relationship at the modern time.

The well-known distorted image in the European writings is reflected in the usage of the term "Saracens". The origin of the term remains uncertain but it had become a sweepingly pejorative term applied to almost all Arabic-speaking populations. Historical references show that the linguistic origin of the "Saracen" could be a Latin word and comes with three possible meanings. First, Saracen could refer to 'East' where Arabs lived, which means in Arabic al-sharqiyya. Secondly, it could be an equivalent to the Arabic word "sarraq" which means thief or plunderer and the Byzantines used it to describe Arabs. Lastly, it could refer to

the Arabic word "sharika" which means association or treaty signed between the peace-loving Byzantine and savage Arab tribes.

The European literary depiction of Arabs and Islam shares a common ground with the religious Christian viewpoint. This perception of Arab Muslims including Prophet Muhammad, a man who is held responsible for spreading religion that oppresses the woman, has long been projected in the famous work of the Italian poet Dante Alighieri and such a view remains practically unchanged centuries later. Dante's *Divine Comedy* or *Divina Commedia* is a major literary work with a considerable focus on Muslims and Islamic figures like Prophet Muhammad, his son-in-law Ali, Avicenna, Averroes and Saladin. In this work, Dante considers these figures as sinful and thus he places every one of them in a particular level of the Inferno. Dante, for example, places Prophet Muhammad in the ninth bolgia of the eighth circle of Hell "where heretics, schismatics, and all spreaders of discord are to be found."[24] Similarly, Ali, Muhammad's son-in-law is kept in the same place: with "Mahomet." Avicenna (981-1037) and Averroes (1126-1198) are great Arab philosophers whose contribution to humanity, virtuous deeds, and lofty codes of ethics intercede for them because Dante has a profound respect for such figures and therefore he places them in hell among great philosophers and scientists like Anaxagoras, Empedocles, Heraclitus, Orpheus, Hippocrates and Plato. Quinn summarizes Dante's strategy in the following words:

> Dante Alighieri awarded Saladin a higher place in the underworld than Muhammad. Whereas the Prophet was to spend eternity in a place of endless torment, Islam's most illustrious military figure was consigned to a higher place in Limbo along with non-Christians of the past, such as Socrates and Plato. Muhammad was

relegated to the dreaded Eighth Circle, a place reserved for sowers of scandal and schismatics.[25]

In England, the frustration of Arabs towards their representation in English literature has its roots in historical conflict between the Islamic East and the Christian West. Eighteenth century English literature has served to define, formulate and indeed exacerbate this hostile relationship. Usually, critics look at the seventeenth century as the golden age for the representation of Oriental character, life and history in England. In fact, demonizing Arabs and Islam by literary figures like Christopher Marlowe, William Shakespeare, John Webster, and John Ford etc. has its beginnings in the English Renaissance. As Said suggests, *Robinson Crusoe* advocates the British seventeenth century imperialism. In *Robinson Crusoe*, when Crusoe escapes slavery from the hands of the Turks, he compels the Muslim boy, Xury, to swear by Mahomet, a deformed name of the Prophet, to be faithful to him: "Xury, if you will be faithful to me, I'll make you a great man; but if you will not stroke your face to be true to me' - that is, swear by Mahomet and his father's beard."[26] Shakespeare's manifestation of Arabs as "Moors" and "Barbarians" is clear in his *The Merchant of Venice* (1590) where Lorenzo, king of Spain comments on Prince of Morocco in Act 5, Scene 1:

Queen Mother: Your deceast King made war in Barbarie
Won Great Abdela King of Fesse and father
To that Barbarian Prince.
Eleazar: I was but young,
But now methinks I see my father's wounds.
Poor barbaria! No more.[27]

The European attitude towards non-Arab Muslims is further influenced by the long history of rivalry between Islam and the West. This attitude of depicting Muslims negatively is extended further in the portrayal of non-Arab Muslims in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. For example, Indian Muslims are shown as intolerant, sexually loose and violent in E. M. Forster's *A Passage To India*. The European colonial rhetoric succeeded in making the concept of Islam synonymous with backwardness, intolerance, inefficiency and bigotry. Muslims depicted by Forster are not faithfully sketched. Muslims in India like Dr. Aziz who, despite the advantages of education they have enjoyed, look down upon Hindus and belittle their culture, and fall below even a reasonable standard of truthfulness and efficiency.

The presence of the Middle East in American literary and cultural work coincides with the beginning of the Barbary wars fought between North African pirates and American sailors. The American imperial growth runs parallel to the progressive distortion of Arab identity. Said notes in *Culture and Imperialism* that "[f]or decades in America there has been a cultural war against the Arabs and Islam: appalling racist caricatures of Arabs and Muslims suggest that they are all either terrorists or sheikhs and that the region is a large arid slum, fit only for profit or war."[28] Though little average Americans knew about the Middle East and its peoples in the nineteenth century, Arab Muslims appear with striking regularity in the works of Edgar Allan Poe 1809-1849. Sexuality of veiled Arab women and savagery of Arab men have been the corner stone of American Orientalist discourse of Hawthorne's tales like *The Blithedale Romance*, *Twice-told Tales*, and *The House of the Seven Gables*:

> Hawthorne considers the East as part and parcel of his romance. He finds in the hybrid nature of the romance the right atmosphere that the American romancer needs. And he considers the Orient an essential constituent for such production. The Orient in the romance, thus, becomes a methodology of representation. It is an episteme in the American novelistic discourse.[29]

As a rising super power, few parts of the world have become as deeply embedded in the U.S. popular imagination as the Middle East. The Middle East begins to loom larger on America's diplomatic and cultural horizon during what Mark Twain called "the Gilded Age," not only because U.S. missionaries seek to have more converts but also because U.S. merchants try to expand trade. Douglas Little, an American historian specializing in American diplomatic history and United States' relations with the Middle East, argues that "[no] one probably did more to shape nineteenth-century U.S. views of the Middle East, however, than Mark Twain."[30] Twain was responsible for projecting the Muslims to his American audience as "a people by nature and training filthy, brutish, ignorant, unprogressive, [and] superstitious" and calling the Ottoman Empire "a government whose Three Graces are Tyranny, Rapacity and Blood."[31]

Mark Twain's Travel writings (1835–1910) show a great interest in the description of Arab life style, the houses, the people, the dresses, mosques, coins, rulers, women, landmarks, jails, marriage, slavery, pilgrimage, and foreign relations. In "*The Innocents Abroad*", he describes Muslims as brutish savages, ignorant, unprogressive, and superstitious. Therefore, Mark Twain represents the first generation of American Orientalists whose main focus is foreignness, misery and filthiness of the natives: "A Syrian village is a hive of huts one story high (the

height of a man)…When you ride through one of these villages at noonday…you come to several sore-eyed children and children in all stages of mutilation and decay."[32] Washington Irving's fascination with the Middle East and its people in his *Mohamet and his Successors* shows a very strong account of the Arabs and Islam to the United States in the early years of the nineteenth century when Irving finds Islam to be "one of violence and the sword". Irving's manipulation of Muhammad into "Mahomet" and Islam into "Mahometanism" aims at demonizing Islam and defaming the Prophet. This manipulation in words articulates a sharp critique, describing the holy mission of the Muslim prophet as wholly fallacious.

These images of Arabs in American travel writing achieve their Orientalist aims and facilitate production of similar images in other forms of American culture. For example, in the American World's Fairs in 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition and the 1893 Chicago World Columbian Exposition, Arab culture of Egypt is perceived as "strange, exotic and radically different from American culture" and its people as "primitive or savage peoples"[33] For a curious scholar, this early American preoccupation with the Middle East looks strange and therefore needs to be investigated. In this regard, crucial questions need to be answered such as why was such strong interest in the Middle East evident at these world fairs well before the United States' economic and political interests in the region crystallized following World War II? To what extent can the Orientalist paradigm help us understand the United States' cultural encounter with the Middle East as expressed through world fairs? And what impact did these fairs have on American society and its understandings of the region?

Today, especially after establishing the Jewish state of Israel, any study or research on the Middle East-America relationship should have a reference to the

American-Israeli relationship that shapes the American policy and attitude towards Arabs. The many wars fought between Arabs and Israel have further distorted the image of Arabs in American literature. Since establishing the Jewish state of Israel on the Arab land of Palestine in 1948, the Arab image in American literature suffered more distortion, so much so that an Arab is seen as a savage, backward, anti-Israel and anti-America. For example, *The Haj* by Leon Uris, a prominent American novelist, projects Arabs as animal-like, inferior, backward, irrational, untrustworthy and a threat to Israel. This kind of projection becomes a reliable source for the American people to understand Palestinian society and issues. Edward Said rejects Uris's discriminative approach in treating the Arab-Israeli issue and labels it as "moral epistemology of imperialism". In an article, *An Ideology of Difference* published a few months later, Edward Said gives his point of view on Uris' novel *The Haj*: "I must confess at the outset that I could not finish its six hundred pages, so filled are they with sheer disgusting hatred. This book, which makes the worst Nazi anti-Semitism seem restrained, was nonetheless a best-seller."[34] *The Haj*'s premise is simple: that an Arab is a lecherous, deceitful, murderous, irrational, larcenous and utterly reprehensible subhuman whereas the Jew is noble, intelligent, understanding and-above all-deserving of Palestine.

Representation of Arabs in *The Haj* aims to justify colonization by depicting the colonial process as a historically inevitable movement of progress toward bringing civilization to the land of the barbarian. Uris' writings are anti-Islamic and anti-Arab being constitutive of an Orientalist discourse that aims at distorting Arabs' identity, religion and their human values, which is clear in his earlier novel *Exodus* published in 1958. In *The Haj*, Uris makes Arabs articulate their own point of view about themselves. His Arab narrator Ishmael begins his

narration with a reference to these voices: "There are times I will speak to you in my own voice. Others will speak in theirs."[35] On the other hand, at every occasion the Jews are presented as civilized, sympathetic, democratic and peace-loving people who are distinguished from the Arabs. Ishmael, for example, makes a candid confession: "So before I was nine I had learned the basic canon of Arab life. It was me against my brother; me and my brother against our father; my family against my cousins and the clan; the clan against the tribe; and the tribe against the world. And all of us against the infidel."[36] In 1957 Uris was hired by a Jewish group to write a screenplay which took the shape of the novel *Exodus* which aimed at demonizing Arabs in which Arabs are "lazy and shiftless, dirty and deceitful. They have become dependent upon the Jews."[37] This representation of the Arabs ultimately confirms Edward Said's view that the Arabs and Islam exist only as communities of interpretation.

In the American Orientalist discourse, Arab Muslims' stereotypes are thoroughly negative in nature. The Americans categorize Islam as a threat to the West as a whole. This negative perception of Arabs is an accumulation of a long history of interaction as explained earlier. Since these stereotypes are imperial tools of domination, they have become an essential component of these literary and political mainstreams in a way that indicates no change of its course.

1.3 Theoretical Framework

The last quarter of the twentieth century marks the inauguration of a new era of academic inquiry, namely post-colonial discourse in which Said's *Orientalism* constitutes one of its main pillars. In *Orientalism*, Said uncovers the negative images that the West uses to portray the Orient with special focus on Arabs and Muslims and tries to defend the entire Islamic culture against a long

mode of representation. In his works, *Covering Islam*, *Orientalism*, and *Culture and Imperialism* which constitute the most well known trilogy in post-colonial theory, Said documents numerous instances of how the Western literature, media and politics systematically misrepresent Arabs and the Islamic world. In his introduction to the 1997 edition of *Covering Islam*, Said states: "In short, fundamentalism equals Islam equals everything-we-must-now-fight-against, as we did with communism during the Cold War…The norms of rational sense are suspended when discussions of Islam are carried on."[38] Said quotes two example headlines from *The National Interest* by Daniel Pipes (1995) entitled "*There Are No Moderates: Dealing with Fundamentalist Islam"* and from the *Sunday New York Times* by Elaine Sciolino (1996) titled "*The Red Menace is Gone. But Here's Islam*" to show the role of the American Orientalists in corrupting the name of Islam by making it fascist, fundamentalist, terrorist and a threat to American culture.

In this research on Arab identity, Islam and Arab nationalism, which constitute a major part of the Orient, Said's post-colonial theory will be applied with special reference to his *Orientalism* which is widely considered as the starting point for all critical discussions of East-West literary relations. This institution of Orientalism is first defined by Said as a system of representation and hegemony invented by the West on the assumption of a strong distinction between East and West. This institution of Orientalism is explained by Said as: "a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between "the Orient" and "the Occident…a Western style for dominating restructuring, and having authority over the Orient."[39] Said gives no fixed definition of what "the Orient" is or what "Oriental" means: "I have no "real" Orient to argue for. I do,

however, have a very high regard for the powers and gifts of the peoples of that region to struggle on for their vision of what they are and want to be"[40] In Said's view, Orientalism as a discourse includes every writer who indulges in representation of the Orientals:

> Everyone who writes about the Orient must locate himself vis-à-vis the Orient; translated into his text, this location includes the kind of narrative voice he adopts, the type of structure he builds, the kinds of images, themes, motifs that circulate in his text all of which add up to deliberate ways of addressing the reader, containing the Orient, and finally, representing it or speaking in its behalf.[41]

In *Orientalism*, Said argues that the Western political domination over the Orient is greatly assisted by a textualization process, a set of textual practices that a Westerner can become an expert Orientalist without ever leaving home. Similarly, Western readers become more prone or addicted to accepting images of Arabs as terrorists, uncivilized and anti-West with Orientalist materials available to them at home. Orientalism, suggests Said, is an ultimate cultural and political doctrine willed over the Orient because the Orient is inferior to the West; this doctrine forced a "difference between the familiar (Europe, the West, "us") and the strange (the Orient, the East, "them")" because "Orientalism depends for its strategy on this flexible positional superiority."[42] Further, Said observes that Orientalists make the Orientals narrate their own images and generalize these images on all Muslims like "the Moors", "the Muslim", "the Turk" "the Arab" versus "the Westerner". This imbalance created between the "Muslim East" and the "Christian West" remains an obvious trait of Orientalist writing even today.

In his critique of Orientalist discourse, Said notes that cultural hegemony gives Orientalism durability and strength. Thus, though Said does not adopt Marxist base/superstructure terminology for his own analysis, he clearly cites it approvingly as a valid critique of imperialism. Orientalism thus appears especially indebted to Marxism with an emphasis on the interconnection of political power and cultural phenomena. This connection is more strongly apparent as readers discover Said's direct reference to the works of Marxist theorist Antonio Gramsci who identified Western hegemony as an indispensable concept for any understanding of cultural life in the industrial West. Accordingly, Said reaches to the conclusion that a sizeable part of Western culture is "what made that culture hegemonic both in and outside Europe: the idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures."[43] This hegemonic attitude is applied to the United States too as one of the imperial powers who "impart to their civil societies a sense of urgency, a direct political infusion as it were, where and when-ever matters pertaining to their imperial interests abroad are concerned."[44]

Oriental backwardness and inferiority are essential themes in Said's *Orientalism*. Orientals, unlike the Westerners, are backward and therefore chances of mutual understanding are slight unless the Oriental learns to be rational", otherwise there can be no rapprochement between East and West. Said cites Orientalist works that draw binary oppositions between the Orient and the advanced and superior West as reflected in the work of Orientalist William Robertson Smith, a Semitic language philologist who states: "The Arabian traveller is quite different from ourselves…He has no enjoyment in effort, and grumbles at hunger and fatigue with all his might."[45] Said further quotes Smith

who asserts that "It is characteristic of Mohammedanism…that it has taken under its protection so many barbarous and obsolete ideas."[46] Accordingly, the Muslims are not only the opposite of and inferior to the Westerners but savages and dangerous.

In the examination of Orientalist discourse on the Islamic world, Said observes that dehumanizing the Orientals and imperial ambitions are very much connected to each other. This production on Orientals, Said discovers, does indeed happen during the British colonialism over Egypt in order to rationalize its domination. Said gives a key example of Lord Cromer, the British governor of Egypt: "Want of accuracy, which easily degenerates into untruthfulness, is in fact the main characteristic of the Oriental mind."[47] All these binary oppositions drawn between Orientals and Westerners in the Orientalist discourse will be of immense help in exploring the same binaries in modern American fiction written about the Oriental Muslims.

Said's endeavor in unveiling the hegemonic writing style on the Orient has recently been a target of criticism by many Western writers. Christopher Bush observes that there are two main criticisms which are important to point out in this context: first, Said's failure to demonstrate a logical binary opposition between the Orient and the Occident, and secondly, his overgeneralization about the discourses he is critiquing.[48] Neil Templeton, for example, argues that Said's creation of a binary opposition between the Orient and Occident is marked by its reductive tendencies when he tries to define the East as opposite to the West because "the West's component parts be similarly defined in relation to their differences with each other."[49] Further, Templeton notes that Said's binary distinction between Orient and Occident is further damaged and fractured by his discussion of the

commonality of German Orientalism, Anglo-French Orientalism, and American Orientalism. Said's tendency to generalize Orientalism as a monolithic discourse is also noted by other critics who argue that Said has overstated his case when he views Orientalism as monolithically constructed and its discourse as an agent of the colonizer: "There are, however, major problems with a Saidian 'Orientalist' interpretation of these artistic distinctions. Such attitudes were not monolithic; they did not repeatedly feed off each other; and they were not necessarily related in any close or instrumental way to imperialism and racial attitudes."[50]

The hypothesis that Orientalist discourse as an imperial tool for dominating and reconstructing the Orient is also challenged by modern scholars. They argue that in his examination of the hegemonic work of Western Orientalists, Said may have fallen into the same trap of Orientalism by producing Occidentalism. The Orientalist monolithic construction of the Orient as the "Other" of the Occident is a major point of *Orientalism's* argument. This process of "othering" the Orient results in, firstly, the creation of two distinct identities namely, "Orientals" and "Occidentals"; secondly the dominancy and the authority of the Occidentals over the Orientals in the Occidental point of view. This point in particular comes under much scrutiny and investigation by many critics who have dedicated entire books in response to Said's contention. Bart Moore-Gilbert for example, wonders if Said "does not himself reproduce the kind of stereotyping which he condemns in Orientalism in making such distinctions."[51] Many critics of Said's *Orientalism* feel that though Said's analysis of Orientalism is a powerful one, yet it suffers from a disease like the one it seeks to diagnose which may be called anti-Orientalism. Accordingly, as Said tries to expose distortions, he does this so systematically that

he falls into the same trap. This means that while producing a counter-hegemonic discourse to Orientalism, Said produces what may be called Occidentalism.

According to critics Said fails to look at the heterogeneity and the different factors that govern different Orientalist discourses produced by different British, French, German and American scholarship. Orientalism, as sets of colonial discourses, is targeted for being ignorant of the heterogeneities that constitute and redefine them. Porter believes that Said positions himself as a powerful opponent to the Western writers and thus the dichotomy he creates is full of overgeneralizations of his views on all the Western writers:

> Can anyone at any time speak of a unified Western discourse [British, French, German and American], even in a specific historical moment, and less throughout the course of centuries of historical change? Should one not at least speak of varieties of discourses about nationality and class that shed light on all sorts of over-determined cultural products?[52]

In *Critical Terrains: French and British Orientalisms*, Lisa Lowe tries to show the variations between French and British Orientalisms. By comparing figures such as Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, E.M. Forster, Gustav Flaubert, and Roland Barthes, she shows that different styles and different themes characterize the traditions of both British and French nations.[53] Further, she claims that she "resists totalizing Orientalism as a monolithic" and argues that Orientalism consists of "an uneven matrix of Orientalist situations"[54] across different cultural and historical sites that each of these Orientalisms is internally complex and unstable.

Yet, several contradictions emerge in the course of Western criticism of Said's theory. It has been more than three decades since Said published his thesis of Orientalism. Unfortunately, many Western readers perceive the book as racist discourse simply because it defends Arabs and Muslims against what Said believes to be a hegemonic attitude towards the Orientals. Regrettably, many Western critics, readers and academics, even up till this moment, do not know that Edward Said is not a Muslim. Obsessed with the content of the book that defends the Arabs and Muslims, Western critics fail to know that Said is a Protestant Christian and not a Muslim, or that not all Arabs are Muslims. For instance, in the Customer Reviews on Amazon.Com, Eric Gartman writes his response to Said's *Orientalism*: "The central point of Said's book is that the so-called West cannot truly understand the complexities and intricate nature of the Arab world. Only a Muslim like him can, despite the fact that he himself was educated in the West."[55]

In addition to viewing the history of Western representation of the Orient, a good part of Said's theory is an inquiry into the 'problematic' representation of another culture. Said concludes his book with an appeal to human sciences to stop providing contemporary scholars with knowledge and ideas that promote "racial, ideological, and imperialist stereotypes" like the sort provided by Orientalism. Said asks very important questions:

> How does one represent other cultures? What is another culture? Is the notion of a distinct culture (or race, or religion, or civilization) a useful one, or does it always get involved either in self-congratulation (when one discusses one's own) or hostility and aggression (when one discusses the "other")? Do cultural, religious, and racial differences matter more than socio-economic categories,

> or politicohistorical ones? How do ideas acquire authority, "normality," and even the status of "natural" truth?[56]

In the first part of *Orientalism*, Said identifies the "scope" of Orientalism and refers to this scope as a construction of the idea of an "Orient" which embraces the world of the Arabs and Islam. In the second part, Said traces the origins of Orientalist discourse beginning with the first Western encounter with Islam. In both parts, Said reaches to the conclusion that the Orient imagined by European scholars is nothing but an invention of the Western "hegemonic power" and aims at controlling the Orient.

Following Karl Marx's widely famous statement "[t]hey cannot represent themselves; they must be represented," Said criticizes the whole Orientalist discourse of representing the Orient and its people. Further he notes that this authority of representing the Orient is a result of imperialist power and thus lacks truth. Compared to the more enlightened and civilized European World, the Orient has long been perceived by Orientalists as "a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences."[57] Said shows the imbalance of power and the absence of a voice given to "Orientals" in the Orientalist discourse by discussing an influential passage from the great nineteenth century French novelist Gustave Flaubert in which Flaubert describes his experience with an Egyptian prostitute who cannot represent herself:

> Flaubert's encounter with an Egyptian courtesan produced a widely influential model of the Oriental woman; she never spoke of herself, she never represented her emotions, presence, or history. He spoke for her and represented her. He was foreign, comparatively wealthy, male, and these were historical facts of domination that allowed him

> not only to possess [her] physically but to speak for her and tell his readers in what way she was "typically Oriental."[58]

Edward Said becomes cynical of how Flaubert represents and speaks of an Egyptian courtesan with whom he claims to have a sexual relationship. Further, Said gives examples of the imagined Orient from eighteenth century writing that he believes to be the approximate starting point of European Orientalist writing. According to Said, Silvestre de Sacy's *Chrestomathie Arabe* and Edward William Lane's *Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* mark the starting point for dealing with the Orient by representing it, authorizing views of it, describing it, teaching it and ruling over it.

In 1978 and 1981 Said published *Orientalism* and *Covering Islam* respectively. In both books Said tries to be more specific in showing how Arabs and Muslims in particular are represented in Western literary writings. Moreover, he considers his *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) to be an extension to *Orientalism* in which he tries to broaden the scope of his analysis to make it into a general theory of colonization. His later articles like *A devil Theory of Islam* (2000), *Clash of Ignorance* (2001), *Islam Through Western Eyes* (1998), and *Orientalism after 25 years* (2003) are about the modern American Orientalism. Thus, Said's *Orientalism* is still valid to be applied to American Orientalist discourse of twentieth and the twenty-first centuries like that of Bernard Lewis, Samuel Huntington and Daniel Pipes.

Orientalism demonstrates Said's skepticism towards Middle East studies in the United States. He notes that "Oriental studies were to be thought of not so much as scholarly activities but as instruments of national policy towards the newly independent, and possibly intractable, nations of the post-colonial world."[59]

Thus, Orientalism is still a productive academia to meet changes in the different parts of the Orient especially those who challenge the Western supremacy. American Orientalist discourse as a theoretical institution emerges with the publication of Bernard Lewis, a committed Zionist historian and scholar in Oriental studies, whose argument is based on the notion that Islam does not develop nor do Muslims. Further, Lewis is the first modern American Orientalist to describe the relationship between Islam and the West with the concept a "Clash of Civilizations". In his famous essay *The Roots of Muslim Rage* (1990) Lewis describes the Muslims as "enraged nation" opposed to the Western civilization: "This is no less than a clash of civilizations--the perhaps irrational but surely historic reaction of an ancient rival against our Judeo-Christian heritage."[60]

In *The Roots of Muslim Rage*, Lewis seems to have delved into the psyche of the Arabs and comes up with views that largely resemble the European Orientalist attitude towards the Arabs. According to Lewis, Arabs' hatred for Western culture results from their awareness of their own failure and backwardness, a feeling that creates a revengeful attitude to the West. With the publication of *The Roots of Muslim Rage*, Lewis seems to have laid the foundations for modern American Orientalism.

Thus, Muslims' rage at the success of Western civilization especially the American one provides further knowledge for the American public. Inquiries into "[W]hat else can justify the Muslim attacks on New York and Washington? And why do they hate us more than other Westerners?" are questions answered by prominent American policymakers and literary writers. In his study of American literature, Said's advice to the students of modern literature is very pertinent: "take account of the politics of what they study…Texts are protean things; they are tied

to circumstances and to politics."[61] In his answer to the same question "Why do they hate us?" to the PBS News Hour, Collin Powell, the former US Secretary of State, answers: "They don't like our value system; they don't like a system that treats each individual as a creature of God with the full rights of every other individual. They don't like our political system, our form of democracy."[62] Similarly, President Bush Jr. gives his own answer for the Muslims' rage in a speech to Congress on September20, 2001:

> They [Muslims] hate what they see right here in this chamber…Their leaders are self-appointed. They hate our freedoms -- our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom…They want to drive Israel out of the Middle East. They want to drive Christians and Jews out of vast regions of Asia and Africa…They stand against us, because we stand in their way.[63]

In most of his writings, Said keeps a good space for dealing with Lewis' Orientalist work largely because he believes that Lewis' opinions are taken for granted by all American policymakers as well as the American public. Said, for example, writes extensively about Lewis in both *Orientalism* and *Covering Islam* where he describes Lewis as one of the worst offenders in the cultural war against Islam. John Esposito, a professor of International Affairs and Islamic Studies at Georgetown University, echoes Said's opinion on Lewis' writings on Arabs and Muslims. He wonders how Lewis generalizes his personal point of view and applies it to more than one billion of Muslims by describing them enraged at the Western civilization. Esposito criticizes the way in which selective presentation of Arabs' and Muslims' activities endorses certain negative stereotypes embedded in the Western mind. Esposito asks his Western fellows certain questions:

> …would we tolerate similar generalizations in analyzing and explaining Western activities and motives? How often do we see articles that speak of Christian rage or Jewish rage? In a similar vein, the nuclear capability of Muslim countries such as Pakistan has often been spoken of in terms of an "Islamic bomb," implying the existence of a monolithic Muslim world threatening Israel and the West. Do we expect Israel's or America's nuclear capabilities to be described in terms of a Jewish or a Christian bomb?[64]

Bernard Lewis is considered to be one of the important figures in the political world of the Anglo-American Middle Eastern Establishment. Thus whatever he says or writes is backed up by the fact that he is an authority in the Orientalist field, and consequently his views are taken as absolute truths. Islam as a religion of violence is an idea that occupies a good space in his work. Lewis associates the Muslims with whatever he believes to be anti-West and anti-Christian. On these grounds, Said tries to justify his major concern on Lewis' writings. Hence, Said believes that Lewis' writing is very close to being propaganda against his subject material. Thus, Lewis' powerful position in the Orientalist academy establishes him as a truthful source of knowledge about Arabs and their culture.

In *Covering Islam*, Said notes that Lewis' argument aims at establishing Islam in a binary opposition to the Judeo-Christian coalition. He summarizes Lewis's argument in the following words: ""Our" world is the world of Israel and the West; theirs is that of Islam and the rest."[65] This argument here is to show how this binary opposition, created by Lewis, influences the Western media that proliferates the same attitude towards Arabs and Islam. In *The New York Times*, for

example, the stories on Palestinian-Israeli conflict provided by the newspaper are always written from Lewis' Judeo-Christian point of view. For instance, the story *Portrait of an Angry Young Arab Woman* highlights terrorism as an inherent quality of Arab men and women:

> Darin Abu Eisheh, a devout Muslim college student from this village near Nablus, believed that women should take their place beside men in the fight against Israeli occupation"…her father tells her "Let Sharon the coward know that every Palestinian woman will give birth to an army of suicide attackers, even if he tries to kill them while still in their mother's wombs, shooting them at the checkpoints of death."[66]

Observers of the Islam-West relationship can easily find that American thinkers and policymakers view Islam as the only remaining threat to their culture and an opponent to the Judeo-Christian tradition. The long history of enmity between Judaism and Christianity seems to have vanished and so did Communism while Islam becomes the only rival. Shylock, the Jew, no longer represents the Jewish wickedness and hatred for Christians while Osama bin Laden becomes the new Muslim Shylock who is taken to represent the entire Islamic world. This shift in modern Western thought can be seen in Europe too. In France for instance, French Muslims, the largest minority with an estimated total of 6 to 10 percent of the national population, are not allowed to practice their religion as their Christian counterparts. President Sarkozy argues that Islamic code of dress is a sign of oppression to women and thus it is banned: "It [burka] is a sign of subservience. A sign of debasement. I want to say it solemnly; it will not be welcome on the territory of the French Republic."[67] On the other hand, Sarkozy frequently stresses

the centrality of the Western Judeo-Christian values in his policies and his attachment to what he calls "the Western family" which perceives Islam as an alien intruder.

One of the main aims in Lewis' argument on Islam, Said notes, is to distort the image of Islam in order to sway people away from it. Accordingly, he believes Lewis' argument is polemical and not scholarly: "[his] purpose is to show, here and elsewhere, that Islam is an anti-Semitic ideology, not merely a religion."[68] Said demonstrates his claim by unveiling Lewis' dogmatic partiality to his Jewish religious heritage that pushes him to view Islam as an "irrational herd or mass phenomenon."[69] Lewis' representation of Islam as a threat, according to Said, echoes the early European Orientalist mainstream that both discourses try to corrupt and spoil the name of Islam to the Western audience. Several centuries ago, European Orientalists advised their readers not to read the copy of the Quran that reached to France through England because this reading would expose the reader to danger. Samuel Chew quotes Alexander Ross, a sixteenth century English Orientalist:

> Good Reader, the great Arabian Impostor now at last after a thousand years, is by the way of France arrived in England, and his Alcoran, or gallimaufry of errors hath learned to speak English…If you will take a brief view of the Alcoran, you shall find it a hodgepodge made up of these four ingredients: 1. Of Contradictions. 2. Of Blasphemy. 3. Of ridiculous Fables. 4. Of Lies.[70]

Lewis' hypothesis (1990) of a possible clash between civilizations gained worldwide attention only after Huntington published his *A Clash of Civilizations* in

1993. İn this hypothesis, Huntington predicts that the next clash will not be primarily ideological or primarily economic but rather "it will occur between nations and groups of different civilizations."[71] According to Huntington, the post cold war division of the world into the first, second and thirld worlds is not relevant at the present time and a new division based on culture and civilization will take place.

Islam acquires a central focus in Huntington's theory. Huntington relies heavily on historical factors that shape Islam-West relationship which culminated in the 1990s when the United States sent a massive army to the Persian Gulf to defend some Arab countries against aggression by another. Huntington clasifies Islamic civilization as a civilization that poses danger to the West: "This centuries-old military interaction between the West and Islam is unlikely to decline. It could become more virulent."[72] Thus, according to this view, 'terrorism' and 'Arab backwardness' can be seen as closely connected that the latter explains the former as irrational and violent. According to Huntington, this realization "strengthens anti-Western political forces" represented by "the principal beneficiaries" (Islamist movements). Accordingly, Muslims turn to conspire with other aggressive civilizations like the Confusian one (the Chinese) against the West.

In *Clash of Ignorance* (2001), Said introduces his view on the Huntington's hypothesis of clash of civilizations and finds it to be a "vague notion of something Huntington called civilization identity"; and describes Huntington's argument as a "belligerent kind of thought."[73] Said notes that the binary opposition created between Islam and the West is an Orientalist phenomenon because Islam is no longer on the fringes of the West but becomes in its center. Moreover, Said observes that Huntington's hypothesis of *Clash of Civilizations* is based on the

racist argument of Lewis essay *The Roots of Muslim Rage* (1990) in which Huntington is an ideologist who wants to make civilizations and identities into what they are not.

Said argues that the Orientalist propagation of Islamic-Western clash does not aim to edify but rather to inflame the reader's indignant passion. All he perceives from these hypotheses is that Orientalist Huntington is propagating war hypotheses: "*The Clash of Civilizations* thesis is a gimmick like "The War of the Worlds" and thus Huntington proves himself to be "a clumsy writer and inelegant thinker.""[74] Said concludes: "we are all swimming in those waters…And since the waters are part of the ocean of history, trying to plow or divide them with barriers is futile."[75] A state of anxiety from Islam has become a matter of enduring Western preoccupation and one which politicians in Western Europe and the United States have chosen to highlight. In an article titled *Creeping Islamicization of a decadent Christendom*, Niall Ferguson conveys the fear of prominent figures in Christendom from Islam that is creeping towards Christian societies: **"**The West must decide how its laws and values will shape and be shaped by Islam. For Europe, as well as the United States, the question is not which civilization, Western or Islamic, will prevail, but which of Islam's many strands will dominate."[76]

Islamic rivalry and hatred to Western civilization, especially the American one, as elaborated in Huntington's thesis forms the basis of modern American Orientalism. American Orientalists Daniel Pipes and Khalid Durán's joint essay *Muslims in the West: Can Conflict Be Averted*? states that many signs of this clash become visible and the West becomes threatened from inside: "The potential for conflict between Muslims resident in Europe and North America with the

indigenous Christian and Jewish populations is great and multifaceted."[77] Muslim immigrants in America come to be perceived as a threat to the stability of the society and its security and thus they are not welcome. In this essay, Pipes and Durán recommend the American administration to apply strict mechanism through which Muslims and their threat are eliminated.

Since 1990s, Said's writing shifted its focus from the European to the American Orientalism. His essay written in 1996 *The Devil Theory Of Islam* provides a review of American Orientalist writings by Daniel Pipes, Judith Miller, Samuel Huntington, Martin Kramer, Bernard Lewis, Steven Emerson and Barry Rubin whom he calls "plus a whole battery of Israeli academics" and whose job "is to make sure that the threat [Islam] is kept before our eyes."[78] In his review of Miller's book *God Has Ninety-Nine Names: Reporting from a Militant Middle East,* Said concludes that Miller is a writer who "trades in the Islamic threat" and whose "search for a post-Soviet foreign devil has come to rest, as it did beginning in the eighth century for European Christendom, on Islam, a religion whose physical proximity and unstilled challenge to the West seem as diabolical and violent now as they did then."[79] Therefore, Said observes that American policy in the Middle East and American Orientalist representation of the Arabs are identical and complementary that both view Israelis as more civilized and Westernized while Arabs are uncivilized brutes, savages and terrorists.

Analysis of American discourse on Islam reveals that American identity is formed in relation to the political and cultural changes that take place in the world. If American identity has been once shaped as the opposite of the Communist identity of the Soviet Union; now that the Cold War is becoming a memory, American identity has begun searching for new enemies for the same purpose. The

process of building this imperial identity, thus, takes different shapes of confrontations with the supposed enemies who were Communism during the cold war and Islam today. Hence, a huge number of distorted images by imperial writers are produced on the target whose aim is to convince the public of and facilitate the military action against the terrorists of the Middle East. In *Culture and Imperialism*, Said refers to how the media of the empire produces distorted images of the natives in order to make the military action acceptable among the public: "The media go abroad so to speak, they are effective in representing strange and threatening foreign cultures for the home audience…creating an appetite for hostility and violence against these cultural "Others"."[80]

The Western discourse about the world of Islam in the late Middle Ages was, strictly speaking, an imperialist project as did the discourse of modern European colonization of the Orient. The European military attempts at dominating the Arab Muslim region that took place during 1095-1295 AD known as *Crusades* were not primarily religious, but rather political, racial, military, and economic, facilitated by the distorted images of Arabs created by early European Orientalists. Therefore, since the main goal of the Crusades "was primarily European, not missionary; not to extend religion abroad, or even defend it from invasion,"[81] the West shows a very early political and economic hegemony over the East while religion is used as a cover for their military intervention. It is also true that the post 9/11 American discourses and military campaigns on some parts of the Arab world have resemblance to the European imperialism and its imperial discourse. The same religious guise is used in 2003 to legitimize the American occupation of Iraq as demonstrated in a speech of former President of the United States George Bush Jr. who states:

> I'm driven with a mission from God. God would tell me, "George, go and fight those terrorists in Afghanistan." And I did, and then God would tell me, "George, go and end the tyranny in Iraq." And I did. And now, again, I feel God's words coming to me, "Go get the Palestinians their state and get the Israelis their security, and get peace in the Middle East." And by God I'm gonna do it.[82]

Thus, it is undeniable that religion plays an important role in the lives of the American public especially when it comes to issues related to their relationship with the Arabs. Said observes that American society is growing more religious and ideological compared to other Western countries. In a comparison drawn between the Europeans and the Americans, Said opines that religion and ideology play a crucial role in the lives of Americans compared to the Europeans who are viewed as decadent Christians. A possible conclusion, according to Said's study, is that there is no difference between American fanatics who carry out God's will in Iraq and other Muslim fanatics who have carried the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

It is also undeniable that American economic expansionism in the Middle East region is primarily carried out by ideological and religious drives. Iraq, for example, which has the second largest oil reserve in the world, becomes a victim of this natural wealth that attracts the scorpion to its gate while toppling Saddam's tyranny is used as an excuse. The entire premise in the Iraqi issue is colonial that for a time America promoted Saddam, then demonized him and at the end destroyed him. Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990 is used as an excuse to have a foot on a land swaying over huge reserves of oil.

In this situation, a reader can observe the utility of the Orientalist images on Arabs and how they convince the public that military actions are needed against

the uncivilized Arabs. From this imperial perspective, the fate of native brown subjects cannot be decided by their own, rather constructing their fate is the duty of Empire. This is to be applied to all imperial powers who claim that their missions are only to bring light and prosperity to the natives. Iraq's case can be well appreciated in President Bush's address to the nation given on March17, 2003:

> Many Iraqis can hear me tonight in a translated radio broadcast…we will deliver the food and medicine you need. We will tear down the apparatus of terror and we will help you to build a new Iraq that is prosperous and free. In a free Iraq, there will be no more wars of aggression against your neighbors, no more poison factories, no more executions of dissidents, no more torture chambers and rape rooms.[83]

In his critique of Imperialism, Said relies on both Foucault's and Marxist framework in order to draw a correlation between the Western imperialist ambitions in the non-Western world and the cultural texts that support Western hegemony. Said, for example, uses Foucault's notion of "discourse" without adopting the whole thesis of structuralism which includes semiotic analysis of texts. His main intention is to expose political intention and interest of the authors: "I have found it useful here to employ Michel Foucault's notion of a discourse…to identify Orientalism."[84] Similarly, Said uses the Marxist "base and superstructure" in order to explore the strong relationship between the imperialist hegemonic domination over the non-Western natives and the cultural texts which facilitate domination.

Edward Said uses '*The Latest Phase*' in his *Orientalism* to refer to the American Orientalist style. He argues that the America's real interest in the Arab world starts only after the Second World War with the rise of Arab-Israeli conflict. Further, the same period witnesses the discovery of the huge Arab oil and gas reserves which arouses the American interests in the area. Accordingly, the most dominant images of the Arabs during that period are anti-Israel Arabs and "oil wealthy Sheikhs." For Arab critics of American policy in the Arab world, American interference in political and social affairs in Arab societies is covered by many claims such as defending Israel against Arab terrorists, defending modern Arab states against Arab aggressive Arab states, maintaining the peace process in the Middle East and promoting human rights in the Arab world. Thus, Arab terrorism, aggression and backwardness are tools used for producing distorted images.

Modern American Orientalist writing on Islam and Muslims is referred to by critics as neo-Orientalism. The term neo-Orientalism revolves around the American discourse that reduces the whole Orient to make it refer to Islam. So, neo-Orientalism does not basically differ from classical Orientalism in its themes and treatment of the Orientals: "If the language of classical Orientalism was *crusade*, the language of neo-Orientalism is one that battles the soul of Islam."[85] Unlike traditional Orientalism that constitutes systems of representation framed by the hegemonic political forces of colonialism, neo-Orientalism facilitates domination through the systems of representations. Another major difference is reduction of the whole geo-political Orient to refer to Islam. This new Orient can be found in Pipes' essay *There Are No Moderates: Dealing with Fundamentalist*

Islam, in which Muslim countries constitute the Orient where "Muslim countries host the most terrorists and the fewest democracies in the world."[86]

Neo-Orientalism is a double-edged sword used by the American empire to validate its military presence in the Arab world. In 2005 President George Bush states: "So we will fight them there…and we will stay in the fight until the fight is won…We will stay in Iraq as long as we are needed."[87] Since 9/11 terrorist attacks, the neo-Orientalist connection between Islam and terrorism has grown so rapidly that for many Westerners, Islam becomes synonymous with menace, and Muslims are fanatics who perform God's work by bombing unbelievers. This neo-Orientalist attitude towards the Arabs and Muslims does not differ from the classical Orientalist thought. Therefore, Said's *Orientalism* is still relevant in the context of the analysis of the neo-Orienalist discourse.

Thus, the image of Arab Muslims as terrorists continues in the United States to carry out American imperialist interests in the Arab region. Again, Bernard Lewis, the most well known neo-Orientalist, constructs the most frightening image of Arabs to the American public. In his book *Will Terrorists Go Nuclear,* Lewis warns the American society against the possibility of nuclear attacks by Arab terrorists if they develop nuclear weapons: "If they get their hands on a nuclear weapon, they will use it without hesitation."[88] Thus, these terrorists have to remain armless and under close examination. Across the Western world especially in the United States, Arabs and Muslims face individual and systemic negative representation, discrimination and violence especially after 9/11 attacks on New York and Washington. Though 9/11 attacks are claimed to be carried out by a small fraction of radical Muslims, the retaliation for these acts takes a form of

the collective guilt ascribed to all followers of Islam and anyone who resembled them.

1.4 Plan of the Thesis

The principal objective of the present work is to examine the ideological moorings behind the post 9/11 American fiction. The thesis makes an attempt to come to grips with the dynamics of Orientalist discourse in terms of which the West has appropriated the East. Based on Said's theoretical framework, the thesis makes an intensive analysis of a few seminal novels. Texts to be discussed in this thesis cover the post 9/11 period from 2003 onwards. Argument in these chapters will focus on how these novels represent Arabs, Muslims and Islam in the period following the 9/11 tragic attacks on New York and Washington. This study does also include an analysis of novels written by Arab-American writers who narrate their own views on the impact of the 9/11 attacks on the lives of the Arab-American community.

Identifying thematic and stylistic differences in the selected novels of this study, the thesis distinguishes between the white American novel and the Arab-American novel. Analysis of the first group of novels focuses on the representation of Islam, Arab Muslims and their ideologies. The second group of novels is a counter-narrative discourse that focuses on the impact of the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the life of the Arab-American community. In this context, the study addresses the following questions: how do the 9/11 attacks facilitate the portrayal of Arab Muslims in the contemporary American novel? Do these contemporary novels attempt to break free from the classical stereotypes about Arabs and to what extent have they been different? And how do Arab-American writers define themselves in their counter-narratives?

The study will revolve around the Orientalist/Oriental relationship and deal with the binary division between "us" and "them". This study will be in the context of the Orientalist as superior and the Oriental and his/her religion as inferior. In the analysis of this relationship, the study will focus on how the Orientals act and how the Orientalists react. This will be the central premise of the thesis.

Moreover, a focal point in this thesis will be the association between Islam and terrorism, Islam and oppression of women and Islam and sexuality. The thrust of this study will be on how Muslim characters go to extremes in issues related to power, woman and sex. The study will focus on the American characters and their response to acts of terror. The study will also spotlight the Muslim female characters who are not silent spectators to the male oppression. The suffering of Arab-American community in post 9/11 America will be examined.

What has been provided till now is an outline of the historical background of the Arab-American changing relationship and a review of the American Orientalist writings. The introductory chapter presents a bird's eye view of the historical background of the Arab-American changing relationships and examines how representations in literature change accordingly. The first part of this chapter elucidates the American response to the attacks and explores the impact of 9/11 attacks on American fiction. It also provides a brief sketch of the history of the American Orientalist writings. This is followed by a review of previous studies by writers on Orientalist writings. The chapter concludes with a theoretical frame of the thesis in which Postcolonial theory is elaborately explained. The study in this chapter has by and large made an analysis of Said's seminal works which are related to the Western monolithic representation of the East.

The second chapter of the thesis will study four major American novels written in the aftermath of 9/11 terrorist attacks. These novels are Tom Clancy's *The Teeth of the Tiger* (2003), Richard A. Clarke's *The Scorpion's Gate* (2005), John Updike's *Terrorist* (2006) and John Elray's *Khalifah* (2002). These novels were *New York Times* and *Amazon* bestsellers and the novelists have been prominent canonical figures in American literature. The study in this chapter will focus on representation of Islam, Arab Muslims and their ideology. Based on analysis of the characters of the novels, this chapter will provide an evaluation of how Arab characters are projected in relation to other non-Arab characters like the Chinese and the Hispanic characters.

The third chapter will make a study of how Arab Muslim women are represented in Sherry Jones' *The Jewel of Medina* (2008), Zoe Ferraris' *Finding Nouf* (2009) and Homa Pourasgari's *The Dawn of Saudi* (2009). These three novels have been bestsellers for at least three months in *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Los Angeles Times* and *Amazon*. The focal concern in this chapter will be on the role of religion in women's life and how women react. The study in this chapter aims at evaluating how post 9/11 novels introduce Muslim woman and her position in the society to the reader. Reading in *The Jewel of Medina* will focus on the projection of Prophet Muhammad's wives and expose the fragile position of woman in the early Islamic society. The study of *The Dawn of Saudi* and *Finding Nouf* will focus on the situation of Muslim women in modern Saudi society and compare the suffering of these women with the suffering of Prophet Muhammad's wives.

The analysis in the fourth chapter will focus on novels written by Arab-American writers. In this chapter, the novels completely break away from the themes of the previous novels. The selected novels for this chapter, Diana Abu-

Jaber's *Crescent* (2004) and Laila Halaby's *Once in a Promised Land* (2007) are counter-narrative texts written by Arab-American writers. These novels offer an exploration of the self and the suffering of Arab-American community. In this chapter, the study will reveal how the Arab-American community becomes exposed to hatred, discrimination and physical assaults after the 9/11 attacks. An exploration of the suffering of Arab-American community will be analysed.

The final chapter apart from bringing all the loose threads together will arrive at certain findings based on the study of post 9/11 American novel. The final chapter also makes an attempt to situate the post 9/11 fiction in the larger framework of the neo-liberal agenda of the West in a globalised world. Since neo-liberalism has become the dominant policy of the United States and literature has an intimate and necessary relationship with politics, it is argued that post 9/11 fiction written by white American writers plays an important ideological role in reinforcing and recirculating the stereotypical representation of the Middle East, Islam and the Muslims as a whole. In this chapter, the American Orientalism will get its shape and be compared with classical Orientalism.

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Chapter II

Projection of Arab Terrorism and Nationalism in the White American Novel

The West is the spectator, the judge and the jury, of every facet of Oriental behaviour.

---Edward Said

2.1 Islamic Terrorism and Nationalism

Today's most talked about and represented subject inside the United States is "terrorism," described as the greatest threat to the peace-loving world and humanity. In post 9/11 United States, literary writers are busy with vigorous efforts to examine and evaluate both Arabs and Islam in the light of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. In the analysis of American literary discourse on Arabs, Islam cannot be taken in isolation from the political environment that is shaped after the attacks because the current war on terrorism is fought on military, political, social, economic and literary fronts. Therefore, the terrorist attacks of 9/11 remain the most significant event affecting the relationship between the United States and the Islamic world. Though terrorism is a threat to all societies as well as faiths, the proactive campaign to combat this phenomenon by the United States of America in particular and the West in general has created some misunderstandings between the faiths and given an opportunity to some to widen the gulf of misunderstanding and distrust between civilizations.

This chapter examines representations of Islam, Arab Muslims and Arab nationalism and looks at competing uses of concepts of Islamic terrorism, Arab terrorism, anti-Americanism and Jihad in post 9/11 American fiction. These are among the major concepts that the American public happens to hear and read about on an almost daily basis after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. What makes the American

public's encounter with jihad even more interesting is the fact that the relationship between Islam and the United States is no longer one between two distinct parties, but rather a complex relationship between two conflicting identities. The study in this chapter evaluates the connection between terrorism and Arab Muslims in selected novels written by John Updike, Tom Clancy, John Elray and Richard A. Clarke.

In the United States, the terms like "Islamo-fascism," "Islamo-fascists," "Islamic fascism" and "Islamic fascists" are used for the first time by President George W. Bush in 2005 to describe Islam and Muslims in general. Historically, terrorism has not been associated with any particular religion or culture. Hence, associating terrorism with a particular religion or culture may not be a fair sort of judgment. According to various sources, terrorism is a sin in Islam as it is in all the religions of the world. In the sixth century, Prophet Muhammad orders his followers in times of adversity to behave with the maximum degree of patience and tolerance with the Arab Pagans and Jews who mistreated the Muslims. The Prophet warns his fellow Muslims to avoid extremism that has been the cause of the evanescence of earlier communities. Thus, terrorism is not religious and the terrorists are common enemies of humanity and need to be trapped and fought because terrorists, who usually constitute a small fraction of a certain nation or ethnic group, never think of the basic tenets of their religion and this can be applied to Arab Muslim terrorists too.

Published in 2006, Updike's *Terrorist* is a more frontal response to 9/11. *Terrorist* is about an Arab American teenager, Ahmad Ashmawy Mulloy, and his high Jewish school counselor, Jack Levy. The novel explores the world view and motivations of Islamic fundamentalism. The novel begins with a monologue by

Ahmad about the condition of faith in America. Ahmad views America as a decadent society and the Americans as a morally impure nation. He quits his classes and joins the Mosque where he gets very close to the Yemeni Imam of New Jersey mosque, Shaikh Rashid, who is linked with a Jihadi organization. Jack Levy, who thinks that Ahmad has a great academic future and that he should go to University, is puzzled by Ahmad's desire to drive trucks. Though Levy's view of America is that it is materialistic and greedy but his criticism of the country is different from Ahmad's condemnation which is fired by Jihadi enthusiasm. Ahmad drives the truck as he wants to but soon he is sucked into a Jihadi plot. Levy gets to know this and hops on to the truck which is loaded with explosives meant to blow up a subway in New Jersey. Levy manages to take Ahmad out of his mad adventure. The novel is in the third person narrative mode and the shifting narrative voice allows the reader to get a glimpse of the reflections and psychological anxieties of Ahmad, the Islamic fundamentalist on the one hand and the American Jews on the other.

This antagonism between Islam and Judeo-Christian traditions reaches its peak after the 9/11 events. Since that terrible day, on many occasions George W. Bush states that he is inspired by God to attack Iraq and Afghanistan: "I was praying for strength to do the Lord's will…in my case I pray that I be as good a messenger of His will as possible. And then, of course, I pray for personal strength."[1] Updike brings the Judeo-Christian coalition and Islam into clash and thus he positions himself very close to the notions of Orientalists of Huntington's and Bernard Lewis' on Islam as an "ancient rival against our Judeo-Christian" and "the West versus the rest" which are an integral part of the clash of civilizations thesis.

When *Terrorist* begins, Ahmad, the protagonist, converts himself to Islam and his anti-Americanism emerges eventually. Ahmad, who is exposed to Islam at the age of eleven, is inspired by the Quran and the teachings of the mosque's Imam to explode Lincoln Tunnel in order to cause a considerable number of deaths among the "enemies." Ahmad considers this work to be holy and in Allah's Cause because the Americans are unbelievers. At the mosque, which becomes a center for terrorist planning, Ahmad learns that "all unbelievers are our enemies. The Prophet said that eventually all unbelievers must be destroyed."[2] Ahmad, as a new student of Islam, still has doubts whether this work of killing the innocents will be rewarded by God. He asks himself: "Shouldn't God's purpose, as enunciated by the Prophet, be to *convert* the infidels? In any case, shouldn't He show them mercy, not gloat over their pain?"[3] But Ahmad is more obsessed with paradise than any rational thought. His irresolution is solved by the Imam's assurance: "With this glorious act, you will become my superior. You will leap ahead of me on the golden rolls kept in Heaven."[4] Ahmad's regular talk with his religious guide does not produce a very determined terrorist. Though he receives many assurances regarding the reward of Paradise, Ahmad still has doubts: "What evidence beyond the Prophet's blazing and divinely inspired words proves that *diere* is a next? Where would it be hidden? Who would forever stoke Hell's boilers? What infinite source of energy would maintain opulent Eden?...What of die second law of thermodynamics?"[5]

The mosque's Imam positions himself as a defender of God against the unbelieving Americans whom he perceives as "cockroaches that slither out from the baseboard and from beneath the sink-do you pity them? The flies that buzz around the food on the table, walking on it with the dirty feet that have just danced on feces and carrion—do you pity them?"[6] He convinces Ahmad that killing of such

cockroaches and flies is not the same as killing human beings: "The deaths of insects and worms, their bodies so quickly absorbed by *eardi* and weeds and road tar."[7]

In order to convince Ahmad to carry out a terrorist attack on Lincoln Tunnel, Sheikh Rashid introduces America as a materialistic civilization and a threat to Islam and Muslims. Accordingly, Ahmad grows with the fear of the devilish American attitude toward Islam: "America wants to take away my God."[8] On many occasions in the novel, Ahmad expresses detestation of American life: "College track exposed me to corrupting influences-bad philosophy and bad literature. Western culture is Godless…And because it has no God, it is obsessed with sex and luxury goods."[9] Rather, Ahmad wants to be God's servant even at the cost of American citizens' lives. Before, carrying out his attack he reads from the Quran: "Are We wearied out with the first creation? Yet are they in doubt with regard to a new creation? We created man: and We know what his soul whispereth to him, and We are closer to him than his neck-vein", a verse that "has always borne a special, personal meaning for Ahmad."[10]

Spirituality is a major concern that urges Ahmad to confront the American materialism and secularism. Ahmad leaves the American college and turns to the mosque because "[m]ore education, he feared, might weaken his faith. Doubts he had held off in high school might become irresistible in college. The Straight Path was taking him in another, purer direction."[11] He learns that Prophet Muhammad was a materialist but with certain limits: "The Prophet himself was a merchant. Man never wearies of praying for good things, says the forty-first sura."[12] Unlike the Islamic civilization, Ahmad describes America as materially rich but spiritually poor since the "human spirit asks for self-denial. It longs to say 'No' to the physical

world."[13] In an interview with Louis Witt, Updike describes Ahmad as "a boy who is trying to be good and trying to make sense of his life in an American environment, which doesn't make much sense to him. He sees the rather hedonistic, materialistic, pleasure-now side of America, which strikes him as worthy of condemnation, and is certainly evil in his mind."[14] Ahmad's language gives hints as if he has learnt at the hand of a professional Al-Qaeda terrorist: "I of course do not hate all Americans. But die American way is the way of infidels."[15] He narrates: "It makes no difference which President is in. They all want Americans to be selfish and materialistic, to play their part in consumerism."[16]

The protagonist, Ahmad, is a half American and half Arab, whose father, Omar Ashmawy, abandons the family and leaves for Egypt when Ahmad is three years. Updike introduces Ahmad's life before joining the mosque at the age of eleven as a normal American life free from all prejudices and hatred. This loose life provides the Imam with the opportunity to mislead Ahmad easily: "The lack of fathers, the failure of paternity to keep men loyal to their homes, is one of the marks of this decadent and rootless society."[17] Evaluating the American life in the light of the Islamic standard becomes a priority in Ahmad's thought after joining the mosque. He begins to think of Christian American life in the light of Islam and finds that the secular Americans appear to him as devils who seek to take away his God.

Ahmad develops a big concern for Americans who do not know what he believes to be the right path of God: "And who shall teach thee what the Crushing Fire is? It is God's kindled fire, Which shall mount above the hearts of the damned; …It shall verily rise over them like a vault, On outstretched columns."[18] His language reflects the identity dilemma of an Arab teenager brought up in a Western

environment, neglected by his parents and exposed to radical groups at a very early age. These factors make it difficult for Ahmad to identify himself with American cultural and political contexts; rather, it becomes easy for him to imagine himself as being from somewhere else in the Middle East as a critical or oppositional stance.

Islam, as represented through Ahmad's character, is an intolerant and segregationist religion. When Ahmad becomes a devoted Muslim, he rejects the American way of life including dress, sexuality and material bodies. For Ahmad, faith in the transcendence of Allah leads him to disparage the immanent world, a world he sees as ruled by unrestrained sexuality and empty materialism. In his point of view, the words of the Quran invade his body and true spirit entails the destruction of the flesh and the denial of sexual desire. Even though he finds the exposure of women's bodies generally to be sinful, he enjoys the exposure of female's parts: "Their bare bellies, adorned with shining navel studs and low-down purple tattoos, ask, *What else is there to see*?"[19] Ahmad, as a devoted Muslim, cannot discipline himself according to what he believes. At school, he fantasizes about his classmates girls' bodies while simultaneously imagining their punishment in hell, a means of expressing his sexuality and desire. He envisions the "smooth body" of Joryleen, an African-American girl with whom he timidly flirts as "darker than caramel but paler than chocolate, roasting in that vault of flames and being scorched into blisters."[20] It becomes clear that Ahmad's devotion to Islam is in large part a means of negotiating the difficulties of adolescence by addressing issues like sexuality and other complexities in different cultures. However, religion is not simply a means of repressing one's own sexuality, as is clear when he responds to Joryleen's assertion:

> The way I feel it, the spirit is what comes out of the body, like flowers come out of the earth. Hating your body is like hating yourself, the bones and blood and skin and shit that make you…He thinks of sinking himself into her body and knows from its richness and ease that this is a devil's thought. "Not *hate* your body," he corrects her, "but not be a slave to it either. You have a good heart, Joryleen, but you're heading straight for Hell, the lazy way you think.[21]

Islam in *Terrorist* produces a totally opposite code of life from the American one. Ahmad's Islam is a religious code that clashes with the American economic and social life. Ahmad feels that "all America wants of its citizens, your President has said, is for us to buy-to spend money we cannot afford and thus propel the economy forward for himself and other rich men."[22] And thus Ahmad comes to the conclusion that Islam is superior to the Christian American code because the mosque and its teachers offer the Muslims what the Christian America takes. Similarly, Ahmad disagrees with the American sexual mores and introduces his view on them, a view that reflects a strong inclination to terrorism and a masculinity crisis: "He arouses curiosity in her. She wants to get close to smell him better, even though she already has a boyfriend…Ahmad has been warned by Shaikh Rashid, and he can see for himself that the high school and the world beyond it are full of nuzzling- blind animals."[23]

Quran and the teachings of Prophet Muhammad have a strong presence in the novel which provides a better understanding of Arab characters. The mention of Prophet Muhammad in a terrorist context is a reductive one as the novel draws similarities between the spiritual journey of Prophet Muhammad to Heaven and the

terrorist journey of a misled young, Ahmad, whose main purpose is to murder a huge number of civilians. A common feature between the two is that in both Journeys God is "closer than the vein in his neck" to both Prophet Muhammad and Ahmad who are surely in "the Straight Path."[24] Before he sets out, Ahmad wonders whether he will be flying to heaven after killing Americans. He arrives at the conclusion that his flight will be as holy as the Prophet's:

> So where did that body fly to? Perhaps it was snatched up by God and taken straight to Heaven…according to the sacred tradition of the Hadith such things happen: the Messenger, riding the winged white horse Buraq, was guided through the seven heavens by the angel Gabriel to a certain place, where he prayed with Jesus, Moses, and Abraham before returning to Earth, to become the last of the prophets, the ultimate one.[25]

Updike shows an attitude towards Islam by establishing Christianity as a basis for judgment and as a ground against which he balances what he describes. Following the footsteps of earlier Orientalists, Updike refers to Islam with the Orientalist term "Mohammedanism". Updike's use of the term "Mohammedanism" indicates two things: firstly, this term is a misnomer because it suggests that Muslims worship Muhammad rather than God. When Ahmad's mother tells him: "I don't know how much credit to give your Mohammedanism" he replies, "We don't call it Mohammedanism, Mother. That sounds as if we worshipped Mohammad. He never claimed to be God; he was just God's prophet."[26] Secondly, it is an intentional misrepresentation resulting from having in mind Christianity, the religion of Christ, as the basis for representing any other religion in the world. Besides, the name Mohammedanism is a vulgar use, deriving from the Prophet's

name Muhammad and Muslims do not speak of Islam as Mahometanism or Mohammedanism because Muhammad is regarded as the Prophet of God and the principal legislator in the Islamic law. He is not perceived by the Muslims as the inventor of religion. Thus, the religion of Islam takes its name from its basic requirement, namely submission to God, rather than from the name of its prophet.

Portraying Islam as a religion of violence and terrorism is an important issue in *Terrorist*. It appears to the reader that the problem of Ahmad is his belief in Islamic religion that leads him to hate the whole of American life. Because of this belief, Ahmad thinks of people of other faiths as weak Christians and nonobservant Jews. Christians and Jews, in Ahmad's belief, lack the true faith because they do not follow the "Straight Path" and therefore, they are unclean people. Though, Updike highlights the role played by the radical Yemeni Imam, Sheikh Rashid, in brainwashing Ahmad's mind, the major focus in the novel is given to certain quotations from the Quran. In his portraying of Ahmad's shift to radicalism, Updike puts the blame on the Quran as he quotes it: "Mohammed is Allah's apostle. Those who follow him are ruthless to the unbelievers but merciful to one another."[27] This Orientalist viewpoint of Islam and the Islamic view on it are examined by Said in *Covering Islam*: "To Westerners and Americas, "Islam" represents a resurgent atavism, which suggests not only the threat of a return to the Middle ages but the destruction of what is regularly referred to as the democratic order."[28]

Updike creates characters from different ethnic and religious affiliations in order to show how religions and believers differ from each other. In addition to Muslim characters, there are Jewish characters like Jack Levy whose religion "meant nothing to him", Beth, Levy's wife, who is a Lutheran, a hearty Christian denomination; her sister Hermione, Tylenol and Joryleen are African Americans.

Terry, Ahmad's mother, who is of Irish and Catholic descent, is not a devout Christian. She tells Levy: "If Ahmad believes in God so much, let God take care of him."[29] These Jewish and Christian characters represent the ethics of American multi-cultural society. These characters are fairly presented to the reader. For example, Levy does not have a problem in marrying a Lutheran woman, Beth. Religion is not a barrier in their life. In this marriage, no one converts. No one discusses theology. No one insults one's own gods, or anyone else's. Interfaith marriages are not the key to world unification under the banner of Judeo-Christian; neither do they have to follow the cataclysmic struggle between good and evil.

Geography is assumed to have relevance to the representation of characters. Omar's marriage to the Christian Teresa is ended by Omar simply because she is a "trashy and immoral" Arab. Unlike Levy, Omar Ashmawy is an opportunist Arab Muslim figure who marries her during his studies in America and suddenly abandons his wife and son without having them informed. Though Omar is not a dedicated Muslim and never went to a mosque, he is doomed to be inferior because of his Arab Muslim identity. Later, his wife observes the impossibility of a successful marriage to an "exotic" man: "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."[30]

Good versus evil is present between the two opposite forces of Judeo-Christianity and Islam and represented by the Jewish teacher Jack Levy and the Muslim Sheik Rashid. Each of these forces tries to manipulate Ahmad in its own direction. Throughout the novel, Sheikh Rashid tries to distance Ahmad from all the people he knows and confine him to only one purpose "istishhdd" or suicidal attack. He introduces a verse from the Quran to convince him: "In your wives and children

you have an enemy. Beware of them. But if you, uh, forgive and pardon and are lenient, God is forgiving and merciful."[31] The Imam advises Ahmad that these people "distract you from *jihdd,* from the struggle to become holy and closer to God." "Perfect! What a beautiful tutee you are, Ahmad!"[32] The reader can easily realize who is good and who is evil. Contrary to the Imam, Jack is working hard for a good future for Ahmad while Shaikh Rashid is working to destroy that future by making Ahmad carry explosives. Levy represents the peace-loving world. He convinces Ahmad to quit the mosque classes and reveals his own personal history of his refusal to kill civilians in Vietnam: "I was in the Army, you know, though they never sent me to Vietnam. That bothered me. I didn't want to go, but I wanted to prove myself. You can understand that."[33]

In *Terrorist*, good always prevails over evil and accordingly the Occident is always superior. Levy's efforts succeed in alienating Ahmad from the mosque and its Imam. Levy has been knocking himself to get this boy out of the grip of his mosque that leads him to abandon his future. At the end, the good force overcomes the evil ones. On the explosive truck that Ahmad drives, Levy, but not Sheikh Rashid, insists on dying with Ahmad. Levy manages to catch Ahmad on the way to Lincoln Tunnel and jumps over the truck. Further, he assures Ahmad that he will use his influence to help him if he aborts the bloody plan and surrenders to the police: "Let's get this truck back to Jersey. They'll be happy to see it. And happy to see you, I regret to say. But you committed no crime, I'll be the first to point out…they'll probably lift your license, but that's O.K. delivering furniture wasn't your future anyway."[34] So Levy's efforts are more fruitful at the end that he not only saves Ahmad but also the city of New Jersey from a horrible attack. Here, the

novel helps the reader appreciate the superiority and prevalence of the Western Jack over the Eastern Arab Muslim fundamentalist.

In his portrayal of good and bad Arabs, Updike does not offer a balanced perspective. Almost all Updike's Muslim characters are evil ones. Bad Arabs are seen as terrorists and good Arabs as escapists. Charlie, a good Arab, who has been raised in pure America and looks at America as an "honest and friendly country", is perceived by Levy as "a loose cannon" though he is the only one who reports to the CIA about Ahmad's terrorist plan. Levy accuses him of involvement in the plan. Therefore, an Arab can never be as good and friendly as the American.

The post 9/11 American literary tradition accepts myths about the Muslims and their religion, in the wide range of works, that they are intolerant towards other faiths. In *Terrorist*, Muslims' intolerance towards other people inside America is defined in religious terms. This intolerance is demonstrated through Ahmad's attitude toward Joryleen, a Christian girl. Ahmad, who sometimes is invited to Church parties by his Christian classmate Joryleen, wonders how he is, as a Muslim, allowed to enter the church. He is shocked to find how the Christians are more tolerant than the Muslims. Joryleen: ""I am not of your faith," he reminds her solemnly. Her response is airy, careless. "Oh, I don't take that all that seriously.""[35] Later, when Joryleen wants to visit the mosque with Ahmad, he informs her that the mosque is a sacred place for Muslims and Christians are not allowed to get in because they are unclean people.

In *Terrorist*, the Muslims' tendency to violence is a part of their belief that positions its followers as opposite to the Christians and other believers. Ahmad differentiates himself from Joryleen and other Christians: "I still hold to the Straight Path…Islam is still my comfort and guide."[36] He contrasts Islam from the Christian

"devils" and refers to how the Muslims contributed to science. This radicalism of Arab Muslim characters in *Terrorist* is generalized on all Arabs and Muslims. In the interview with Jeffrey Goldberg, Updike states: "Certainly the standard, as I understand it, critique from our Islamic critics are that we are godless, but in addition to that, racist and sex-obsessed…we are against God, we are not on the right side."[37] He goes on to describe Ahmad as a member of a community that believes in fighting on God's side against the West. This radicalism in *Terrorist* is one of the terrorist forces shared by all Muslims: "True believers believe in jihad…they believe in action. They believe that something can be done."[38]

Representation of Arab Muslims in *Terrorist* does not provide an explanation of how and from where people like Ahmad are coming. Updike, rather, seems to be writing from the victims' point of view providing a sense that if this description represents a terrorist, it also happens to represent all the Muslims including those who reject terrorism. Further, Updike does not make a single quotation from a Muslim source; rather he goes on quoting several verses from the Quran, a distorted version translated by nineteenth century European Orientalists to build his narrative on terrorism. This copy of the Quran is full of omission, distortion and mistranslation introduced by European Orientalists to subvert the message and meaning of the Quran. In an interview with Louise Witt after publishing his *Terrorist*, Updike describes Islam as a "static religion" and contrasts it with Christianity and Judaism: "It's fairly absolutist, as you know, and you're either in or not."[39] Arab Muslims in *Terrorist* are anti-American while all other characters from the Judeo-Christian tradition represent the peace-loving world. Similarly, Islam is portrayed as an intolerant religion that fosters violence and terror.

Tom Clancy's *The Teeth of the Tiger* was published in 2003. The novel is a counterterrorism discourse. It revolves around the incident of murdering an Israeli Mossad agent working at his station in Rome by a Saudi Muslim character, Mohammed Hassan al-Din. While the Mossad agent is waiting for a pickup of information from Hassan al-Din, who has ties to the PFLP militant organization, however, the agent is deceived and killed in a restaurant bathroom by his Saudi friend. Hassan al-Din is a central terrorist who leads a terrorist organization which is plotting attacks against American targets. With the help of the Columbian drug cartel and its contacts in Latin America, sixteen Arab terrorists are smuggled over the Mexican border and into the US. They carry out simultaneous massacres of civilians in four American shopping malls around the country, inflicting fear on the population, and they all die in the end as armed forces arrive at the scenes.

The first half of the book introduces a detailed role of an unofficial organization called Hendley Associates established by a former Senator with the support of a former President Jack Ryan. The organization works with a cover of a trading and arbitrage business. In reality, the organization is a privately-financed intelligence service which gathers information on terrorists in the world. "The Campus", as it is called, recruits three young men to help it fight against Muslims terrorists. At first the team is not convinced of the morality of the secret counterterrorist organization. After the four terrorist attacks on the shopping malls, the team has no more problems to kill terrorists and become eager to partake in their first missions. The rest of the novel follows the movements of individual members of the terrorist organization across Europe with the team eliminating them one by one. The novel ends when Jack Junior, a member of the team, is killing Hassan al-Din, the murderer of the Israeli agent.

Clancy's counterterrorism discourse tends to spotlight not only the irrationality but also the efficacy of terrorism, focusing on issues related to individual, group, the role of religious motives and religious indoctrination. In *The Teeth of the Tiger,* one reads of dreadful statistics on innocent victims who get killed in God's name by Arab fanatics who hope to "meet Allah and enter Paradise at the time written by God's Own Hand in God's Own Book."[40] Critical analysis of counterterrorism discourse in post 9/11 American novel does also involve the conflicts on Arab oil, post-Holocaust guilt or the establishment of Israel in the Middle East on Palestinian soil that displaces Arabs and Muslims and creates anger and loathing among the Arabs at America. Yet, the 9/11 remains the main gate of knowledge for Americans about the Arabs because American consumers want literature that gives them information on what has just happened as Clancy's novel provides.

Narration in *The Teeth* follows Arabs' hatred for both America and Israel. In their hatred and enmity toward the Jews, Arabs resemble the Neo-Nazis who are trying to finish the job the Germans had started. The danger posed by Arabs is not limited to Israel; rather America is a target too because of the American unlimited support for Israel against the Arabs. To understand Clancy's structural forces that play an important role in representing Arab Muslims, it is helpful to recall Lewis' notion of the Clash of Civilizations as a background for illustrating the Islamic-Judeo-Christian relationship. Bernard Lewis, as the first writer to use the term Clash of Civilizations, observes that Islam is an old enemy for both Christianity and Judaism. This enmity, according to Lewis, should be met with a unified reaction against this rival. In *The Teeth,* Arabs are enraged at Judeo-Christian tradition and

wish to destroy this Western coalition. Fa'ad has the same feelings toward the Judeo-Christian alliance:

> America was his primary target because its power, whether held to its own use or parceled out for others to use in America's own imperial interests. America threatened everything he held dear. America was an infidel country, patron and protector of the Jews. America had invaded his own country and stationed troops and weapons there.[41]

Arabs believe in the holiness of their act of terror that targets women and children in the American malls where "blood on the floor could have been rain in a thunderstorm."[42] In their attack on civilians, Arab terrorists do not differentiate between combatants and noncombatants because they perceive all Americans as infidels and therefore, all of them are targets. Arab terrorists are irrational and irresponsible humans who believe in the holiness of terrorizing the non-Muslims: "To them it wasn't a crime at all…it was the illusion that they were doing God's work."[43] A few hours before the attacks on the four shopping malls "they all unrolled their prayer rugs and, as one man, said their morning Salat for what they all expected to be the last time. It took a few minutes and then they all washed, to purify themselves for the task."[44] By using religious motives to attack America, Arab Muslims display a ferocity which gives them extra energy that amazes the Americans. In the shopping mall shooting, Mustafa is shot five times in the chest without him feeling it: "Mustafa felt his legs weaken. The blow in the face did hurt, even though the five bullets had not. He tried to turn again, but his left leg would bear no weight…He tried to sit up, even to roll, but as his legs had failed him."[45]

The result of the attack on the malls is not satisfactory for the Arab terrorist leaders in Europe because they hope to kill thousands. Even though the nature of the attack is so gruesome that it has resulted in more than eighty three dead and hundreds of injured including women and children. Muhammad feels "the mission had not gone all that well" because "he hoped for hundreds of dead Americans, instead of several dozens."[46]

In the portrayal of Arab characters and Islam, the novel shows a strong correlation between Islam and terrorism: "Religion is the centre of their culture. When a guy converts and lives by Islamic rules, it validates their world."[47] In their fight against unbelievers, Arab Muslim fanatics "hoped to meet Allah soon, and to garner the rewards that would come for fighting in their Holy Cause."[48] The novel also makes a mention of Prophet Muhammad as a man who was involved in acts of terror and believed in virgins as reward for those who died in the Holy Cause. Furthermore, for the sake of generalization, the novel insists that all the terrorists of the world pray to Mecca, the native place of the Prophet.

The existence of Prophet Muhammad in the novel is not a passing mention; on many occasions narration highlights Prophet Muhammad's aggression and violence: "Muhammad had been the most honorable of men, and had fought a good and honorable fight against pagan idolaters…Was he, then, an honorable man? A difficult question…Did Allah desire His Faithful to be prisoners of the seventh century? Certainly not."[49] In addition to the fight for the holy cause, Arabs carry out terrorist attacks against both Christian America and Jewish Israel for two other reasons; firstly to avenge the Palestinians against the Judeo-Evangelical cooperation and secondly to give the Shi'a Muslims a lesson that the Sunni Muslims are more nationalist and closer to Allah than the Shi'a Muslims. Sunni Muslims pose more

danger to the United States than the Soviet Union did. These new fanatics have "willingness to trade their own lives for those of their perceived enemies."[50]

Mustafa's loathing of America is interpreted by the American support for Israel. He is obsessed with the American policy that exploits Arab huge reserves of oil and gas and in return it gives its strategic weapons to Israel: "They were such ungrateful bastards, the Americans. Islamic countries sold them oil, and what did America give in return? Weapons to the Israelis to kill Arabs with, damned little else."[51] Fa'ad, one of the leaders in the group, knows that any act against Israel will anger the Americans because "they love the Jews more than their own children. Mark my words on this. And they will lash out at us"[52] Clancy's portrayal of anti-Israeli terrorist acts and the American response to it reflects a major fact about American-Israeli relationship. As a counterterrorism fiction, *The Teeth* shows that the role of the Jewish minority inside America determines the American policy in the Middle East. And defending Israel against Arab threat is an American priority and is considered by the Americans as a work of the highest national importance.

The Teeth, further, draws a distinction between the Sunni and Shia Muslims in terms of terrorism. In this distinction, Sunni Muslims are more prone to terrorist acts against the United States and Israel than the Shia Muslims. Further, Sunni Muslims believe in the oneness of the whole world that should be brought under the umbrella of Islam even at the cost of human life. In the background of the whole terrorist network in the novel, all the members are Sunni Muslims from different Arab countries who work under a conservative Imam called the Emir who wants to bring humanity under Islam. The Emir believes in a single Sunni leader for the world, a Pope interpreting and applying views of the religious laws of Islam, ending the differences between Islamic sects and all religions of the world.

The Teeth shows an attitude towards Islam by establishing Christianity as a basis for judgment and as the ground against which it balances what the Americans confront. The American war against fanatic Arabs is based on the American characters' Christian belief too. Religion is a powerful motivator in the American fight against Arab fundamentalists. In the fight against Arabs fanatics who kill in God's name, Americans have fallen into the same trap. He describes war on terrorism as a holy Christian war against non-Christians: "We're not after people who sing too loud in church."[53] Against this background, Imam Warith Deen Mohammed, an American Muslim leader, observes that the ongoing conflict between America and terrorists should not have a religious colour because each of these faiths is complementary to each other:

> When we read the Quran and Bible with proper understanding, we can clearly see that these great religious leaders were not divided one against the other. Jesus not only supported the scripture that Moses taught, but he interpreted it and explained it so that the people could get more light on what Moses had taught them. When Prophet Muhammad of Arabia came behind Jesus, he did the same thing.[54]

Killing in God's name has become a component of the image of Arabs in the West after the 9/11 events. *The Teeth* introduces the reader to four teams containing four terrorists each but the narration follows the events created by one of the teams led by Mustafa that entered a shopping mall called 'Victoria's Secret Store' in Colorado while the other three teams spread in other malls in Provo, Utah and Iowa. All the members of this terrorist network kill in God's name. Though, they have killed large numbers of innocent women and children, they feel the result of the act is not satisfactory because it was not a busy shopping day. Mustafa, a leader of the

team, is the only terrorist who is satisfied with the result of the action because he has done his duty to his faith and to his Allah. What is worthy of note here is the way Arab Muslims are portrayed and how religion is pushed to the centre. Terrorism is given religious color and supported by quotes from the Quran without providing the original context of the verse.

Arab terrorists are beyond redemption and belong to a society that is "not a civilized one". Though most of Clancy's Arab characters get their education in Europe, they turn against the West. Terrorism is a holy mission that resembles Prophet Muhammad's Journey from Mecca to Medina. The connection between a terrorist mission and Prophet Muhammad's mission from Mecca to Medina is an Islamophobic context because the two missions carry two opposite purposes. While the Prophet leaves Mecca to Medina for his safety as the Arab Pagans threaten to kill him, Arabs' mission from Europe to the United States is a terrorist one. This mission is meant to terrorize innocents and disturb the public.

Arab Muslims have no dignity and chastity when it comes to issues related to sexuality and women. Arab characters' sexual thoughts come up when they encounter Western women. The scene when the sixteen attackers meet French females who prostitute themselves for a fee reveals the lecherous nature of Arab Muslims who are: "horny buggers and good at paying a girl."[55] They are also sexualized in the religious context. Zuhayr feels that the woman with "whorish red pants" he is killing will have sex with him in Paradise as a reward by God. While killing her, he assures her that the other life is the eternal life in which he will marry her. He tells his colleagues that "he'd had only a few women in his life, and surely he'd killed more women here today than he'd ever fucked."[56] At the end of the novel, Fa'ad in Vienna has cybersex on the internet as he locates a willing partner in

a chat-room and carries out a fantasy of being a German commandant taking out his desires on a Jewess in a concentration camp. The hidden irony in this perverse narration is that Fa'ad's partner is not the twenty three-year old female he thinks she is, but a fifty year old man, half drunk and quite lonely.

Arab Muslims in *The Teeth* are hypocrites. They indulge in prostitution, alcoholism, drugs and other acts against Islamic beliefs. For example, during Muhammad's trip to Colombia to make the deal with drug cartels he drinks beer and wine though it is contrary to his religious beliefs. He justifies his indulgence in alcohol as the only way to fit in the new environment. Even the Emir, the most religious character in the group, who believes that his enemies are "Allah's Own Enemies" drinks wine in every hotel he enters. Similarly, Uda bin Sali, the financial supporter in the network and a son of Saudi prince, spends most of his time and money with London prostitutes whom he believes to be his girlfriends, such as Rosalie Parker and Mandy. After his assassination by CIA, none of his girlfriends shows sorrow. According to Rosalie, Uda has been only a business client and a source of income as other customers.

The Teeth draws a binary opposition between the Muslims in terms of threat and divides them into "Arab Muslims" and "non-Arab Muslims". Accordingly, Arab Muslims are projected as barbaric, savage and blood-thirsty. An Arab Muslim is an irresponsible human being. His act of terror reveals that an Arab is not even a human being but an animal "holding a weapon". Mustafa is a typical example of Arab savagery. In the shopping mall he meets six women and empties his magazine into them. He kills them all and feels "the momentary satisfaction" as they fall. Unlike Arab Muslims, non-Arab Muslims are more peaceful. Brian Caruso, a US Marine Captain, is introduced in an interview with a general discussion of his recent

experiences in Afghanistan and seems to have very good knowledge about both Arab Muslims and Afghan Muslims. In the confrontations with the Arabs, he finds that Arabs are fanatics who do not fear death while Afghans are not: "The Afghans were brave enough, but they weren't madmen-or, more precisely, they chose martyrdom only on their own terms…they [Arabs] were barbarians, sure, but even barbarians were supposed to have limits…while Afghans hadn't made any overt attempts to kill women and kids."[57]

Caruso has no qualms or nightmares about the many Arabs he kills because he fights terrorists back. Killing terrorist, according to him, is a business and not personal due to the simple fact that "those people were making war on my country."[58] He does also observe that Afghans have a higher level of morals than "bastard Arabs" that "Afghans don't rob." Similarly, Turkish Muslims are not hypocrites like Arab terrorists who indulge in all kinds of taboos like prostitution, alcoholism and drugs: "They [Turks] are also Mohammadans. They will not eat the sauerbraten or drink the beer."[59]

Binarism drawn between Islam and Christianity shows an unbiased attitude towards Islam. Jack, a Christian character, tries to analyze the lifestyle of those connected to terrorism, what motivates them and the way they think. This leads him to study the religion of Islam and its practices through its religious scriptures. Jack comes to the conclusion that all men are fundamentally the same. He hears the same from his father that bad people exist everywhere in the world regardless of religion and ethnic affiliation. Most of Jack's narrations follow this pattern that there are bad people in Islam and bad people Christianity as well. Jack assures his fellow Americans that Islam is not faulty. He proves his assumption by mentioning an event where Catholic terrorists try to kill his mother when he is in her womb.

Therefore, Jack's understanding of terror is not tied to any religion because fanatics are fanatics in all religions of the world.

Jack, further, draws similarities between Islam and Christianity for the purpose of defining the mentality of terrorists. According to Jack, both religions have the same origin, the Ibrahamic tradition, and the same basic message, belief in God: "Islam is not a belief system for psychopaths, but it can be perverted to the use of such people, just like Christianity can."[60] Thus, if Islam is not at fault, it remains difficult to interpret other American characters' generalization about the Muslims.

One important thing which critical theory teaches us today is to make connections and unravel hidden issues that earlier researchers think do not exist in novel. Postcolonial criticism, in particular, which became a major force in literature studies in the 1990s, helps us move from the margins of a literary work into the center of analysis. In such theoretical readings, victims and dehumanized characters take over the role of important and serious characters. For the sake of clarity, a reader can notice how Defoe's Crusoe ceases to be a survivor; and instead, becomes a colonizer and how Friday's character looms larger, and so on. The same is true in post 9/11 American novels that Arabs are no longer traditional terrorists; rather, they become more sophisticated and are able to form international alliances with other non-Islamic powers in order to organize attacks inside America.

The Teeth introduces one of the most dangerous conspiracies in which Arab terrorists work together with the Hispanic drug Cartels in Latin America and smuggle sixteen Arab terrorists into America through the Mexican borders. The plan is sophisticated enough that it starts from Lebanon through France and Mexico using Qatari passports and Bahraini visa cards. According to the terror-drug deal, Arab terrorists in Europe will help the Hispanic Cartels export their drug cargo to

the huge European market in return. The main purpose behind this deal is to carry out simultaneous massacres of civilians in four American shopping malls around the country and inflict fear in the population.

Behind this terrorist organization is a figure called the Emir, a rich Saudi living in Riyadh. He has plans to gain a position of power and influence through a radical movement in the religion of Islam. He supports and leads the fight against what he considers Western offenders. In the negotiation with the Colombian drug Cartels, Muhammad, the Emir's envoy, assures the Cartels that Arab Muslim have conducted several operations in Europe for a long time through a highly secure network. Therefore, it is easy for this network to transport drugs to the European market if the Latinos "transport weapons and people" to the United States.

This connection seems to be drawn between two seemingly unconnected poles, extreme rightist Muslims and extreme leftist Latinos. Though, this alliance between radical Arab Muslims and Hispanic drug Cartels looks odd, yet it helps develop a conspiracy theory through Muslim and Latino Machiavellian characters. Muhammad feels that Hispanic Americans are enemies too because they are "Infidels" whose main aim is to make a great deal of money. In his negotiations with them, Muhammad maintains certain limits because he knows that these Cartels could be as dangerous as himself: "He was no fool…The Arab was not going to underestimate these men or their capabilities…Nor would he mistake them for friends."[61] This is because he believes that the Latinos deny Allah and could be very dangerous as those who "worked in His Name". Further, they are grandsons of Spain, an ancient enemy of Islam. But Muhammad does not mind being allied even with infidels in order to achieve his end. The only common thing he shares with the Latinos is that both parties loathe America.

In this situation Muhammad has to consider these old enemies as allies: "The enemy of your enemy is your friend" and his meeting with them as "a cordial business meeting." The cocaine-terror deal finds a common ground for both sides whose basic aim is: "mutual interests to cause unrest and chaos within America."[62] For Colombian Cartels, a state of disorder created by Arab terrorists will help them smuggle drugs easily into the American states because: "They [Americans] are putting ever-greater pressure on my friends" and therefore they "wish to retaliate, and to deflect their pressure in other directions" so that America "would become less interested in Colombia, and shift her focus of intelligence operations elsewhere."[63]

Unlike Arab characters, Hispanic characters turn out to gain a more humane portrayal in the novel than their fellow Arabs. Ricardo, a Mexican Cartel member who is mentioned to have a family, feels that the Arabs are "morose" people, and do not have families to go back to. Ernesto, a senior Cartel man, speaks of Mohammed as the "towel-headed thug" and wonders why Arab fanatics seek after death. Ernesto is surprised to hear about the Arab terrorist attack that resulted in the death of eighty three women and children. He feels sorry to see the blood of the innocent women and children. Pablo, a Cartel contact man, feels guilty because he is involved in facilitating those operations. He considers killing women and children a cowardly job but he understands that the attackers belong to a savage culture. He comes to a conclusion about Arabs: "That is why they are called terrorists…They kill without warning and attack people unable to defend themselves."[64]

Conspiracy theories in narrative forms in Western literature have first emerged in American literature with a primary function to maintain hegemony over the world. Conspiracy theories to solve the puzzle of 9/11 events continue till today

as both Americans and Islamist Arabs fail to disprove each other's allegations. In a recent interview with Iran's Press TV, leading American intellectual and political dissident Noam Chomsky states that the wars launched in response to the 9/11 attacks are "criminal". He adds that the US government provides no evidence that Bin Laden and other Arab Muslims are responsible for the attacks:

> The Taliban requested evidence which is of course natural…and the Bush administration refused to provide any….We later discovered one of the reasons why they did not bring evidence: they did not have any… Eight months later, the head of FBI informed the press that the FBI believed that the plot may have been hatched in Afghanistan, but was probably implemented in the United Arab Emirates and Germany… So they had no evidence."[65]

There is a history, Emerson argues, for every word. To this effect he says "as we go back in history, language becomes more picturesque."[66] Clancy and Updike are not the first to write about terrorist conspiracies woven by Arabs against the West and the United States in particular; rather they are following a formidable Orientalist tradition. If readers go back to the *Clash of Civilizations* published in 1993, for instance, they will notice that its author, Huntington, points to a very dangerous connection between two civilizations; Islamic and Confucian. Huntington assumes that the Confucian-Islamic military connection is growing and designed to promote acquisition of the weapons and weapons technologies needed to counter the military powers of the West. This growing cooperation between the two civilizations poses a threat to the West. Huntington's thesis of Clash of Civilizations can be used as a test to examine the nature of Arab terrorist

conspiracies in the post 9/11 American novel and as a link to the American Orientalist discourse.

2.2 Representation of Prophet Muhammad's successors

The American novel of the post 9/11 does also include an investigation of the origin of Islam and Arab Muslim identity of the seventh century A.D. John Elray's *Khalifah* describes the Muslims' aggression and intolerance towards the unbelievers of the seventh century around Arabia when Muhammad's successors take the responsibility of spreading the Islamic message to humanity. The novel describes the brutality of the Orientals towards Orientals and Islam toward other faiths. Analysis of this novel will examine whether Elray is following a tradition of misrepresentation by departing from a point where his Orientalist predecessors leave Islam or giving his own personal judgment.

At the outset, Elray makes a reference to the Arabs, the community of his interpretation: "In a desolate land of barren hills and shifting windswept sand, a cloud of dust spiraled high into the air" referring to the Orient as harsh as his land.[67] The first incident in the novel gives a brief yet deep reference to the brutality of Arabs. The incident takes place as an Arab is holding a crying baby girl and placing it into the tomb while the others push in sand to entomb the infant. This incident reveals the brutality of Arab tradition in which female infants are buried alive in order to avoid a possible shame in future.

John Elray's *Khalifah* (2002) is a historical novel about the rise of the first Khalifahs, Prophet Muhammad's successors, to power at the dawn of Islam in the seventh century, a highly strange and exotic setting to Western readers. The story is about the earliest Khalifahs who attempt to unify Arabs and try to expand their power to neighboring territories. The story describes how Islam becomes in turmoil

when the Muslims begin to fight one another for gaining personal power. The novel includes details of the violence that was common during that time period especially the fight between the two cousin clans of Mu'awiya and Prophet Muhammad. The story line is filled with intrigue and treachery as various factions of the Arab groups vie for power. Elray's focus is on the bloody wars and eventual rise of Mu'awiya who spends much of his time in the face of great dangers between rival families and tribes. Most of the main characters are depicted as unpleasant, touchy, and unsympathetic egoists, bloodthirsty, opportunistic and quick to kill or rape. The novel ends with the victory of Mu'awiya over the Prophet's grandsons who get killed at the hands of Mu'awiya's army.

Orientalism, suggests Said, is an ultimate cultural doctrine willed over the Orient because the Orient becomes inferior to the West; this doctrine forced a difference between the familiar West and the strange Orient. Further, the Orientalist makes the Orient speak, using a generality of labels like "the Arabs," "the Muslims" versus "the Westerner," "the Christians". In *Khalifah,* Elray does not distance his subjects from these binaries; rather he reduces them to the animal status: "The Bedouin live like animals" who use "the foul odor of fresh dung…to be used later as fuel" and "wash in camel piss every day" because "It kills parasites."[68] The imbalance between the Muslim East and the Christian West remains obviously a function of changing cultural and historical patterns that facilitate reproducing representations accordingly.

Khalifahs or Califates is a title given to Prophet Muhammad's successors. In *Khalifah,* Islam is, from the outset, a bloody religion that spreads by force. The novel opens when Islam is getting disintegrated soon after Muhammad's death. The Islamic empire falls apart and people who are brought to Islam by force leave it:

"Fewer than four moons had passed since the death of the Prophet and already the unifying influence he had exerted on the tribes of the Arabian Peninsula was disintegrating. Rebellion was rampant."[69] Muhammad's force that has brought people to Islam is weakened and unable to maintain the Islamic community from falling apart after the Prophet's death. The novel concludes as it opens that Islam fell into two opponent sects Sunni Muslims who follow Mu'awiya and Shia Muslims who follow Ali.

While it spreads by the sword, Islam does teach that fighting in the name of God is worthwhile since its aim is "to enforce the will of Allah". Here is the description of Prophet Muhammad's divine and extraordinary sword that has fallen from heaven:

> …a star fall from the heavens one night and heard a tremendous explosion nearby his village as it hit the earth…In his infinite wisdom, he positioned his camel over the blackened saddle-sized rock and stimulated the animal so that its urine flowed over the gift from above. The rock hissed and sputtered before bursting into several smaller pieces…One of these pieces he took and had a sword fashioned from the metal extracted from it."[70]

In *Khalifah*, Arabs are aggressive and violent people. Mu'awiya narrates bloody events that took place between clans in his tribe before the emergence of the religion of Islam: "A blood feud existed for ages between my family and that of the Prophet Muhammad…after Mecca fell to Muhammad, our families reconciled. To bind the pact, my sister was given to the Prophet as wife."[71] Though, *Khalifah*'s main focus is the aggression and barbarism of the Muslims, the novel makes references to the barbarism of Arabs before in pre-Islamic era. 'The Sword of

Allah' is a title that Muhammad gives to Khalid whose duty is to bring people to Islam by force. Khalid describes the task given to him by Muhammad: "By the right bestowed upon me by Allah, through his messenger Muhammad, who instructs me to spread the faith, a faith which you must accept, and pay tribute to, or die."[72] Therefore 'The Sword of Allah' is known for his bloody mood towards the people who reject Islam. His justice is always meant to be death by beheading.

Evidence of substituting the power of God with that of Khalid does not stop at any point throughout the novel. When the reader finds that Khalid is called the 'Sword of Allah' in the very beginning of the novel, he believes that Khalid is a human being bestowed with God's superpower along with certain divine qualities such as mercy, love and pity. Surprisingly, such assessment is a faulty one because Khalid is a person who never thinks of Islam as anything other than the sword. As the reader proceeds, the Sword of Allah is turning into a beast, or at least a wild man and the reader's attitude towards him grows unfavorable. People, like those of Museilima, who choose a faith other than Islam, are crushed by Khalid's sword. People who reject Muhammad's religion receive divine killings that Allah orders. Mu'awiya narrates Khalid's treatment of Beni Yerbu, a tribe that chooses not to believe in Islam:

> In the midst of Khalid's caravan I could see some fifty Beni Yerbu prisoners, their hands bound together in front of them. They staggered from exhaustion like a band of drunkards…Between them, sprawled on the ground, lay the motionless bodies of many Yerbu prisoners, their garments covered with blood, their exposed flesh displaying deep gashes.[73]

Islam is depicted as a religion of terror and violence in *Khalifah*. The violence against non-Muslims that accompanied the spread of Islam is encouraged by Muhammad himself. In the eighth year after the *Hijrah*, Prophet Muhammad orders Khalid to invade the Christian tribes surrounding Arabia. This Islamic attitude towards the non-Muslims is found in Amr, a commander in Khalifah Omar's army who conquered Jerusalem and destroyed the churches and built mosques instead. Therefore, by extension, all men from the East who share that "common religion" and "ethnic origin" are expected to share in violence, barbarism and terror.

Jihad or Islamic Conquest is one of the few Islamic concepts that the American public happens to hear or read about on a daily basis after the 9/11 attacks. Further, the concept of Jihad and the debates surrounding it emerge as key to exploring the representation of Islam in the aftermath of 9/11. *Khalifah*, confirms the aggressive nature of Jihad and embellishes the picture of this aggression by making the Muslims narrate their own experience of terror. Narration comes from Mu'awiya, a prominent Islamic figure who narrates the barbarism of the Muslims. This barbarism is highlighted further in the Islamic fight on the non-Muslims that is based on the principle 'submit to Islam or suffer the consequences.' Mu'awiya narrates his experience during Khalid's invasion of the Pagan tribe of Beni Yerbu: "Malik's men offered little resistance and after a mere half-day of fighting, chose instead to embrace Islam…We are all Believers now."[74] The dialogues built between the conqueror and the prisoners in the novel demonstrate the Islamic aggression.

Man's relation to God has a major focus in the novel and the name of Allah is present in every action the Muslims perform. Thus, the belief in God's mercy and

compassion may bestow these attributes to the Muslims since Islam means submission to God. In fact, Elray is correct in a certain way, because mercy in Islam is a fundamental feature, as it is in all religions. But Elray's approach in describing events is quite different, especially his representation of Islam, Prophet Muhammad and his companions. For example, while describing Khalid's punishment to those who reject Islam, Elray, however, makes sure that the reader's judgment will render Muslims irrational, barbaric and merciless: "Those charged with committing crimes against Islam were huddled together...Twenty perished by the sword. Seven of those were beheaded." Similarly, women receive the same punishment: "One was thrown off a nearby cliff, and two were drowned in the well − suspended by their ankles and lowered in until the water reached their knees."[75] Singing is also punishable in Khalid's laws. Songstresses are considered apostates and receive death penalty.

Post 9/11 monolithic representation of the Muslims is not a new phenomenon; rather it is a consequential movement of history, a movement which established this monolithic relationship between Islam and the West in the eighteenth century. In *Khalifah,* representation of Islam reduces the religious to the mundane. Omar, the second Successor of the Prophet, is a wicked man who loses all moral standards while dealing with his captives. He does not differ much from Khalid. Though Elray makes a passing mention of Omar, Omar's image is clear that he is as wicked as Khalid who occupies a good space in the novel. Omar always kills the non-Muslims in order to enforce the will of Allah. His brutality is vivid when he punishes Mutemmam, a pagan captive after an attempt of escape. Though, Mutemmam has been unconscious due to severe beatings, Omar is showing a barbaric personality as he produces his sizable penis and urinates into the captive's mouth.

Khalifah Omar is an embodiment of Islamic fanaticism and intolerance towards other faiths. Omar wishes to eradicate all religions and confine humanity to Islam. He warns the Christian Patriarch of Jerusalem after his triumph on the Pagans of Arabia: "We have just recently taken Al-Medain from the Persians…Today, the fire worshippers hold nothing...Islam has triumphed over the two most powerful empires in the world and we shall go on to take their very homelands."[76] Christianity, too, is not tolerated by Omar: "Surely you are misguided to think that my men have no right to be here. This is the place where the prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, made his ascent into heaven."[77] Further, he confiscated Christian worship places and built mosques in their places. Chances of co-existence should be subject to Omar's terms produced for the Christian inhabitants of Jerusalem:

> I have brought with me an agreement that I've drawn up myself,"…"It stipulates the terms and conditions under which we will accept your surrender, and grants to your people certain privileges and freedoms…able-bodied men must pay a tax of thirty dirhams each year as well as providing a specified amount of food and oil to sustain the Arab population which will reside here.[78]

The seventh century's confrontation between Muslims and Christians is introduced as a fight between the backward and the civilized. Though there is no clash of civilizations in the sense that Bernard Lewis and Samuel Huntington employ in their arguments, Elray represents the Islamic fight against the Christians as a fight of savages, barbaric and uncivilized people against the civilized people. Further, the Muslims' fight against the Christians differs from their attacks on Arabs Pagan because Muslims know how civilized and powerful the Christians are

and therefore Muslims attack them with more brutality: "This engagement with the Christians won't be like fighting the Beni Kelb or the Beni Kodaa…These people call themselves civilized but they are more barbarous than the worst you've ever seen."[79]

The binarism between Arab Christians and Western Christians is also highlighted in *Khalifah*. This kind of binarism insists on the inferiority of the Orient including Arab Christians. Arab Christians of Gaza are projected as less civilized and powerful than their Western Christian counterparts simply because Christians of Gaza are parts of the Orient. Mu'awiya is aware of this inferiority. He narrates that conquering Christian Gaza poses less threat to the Muslims than conquering Christian Byzantines. This is because of the fact that Western "mind does not think in the same way as the Arab mind. You must learn the differences."[80] Further, Western Christians of Byzantine "are logical and organized. They operate like a machine, like a catapult, for example. Everything works well when all the steps take place as they should."[81] The worst of all are the Arab Muslims who "lack control" and are "undisciplined". Although Christianity and Islam have many similarities, they are doomed to be on a collision course. Both Christianity and Islam start a mission to enlighten the world. According to this view, Christianity comes as a fulfillment and reformation to a previous religion, Judaism, and so does Islam. Using power to enforce the right to spread the Word of God has made both faiths meet on unfavourable grounds.

Indeed Islam spread in a relatively short period of time and the Muslims conquered nations in the cause of God. Along with this military expansion, the religion had a power of faith and enthusiasm for the Cause: "Combat is in my blood. I must be at the battlefront, not at a seat of administration."[82] And once in the

battlefield, the Muslims, though "undisciplined" but "have unity of Cause" and believe that the Cause of God is well worth fighting for. This Cause, Elray suggests, is more important than the Christian organizational control; and therefore Christendom, unlike Islam, has less faith and fewer fanatics.

Muslisms' aggression against the non-Muslims is not the only focus of Elray in *Khalifah*. The novel does also focus on aggression of the Muslims against the Muslims during Khalifahs' era. Muslims are also victims of religious aggression. Therefore, aggression among the Muslims is one of the reasons behind the disintegration of the early Islamic State after Prophet Muhammad's death. Soon after the death of Abi Bakr, the first Khalifah, some Muslims become discontent with the appointment of Omar who is not from the same lineage of the Prophet. Ali, Muhammad's cousin, feels he is ignored because he is not consulted in the decision. Othman, the fourth Khalifah, shares Ali's fear and tries to calm him down: "I too believe Omar to be the best choice…Although Omar sometimes shows not the goodness…he has learned to temper his severity…He is also the most experienced in running the affairs of the state, and a devout Believer. Be not concerned. Omar will be a good Khalifah…And besides, it's too late to bellyache now."[83]

Distrust among the Muslim family members in issues related to power is an example of evil Muslims. The struggle for power between the two cousin clans of Prophet Muhammad, Hashim, and his cousins' clan, Omia, continues for generation. As soon as Muhammad begins preaching to the people about Islam, Mu'awiya's father tries to kill Muhammad in order to maintain his position as the most powerful man in the two clans. This competition for power continues even after the death of the Prophet and reaches its peak when Omar, who belongs to Omia clan, becomes Khalifah. Othman comments on Ali's attitude: "The house of

Hashim is losing its influence, and I am certain he harbors ill feelings towards you because of your father. I am telling you this because I have been informed that he has met with Khalid, another one who has reason to be disgruntled now that Omar is Khalifah. They both see you as a threat."[84]

This ambition for power continues for centuries and results in the disintegration of the Islamic society into the Sunni sect which follows Omia Clan and the Shia sect which follows Hashim's clan. The evil of Muslims' ambition for power serves as the climax of the novel when Mu'awiya, a member of Omia clan, kills the remaining members of Prophet Muhammad grandsons Al-Hasan and Al-Hosein. By killing the Prophet's grandsons, Mu'awiya has put an end to the struggle for succession, a struggle which has caused the death of many lives.

Prophet Muhammad's companions have no dignity when it comes to issues related to sexuality and women. They are torn between their mission as Khalifahs and their worldly interests; thus Islam is characterized by bloodshed. Sexuality is seen as one of Muslims' pursuits that comes closer to power. Khalid's sexuality is accompanied by savagery and use of power. On many occasions in the novel Khalid uses his powerful position to have sex with women he conquers. Mu'awiya narrates his and Khalid's sexual interest in captive Leila whose husband is killed by Khalid: "The combination of her brazen complexion, dark elongated eyes, and raven black hair against…I sensed, by his tone of voice, that Khalid was becoming aroused…as was I. I felt the stirrings of lust beneath my robe."[85] By extension, all Muhammad's companions who share a "common religion" and "ethnic origin" are sexually loose.

Woman, who is so highly dignified and protected in Islamic law, is reduced to an animal-like status during Khalifah's rule. Instead of listening to her suffering and calls for mercy in captivity, Khalid thinks of having sex with her: "I will free

your people soon…Come to my tent tomorrow morning."[86] These people "are animals; they live only for the present, without compassion."[87] Oleiyah Majaa is another victim of Khalid's sexuality who kills herself when Khalid marries her against her desire. She is a victim of the generosity of her father who invites Khalid to his house in the presence of his daughter. She does not know that serving the guest will turn into a calamity upon her. Soon after she serves Khalid's food, Khalid threatens to kill her father if he does not allow him to marry her: "Give her to me or I will hand her over to my garrison as a plaything, after which no one will want her." "Find her and send her to me at once."[88] Oleiyah's father has no way to save his daughter from the overwhelming sexuality of Khalid. The only way to avoid Khalid's brutality and save her father's life is to sacrifice her own life. She stabs Khalid and kills herself the moment she enters Khalid's hut.

On numerous occasions, the text shows that trustworthiness is an essentialist impossibility for Arab Muslims in issues related to women. Like Khalid's betrayal of his host, Mu'awiya, who from the beginning of the novel distinguishes himself as a devoted Muslim, feels sexually attracted to Omar's wife when he enters Omar's house. He cannot hide his lust when he looks at Koreiba's "enormous breasts" and develops "an erection from looking at her". Though, Mu'awiya knows that it is a sin to covet another's wife especially that of a friend and such an important figure as Omar, he is doomed to be a hypocritical figure.

This type of assessment continues to include the sexuality of non-Muslim Arab women. Elray demonstrates that through the Arab woman, Sajah, "the false Prophetess", who lives in a society in which sexual rituals are commonplace and on many occasions Sajah pleasures herself with several men and women simultaneously. Elray, further, introduces us to a very important episode that

illustrates lechery of the Orientals in which "the false Prophet" Al-Ashtar and Sajah are having sex in front of their people:

> She dropped her garment onto the sand and laid on it with the Bedouin sheikh following on top of her. They began to copulate to the rhythmic sounds of the ceremony…Sajah began to experience orgasm after orgasm, her body writhing, her legs raised and shaking. The Beni Hanifa cheered as their leader delivered the final few thrusts and then fell limp on the prophetess.[89]

The narrator, Mu'awiya, is speaking in the discourse of the culture portrayed and therefore, it is looked at as an authentic representation. In this representation, all Muslim figures including the narrator are stereotyped. All are empty from humanitarian sense towards the Muslims and non-Muslims. Mu'awiya, who is described as a moderate Muslim, is involved in subjugating the non-Muslims. On many occasions, Mu'awiya shows an attitude that is very similar to Khalid's and Omar's. When his wife mentions that the Muslims have killed her brother, he informs her "I slew him myself" and justifies his murder in a very rude manner "he reminded me of a pig". The fact that Elray is acting with notable bias in representing the Orientals is illustrated by his overgeneralization. Arab woman, in Elray's point of view, is nothing more than an object of sex. Edward Said notes that this paradigm set up a special role for woman who is no more than a machine, referring to her sexuality.

2.3 Arab Nationalism Vs American Imperial Ambition

Nationalism is a key concept in understanding Arab-America relationship in the twenty-first century. Many Arab nationalist leaders observe that establishing independent Arab states free from the hegemonic policy of the United States should

be first priority. This basic Arab-view is well represented in a 1981 speech by the Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad: "The United States wants us to be puppets so it can manipulate us the way it wants. It wants us to be slaves so it can exploit us the way it wants. It wants to occupy our territory and exploit our masses…It wants us to be parrots repeating what is said to us."[90] This view has a heavy weight on Arab nationalist characters' thought.

9/11 terrorist attacks have inspired a voluminous White literature on Arab nationalism in the United States in which demonizing Arab nationalism resembles the racist Nazi demonizing of the Jews in the twentieth century. This focus on Arab nationalism serves two major themes; first is to produce Arab nationalism as a terrorist form of nationalism and the second is to fuel the fire of the neo-conservatives and their liberal neo-imperialist allies to get accession into the Middle East's rich region. From an American point of view, both secular Arab nationalism and Islamic nationalism are seen as ideological allies based on a broad ideological construct. In Updike's portrayal of Arab Muslims in *Terrorist,* terrorism forms the core of Arab nationalism. *Terrorist* quotes verses from the Quran that define Arab Islamic nationalism: "Mohammed is Allah's apostle. Those who follow him are ruthless to the unbelievers but merciful to one another."[91] Arab nationalism is a part of their barbarism that violently denounces the United States and struggles for the obliteration of Israel.

The mindset of Arab terrorist in Updike's *Terrorist* stands as a metaphor for all the Muslim Arabs of the Middle East; a representation that makes the nexus between terrorism and Arab nationalism even more dangerous to the United States than that between nationalism and communism. Ahmad's nationalism is the force that pushes him to avenge his fellow Palestinians by bombing America "whose

Christian-Jewish God is a decrepit idol, a mere mask concealing the despair of adieists."[92] Further, Ahmad views his own act of terror as one of nationalism for which all the Muslims of the Middle East will be overjoyed as he contemplates: "It'll do a ton of damage, minimum. It'll deliver a statement. It'll make headlines all over the world. They'll be dancing in the streets of Damascus and Karachi."[93] This generalization helps propagating the myth that Arab nationalism equals terrorism. Updike's generalization aims at demonizing Islam and Muslims as the blame is put on the entire Muslims for the deeds of a small group.

Post 9/11 American literary writing is impacted by the hegemonic policies of the US in the Middle East. In *Terrorist*, Arabs characters define themselves as opposite to American political hegemony. Ahmad, who is half Arabian and half American, is more attracted to the Arab world, tradition and culture. From an early age, when he starts frequenting the mosque, Ahmad develops very strong hatred to America that "wants to take away my God" and begins to replace his American identity with the Arabic one.

The Palestinian issue occupies a good space in Ahmad who feels enraged at the American policy that encourages Israel to occupy the Palestinian lands: "Look at the history the school teaches, pure colonialist. Look how Christianity committed genocide on the Native Americans and undermined Asia and Africa and now is coming after Islam, with everything in Washington is run by the Jews to keep themselves in Palestine."[94] There is an obvious enhancement of the love and respect for the Palestinians inside Ahmad's heart who believes in actions against Israel and America as the empire that sustains Israel and inflicts death every day on Palestinians. Ahmad's determination emanates from his nationalist thought against what he believes to be "the Great Satan" referring to America that builds its power

from Arabian oil. As far as the American-Israeli relation is concerned, Ahmad believes that the American support for Israel has been both direct and unconditional for two reasons. Firstly, the US insistence on the survival of Israel is due to the fact that everything in Washington is run by the Jews. Secondly, the American support for Israel is a pure American hegemonic policy that aims at controlling oil supply to the United States.

The mosque plays an important role in conducting Ahmad and attaching him to his Arabic background. It inspires him to believe that he belongs to the exotic environment of the Arab world. Accordingly, the first nationalist act Ahmad thinks about is to change his name: "My [American] mother attached her name to me, on my Social Security and driver's license, and her apartment is where I can be reached. But when I am out of school and independent I will become [an Arab] Ahmad Ashmawy."[95] Ahmad's nationalism rejects Americanizing his personality. Ahmad's love for his Arab heritage persuades him to reject the service in the American army that fights in Arabia against his brothers: "The Army would send me to fight my brothers."[96] Nationalism reflected through Ahmad's character resembles the Pan-Arab nationalist movement led by Jamal Abdul Nasser in the 1950s. Like Nasser, Ahmad detests the American policy that creates a Jewish state on part of his motherland of Palestine:

> Everything is war, right? Look at America abroad—war. They forced a country of Jews into Palestine, right into the throat of the Middle East, and now they've forced their way into Iraq, to make it a little U.S. and have the oil…Those people worked in finance, furthering the interests of the American empire, the empire that sustains Israel and inflicts death every day on Palestinians.[97]

Richard Clarke's *The Scorpion's Gate* (2005) is a manifestation of the reemergence of Arab nationalism in the modern time. *The Scorpion's Gate* is a geopolitical fiction written by the counterterrorism official Richard A. Clarke who has been advisor for four presidents. The novel highlights the tense relationship between Arab Muslims and the United States in the twenty-first century and shows how American interests can be tremendously threatened in the Gulf region. This time the danger that looms comes from nationalist Arab governments and not from networks of individuals. Ideological fanatics abound in *The Scorpion's Gate* but they do not pose any great threat to U.S. interests until they have a state behind them. In this geopolitical novel, Clarke takes readers five years into the future when government of Saudi Arabia and the United States are to launch another Gulf war. But this time it could be nuclear and spread to Asia and beyond.

In *The Scorpion's* a coup has toppled the sheiks of Saudi Arabia and put a determined Islamic government in its place. The coup is led by two brothers Abdullah and Ahmed, nationalist figures. The first half of the novel describes a state of disorder in the Republic of Islamyah, the former Saudi Arabia, and its role in destabilizing Bahrain through bombing Diplomat Hotel and terrifying the Westerners. The coup's leaders manage to depose the Saudi family and end the American influence in this part of Arabia. The second half of the novel describes the Chinese role in arming and training Arabs to gain control over their oil. Being a new government suffering disorder the scent of oil starts attracting the world powers. The US falls in deadly competition with China over the oil and enters a cold war. Iran is a nuclear power and threatens to support the Shia'a Muslims of the country. Secretary of Defense Henry Conrad thinks the time is ripe to invade Islamyah and seize its oil. The leaders of the new government reach the conclusion

that the American, Iranian, and Chinese forces are now all very close to invade their country for its oil. The novel ends in the assertion that the oil infrastructure is an Arab national issue.

The American interest in the huge Arab oil and gas resources is central in Clarke's *The Scorpion's Gate*. The novel's title refers to the oil reserves in the Arab region that attracts the world imperial powers, particularly the USA, to the area. The novel represents a clash between Arab nationalists who overthrow the pro-American government in Saudi Arabia and imperial powers of America and China that compete to win accession to Saudi oil. Richard A. Clarke, an American counterterrorism official in the Clinton and Bush administrations, writes the novel from an American political point of view. In this novel, Arab nationalism conflicts with American interests in the Arab region: "The Americans won't abandon this place…The Yanks are like sandwich meat spread thin onto the Gulfies."[98] The novel shows fear of Arab nationalists from American imperialism that perceives Arab nationalist movement as a part of Arab terrorism.

While examining the American imperial interest, highlighting some factors that determine Arabs' relationship with America creates better understanding. A part of these factors is the Arab oil embargo imposed on America that lasts from October 1973 till March 1974 during the Arab-Israeli war when America declared its ultimate support for Israel. This embargo on America had worse effects on the American economy and the public who declares their interest in oil instead of Israel. This Arab reaction to the American policy shows how the American economy can be threatened by Arabs. According to Chomsky, since the October embargo, the USA has prepared itself for the worst scenarios, including war, to secure its interests in the Gulf: "This possibility has been discussed, not only on the lunatic

fringe, and the Pentagon has been taking no pains to conceal its military exercises in desert regions."[99] Robert Baer, a former CIA officer assigned to the Middle East, notes:

> Americans have long considered Saudi Arabia the one constant in the Arab Middle East. The Saudis banked our oil under their sand, and losing Saudi Arabia would be like losing the Federal Reserve. Even if the Saudi rulers one day did turn anti-American, the argument went, they would never stop pumping oil, because that would mean cutting their own throats.[100]

Ensuring oil supply to the United Sates is a part of the American hegemony on Arabia. For this purpose, democracy and enhancing human rights are used as a cover for American military existence in the region. Rusty MacIntyre, a major character who is the first Deputy of the American Intelligence Analysis Center in Bahrain assures Abdullah, one of the movement leaders, that the United States insists on establishing democracy in the region: "We tried to rebuild Iraq and give it democracy. We are not the satanic force that you seem to have convinced yourself we are."[101] The use of democracy and human rights by high rank American officials resembles those found in the novel. Donald Rumsfeld, a former American Defense Secretary, states: "The Iraq war has nothing to do with oil, literally nothing to do."[102] Rumsfeld's statement is contradicted by his deputy, Paul Wolfowitz, a few months later in 2003 as he states: "Let's look at it simply. The most important difference between North Korea and Iraq is that economically, we just had no choice in Iraq. The country swims on a sea of oil."[103]

Rusty is highly obsessed with imposing American values on Arab society. He assures Ahmed, an agent of the new Arab Republic in Bahrain, that the

American interference in the region has nothing to do with oil: "You must know that the reason we sent forces to Japan and Germany…We gave them money and democracy. We went to Korea at their request…We also sent American boys to fight and die trying to help Muslims in Bosnia, in Somalia, in Kuwait. We tried to rebuild Iraq and give it democracy."[104] Though MacIntyre confesses that America has huge oil reserves in Alaska, his support for his country's imperialism indicates the imperial obsession with exploiting Arabs' resources and belief in the superiority of the American interest at the cost of the livelihood of others.

Losing Arab oil for China would bring an end for American interest in the region and may create a second Cold War: "We may have to confront them, block them from getting their troop ships into the Gulf" because "the Middle East is a powder keg, the Chinese are stealing our lunch"[105] Therefore, the United States will never permit Arab nationalist leaders to harm the Saudi allies because the American interests are above any other concern even if it involves accusing Arabs of terrorism as Abdullah, the nationalist leader, who reveals his own history: "I was learning to kill them. I personally slew al Sauds last year…I attacked their American masters. I am not going to hand our nation back to those swine, or anyone else. Allah, the merciful and compassionate, has given us the mission to create Islamyah from the fetid carcass that was Saudi Arabia."[106]

The representation of Arab revolt against Saudi royal family in *The Scorpion's Gate* is an anti-American movement. This revolution takes place due to the awareness of Arabs to their weakness and the American exploitation of their natural resources. This realization emerges as a result of nostalgia in Arab intellectuals for an Arab powerful nation of the past that prevailed from the seventh to the sixteenth centuries: "Things that Islamic scholars created and promoted

centuries ago at the height of our power…We also need to lead the Arab world back to the leadership it once had in the arts, sciences, medicine, mathematics…We have lost all that. We have closed the minds of our people."[107] Ahmed, one of the main revolutionists who received his education in Canada and who is a brother of the new Islamyah Leader Abdullah, dreams of establishing a powerful Arab state and defines it in terms of a relationship with the United States: "We could instead use our wealth to join the twenty-first century, to revive the time of greatness when Arabs invented mathematics, astronomy, pharmacy."[108] He goes on hitting the point behind the revolution: "We are not a country, we are an oil deposit! And if that is all we are, others will come, the scorpions will come for their food, their precious black liquid. They will keep us enslaved; buying everything we need from them."[109]

The decline of Arab nationalism in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries is attributed to two main factors: firstly, the Arabs' defeats in the struggle against Israel and secondly, the internal political dynamics in the Arab world. In *The Scorpion*, the reader is informed that Arabs' realization of their failure is part of the nationalist revival in the Arab world as Ahmed tells his brother:

> Two percent of our people have Internet access, compared with ninety-eight percent in Korea. Five books are translated into Arabic a year per million people, compared with nine hundred translated into Spanish…we publish only one percent of the world's books. One out of five books published in Arabic is on religion. We spend less than one-third of one percent of our GNP on research…We do not create knowledge…This is not the way of the modern world, which is leaving us in the dust.[110]

The re-emergence of Islamic nationalism in the twenty-first century can be attributed to many factors embedded in the 'Theory of the New Middle East' and its assumptions such as exporting American democracy and women's rights to the Arab world. Clarke highlights the Arab anger at imposing these American values: "Then they [Americans] think they are so superior that they must reshape the Arab world in their ghastly image. How? By bombing our cities, killing our women and children? Locking up our people forever? Raping them?"[111] So in order to prevent American imperialism, Arab revolutions believe in the necessity of shutting the doors in front of these alien values: "It is not about our becoming like the Americans…It is about what was promised to our people: more freedom, more progress, more opportunity, participation, ownership of their country."[112] China plays a major role in the displacement of America through supporting Arab nationalist movements: "…the movement is to be protected by a Chinese navy expeditionary force, including two of the new aircraft carriers, accompanied by their cruisers with their new antiship missile, and their subs."[113] On this Orientalist framework, the novel repeats Huntington's concerns about on the American fear from the Arab-Chinese relationship that may tender nuclear technology to Arabs.

The choice of China as a strategic partner for the Arab Muslims is partly justified in the novel. Clarke is correct in a certain way that China's interest in the region is an indication of its rapid economic growth which is accompanied by need of huge oil imports from Arabia. The American anxiety is twofold. Firstly, China will have a larger share of the Arab oil that has long been under American control: "China is now a close second to the United States in oil and gas imports…They are bucking up this I-Salamie regime when it is new and weak, just to get long-term

access to all the oil they got there."[114] Secondly, the Chinese attachment to Arabs will help Arabs to get nuclear weapons in return:

> …they carry nuclear weapons, three per missile. Intelligence indicates that there are twenty-three hundred Chinese personnel at the main base, in the middle of the Empty Quarter. We estimate twenty-four missiles on launchers, probably some reloads…the Chinese have a much closer relationship with the revolutionary regime in Riyadh than we had earlier estimated.[115]

Arab nationalist leaders who try to change the political regime in Saudi Arabia do not only pose a threat to the American interest in Saudi Arabia but to the whole region of the Gulf itself: "This al Qaeda regime in Riyadh is sending a message to King Hamad in Bahrain to kick the Americans out…These people are not satisfied with just their fanatical caliphate in Saudi Arabia; they want to export their revolution throughout the Gulf."[116] Arab revolutionaries are agents of terror and anti-Americanism. The narration excessively highlights the Islamic-Confucian connection: "Bigger problem may be Islamyah-China connection."[117] The novel does not assert the Imperialist nature of American interest in the area. Its narration sways between two major ideas: firstly defending the American allies in Saudi against the nationalist movement that "[t]he United States of America will never permit them to harm our allies and will work for the restoration of the rule of law and order on the Saudi peninsula."[118] Secondly, it highlights defending the American interests against the Chinese who plan to dominate on oil and gas resources.

The novel shares Huntington's fear of the Islamic-Confucian connection that may result in the transfer of nuclear weapons to the Arabs undermining the

American national security. On many occasions Clarke highlights the American anxiety from the possibility of nuclear weapons falling at the hands of the Arabs either from China, Korea or Pakistan. Abdullah, the nationalist leader in Saudi Arabia, is very concerned about nuclear weapons: "Without the Chinese weapons, we will lie naked before our enemies...We may need those weapons…We must have weapons to deter our enemies…we need our own bomb…What about the Pakistanis? The al Sauds gave them the money for a bomb…The Pakistanis will defend us."[119]

This image of Arab Muslims swaying between terrorists and oil possessors is central to Said's examination of the Islam-West relationship. In *Covering Islam*, Said observes that the tendency of depicting Arabs as terrorists and wealthy Sheikhs is very common among the modern Imperial American writers. Said refers to a strong connection between misrepresentation of Islam and oil high prices that followed the 1974 embargo and results in "scarcely figured" Islam. This American dilemma is heard from Henry Alfred Kissinger, an American Secretary of State in the administrations of Presidents Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford, who states: "Oil is much too important a commodity to be left in the hands of the Arabs."[120] Clarke echoes the same in *The Scorpion's Gate* that cultural, political and even military domination over the region becomes a necessity for the United States to secure the American interests. A part of this strategy is to quench any nationalist movement in the region under claims of terrorism or Islamism.

War for oil does not produce a reliable ally for America in Iraq. Though the American administration believes that librating the Iraqis from Saddam's tyranny to be its moral responsibility, this war results in loathing America by both Sunni and Shi'a Muslims: "The Iraq War did not result in the people there loving us."[121]

Therefore, building trust with revolutionaries is not fruitful because revolutionaries are terrorists. This American attitude toward Arabs is revealed by the most intellectual Islamic leader, Ahmed, who got his education in Canada: "Some people are trying to sow fear in the minds of Americans, Ms. Delmarco…We have replaced a corrupt, undemocratic government with one more in line with our traditions and beliefs as a people. We still sell oil on the world market. We do not attack Americans."[122]

The fact that the novel is presented as a counterterrorism discourse justifies the manner in which Americans and Arab revolutionaries are introduced to the reader. The novel displays a total absence of trust between Arabs and Americans. Though, Arab revolutionaries introduce many guarantees to the Americans regarding the peaceful nature and goals of the revolution, they are received with much doubt and skepticism by the Americans. Ahmad assures his American fellows: "The Prophet never taught that we should convert or kill the Christians and Jews. And if we tried, even if we took centuries, we would only devastate this little planet in the process. Does Allah want that? The nuclears, if we get them, will cause the ruin of our country."[123] Such guarantees are met with American assertions: "We won't abandon this place…I'm telling you that these al Qaeda murderers in Riyadh are out to get nuclear capability…they can get it from the nuts in North Korea or their al Qaeda East buddies in Pakistan."[124]

There is a history, Emerson argues, for every word. To this effect he says, "as we go back in history, language becomes more picturesque."[125] Post 9/11 American novelists are not the first to write about terrorist conspiracies woven by Arabs against the West and the United States in particular; rather they are following a formidable Orientalist tradition. If readers go back to the *Clash of Civilizations*

published in 1993, for instance, they will notice that its author, Huntington, points to a very dangerous connection between two civilizations; Islamic and Confucian. And this growing cooperation between the two civilizations poses a threat to the West.

The examination of post 9/11 American novel finds that Arab Muslims and Islam are presented in a traditional manner in post 9/11 American novel. The 9/11 events play a strategic role in reproducing, refashioning and strengthening the old Orientalist discourse in which representation of Arabs and Islam are the centre. American writers follow in the footsteps of the traditional Orientalist writings that prevailed in Europe since the eighteenth century in which Arab Muslims were represented as violent, irrational, backward and sexist. These writers use the same clichés to represent the Orient. Therefore, post 9/11 American representation of Arab Muslims is a continuation process and a part of the whole organization of the Orientalist discourse that is based on reconstruction, repetition and confirmation of the old prejudices and misconceptions in which Arab Muslims are presented as the "Other" of the Westerner.

In the post 9/11 American novel, Islam is presented as a violent and barbaric religion and Arab Muslims as lecherous, deceitful, murderous, irrational, larcenous and utterly reprehensible subhuman beings. Unlike the old Orientalist discourse, Islam and Arab Muslims become exposed to a massive amount of representations in a very short period. To a Western reader, who probably has no real knowledge of the Orient, this representation is authentic. This is because Islam is "a lasting trauma" that symbolizes terror, devastation, the demonic, hordes of hated barbarians. This focus on 'Other' Arabs aims at creating an American identity by relating to other people, strengthening their own ideas and beliefs and giving

themselves security against the threat of those "Others". These exoticising and racist representations produce a fictional Orient for Americans, a concept which becomes central to the strengthening of American self-representation and the construction of identity. Arab Muslims are savages who are beyond enlightenment in *Terrorist*. They are doomed to backwardness and darkness. Though they live in the American society, they are incapable of appreciating the American values.

Based on the traumatic day of 9/11, Arab characters in American literary writing are divided into bad guys or terrorists as a majority and good guys or moderate Muslims as a minority of the total Arab Muslim adherents. This division of the Arab Muslims into "Good Muslims" and "Bad Muslims" becomes broadly accepted in the West and particularly in the United States**.** The binary opposition created between good Muslims and bad Muslims does not exempt the good Muslims from negative representations in the White American novel since all Muslims share common beliefs and cultural practices.

Edward Said makes a distinction between "unconscious positivity" which he calls "latent Orientalism" and the various stated and contradicted views about Islam and Oriental Muslims which he calls "manifest Orientalism". He explains: "whatever change occurs in knowledge of the Orient is found almost exclusively in manifest Orientalism; the unanimity, stability, and durability of latent Orientalism are more or less constant."[126] Later on, Said asserts that Orientalist depiction of Islam is always full of contradictions and post 9/11 novels are not an exception. Their truths are the kind of truths on the manifest level of Orientalism, but when it comes to latent Orientalism, they join the Orientalist consensus on Islam, latent inferiority. At this point one can imagine that if a critic like Chinua Achebe or Frantz Fanon comments on post 9/11 fiction, his words might be: I cannot consider

it to be as entertaining and interesting as others think of it; rather, I think it is a "bloody Orientalist" and cannot be called a work of art, for it generalizes terrorism on all Arabs and Islam.

Providing a new generation of heroes, largely terrorists, is an important feature in most of post 9/11 American novels. This tendency aims at producing counterterrorism fiction as constructionist discourse in which all Arab Muslims are terrorists and anti-America, while characters from the Judeo-Christian tradition represent the peace-loving world. This generalization seems to be from the victims' point of view, providing a sense that if this description represents a terrorist, it also happens to represent all the Muslims including those who reject terrorism. In an interview with Louise Witt, Updike argues that Islam is a "static religion" and contrasts it with Christianity and Judaism: "It's fairly absolutist, as you know, and you're either in or not."[127] Further, he describes the aim behind writing his *Terrorist* is to give models of living human beings with the American way of life. Further, American writers do not make a single quotation from a Muslim source; rather they go on quoting several verses from the Quran, a distorted version translated by nineteenth century European Orientalists to build their views on terrorism. This polemical representation of Islam as a religion of terror and intolerance is common in post 9/11 American fiction.

Notes

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[4] Updike 154.

[5] Updike 3.

[6] Updike 42.

[7] Updike 3.

[8] Updike 22.

[9] Updike 21.

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[11] Updike 123.

[12] Updike 85.

[13] Updike 40.

[14] John Updike, "Why Updike delved into suicide killers' psyches," Interview by Louise Witt. *NewYorkPublicLibrary.com*, 18 July 2006. Web. 15 August. 2010.

[15] John Updike, *Terrorist* 22.

[16] Updike 40.

[17] Updike 82.

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[19] Updike 2.

[20] Updike 9.

[21] Updike 40-41.

[22] Updike 40.

[23] Updike 5.

[24] Updike 144.

[25] Updike 3.

[26] Updike 137.

[27] Updike 103.

[28] Edward Said, *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine how we see the Rest of the World,* (London: Vintage Books, 1997) 55.

[29] Updike, *Terrorist* 51.

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[31] Updike 61.

[32] Updike 61.

[33] Updike 165.

[34] Updike 176.

[35] Updike 6.

[36] Updike 128.

[37] Updike, Interview by Louise Witt.

[38] Updike, *Terrorist* 111.

[39] Updike, Interview by Louise Witt.

[40] Tom Clancy, *The Teeth of the Tiger,* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 2003) 103.

[41] Clancy 369.

[42] Clancy 248.

[43] Clancy 180.

[44] Clancy 238.

[45] Clancy 248.

[46] Clancy 265.

[47] Clancy 143.

[48] Clancy 127.

[49] Clancy 341.

[50] Clancy 31.

[51] Clancy 193.

[52] Clancy 357.

[53] Clancy 125.

[54] Nashid Abdul Khaaliq, "Answers To LA Times Questions On Islam and Terrorism," *ATT.com*, 7 February 2010. Web. 13 February 2011.

[55] Clancy 334.

[56] Clancy 249.

[57] Clancy 8.

[58] Clancy 25.

[59] Clancy 346.

[60] Clancy 143-144

[61] Clancy 80.

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[64] Clancy 267.

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[68] Elray 4.

[69] Elray 1.

[70] Elray 125.

[71] Elray 8

[72] Elray 113

[73] Elray 20.

[74] Elray 19-20.

[75] Elray 33.

[76] Elray 208.

[77] Elray 208.

[78] Elray 209-210.

[79] Elray 127.

[80] Elray 127.

[81] Elray 127.

[82] Elray 215.

[83] Elray 147.

[84] Elray 156.

[85] Elray 45.

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[88] Elray 93.

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[91] Updike, *Terrorist* 13.

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[110] Clarke 118.

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[112] Clarke 117.

[113] Clarke 40.

[114] Clarke 41.

[115] Clarke 36.

[116] Clarke 38.

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[121] Clarke 103.

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[127] Updike, Interview by Louise Witt.

Chapter III

Representation of Arab Muslim Woman in the White American Novel

This was woman herself, with her sudden fears, her irrational whims, her instinctive worries, her impetuous boldness, her fussings, and her delicious sensibility.

---Honoré de Balzac

3.1 Introduction

Post 9/11 American narrative on Arab Muslim woman prospers in American literature and forms a central part of the modern American Orientalist discourse. This study examines the representation of Arab Muslim women in the post 9/11 American novel with an aim of a better understanding how women are portrayed in relation to religion, society and power. Through the discourse analysis, the study highlights various aspects of Arab Muslim women's lives between the seventh century and the twenty-first century. With the increasing focus on the Muslims in general, and Muslim women in particular, it is necessary to determine how women are portrayed. Arab women have increasingly been the subject matter of novels and stories since 9/11 and their representations have been influenced by all the events that followed such as the war in Afghanistan and the U.S.-led Iraqi invasion. This study aims to provide a comprehensive examination of the diverse stereotypes used by American writers to describe Arab Muslim women, their appearance, status, roles, obligations, responsibilities and aspirations.

In fact, the survey of literature reveals that Western representations of Muslim women are far more complex than initially expected. This representation overlays several frames, where Muslim women are represented as oppressed, weak and dependent on the one hand, and fully independent, empowered, intelligent and bold on the other. There are many incidents of misrepresentations of the women and of how they are treated under Islam. In such cases, the Muslim woman's strong voice is rarely heard in

the novel and instead readers are bombarded with stereotypical and distorted accounts from the writers in an attempt to show how Islam and Muslims view woman. Similarly, there are cases where Muslim women are given ample space in these novels to voice their opinions, beliefs and concerns; they are allowed to discount stereotypes depicting them as weak, helpless and oppressed. In these cases, novels enable readers to draw a comprehensive picture of how Muslim women react, think and live.

One of the theoretical frameworks that helps us understand how Arab women are represented is Postcolonial Theory described by Said as Orientalism in which he notes that anyone who writes on the Orient is an Orientalist and what she/he is doing is Orientalism. Postcolonial discourse is thus more than a mere act of describing facts of colonialism; it is an approach of defining the imperial identity in its contrast with the identity of the Orientals. So far, in the United States, 2001 has been the year of questioning Arab identity and the role of Islam in its formation that the events of the 9/11 seem to have acted as powerful catalysts in this issue and the cultural diversity between Arabs and America as well.

As far as Orientalism is concerned, Muslim woman cannot speak for herself; rather she needs to be represented. In reference to this discourse, Said quotes Marx's famous statement: "They cannot represent themselves, they must be represented."[1] Marx's statement does also figure prominently in Gayatri Spivack's famous essay "*Can the Subaltern Speak*?" in which Gayatri refers to oppressed men and women as the subaltern "whose identity is its difference."[2] Gayatri argues that for the female subaltern, the situation is even worse: "She is even more deeply in shadow."[3] The study in this chapter is based on the analysis of three novels of Sherry Jones' *The Jewel of Medina* (2008), Homa Pourasgari's *The Dawn of Saudi* (2009) and Zoe Ferraris' *Finding Nouf* (2009).

3.2 Representation of Prophet Muhammad's Wives

The Jewel of Medina (2008) by Sherry Jones tells the life story of A'isha, the youngest and favorite wife of Prophet Muhammad, and her suffering that starts at the age of six. *The Jewel* opens when A'isha gets engaged to the Prophet at the age of six when her father decides to cement his friendship and loyalty to the Prophet. Representation of Muslim women's suffering is the main focus of the novel. When A'isha is betrothed to Muhammad at age six, she is confined to her house until her marriage three years later. She is forced to leave her beloved house in Mecca for Medina when Mecca becomes unsafe for Muhammad and his followers. Through the course of narration, the novel shows how A'isha grows young from a self-centered child to a woman who fights for emancipation of woman in this harsh part of the Orient.

The main focus of the novel is A'isha whose suffering becomes the embodiment of the suffering of women in Arabia. *The Jewel* provides humanizing glimpses into the origin of the Islamic faith and the treatment of woman in Islam through the eyes of this Arab heroine. The life of A'isha is divided into two stages: the early life when she is the only wife of Muhammad and the later life when she lives with multiple wives and concubines in Muhammad's harem. Most of the characters in the novel are the wives of Muhammad. The novel goes into detail about the personal and sexual relations between the Prophet and his wives. One of the sorest spots is the plot in which A'isha is taken to the brink of adultery with her childhood sweetheart, Safwan.

The Jewel becomes controversial around the Islamic world and is seen as the *Satanic Verses* of the twenty-first century because the Prophet's wives are sacred figures. Descriptions of many episodes in the novel are seen by many Muslims as offensive and their content as soft porn. When the book's publisher, *The Random House Publishing Group*, decided to publish excerpts, outrage soon followed. In an interview with El-Katatney, Jones states "I knew that I expected controversy because I'm writing about sacred figures in Islamic history."[4] Jones rejects the Muslims' condemnation:

"Although I've been aware from the start that my books might offend some people, I've never been afraid of physical harm because of them…It is only my interpretation of history, based on my research, experiences and imagination. I do not fear the consequences of publishing this book."[5]

Sherry Jones opens her novel *The Jewel of Medina* with an Orientalist description of the Orient and its women of the seventh century: "Join me in a harsh, exotic world of saffron and sword fights, of desert nomads living in camel's-hair tents…We are in seventh-century Hijaz, in Western Saudi Arabia…where Bedouin raiders fight for survival and women have few rights."[6] A part of Jones' antique and exotic Muslim world is the "exotic world," where women are "regarded as chattel, the property of men, so worthless they might be buried alive" and have few rights.[7] Jones mentions many examples of oppressed women among them the six years old girl, A'isha, who gets married to the sixty years old Prophet and manages to survive troubles that accompany the Prophet's life. *The Jewel* is a historical novel that tells a fictionalized version of the life of A'isha from age of six till she joins Muhammad's harem. Though many Muslims feel humiliated after reading the detailed sexual life of the wife of their Prophet and how the Prophet is introduced as an oppressor of woman, Jones argues the novel is not meant to be the definitive version of A'isha's life or of Muhammad's character, rather, it is an interpretation of history based on research.

Narration in *The Jewel* constitutes a systematic attack on what Jones believes to be the repressive ideals of femininity enforced by the brutal, barbaric, segregationist and anti-woman legislations of Prophet Muhammad in the seventh century. Jones exposes the fragile Muslim woman's position in Islamic society in which A'isha becomes the embodiment of resistance and feminine struggle for freedom. A'isha comments on such a marriage: "I'd known it would happen someday, but not when I was six. Only very few girls were engaged at birth, as I had been, but they were never confined until they began their monthly bleeding. To begin *purdah* at my age was unheard of."[8] Jones notes

that if Islam chains the feminine ideal, A'isha is ready to reject the laws and has the spirit to rebuke men who hinder her freedom including Muhammad: "If they try to lock me away forever, I would escape. With the Bedouins, I'd be free to live my life the way I wanted, to run and yell and fight in battles and make my own choices. Because, in the desert, it didn't matter whether you were a woman or a man. In the desert, there were no walls."[9] Although, on the one hand A'isha's triumph is limited compared to the many defeats she receives from the Muhammad's strict legislations, the text on the other at various stages acknowledges her demonstration of power as a livewire which cannot be easily defeated.

Jones' major focus on A'isha with a little reference to other wives of the Prophet does imply that it is unnecessary to expend tremendous narrative energy on all the Prophet's wives because they are homocentric through A'isha, having a common center. A'isha's suffering from age of six represents Muhammad's attitude towards women in general. In the novel, the six years old A'isha is disciplined in a strict manner in preparation to get married to Muhammad. She is forbidden to interact with boys of her age or to look at elder men: "My parents had drummed the dangers into my very bones until I dreaded the gaze of any man not in my family. One illicit glance, it seemed, could pierce the veil of my virginity...I learned every stone in the floor, every crack in every wall of our Meccan home during my years in *purdah.*"[10]

To reinforce the theme of oppression as an inherent feature of the Prophet, Muslim women are introduced as voiceless humans. Arab Muslim woman is innately oppressed, veiled, secluded, and silenced. A'isha is forced to marry Muhammad though she wishes to marry her childhood friend, Safwan. Nothing she or her mother can do or say will lift her suffering because everything related to them must be decided by men: "Being female meant being helpless. Powerless. They [women] weren't supposed to plan, but to let others plan for them. They weren't supposed to live, only to serve."[11] The novel, further, keeps a very huge gap between Muhammad's age and A'isha's who are

sixty and six years old respectively. A'isha narrates her feelings the day Muhammad proposes to marry her: "I slumped onto my bed, feeling as though stones filled my body. Married to Muhammad! It couldn't be. He was older than my father… why was he allowed to visit me during my *purdah*, when all other men are forbidden?..."Safwan,"..."Come and rescue me. Hurry, before it's too late."[12]

One important issue Jones addresses relates to the confinement of women living in Muhammad's harem where women's personal freedom is completely thwarted by their confinement; they have to follow a religion that "suspects every woman", a religion which teaches its followers that "if a woman glances at the mirror she's plotting evil."[13] The issue of Muslims women's confinement is related to more than one thing. The first is that Islam orders Muslim woman to be shut off from all public interaction if she is not accompanied by a male guardian. The description of A'isha's situation is always used for this end. A'isha is the most exposed woman to oppression of Islam because from the age of six she is engaged to Muhammad and she is ordered: "You are to remain indoors, A'isha. It is forbidden for boys or men to see you unless they are relatives"…"You won't be going to the market anymore, or going anywhere else without me or your father.""[14] The second kind of confinement has to do with Islamic dress: "I wouldn't be allowed to step outside my parents' house…I'd be stuck in this cold, dready tomb until the day my blood flow started, six years away or maybe even longer."[15] In the novel, Islamic dress, contrary to the Islamic view, is a sign of oppression and subjugation of woman.

In Islamic tradition, Prophet Muhammad's wives are ordered to dress in a way that is modest and dignified. Because of the fact that Muhammad's wives are subject to the assaults of the Pagans and the Jews of the seventh century, a headscarf in addition to a proper unshowy dress, is prescribed as a preventive measure for narrowing the possibility of troubling Prophet Muhammad's wives. This is the general wisdom behind the Islamic dress as described by Islamic tradition. Little attempt is made to depict the

hostile Jewish environment for Muhammad's wife in the novel. The scene when Sawdah, one of Muhammad's wives, is harassed in the market by a Jew who "pinned the back of her skirt up to her belt" to expose her private parts" does not justify the necessity of imposing the veil on Muslim women.[16]

Instead of describing Islamic dress as a protective measure against such villainies, the novel looks at this dress from a different angle. The erotic allusions are quite clear by repeating the association between Islamic dress on the one hand and sexual freedom on the other, thus forgetting entirely, if not deliberately, about relating the Islamic point of view. Therefore, the veil is a kind of masquerade, which hinders the Muslim women from following their sexual endeavors. A'isha discloses Muhammad and Omar's discussion on the wisdom behind enforcing the veil: "A woman's eyes are her most enticing feature," Omar said. "Even your wives know how to use them for seduction. Covering one eye is the only true way to avoid scandal."[17]

A tendency for inclusion of restraining woman's sensationalism demonstrates that poor treatment of women and outrageous human rights abuses are part of the faith and practised by the most sacred figures in Islam. This is because, in colonial discourses, the colonized people do not speak for themselves; rather, they are objects of representation on which power is exercised. Edward Said emphasizes the dynamicity of this discourse, twenty five years after the publication of his *Orientalism* in his "*Orientalism after 25 Years*", that Orientalism is "very much a book tied to the tumultuous dynamics of contemporary history."[18] Therefore, it is commonplace to point to Muhammad's harem as the quintessential mode of American representation of the Muslim woman's oppression after the 9/11 because "[p]rior to September 11, popular perceptions of Arabs and Muslims had no significant American component."[19] For this purpose, Muhammad's life is divided into two stages: first is his early life which is marked by less religiosity and more freedom for women, and the second is his later life, a period of Quran revelations which witnesses a rapid increase in his harem and less

freedom given to them. The most oppressive of these Quran revelations are verses that force his wives to hide themselves from all men other than the relatives. The following verses are revelations that provide instructions for Muhammad's friends:

> Do not enter the prophet's home unless you are invited, and leave as soon as you finish your meal…When you ask his wives for something; ask them from behind a curtain. That is purer for your hearts and for their hearts… It is not for you to cause injury to the Messenger of al-Lah, or ever marry his widows after him. To do that would be something dreadful in the sight of God.[20]

Women's suffering in Muhammad's harem does not end even after his death; rather, women remain imprisoned even after Muhammad's death. According to the above mentioned verses of Quran given in the novel, Muhammad's wives are not allowed to remarry after his death including A'isha who believes she has the right to remarry after the death of Muhammad since she is still in her teens. On many occasions, Muhammad is seen as lecherous, an assumption on the basis of Muslim women's tragedy. Accordingly, the sexual gratification of Muhammad, almost to the total dismissal of the spiritual purity of a Prophet, becomes more or less mere eroticism. He allows Muslim men to marry only four women at a time while he enjoys more privileges in this respect, more than four wives.

A reader has no way of knowing what source material Jones consulted, but he does rather know that this description involves post 9/11 personal views of the author. The portraits of Muslim women, the characterizations of the Quran and the images of oppressive Islam remain typical: the Prophet is generally displayed as an oppressor of women and the Quran as his fabricated text used to justify his ends. Muhammad is a fanatical leader who has schemed himself into power by claiming to have received revelations and his women are victims of the irreconcilable conflict between his mission as inspired Prophet and his endeavour to possess a large number of women. The

provided Quran revelations in the novel largely focus on issues related to woman's freedom and A'isha's reaction:

> You know al-Lah ordered your *hijab*, A'isha, he said. "You witnessed His revelations to me in the courtyard."…How his revelation, in essence confining us all to the *harim*, had closed in upon me like the dark, cold walls of a tomb…"Yes, I witnessed it," I said. "I saw everything-including your transformation from a liberator of women into an oppressor of them. *Yaa* Prophet, was that also the work of al-Lah? [21]

One very important contention that Edward Said mentions in *Orientalism* is that Orientalist discourses introduce Muhammad as a disseminator of a false Revelation that aims at fulfilling his sexual desires. *The Jewel* can be used as a test case to support Said's contention. Thus, Prophethood (Muhammad's Prophethood, Muhammad's Message, Muhammad's revelation) is that of sexual (but not spiritual) gratification. Muhammad's attraction toward the child A'isha proves his abnormal sexuality. A'isha imagines herself under Prophet Muhammad's body: "I would lie under Muhammad while he pinned me down with his body, imprisoning me, hurting me. Would he hear my cries of pain? Or would he only pound into me harder and faster…"What would marriage to him be like? Would he forbid me to play with my dolls and toy horse?"[22]

The total picture of the Prophet and the sexual language suggest that Muhammad can do nothing to improve woman's life but gratify his sexual desire with a six year old girl whom he deprives of enjoying her childhood. In her use of source material, Jones tends to adopt certain events that could best serve the imagination of a historian, but hardly that of a litterateur. For, as an historian, Jones seems to have cared for the situation of woman under Taliban and applied it to a woman in Prophet Muhammad's era. In an interview with Keskin, Jones notes: "I came across the story of A'isha for the first time shortly after the World Trade Center attacks in 2001…My goal was to bring these tales, already familiar to Muslims in the rest of the world, to Western audiences."[23]

Jones does not place much reliance on scholarly research; as Said reminds us in his critical assessment of Orientalist discourse that: "No linguistic knowledge seems to be necessary since what one is dealing with is considered to be a psychological deformation, not a "real" culture or religion."[24] Similarly, in Foucauldian tradition, truth and knowledge on subjects are complementary to each other that any writer "has to conform to this in order to communicate, to be understood, to remain 'in the true', and thus to be accepted."[25] In Jones' case, Taliban in Afghanistan becomes a source of all the necessary knowledge on Islam.

Prophet Muhammad is introduced with certain features of a pedophile. For his own desire, Muhammad does not allow A'isha to get married to Safwan when she shows no interest in him: "Please, Allah, oh please let them say my husband will be Safwan. Don't let them marry me to Muhammad. I know he's your messenger, but he's an old man."[26] On her wedding day when she is supposed to be with Muhammad who is waiting for her, A'isha is playing with children. She tells her mother: "Can't you see I'm playing?"[27] The lesson conveyed by this marriage is the unsuccessful attempt of Muhammad to convey God's message without becoming a slave to his sexual desires. His first trial of having sex with A'isha indicates a violation of human rights. A'isha narrates Muhammad's first attempt of consummating this marriage:

> "Wait," I said…I grabbed my doll…My hands trembled, making my doll quiver, also…"This is a solemn occasion, A'isha. The time for children's games is later." He kissed the crown of my head. He slid his fingers down my arm. He pulled gently at my robe until it slipped off my shoulfers…He slipped his tongue inside my mouth. He moved his hands to my waist, and then slowly up my ribcage, toward my breast…"My Little Red," he said. "Your body may be ready for me."[28]

As mentioned in the first chapter, what Westerners say about Islam and Arab societies is always taken at face value and received with little questioning or

examination. On the other hand, what Muslims and Arabs say about Islam and themselves is received with much doubt and skepticism because this area is to be researched by Orientalists. One reason for such a prejudiced outlook including that of Jones' is that "Orientalists viewed these areas as unchanging and used seventh-century Islam to explain the working of those societies."[29] Accordingly, Jones argues that Islam is a patriarchal, anti-woman and segregationist religion. Woman in Islam is a helpless agent in this exotic place because it is the father or the husband who decides her future. In order to fulfil Muhammad's desire in A'isha, her father instructs her "You are a woman now, with no time for childishness."[30] Like A'isha's father, her mother holds the same view regarding this marriage: "I only want to make certain Muhammad does not forget which of us is his closest Companion."[31] Thus, Muhammad manages to create a cruel environment for woman in a very short span of time.

Jones refashions A'isha as a fierce Western modern feminist who confronts Muhammad when he shows interest in marrying all the widows of his own friends who get killed while defending Islam. A'isha is refashioned into Western feminist who fights for emancipation of women and challenges the norms of Muhammad. She denounces the *purdah*, the practice of polygamy and traditional views of women as disempowered with all the flare of a twenty-first-century feminist: "Does that mean you're going to marry all the widows from Badr…Where will they all live."[32] A'isha seems to be disturbed by Muhammad's way of treatment of all his wives who are already in his harem and thus she furiously confronts him: "First you cage us, and now you want to beat us."[33] As a Western feminist, A'isha is not satisfied with her own marriage because Muhammad intends to have many more wives. She hates Muhammad and turns to have an affair with her childhood friend, Safwan.

Sexuality of Muslim women of the Orient is central to the post 9/11 fiction. A'isha's sexuality as an explicit part of her ideal womanhood and feminist struggle is a part of Jones' focus. This struggle for sexual freedom in practical terms implies that the

more sexual freedom for men in Islamic law should meet the same amount of freedom for women. This ethos is largely A'isha's response, after all, to the many marriages that Muhammad has in his life. Therefore, the failure to achieve this balance would remove woman a degree from the center of social life and assign her a secondary feminine sphere. Thus, Jones' portrayal of A'isha's sexual freedom is not as errant and in need of amendment because she is not a sexual wanton, like Muhammad, but a blushing virgin when she meets her lover, Safwan:

> I thought of Muhammad…how he'd let me go at the first sign of fear. Safwan grabbed my breasts and squeezed them hard. He pushed his hand between my legs, making my blood scream…Of course Safwan would expect to make love with me…"My f-flower has not been picked," I said…My marriage has not been consummated… Safwan paced and glowered. "A virgin", he muttered. "If I take you now, it will unman the Prophet completely."[34]

A'isha's reaction to Muhammad's treatment reaches its climax when she meets with Safwan, one of the dearest companions to Muhammad. This incident is full of romance and reflects A'isha escapism from harsh reality to romance: "He pulled me into the circle of his arms and held me as…he lowered his lips to my eyes and my cheek and kissed away my tears. "Sweet A'isha," he said. "Come away with me. Tonight. I have the perfect plan."…"My only wish is for you, *habibati*."[35] A'isha's meeting with Safwan has really happened, according to Islamic sources, but the portrayal of this meeting is overcome by conspiracy and romance. In Islamic history and as the Quran mentions, A'isha misses the caravan when the Muslim army is returning from a battle with Mustaliq tribe and she is found by Safwan, a scout appointed by the Prophet, who takes her home. As a planned romantic meeting, Safwan instructs A'isha to meet him: "I'll remain behind, as a scout…Here's my idea: when the caravan stops at Wadi al-Hamd oasis, you find a way to stay behind. The curtains on your *hawdaj* will keep anyone from

noticing you're gone-and when they do, we'll be far away!"[36] This event in the Prophet's life casts doubt upon his credentials of Prophethood and the purity of A'isha.

Muhammad's personality, from the very outset, has nothing to improve the status of woman but carelessness for his wives, falsehood and sexual attraction towards new women he encounters. In addition to the exhausted theme of voluptuousness and the agonizing love intrigue between A'isha and Safwan, the novel shows that A'isha's sexual affair with Safwan is a result of Muhammad's negligence of A'isha's request for sex. Muhammad's negligence of A'isha's sexual desire can be held responsible for A'isha's scandal. Irritated, as the Prophet rejects her request and shows more interest in Juwairriyah, a captive woman, she turned to have sexual relationship with Safwan: "Why don't you come and watch me, instead?" My smile meant to seduce…"I do not have time for this nonsense, A'isha…Now I must go and make a place for Juwairriyah [captive woman] to sleep."[37]

Several motifs pertaining to early Muslim woman emerge in the American discourse of the post 9/11. Firstly, her struggle for freedom emerges simultaneously with the coming of Islam. That is the basic premise for her portrayal that is transformed into one of helplessness and increasingly subdued speech; her sexual right seems to shrink because of legislations that allow polygamy. Secondly, she becomes oppressed. The harem that Muhammad builds has already begun to be an oppressive place since the seventh century. Thirdly, sexuality is an important part of the Muslim woman's portrayal from the very early Orientalist discourse with certain emphasis that she has been actively seducing rather than seductive. Thus, she becomes, definitively, the erotic object of male visual pleasure.

The sensual element that the dialogue contains implies that Prophet Muhammad supersedes Allah in His function. According to the Prophet, it is Allah who commands him to marry those attractive captive women for the sake of his religion. He tells A'isha about his new marriage to the captive women: "Think about it!...When she becomes my

wife, the Mustaliq will be our allies…This is the work of Allah! First He handed us an easy victory, then He awarded me the chief's daughter. This marriage will be good for the *umma* [nation], and for Islam."[38] It is Muhammad who carries out Allah's will and he who should be gratified. All this makes it abundantly clear to contemporary readers that a man who behaves in this way, especially with women, cannot possibly be a prophet.

Presumably the need to defend A'isha's sexual affair with Safwan leads Jones to accept uncritically many of the points in A'isha's personality including her treachery of Muhammad. Muhammad is assumed to be unfair to A'isha, an assumption that leads A'isha to a critical scandal. It is not uneasy to go on to hold that Muhammad is a man who perceives women as machine for sexual gratification and A'isha is a victim of his interest in women. Soon after the victory he embraces a new marriage with one of the captives: "The prophet is eager to take his new princess back to Medina to marry her."[39] In such a situation, A'isha's adultery happens and is justified because A'isha believes she will not be able catch Muhammad for he intends to enlarge his harem.

9/11 terrorist attacks have inaugurated a sharply heightened interest in Islam and Muslims among American feminists who feel it to be their duty to defend Muslim women against Islamic oppression and marginalization. Gargi Bhattacharyya writes: "One aspect of the War on Terror has been this battle over the meaning and ownership of the idea of women's rights."[40] This Orientalist engagement with Islam and Muslims echoes the American political attitude that emerges immediately after the attacks. Jan Pettman notes that the 9/11 introduces the chance to George Bush to play the role of the champion of Muslim women's rights in the conservative Muslim societies and wonders why this interest grows rapidly after 9/11 and "Why not before?"[41] Interestingly, violation of woman's rights inside the United States shows contradictions in this American struggle to enhance Arab woman's rights. Internationally, the United States continues to refuse to sign the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of

Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), effectively blocking its implementation, and under Bush there has been a withdrawal of US aid to sexual health and family planning programmes that provide information about abortion.

Harem as a discursive concept is a part of the American narrative on Islam and forms the basic tenet of the cultural strength of the American discourse. This term could be used as a negative foreign counterpart to the Western ideals of feminism. Before looking at Sherry Jones's portrayal of Muhammad's harem, examining some pre 9/11 examples will provide some key features of such an image. Beginning with a pre 9/11 column "*How to Start a Harem*" which appears in *Maxim* magazine in January 2001 by Mike Dojc, the columnist gives certain steps to start a harem, first of which is "you'll have to head for the Middle East. Almost any nation there will do."[42] The term harem in this article is a concept that refers to the lives of the wives of a man who keeps more than a wife living in a separate part of the house. As Dojc's column indicates, harem carries many images such as sexuality, oppression of female, male dominancy and veiling.

In addition, to be an icon of patriarchy and gender division, the term harem is used as an epitome of matriarch hegemony where one powerful wife controls all other sister-wives. Therefore, a woman becomes both exploited and exploitative of the underclasses. Women in the harem are divided into a *hatun* who is the "Great Lady," or "first-wife" who controls all the sister-wives and *durras* who are the other sister-wives. A'isha has feelings of fear from this matriarchal system and before she goes to Muhammad's harem she is advised: "When you marry, daughter, make certain you are the first-wife in your household. Make certain you control your destiny, or it will control you."[43] The possibility that the harem is another kind of household where women also govern families, raise babies and attend to the details of domestic production does not come up because it is incompatible with what the harem has come to mean. In the Orientalist view, the harem is, rather, a place where none of those good domestic things

can be properly achieved. The Muslim harem is endowed with irreducible nature to Western feminist ideals with the exception of A'isha who refuses to be exploited by other women of the harem:

> I couldn't be his *hatun*, since he already had a first-wife in Sawdah; I'd be the *durra*, the parrot, serving her every whim. Would Sawdah make me her slave, giving me the baset of chores?...I would never, ever live the way my mother did. If Sawdah tried to order me around in Muhammad's harim, I 'd show her with one sharp sentence who was quicker of thetongue. If she hit me, I'd either kill her or make her wish for death.[44]

The harem becomes a place of unnatural and degrading female life where women are devoid of the values of equality, self-reliance, health and independent minds. A'isha describes the situation in Muhammad's harem: "We were hungry, we were threadbare, and, worst of all we were bored…In Muhammad's harim, there were no babies, only children from previous marriages-and most of them older. We sister-wives spent our days in idleness, magnifying our few problems and grumbling at one another."[45] The explicit association of Islam with the oppression in harem indicates that the Muslim woman turns into a slave, a quintessential victim of absolute despotism and debased to a dumb, animal existence.

Characterization of Muhammad and the sword he uses to conquer the women shows that Muhammad's sympathy to captive women is not humane. He is a man who can never think of religion without involving in sex. This nature of the Prophet is manifested through many of his marriages that take place in disgusting and inhumane situations. For example, his marriage to the captive princess Juwairriyah, the daughter of Mustaliq chief, immediately after the battle reflects his cruelty to the captive woman. A'isha narrates the situation of this captive woman: "I beg you, Prophet of al-Lah, do not send me into slavery,"…"See how soft my hands are? Look at my skin. It has never been touched by the sun"…"I am at your mercy"…"I will do whatever you desire."

Desire? Muhammad was having so many of them at that moment."[46] Sexual aggressiveness is a relatively thick part of Muhammad's overall aggressiveness. A reader would be easy put to find textual support for calling Prophet Muhammad "transgressive voluptuous": ""There is a way" he said. "I can save you from slavery and avoiding offending my men if you will do this one thing…"Marry me," he said."[47]

The Prophet is neither able to offer mercy nor freedom to innocent women. He is only evidently capable of being sexually attracted to them. His sensuality and subjugation of woman are stressed further when Jones allows him to marry another captive, Raihana, the daughter of Jewish Qurayzah chief, whose father, husband, children and brothers are killed in a battle with Muhammad: "Raihana's laugh scraped like sand over a fresh wound. "I will never do that, even to get my sons back." "What kind of man is Muhammad?"…"A true pretender. Claiming to be the Prophet our Jewish Book foretold. Would God anoint an Arab over one of His chosen people?"[48]

In the novel Muhammad's marriages in these difficult situations constitute a systematic attack on the basic ideals of femininity enforced by religions before Islam including Christianity and Judaism. The point here is that relationships should be governed by the consent of the individuals involved and therefore any system or religion tries to alienate individuals from their natural selves is unsound. Sexuality is a primary form of expression for this natural authenticity. Sexual life in *The Jewel* is important both in itself and as a pattern for political life. Therefore, Muhammad judges the loyalty of women on the basis of their submission to his desires. This relative sexual hedonism of the Prophet is not at all a paradise for women as it is for Muhammad. A'isha narrates the ongoing dialogue between Muhammad and Raihana, the captive woman Muhammad desires to marry:

> "You murdered my father, my husband, and my brothers," the woman snarled. "I'd rather die, too, than become your whore-like this one." She flung her hand toward me without a glance. "If you plan to send me into

> slavery, kill me now," she said. "Death by beheading would be more merciful than rapes and beatings. I'm an unskilled princess with soft hands and a sharp tongue, neither of which is valued in a slave."[49]

Muhammad is neither a true prophet nor a genuine humanist but a slave of his own sexual passions, whose harem includes twelve women: "The prophet of God must have special powers in the bedroom."[50] Prophet Muhammad and Muslim women are associated with lowliness and lechery. Lowliness and sensuality of the Muslims are stressed further when the Prophet falls in love with the physical charms of his adopted son's wife, Zaynab and marries her. This marriage proves that Muhammad is not God's Prophet but a sensualist who could easily fall for the machinations of women. The description of Muhammad and Zaynab, almost to the total dismissal of purity and chastity of sacred figures, becomes more or less a matter of mere eroticism. This story is introduced on the notions that Zaynab is a dirty woman who exposes her nakedness to tempt Muhammad; and Muhammad is a lecherous and incestuous man who is tempted and forces his adopted son to divorce Zaynab in order to marry her:

> "But why she opened the door to him?" "She says she thought it was Zayd." The first woman snorted. "As if she would not know her own husband's voice at the door." "She exposed herself to the Prophet on purpose?...Since the Prophet saw her naked, all she does is preen before the mirror."… "When she opened the door in her nightclothes, he told her he would wait outside for her to get dressed. But then a gust of wind blew past and lifted her bedroom curtain. 'The breath of God' she calls it. As if al-Lah willed it to happen. The Prophet saw everything, she said. Everything!"[51]

The story at the very outset certainly has a basis in fact. The relevant facts, which no Muslim, Muhammad himself included, has attempted to suppress or cast doubt upon, are simply as follows, visiting Zayd's house, Muhammad was met at the door by Zayd's

wife, Zaynab, who was indeed wearing a light garment, which the Arab women used to wear in the privacy of the house at that time. Her husband was not at home, so Muhammad immediately withdrew muttering praise to Allah. Zaynab was an attractive woman who was brought up under Muhammad's care. Further, it was Muhammad who got her married to Zayd, who later divorced her. Having been divorced, there was a crucial problem for Muhammad to marry her. Zayd, we realize, was the Prophet's adopted son, and it was the custom among the Arabs at the time to treat adopted sons like one's own sons. And according to that tradition Muhammad would not be able to marry her. It was revealed to him at this critical point that he should follow the Quran and marry her. Therefore, in Islamic tradition, this marriage was to set a precedent to the Muslims that to marry a divorced adopted son's wife is neither sinful, nor socially unacceptable.

Historical evidences show that women's status in the seventh century Arabia was generally poor, particularly in issues related to marriage, divorce, inheritance and worship. Women were more or less the property of men, as under any other world religion especially Christianity and Judaism. Prophet Muhammad was a tribal man living in a society where polygamous marriages were common. His practice of polygamy was not something strange because Arabs of the seventh century had many wives and concubines. In this era, women served two main functions: those of children bearers and manual laborer. Muhammad's marriages helped him improve his economic, social and religious status through wives who worked for him and facilitated alliance with their tribes. The Prophet married Khadijah, his first wife, the wealthy businesswoman to improve his economic status. Khadijah is pointed out as the Prophet's greatest financial supporter. His marriage to Sawdah who worked as a tanner contributed to improve his economic status. His other marriages are meant for gaining wealth, friendships and loyalties.

The status of woman in the medieval European society was no better than the position of woman in Arabian society. Polygamy was popular in the medieval European society. There were multiple wives and concubines even in ancient Rome. In the Middle Ages, European women were valued as an economic commodity. Because women represented a large source of cheap labor, they quickly became the mainstay of the medieval economy. Wife beating was common and even socially accepted. The Church supported this barbaric practice. In a theological dictionary of the time Nicholas Byard states: "A man may chastise his wife and beat her for her own correction; for she is of his household, and therefore the lord may chastise his own."[52]

Therefore judging the practices of medieval Arabs in the light of modern Western norms and values may not be appropriate because many of those practices are not relevant today in modern Islamic society. Similarly, these practices including the subjugation of women were practiced in medieval European society too. Therefore taking the present-day Western values as a model for judging Arab women may be biased because the East and the West share common cultural similarities in issues related to sexism and economic oppression of woman.

The representation of Muhammad's marriages in this novel renders Muhammad as an irrational man; torn between his mission as a Prophet and his worldly interests and passions. He uses his Quran revelations to achieve his own desires. In the context of his marriage to his adopted son's divorcee, he introduces a Quran revelation to avoid his people's criticism: "al-Lah's intentions are perfectly clear…By commanding this marriage, He has left no room for doubt: Adopted sons are not the same as sons by birth."[53] This marriage results in a state of disapproval and condemnation among closest people to Muhammad such as his companions and wives. His wife, Umm Ayman comments: "Poor Zayd…it breaks his heart to hear it. It breaks mine, too."[54] Among his companions is Umar who: "folded his arms and scowled at Ali. Unfortunately, interpreting the Prophet's revelation to fit our own needs has become a popular pastime

in the umma," he said. "Some accuse Muhammad of doing the same in this instance."[55] A'isha's father, the closest man to Muhammad finds "this union may appear unwise". Similarly, other Muslims find it to be unfair that Muhammad limits four wives to them while he increases his harem as he wishes: "Five women in his harem, while he limits us to four. Is that fair?" "The prophet of God must have special powers in the bedroom." "Here is one of his wives. Let us ask her. Yaa, A'isha, how will your husband satisfy five women?" I laughed, scorning them to hide my panic, for I'd wondered the same thing."[56]

Out of much romance and less care for the historical facts perhaps, Jones builds her story on Zaynab and Prophet Muhammad. It may be assumed that Jones has heavily relied on a number of Orientalist sources without even bothering herself to read this issue from an Islamic source. Though she makes no explicit reference to it, Jones probably has read Washington Irving's *Mahomet and His Successors* because the story of Zaynab had been a favourite topic for Orientalists like Irving. Jones may not have a prior knowledge that Zaynab is Muhammad's cousin and it is Muhammad who forces her to marry Zayd. As a romancer Jones is somewhat constrained by facts and challenged by them to unleash her imaginative skills with exotic and romantic details which would appeal more to her as a story teller, and to the reader's feelings and imagination than to the historian's precision. For a Muslim reader, *The Jewel* is a polemical discourse meant to belittle and dehumanize Muslim women and the Prophet. Ahmad Hawfy in his book *Why the Prophet Muhammad Married More Than One* argues that this marriage happened without any fabrication as Jones claims:

> Did not the Prophet know Zainab his cousin and how beautiful she was? Was not he the one that gave her in marriage to Zaid, and even compelled her to do so? Why did he wed Zainab to Zaid and did not marry her himself, considering that had he wanted, it would have been easy for

> him? Would it not be more becoming his social position to marry his cousin first, than to marry her as the divorcee of his freed slave?[57]

Generally, the Muslim woman after the 9/11 is transformed in the American novel into an object for sexual gratification, a model of the marginalized, disabled, oppressed creature and the definitive victim of a tyranny of Muhammad's legislations. She is the emblem of the frustrating Islamic world that starts in the seventh century. Beginning with Muhammad's harem as a perfect didactic tool for the ideology of improper male conduct, American fiction releases a whole series of soothing rationalizations from the point of view of patriarchal authority whose message is at least our women are free; at least our women are autonomous individuals with souls, and not animals; at least we have a single sexual standard; at least we Christians do not treat women as mere sexual playthings.

3.3 Representation of the Modern Arab Muslim Woman

The Dawn of Saudi (2009) is a fictional novel about the oppression of women and human rights abuse in modern Saudi Arabia. The novel explores the hardships many Saudi women endure in this conservative society. The novel provides many aspects of Saudi women's life such as marriage, male guardianship, dress and employment. *The Dawn* highlights the lives of two different women, Sahar Al-Hijazi, a Saudi woman raised in an oppressive society and Dawn Parnell, an American woman raised in a society that offers equal rights to man and woman. The two women, who have formed a bond while attending college in Spain, are the central characters of the novel. Their suffering starts later when they arrive in Saudi and reach to different ends.

Homa Pourasgari was born in Iran and moved to the United States to learn English at the age of twelve. In the Preface to *The Dawn*, she informs the reader that she has chosen to write about Saudi Arabia rather than of Iran "because in order to comprehend what constitutes today's Iranian government, you first must understand

Islam. Consequently, in order to understand Islam, it is necessary to travel to the source of where it all started-Saudi Arabia where Saudis believe they are the unifiers of Islamic practice."[58]

Set in Saudi Arabia and United States, *The Dawn* takes the reader from a conservative country with no freedom to a country that strives to provide equality for everyone. Sahar represents the suffering of women living in Saudi Arabian society. The opening chapters of the novel focus on Sahar Al-Hijazi who is forced to marry an old businessman, Husam. The purpose behind this marriage is to save her billionaire grandfather, Kadar, from bankruptcy. According to the deal, Kadar's business will merge with that of Husam and if this merger takes place, their Crawford Company will be one of the largest in the world. When Sahar comes to know about her grandfather's intention, she fakes her death and is admitted in hospital. With the help of her uncle, she manages to escape to the United States and the scene changes to America. A couple of months later, Sahar starts working and becomes an independent woman who fights for the rights of Saudi women.

The America girl, Dawn, who falls in love with a Saudi man she meets at a night club in Barcelona, decides to drop out of college and converts from Mormon to Muslim. She goes against the advice of Sahar who strictly warns her that her life in Saudi will be in danger. As a result her parents disown her. Ironically, Dawn feels that her parents hold rigid beliefs and little does she know what is in store for her after she marries her Saudi husband. After their marriage, she discovers that her Saudi husband has lied to her. He has two other wives and she is forced to live in the normal ways of Saudi culture. Dawn has applied many times for divorce but as a woman she has no right to get it. Their relationship has deteriorated as he starts beating her. It is only at the end that she realizes that her love has blinded her to the harsh realities to leave the US to KSA. She kills him and is herself killed by her brother in-law.

In the US, Sahar takes the name Dawn Parnell, her American friend who is killed in Saudi Arabia. Through Sahar's eyes, the reader can see the gross injustices inflicted upon Saudi women, who as described by Sahar's grandfather, are merely "precious commodities who bore sons and could be traded to make deals. If they failed to carry out these two obligations, they were worthless."[59]

In her critique of Muslim Arab society, Pourasgari notes that Islam deprives woman of the basic rights as a means for controlling and suppressing her sexuality. Woman's dress is a part of this means: "a woman who shows her hair or skin is nothing but a whore."[60] A wide range of rights is violated for this purpose and anything believed to lead to woman's provocation and exposure to males is strictly prohibited to be practiced by woman: "Bicycles were forbidden for women because the orthodox Muslims thought that the movement of the legs and hips were provocative…Women were allowed to own cars but not drive them. The only time they were permitted to sit in the front was when their *mahram* was driving. Women without means whose husbands were at work were trapped at home."[61] Similarly, "music and dancing were forbidden in the Muslim religion because Islam forbade anything that might lead to lust and fornication. It was believed that music and dancing were used to stimulate thoughts of eroticism and filthy love."[62]

Historically, Saudi Arabia is a place of birth of the Prophet of Islam and from there Islam spreads towards East and West. Therefore, all Orientalist inquiries pertaining to human rights in Islam take Saudi Arabia as a typical model for these inquiries because in the Orientalist point of view, Islamic law and women have never been friends since the time of the Prophet. So, representations of women in this society are believed to be applicable in all Islamic societies. In *The Dawn of Saudi*, all women in Saudi society, whether they are rich or poor, royal or ordinary share the same treatment under Islamic law:

> The fate of all women, royalty or otherwise, was same. The only difference between the rich and the poor was that the former lived in a golden cage and the latter in a metal one…A woman was always considered the property of her husband or male guardian, and that male was allowed to treat her any way he wanted, even kill her without being prosecuted.[63]

Within this highly controlled patriarchal enclosure, a good woman ought to become a submissive individual and an erotic object for her husband's gratification. In *The Dawn of Saudi*, Pourasgari seems to have read Jones' *The Jewel* and provides a similar erotic understanding of how Muhammad suppresses woman's eroticism: "Oppression of Saudi women is based on the belief that women's voice, looks and shape lure or entice men on purpose to get them do things against their willpower and beliefs."[64] Sahar Al-Hijazi is a victim of Prophet Muhammad's tradition. Like A'isha, Sahar is a victim of man's sexuality and has to live to please him regardless the difference in the age of the two:

> Like all Saudi women, such was Sahar's fate as her situation worsened when she turned 22. According to the Saudi tradition, she was too old to get married. Men preferred their women as young as one year old. There were no laws in Saudi Arabia defining the legal age for marriage. The Prophet Muhammad was the model they followed. A'isha became his wife when she was six years of age, and the marriage was when she was nine. The younger a woman married the better. She would be more subservient.[65]

Despite the gloomy environment and all the cruel factors, with Islam at the front, modern Muslim woman fights hard for her independence in order to control her life and decision. In the family of Al-Hijazi, Sahar is forced by her millionaire grandfather, Kadar, to marry a man who is old enough to be her grandfather who aged 68. The

purpose behind this marriage is to save Kadar's business from bankruptcy: "Husam, was also a well-recognized multibillionaire….Husam's company was supposed to merge with Kadar's. If the companies didn't merge, then Kadar would have to file for bankruptcy and sell his businesses and share in Crawford Enterprise to cover his debts."[66] The implication is that one can buy a wife; women in Muslim Arab society are for sale. Sahar narrates: "I was part of the deal, you see. I was given to him as a bonus in order to merge with Husam's company."[67] But Sahar, who has lived in the West and knows its ideals, rejects such a marriage. The dialogue between her and Husam's sister represents a division between a Westernized Muslim woman and the traditional submissive Muslim woman:

> "I will not marry your brother," Sahar replied with conviction. "Oh, yes you will. Your grandfather has already drawn up a business contract with him. And after your marriage to my brother, the paper will be signed. So, you see, it's a done deal. Husam's company will merge with your grandfather's, so you have no choice but to marry him." "I will make his life hell. Why would you want your brother to marry someone as obstinate as me?"[68]

For the sake of monolithic construction of Arab society, *The Dawn* establishes dichotomous opposition between women's life in Arabia and her life in America in order to show the effect of Western culture on Arab woman's life. The novel offers an opportunity to see the "bad" and "good" elements of the Muslim women fully externalized into two separate characters Westernized and non-Westernized. Sahar who gets her education in Barcelona tries to live a Western life-style and rejects her native one. Contrasted to her mother, a submissive woman, Sahar refuses the submissive life in Arab society: "I'm still young. Women in America don't get married until they're into their 30s. I cannot, and I will not be treated like an object. Didn't you even hear what he said? Obey him. As if I would. I would die before I obey anyone…Doesn't anybody care

about how I feel?...men have been coming here and staring at me as though they were purchasing meat."[69] Her mother, Asima, despite her knowledge of the oppressive life, shows no reaction: "I don't like it either, but we have no choice. We live in a culture where women don't have rights". She advises her daughter to accept the marriage to a sixty eight year-old man: "The sooner you accept this [marriage], the sooner you will get on with your life."[70]

Feminist discourse on race revolves around the us/other dichotomy which includes specific victims and victimizers. In Post 9/11 literature, cultural dichotomies between Islamic and American societies hold the view that Islam is a backward, anti-woman and anti-West religion. This dichotomy is explained further in *The Dawn* where Pourasgari shows an attitude towards Islam by establishing the American point of view as a basis for judgment and as the ground against Islamic treatment of woman: "A Jew or Christian's life is worth 50 percent of a Muslim man's life, all others including Hindus are worth 1/16. An atheist's life is worth 0 percent and a woman's life is worth 50 percent of the males in each of these categories. That's how the judges base their decisions."[71] Similarly, women living under Islamic rule receive the same injustice. *The Dawn* establishes a dichotomy between the two girls; Sahar, an Arab Muslim, and her friend, Dawn, an American Mormon married to a Saudi man, in order to provide a strong basis for judgment. Dawn who marries her Saudi boyfriend in Barcelona is fascinated by her husband's description of Saudi life. She goes with him after he promises her a Western life style in Saudi society:

> There were apartment buildings where Westerners lived and men and women were allowed to mix and dress the way they wanted…They had grocery store, swimming pool, a large yard where the tenants could play sports…Women and men were even allowed to sit around in their bathing suits, make homemade alcohol from smuggled yeast, and watch films in a movie theatre, which was all *haram*-forbidden on the outside.[72]

Authenticity of narration in the text is determined by gender where female's voice is usually strong and authentic because a male's voice is inauthentic and rarely does the male speak about his views. The description of life in Saudi Arabia given by the Saudi male does not carry the truth. Dawn's knowledge about life in Arab society comes from her husband who shows more freedom and open-mindedness in Barcelona. In fact, life is not as Dawn is told by her husband. Though Sahar tries to convince her not to go to Saudi, Dawn believes in love rather than rationality "Can't you be happy for me? I am marrying someone I love…My boyfriend loves me. He said we would live in a Western compound and travel all the time."[73] Once in Saudi, Dawn finds life is completely different from what she was previously told. Soon she realizes the result of her trust in this man: "After her marriage, she moved to Riyadh but not in a Western compound, which her boyfriend had promised, but in a house located in an Arab neighborhood. The man she had married lied to her about his liberal ways in order to manipulate her into marriage."[74] There is direct evidence that the Oriental is being represented. This occurs when the male's voice is not speaking in the discourse of the culture portrayed.

Authentic knowledge about life in Islamic society comes only from female characters. The message that Islam is patriarch religion is conveyed by Sahar who has the most authentic voice in the novel. She believes that her suffering has a basis in her religion: "She often wondered which god supported such cruelty toward women. Which god created such inequality among men and women? After all, weren't all humans supposed to be equal? How much of this inequality was religion and how much was it the interpretation of men of her culture? She hadn't an answer but could no longer accept the life she was born into."[75] Had Dawn listened to Sahar's knowledge of her own society and religion she would not have been trapped in Saudi:

> In America, you are free to do as you wish even when your religion dictates otherwise but in Riyadh all your freedoms will be taken away. You will not be able to drink sangrias. You will not be allowed to leave

> the house without a *mahram*-a Guardian…You will not even be allowed to drive or ride a bicycle. Saudi Arabia was the only country in the world where women were not allowed to drive cars."[76]

The binarism that American society is advanced and the Islamic is not is reinforced by introducing Arab characters who lived in the West and returned home with ambitions to Westernize their own society. This binarism of human/subhuman appears as the theme of sub-humanity. Pourasgari provides examples of young Arab men and women who live in the West and return to their native places as enlightened and civilized people. For instance, uncle Nadim, who received his education in the United States, represents the model of civilized Arab Muslim man: "He often wished that the laws of his country were based on civil laws instead of Sharia- a code of law derived from the Koran and teachings of Mohammad."[77] Uncle Nadim is the only male who believes in equal rights for men and women and prefers the Western way of life. He is a symbol of an Americanized Arab man who has certain features that make him a model for Sahar.

Sahar's rejection of marriage is based on her knowledge of the American life that "women in America don't get married until they're into their 30s."[78] She has a preference for the American way of life because living in Arab society will bring more confinement to her. She comments on her arranged marriage: "I can't, and I will not be treated like an object. Didn't you even hear what he said? Obey him. As if I would. I would die before I obey anyone."[79] In other words, she believes that her society is a better place for males and not for females: "If the child is a boy, he can leave after age of 18, but if it's a girl, she may never be allowed to leave by the father, can be forced into marriage and be oppressed like a Saudi woman for the rest of her life."[80]

Sahar and Dawn reach opposite ends. Sahar fakes her death by drinking chemical solution and, with the help of uncle Nadim, she goes the United States. Dawn is trapped in Riyadh and lives a miserable life with her husband. The evil of Arab patriarchy serves

as the climax of the novel when Dawn's freedom is taken in Saudi after she converts to Islam. Dawn has to live as submissive as Arab women where "woman is obliged to satisfy her husband whenever he asks."[81] She has been subject to this aggression by all around her including her husband: "He had an insatiable hunger for intercourse…He hurt her by biting, punching and whipping her…She had tried several times to go to the Saudi courts to complain to officials, only to be sent back to her husband, telling her that she didn't have any proof. The officials requested that she obey him."[82]

The invention of imagery of female heroism which manages to be very feminine and at the same time independent, tough, and consciously resisting traditional male authority, is a remarkable focus of *The Dawn*. All heroism in the novel is not of the American girl, Dawn but of the Arab Sahar's. Sahar pays a high cost for her freedom. When she arrives in America she suffers a lot before getting the American freedom. She works as a servant at Crowford Enterprise and is subjected to various assaults. The fact that she belongs to a very rich family is no more relevant during her search for freedom:

> She was exhausted from cleaning all the toilets-nine downstairs, five upstairs, three at the guesthouses, four at the cottages, his and hers by the indoor and outdoor pools, the tennis courts and the stables. Once done, she mopped the floors, washed the sinks, cleaned the counters and restocked the bathrooms with toilet paper, fresh towels, liquid soap and hand lotion.[83]

Sahar represents the rebellious Saudi woman who rejects religion and tradition and escapes to USA on her wedding day to live her own life, including a life of sexual freedom. She never thinks it is too late to start a new life in America; rather she insists: "My past is my past, and I have to now focus on the present."[84] The qualms she has regarding the American society do not frighten her: "Will she find a home in a country where people were too busy with their own lives to worry about their neighbors? Will she be able to make a family of her own in a place where the roles of women and men

were no longer black and white but a shade of gray?" are overcome at the end.[85] There is direct evidence that her fear is overcome in American society: "America, the country that supported her independence, expected her to make decisions, find work, make money, get lodging, pay for her own medical bills, look for a mate and figure out right from wrong. No longer were there laws that dictated her path. She was a caged bird who had been fed and protected all its life and now had been set free."[86]

One cannot help but observe that the gender limitations on woman's existence are reducible to the simple observation that oppression of woman is essentially Islamic. All women, Arabs or non-Arabs, share the same treatment in Islamic society. In Saudi Islamic laws: "if a woman gets raped, nine out of ten times she gets blamed for luring the man into raping her" and therefore "[m]any women don't report being raped because they're afraid they'll get punished for it."[87] Asian female workers living in Saudi Arabia are oppressed too: "Often young Filipinos with work permits in Saudi Arabia were treated like slaves and had their passports taken away by their employers so that they could never leave the country. They were beaten by owner of the house or raped by male family members while the Saudi courts ignored it."[88]

Mistreatment of women, rather than being a serious problem, becomes an inevitability and thus a stereotype allowing the reader to accept the whole religion as an aggressive one. Sahar is fed up with all the practices of her society including her dress: "I needed my freedom. I needed to be able to walk out without being covered from head to toe. I felt suffocated under my *abaya.*"[89] It is for these reasons Sahar escapes to America where she finds freedom: "From the day a girl is born, she's taught that her role in life is to get married and bear sons to carry out the husband's name."[90]

In America, life is changed for the better. Sahar is no longer oppressed; instead, she is free, independent, working a male-dominated job and refuses to wear the veil. The central change in her personality is indicated by the fact that Muslim woman is rescued by superior American values. Her personality is marked by features of a liberal

Westernized woman. In America she is transformed into a sharp critic of the American policy towards violation of human rights in Arab societies: "The U.S. government has strong ties with the Saudi government and they look the other way when there is any kind of human rights violations."[91] Sahar's American friend Alex feels the same: "That's terrible," Alex pondered the injustice of it all. "What's interesting is, I have never seen our president point to the Saudi Arabia for violation of human rights and yet he has no problem pointing fingers at China, Russia, Cuba and Iran."[92] Sahar begins to work on many fronts against oppression of woman in Saudi Arabia. She writes to journals and contact American politicians for the same purpose: "Sahar set up shop outside Pavilions to collect signatures asking California senators to speak up against the violation of human rights in Saudi Arabia and to support a bill to put sanctions against that country."[93] Not only is Sahar's life changed, but also her way of thinking is transformed in the American society. She begins to search for women who suffer in other parts of the world including women in Latin America. She establishes a Women and Children's Center which cares for abused women and children. She believes that she may not be able to save the world or have the power to change her country but she could at least reach out to the community around her.

The Orientalist notion that women are usually the creatures of a male-power fantasy is challenged by the American girl, Dawn. She is a product of the American values, who, despite the inevitability of her destruction, manages to leave behind a striking picture of the American superiority over the Arab Muslim. The forces she faces in the Arab society are both her husband and the whole judicial system. When she eventually finds out that "it was nearly impossible for a wife to get a divorce from a husband, but incredibly easy for a husband to divorce a wife, all he had to say was "I divorce you" three times" , Dawn does not submit to these forces.[94] She rather has to endure gender discrimination too: "Dawn tried divorcing Youssef but she wasn't allowed to go in front of a judge. She needed a *mahram*[male guardian] to speak for her

but she had no one. Even if she had a male guardian, the court would never allow a woman to divorce her husband. The police just sent her home and told her to work it out with her husband."[95] At the end Dawn is victorious. She stabs her husband fifteen times while he is sleeping. She gets killed by the same knife she uses to kill her husband. Dawn is dead but her soul is not. The soul is alive to enlighten and guide the oppressed Arab woman for freedom as her letter to Sahar indicates:

> You are the voice in my head. You are the sister I never had. You are my best friend, my family and the only person I have in this dark, lonely world…I want you to live for both of us and be free. Do all the things I took for granted. Run on the beach, go out in the street without a *mahram*, vote, drive, work and have sex with a man who respects and cares about you…Don't be scared. I may be dead, but my spirit lives on and will protect you. Take my strength and use it to escape.[96]

The theme of Arab women's sexuality is integrated with the theme of Oriental submissiveness. The episode when Sahar is making love with her American boyfriend is related to gender submissiveness within Middle Eastern society. This episode indicates two things: first is the sexual submission of Arab Muslims before a Westerner: "Jason picked her up and carried her to the bedroom…His mouth caressed her breasts and shifted toward her navel and then to between her thighs but when he heard the sound of pleasure in her voice he lost control and pushed her legs open with his as he entered her in one sharp move."[97] Secondly, it suggests the ease with which Arabs fall before the Western righteous force. After her sexual intercourse with the American boy, Sahar asserts: "I have violated everything I have always been taught, and yet I feel no remorse. I'm glad that it was you who made love to me instead of a husband I could never love. I wouldn't trade this night for anything."[98] These two indications reinforce the idea that there is an essential connection between Arabness and submissiveness to the American force.

Sahar feels violation of women's rights in Islamic society of Saudi reflects the backwardness of her society. In America, she "felt ashamed that her country, which was supposed to be a model for Islamic states, was the biggest human rights violator in the world. If they couldn't get it right, how could their followers?" [99] The message is that if there is any divine spirit, it is manifest in the women's ambition to embrace the American values. Sahar is preoccupied with American conceptions of individual autonomy and freedom of choice: "That's why she loved the U.S. she may have been more conservative than others but she had choices. The choice to drive even if she couldn't afford to have a car, the choice to dress sexy, even if she preferred to dress modestly, the choice to vote even when she didn't have time to make it to polls."[100]

When the Orient is first Orientalized at the end of the nineteenth century, a vast and complex discourse on Islam and Muslim women developed simultaneously. In those colonial discourses, imperial culture is always introduced as a hospitable one for the Arab oppressed woman. Lazreg introduces the best example of the French freedom offered to Algerian women and how the French try to Westernize those women who lived under the oppressive rule of Islam and Arab culture. Lazreg describes a skit written by a French lady at an awards ceremony in a Muslim Girls' school in Algeria held on October 24, 1851 that is attended by French colonial Officials:

> Oh! Protective France: Oh! Hospitable France!...
>
> Noble land, where I felt free
>
> Under Christian skies to pray to our God:
>
> We believe that God
>
> Loves a prayer said by a good child.
>
> Oh! But we will strive to do good
>
> So that He will fulfill your wishes…
>
> God bless you for the happiness you bring us!
>
> And you, adoptive mother, who taught us

That we have a share of this world,

We will cherish you forever![101]

The struggle for freedom is the principal focus in post 9/11 American discourse on Muslim women. This discourse presents the Muslim woman to the reader as a slave in Arab Muslim society while in America she has complete freedom. In America, the Arab Muslim woman is not subordinate to the authority of her male guardian or any other man. When Sahar receives "Welcome to America", she could not believe her eyes and ears: ""Does that mean…does that mean…" she burst into tears. It had taken her tremendous effort to hold back her fear: "Am I free to go?""[102] America becomes a land of her freedom, hope and a space for raising families.

It is commonplace to point to Arab woman's dress as the quintessential sign of Islamic oppression of woman in the post 9/11 American texts. This dress code is perceived as a means of controlling woman's sexuality. This becomes a general view where both literary writers and politicians engage in wide and anxious discussion regarding this issue. For instance, the then First Lady Laura Bush in a radio address on November 17, 2001 states: "The fight against terrorism is also a fight for the rights and dignity of women."[103] These words have an insightful resonance for a reader who has knowledge of colonial discourse that uses women's right to justify imperial domination as Gayatri Spivak puts it, "white men are saving brown women from brown men."[104] The real mystery why coverage of Islamic dress becomes so dominant is answered by the Australian Brownyn Bishop: "It has become the icon, the symbol of the clash of cultures, and it runs much deeper than a piece of cloth."[105] This anxiety spreads to Europe especially France, the oldest liberal country in the world, where Muslims constitute more than six million of the total population.

In America, the Puritans of the 19th century thought the Muslim woman needed a relief from overindulgence in sex. Interestingly, today's liberation of Arab women is perceived from an opposite direction. Today, the Americans believe that Arab women

need a liberation that will enhance her sexual freedom. Thus, empowerment of Muslim women in American literature asserts liberation of woman from Islamic dress as a first step. This significant contradiction is seen in the post 9/11 novel. In *The Dawn*, Arab Muslim code of dress is the most convincing sign of oppression against Arab woman and therefore, Arab woman is encouraged to get rid of this tradition: "She thought it was unjust that she wasn't allowed to breathe the same fresh air that men did, that she was forced to look at the beautiful blue sky through the blackness of her veil, and that while men fornicated before marriage."[106]

The Muslim woman's dress signifies that Islamic law suppresses woman's sexuality. This dress, in Islamic point view, provides the Muslim woman the resistance against the possibility of her vulnerability to the Western culture. Sahar compares her society with the Western one: "When you travel through Europe or America, they have so much freedom that no one cares if you walk out in your underwear. People just go on about living their lives."[107] Accordingly Islamic law is incompatible with modernity because in Western society women are being granted certain freedoms that are not given by Islamic law: "Many Saudis and fundamentalists found the Western culture a threat to their Islamic values. This intensive fear applied not only to Saudi Arabia but also to all countries that governed according to the laws of Sharia. The more the Western countries meddled in their affairs, the more religious and conservative they become."[108] Ideology has much to do in this issue. Arab Muslims hold the opposite view. They regard the Western dress as showy and perceive these women as prostitutes.

Binarism between East and West including contrasting descriptions as human/subhuman, advanced/backward, secular/fanatic implies that East remains East as inferior and West remains West as superior. This stereotype approaches the subhuman; she is a woman who can work in very limited fields but not in the vicinity of man: "Some have jobs in women's banks and women's shopping malls, but this is all new."[109] This kind of discrimination does exist in Islamic society but, according to Islamic

sources, is related to traditions rather than Islamic teachings. Therefore, it would be misleading to assume that this discrimination is exclusive to Muslim Arab society because Muslim societies are diverse in their class base and levels of education and employment, both for men and women, because traditional and cultural values do play a role in this issue. Discrimination against women is largely observed inside the United States too: "In the United States, occupational sex segregation is related to the fact that women hold, on average, jobs with less desirable characteristics than men's occupations."[110] Further, this tradition does not have basis in Islam because Prophet Muhammad didn't object to women working rather he married, Khadija, the woman he was working for.

The evil of Islamic law serves as the climax of the post 9/11 novel when it allows men to kill women in the name of honor. In *The Dawn*, the judicial laws extracted from Islam permit killing of women who violate the family honor. Sahar is followed by her husband to America not just because she escaped to America, but because she spoiled his name: "His goal was to kill Sahar one day and save his honor."[111] Husam is not violating the law here because what he is doing is a work granted by Sharia: "Why should he kill her when the Saudi courts would gladly do it for him? All he had to do was to surrender her to Riyadh police and explain how she had violated their marriage contract. The courts would then throw her in prison, torture her…and then give her the death sentence."[112] This motif activates a whole new scene which includes, for the first time, the aggressive nature of Islamic law, *Sharia*, in issue related to women and thus becomes the most powerful evil force in the novel, more powerful even than the conservative tribal tradition of the Arabs.

It is easy here to see the role of the CIA at Los Angeles airport in saving Sahar from honour killing when she becomes in the grip of her husband and his personal pilot. The CIA agent warns them: "I'm asking you nicely to disappear and am warning you for the last time: If as much as a hair is missing on that girl's head, I will personally destroy

yours lives. For your own interest I suggest that you move on and forget about her."[113] Her captivity at the airport becomes the springboard for transformation. With a cool deliberation, she preserves the life and status she wants for herself: "My duty to be a good wife was burdened on my forehead from the day my mother gave birth to me. But you see, my fate is no different than the fate of many girls who are often as young as 11 years old."[114] Sahar manages to defeat men who mistreat her and create from Islam a misogynistic religion that establishes honor killing as a symptom of masculinity.

In addition to being an unjust system, Islamic law is marked by contradictions. In Islamic laws of Saudi Arabia, a woman who marries a non-Muslim is "condemned to death by her family and the courts even if she lived outside the country."[115] On the other hand, men who marry foreign women "were permitted to marry non-Muslims."[116] In Dawn's case, the murder is justified by the claim of restoring her husband's name while in reality her murder is revenge because: "[w]hen a male relative kills a woman in order to resort family honor, it is tolerated."[117] Though, her brother-in-law is avenging his brother whom she has killed: "he claimed that Dawn has been cheating on her husband and that he had gone home to confront her and she killed him to hide the truth."[118] The only possible conclusion here is that killing for restoring honour is more tolerated by Sharia laws than any other form of killing.

Arab woman as an object of male's desire recurs over and again in post 9/11 American fiction. In Ferraris' *Finding Nouf*, modern Arab men resemble their Prophet who perceives woman as an object to satisfy man's desire. Muhammad's attitude towards women is summarized in the following words: "The best of women, the Prophet said, is the one who is pleasing to look at, who carries out your instructions when you ask her."[119] Therefore, suffering of modern Muslim woman is part of a tradition that Muhammad started centuries ago. Based on A'isha's suffering, Ferraris builds her story of Nouf's loveless marriage that results in her death largely because "she was nervous about her wedding…She didn't know Qazi [her groom] that well."[120] Ferraris is an

American writer who has lived in Saudi Arabia and was married to a Bedouin. She conveys both male and female perspectives in a country where religious police crackdown on mixed company.

Finding Nouf (2009) is a novel written by Zoe Ferraris. It won the Los Angeles Times Book Prize winner when it was published. Set in contemporary Saudi Arabia, the novel tells the life of women who are separated from men in most situations and explores the tension between men and women in this Islamic country. Many issues related to women are highlighted in the novel such as segregation, wearing burqa that covers their eyes and many other customs that prevent women from interaction with men. One of the primary themes in *Finding Nouf* is the suffering of women in one of the most rigidly gender-segregated and gender-biased countries of the world. On numerous occasions, the novel mentions that women are not allowed to have jobs in places where they may interact with men.

Finding Nouf is about the disappearance of a sixteen year-old girl, Nouf ash-Shrawi, the daughter of a wealthy and influential family. Nouf disappears just three days before her wedding. The main characters are Nayir al-Sharqi, a devout Muslim who plays the role of a desert guide and Katya, a girl who works in a coroner's office. Nayir has a difficult time even looking at a woman’s uncovered face and feels his soul may be in jeopardy as he talks to women, especially Katya. The novel begins with Nayir in the desert searching for Nouf, who is rumored to have run away. Nouf was by all accounts surrounded by comforts and led a happy life. Her sudden disappearance leads to much speculation.

Nouf is found dead in the desert after ten days of search. The novel ends with a discussion between Nayir, Katya and the ophthalmologist that Nouf is a victim of honour killing and is not drowned because there are defensive wounds on her wrists. Together they learn that Nouf had meetings with someone in an abandoned zoo and was planning to escape from the confines of Saudi society to New York City. This discussion

reveals that Nouf is killed because she is not happy getting married to Mr. Qazi. The three people are also puzzled by the way Nouf is buried with her belly facing Mecca because only pregnant women are buried that way and Nouf was not even married.

Arab Muslim woman is described in terms of commodities that are at the core of rivalry between Islamic states and America at this period. This commodification is entirely a function of gender differentiation that assumes the equality between Muslim and Western women. In *Finding Nouf*, Nouf plans to run away to America because America offers her what is stolen in Arab society. Nayir feels dazzled by her determination and sacrifice for freedom: "The fact that she wanted to run away to America set her in a category beyond what he had previously believed…Nouf in his mind was starkly deceptive, plotting a scheme to satisfy her desires and rebuke her family. She was not fearful; she was ambitious."[121] What is notable in these novels is that A'isha, Sahar and Nouf are very similar to each other. All of them are persecuted and fight for freedom against the patriarchy of Islamic society that uses the female body for its own pleasure.

Nouf represents rebellion against Islamic tradition in the modern time. Katya, who investigates the death of Nouf, comes to the conclusion that "Nouf would have been upset…the way that family raises their children bothers me...Nouf may have been a victim of her upbringing."[122] Though Nouf knows that committing suicide is a sin in Islam, some sources reveal that she kills herself in order to escape honour killing that may result from her refusal of arranged marriage. In her Journal, she writes: "In the name of Allah, all-merciful, all-knowing, I almost killed myself today, but I was too frightened to do it…Allah, please forgive me."[123] Despite her confession of committing suicide, the investigators, Nayir and Katya reach to the conclusion that Nouf has not committed suicide rather she is killed for restoring the honour of her family.

Nayir and Katya's conclusion is based on three observations. First is that during the search for Nouf's body, the family was not eager to find out the reasons behind her

death. Nayir is directed by the examining doctor: "You're here to pick up the body," she said, "so pick up the body and forget about the rest. The case is closed-they've decided it was an accidental death."[124] Second is that Nouf was pregnant and buried in the way pregnant women are buried: "Nouf's back was turned to Mecca. Not her feet, but her back…The image disturbed him. If what he suspected was true, why hadn't Miss Hijazi told him? A family buries a woman with her back to Mecca only when she carries a baby in her belly, a baby whose face, in death, must be turned in the direction of the Holy Mosque."[125] Therefore, "the family would have to be behind it. They were the only people powerful enough."[126] Third is that Nayir and Katya observe many bruises that look like she has been attacked: "When she turned her attention to a series of bruises on Nouf's wrists and hands, Nayir allows himself to watch. She stabbed one of the lesions. "Looks like sand," she said. "There's something beneath her fingernails too. These look like defensive wounds.""[127]

Honour killing is a universal phenomenon that is reported in countries such as Iran, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Bangladesh, Algeria, Brazil, Ecuador, Morocco, India, Israel, Ethiopia, Somalia, Uganda, the Balkans, Sweden, Holland, Germany, Italy, Yemen and many more countries. The belief that a male has the prerogative to murder his female relative can be traced back to certain codes of cultures rather than religions. As far as Islam is concerned here, the Quran states: "O you believe! You are forbidden to inherit women against their will. Nor should you treat them with harshness…live with them on a footing of kindness and equity."[128] Thus, the practice of honor killings has a cultural root more than a religious one. It is undeniable that the root of honor killings in Arabia is centuries old and dates back to the Pre-Islamic era in Arabia. Before Islam, men were encouraged to bury their infant daughters alive to avoid the possibility of dishonoring their families in future. With the coming of Islam, Islamic law brought an end to the brutality of this cultural action.

In *The Jewel*, Jones has a contrasting view from that of *The Dawn* and *Finding Nouf*. In *The Jewel*, Prophet Muhammad called for an end to honor killing in the seventh century. Jones refers to this act as one of the cultural practices in Arabia and had ended with the coming of Islam. When A'isha was born, she would have been one the female infants who were buried alive before Islam. But she was lucky enough to be born with the emergence of Prophet Muhammad who saved her from Arab tradition. A'isha narrates: "I'd known Muhammad all my life. He'd held me in his arms just moments after I was born...He'd saved my life, my parents told me, by convincing my father to break the Meccan law. Too few boys were being born that year, so the Qurayshi leaders had decided that all the new born girls should be buried alive."[129]

Patriarchal discourse in post 9/11 America always contrasts a "good" woman who is a paragon of the female autonomy with a "bad" woman who epitomizes what is considered unfeminine. If American culture begins its encounter with Islam by representing the Muslim woman primarily as a "bad" woman, this "badness" is fading in post 9/11 discourse. Muslim woman becomes more appreciative of her role in changing the patriarchal forces. The increasing American dominant perception of the Islamic society as impotent, unproductive, ineffectual, is reflected in the general feminization of the Islamic Orient in cultural discourse, so that the Muslim woman, the most feminine part of that effeminate world, becomes its exemplary manifestation.

The ideal woman is not the one who accepts the oppressive treatment of Islamic culture, but the one who rebels. Nouf, before death, decides to accept marriage to Qazi and go with him to New York where she would escape from him in a hotel because in Arab society "women were not allowed to leave the country without an exit visa signed by their husbands or fathers."[130] Once in America, Nouf will embrace the "White Value" by escaping with her American friend, Eric Scarsberry: "She wanted to go to America…She gave him a million riyals. He was going to set her up in New York with

an apartment…She wanted to leave…On her honeymoon. She was going to New York with Qazi…She was going to leave him in the hotel and meet Eric somewhere."[131]

No effort is done by the Arab male to uplift the suffering of woman. While the American boy, Eric, is a saviour of Arab woman from the cruel culture of Islamic society. Eric tells the investigators: "I was helping her. She had no one-I was her only link to freedom."[132] However, to Arabs, Eric represents an evil intruder: "Eric was in some ways the evil American, the greedy man who comes to Saudi and does anything for money, wreaking havoc with society-in this case, with innocent virgins."[133] The superiority of the American values becomes more definite over the Arabic ones at least in women's freedom. This superiority, Ferraris notes, fascinates Nouf to escape her family and live in the American society. Her driver, Muhammad, narrates:

> She wanted to live in America…She saw this program on television one day, about a woman who studied wild dogs in Africa. She wanted to be just like that woman, even though the woman lived with these dogs-dogs! She was dirty…I think that impressed Nouf more than anything else, that this woman could live like a dog and be so happy. More than Nouf, at least.[134]

The imbalance between the Muslim Arab East and the Christian American West remains obviously a function of changing cultural and historical patterns that Said calls in *Orientalism* the difference between the familiar/strange, superior/inferior. He notes that the presence of this imbalance in the American Orientalist discourse has engendered failure to make accurate predictions. Said traces this attitude through a study by the Middle East Studies Association on behalf of the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare in 1967 conducted by Morris Berger, an American sociologist. The study comes to the conclusion that the modern Arab states are not areas of great cultural achievement and that the area has no potential to become a political power center.[135]

There is a common ground between the veil as a segregating tool and eroticism that the former prevents the latter as a religious act. *Finding Nouf* has two environments segregated by sex in which even looks are strictly prohibited and considered "as dangerous as staring at the sun."[136] Nayir represents the male segment of the society who never saw a woman in his life: "Everything he knew about women had been gleaned from rumor, the Quran, and an assortment of bootleg television videos…Although his friends laughed, it was sadly true, and Nayir was left with the depressing sense that the world of women was one that he would never be allowed to enter."[137] In the course of investigating the death of Nouf, Nayir is disturbed by existence of women who are not wholly covered: "There were too many ankles showing for his discomfort."[138] His inability to reach to a conclusion regarding the mysterious death of Nouf is largely because he fears Allah's punishment for speaking and interacting with women: "He tried not to imagine her face or her body, but the more he thought about her, the more vivid she became. In his mind she was walking through the desert, leaning into the wind, back cloak whipping against her sunburned ankles. *Allah forgive me for imagining her ankles*, he thought."[139] Nayir is a typical Arab conservative Muslim who does not accept even looking at a woman's face.

Ferraris' creation of a free female character from Katya plays an important role in establishing a good understanding between men and women in Arab society. Nayir, who works with Katya, has been a radical Muslim who never gazes at Katya's face in the beginning: "Because her face was exposed, he averted his gaze, blushing as he did so. Uncertain where to rest his eyes…she'd noticed Nayir's discomfort and was disappointed by it."[140] The first thing comes to Nayir's mind regarding Katya's freedom is that her parents must be a Westernized couple: "He could imagine her father wearing a business suit, speaking perfect English; her mother was perhaps one of those women who wrote letters to the king and the ministers complaining about the laws against women."[141] This female free association with male can alter radical thoughts of

conservative men in Arab Muslim society. The result of this interaction between male and female can overcome radical beliefs and shape male personality too as Katya recognizes it in Nayir character:

> …she marveled at how her opinion of him had undergone a shift. Instead of an imposing, overly righteous ayatollah, he now seemed like one of those men who, aware of their own physical power, develop a kind of masculine grace…He wasn't overbearing; he was kind, thoughtful, smart, and reliable. And now he is the only person she trusted with information about Nouf's case."[142]

Inferiority calls into question of the basic rights of the Muslim woman as compared to their Western counterparts. Most of Muslim Arab women *The Dawn* and *Finding Nouf* are educated women who are prevented from entering the work field. A common tendency in representing educated women in the two novels is their reliance on educated unemployed Muslim women. This creates an impression that veiled Muslim woman is a well educated woman with career aspirations but hindered by male patriarchy: "Women didn't have birth certificates until recently. They were included on their father's birth certificate, which made them the property of a man…And what's most unfair is that a 12-year-old brother of a 30-year-old single woman, for example, is allowed to make decisions for her and can forbid her to leave the house."[143] Katya Hijazi, who has received a PhD in molecular biology, is not allowed to apply for a job that suits her area of study because "[t]here were few jobs for women, especially educated women. Women were allowed to work only in places where they wouldn't interact with men…the country's scientific jobs were filled by men first."[144]

This paradigm set up a special role for women in Orientalist discourse that "women are usually the creatures of a male-power fantasy."[145] Ferraris makes no effort to distinguish between Arab women who work and others who do not. The more conducive way of representation, which introduces the reader to women from all walks

of life; this would include the educated, uneducated, employed, unemployed, rich, the poor, the courageous, the submissive, the stay-at-home mom and so on, is not relevant in Ferraris' tradition of approaching Muslim woman. Similarly, this will include many examples of Muslim women who wear Islamic dress codes by choice and those who are forced to wear them.

Most of the women who live with Katya are fully controlled females who advise her: "You'd better start having children before you get too old. You may be too old already! What is a job compared to the value of children?"[146] In such society women do not even argue to get their rights: "When she [Katya] told her father about the job, he jerked upright and narrowed his eyes. "Come on, we're not *that poor,*" he said. It had stung her so deeply that she'd wanted to cry. Letting a woman work was a desperate thing to do. They had sunk in the world. Her face must have showed her disappointment, because Abu backpedaled."[147] Accordingly, Katya gives up her ambitions and starts giving tuitions for girls, who are treated the same way by their male guardians: "All of her students were from the school for girls just down the street. They came in pairs with their escorts- usually brothers or cousins- who waited while Katya helped the girls with their homework…She'd hear their escorts tease them: "Why are you studying chemistry? Can you use it for cooking?"[148]

Violation of women's rights is attributed to Islamist thought, the most conservative school of Islamic thought. In Islamist belief, woman's duty is to remain at home; she is not allowed to practice activities that may involve interaction with men such as driving which is "a lot dangerous than stealing. It's illegal, too."[149] This school is represented by Shaikhs like Al Obeikan who issues the most controversial fatwa in which he advises women to breastfeed their foreign drivers so that they form a familial relationship with their drivers and get mixed with them: "Women could give their milk to men to establish a degree of maternal relations."[150] Sumner and Philip note that religion cannot be taken in isolation while dealing with Arab woman because the

conservative tribal nature of Arab culture and the male interpretation of the sacred text have a major role. They refer to women's rights in Christianity: "If the church fathers were prejudiced against women, and we know it, then we should be careful not to absorb their bias" because "Traditional Christian thinking is not the same thing as biblical thinking about women."[151] Therefore, Ferraris' Orientalist view on Islam *is an ethnocentric one because* veiling has roots in Judeo-Christian tradition before Islam. In the Old Testament, for instance, one reads: "When Re-bek'ah raised her eyes, she caught sight of Isaac and she swung herself down from off the camel. Then she said to the servant "Who is that walking in the field to meet us?" and the servant said "It is my master." And she proceeded to take a head cloth and to cover herself."[152]

Post 9/11 American fiction on Muslim women is a part of the whole modern American Orientalist academia, a part whose basic tenet is that Islam is innately and immutably oppressive to women. Islamic marriage, the veil and gender segregation epitomize Islamic oppression of woman and these customs are the fundamental reasons for the general and comprehensive backwardness of Islamic societies. Further, judging Arab woman in the light of her beliefs to find out how civilized she is a common trend in the post 9/11 novel. Accordingly, If a Muslim woman holds certain beliefs that are uncommon in Western culture, she is described as backward, no matter how highly assertive, educated or independent she is. In other words, women are not judged on how they fit within their culture as much as they would fit in a Western culture.

Post 9/11 American narratives, especially the polemical ones, in their diffuse and polymorphous disseminations are part of the American illiteracy about Islam among both public and writers and based on traditional Orientalist discourse. In a questionnaire conducted by CAIR in 2005, the Council on American-Islamic Relations, finds that only two percent of Americans say that they are "very knowledgeable" about Islam, thirty-nine percent felt "somewhat knowledgeable" while nearly sixty percent said they are

"not knowledgeable" about the faith.[153] Hence, 9/11 narrative on Muslim woman is a reproduction of the old Orientalist texts.

Jones does not seem to own a personal outlook of Muslim woman, but tries to establish it as coming from the traditions of the Afghani society whose religion is based on fanatic and radical clergymen. Therefore, it may be assumed that Jones has heavily relied on a number of contemporary sources that are inaccurate, unauthentic and shallow as Jones herself states in the *Afterward* of her novel that her knowledge of Islam is new and the majority of her sources on Islam and Muslim women are books written on women living under Taliban: "[w]hen the U.S. sent troops into Afghanistan, I began hearing news about the reversals for women there under the Taliban, how girls were no longer allowed to go to school and women were required to wear *burqas*…I was disturbed by these reports and…I knew very little about Middle Eastern culture or Islam at the time."[154]

A striking feature exists in all post 9/11 American texts pertaining to Muslim woman is Prophet Muhammad's sexual treatment of woman. Arab Muslim women depicted in these texts have often been represented as either exotic and mysterious or as oppressed and backward persons who have been suffering the male dominance since the coming of the Prophet of Islam. This is the most obvious binary that emerged in Europe in the eighteenth century and continues to emerge in the post 9/11 American discourse devoted to Arab women. Flaubert, for instance, comments "the Oriental woman is no more than a machine" referring to her sexuality.[155] This conception of Arab women in relation to Prophet Muhammad in contemporary American writings remains practically unchanged from Flaubert's conception of the nineteenth century. Muhammad is still anti-woman, a false Prophet and the author of a religion based on subjugation of women. Further, the provided religious elements suggest that Muslim woman in post 9/11 texts is represented not only as a function of American supremacy over all others, but also as a

function of Christian resentment of Islamic power over woman; she is differentiated as the powerless female factor of an intimidating and powerful male world.

In *Orientalism*, Said draws a distinction between "unconscious positivity" which he calls "latent Orientalism," and "the various stated views about Oriental society, languages, literatures, history, sociology," which he calls "manifest Orientalism." He explains: "Whatever change occurs in knowledge of the Orient is found almost exclusively in manifest Orientalism; the unanimity, stability, and durability of latent Orientalism are more or less constant."[156] Said further notes that it does not matter how Orientalists differ in their treatment of the Orient because such differences are only the "manifest" face of Orientalism while the only thing that unifies their effort is the "latent" side which is the deeper level of Orientalism that introduces the Orient as inferior. Ferraris' and Pourasgari's treatments of Muslim woman are kind of truths on the manifest level of Orientalism because what they are doing confirm earlier prejudices because of the fact that "Oriental material could not really be violated by anyone's discoveries."[157]

A well-noted tendency, which has a good presence in these novels, is the overgeneralization of certain cultural practices and mixing them with religious ones; in some cases this leads to distortion and in others leaves one confused about cultural and religious practices that seem inferior, peculiar and alien. Generally, post 9/11 novelists take a single practice; sometimes this practice is very extreme such as honor killing or other kinds of abuse, and introduce it to the audience as an Islamic norm regardless of the different cultural and traditional groupings of the Islamic world. Another feature identified in the post 9/11 representation of Muslim woman is the American standard against which Muslim Arab woman is judged as civilized or traditional. This standard is based on how Western a Muslim woman looks, what clothes she wears and how Western her ideas are, which is not very realistic since many liberal Muslims still hold conservative religious opinions that fit their culture and lifestyle. Thus, American

discourse about the world of Islam in the in the post 9/11 period, strictly speaking, is an imperialist project. If not imperialist energies, what, then, are the energies that go into the production of a discourse about Islam and specifically the Muslim woman beginning with the wives of Prophet Muhammad?

Notes

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[65] Pourasgari 5.

[66] Pourasgari 3.

[67] Pourasgari 210.

[68] Pourasgari 21.

[69] Pourasgari 13-15.

[70] Pourasgari 14.

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[72] Pourasgari 19.

[73] Pourasgari 19.

[74] Pourasgari 20.

[75] Pourasgari 6.

[76] Pourasgari 9.

[77] Pourasgari 30.

[78] Pourasgari 13.

[79] Pourasgari 13.

[80] Pourasgari 165.

[81] Pourasgari 188.

[82] Pourasgari 20.

[83] Pourasgari 67.

[84] Pourasgari 133.

[85] Pourasgari 238.

[86] Pourasgari 238.

[87] Pourasgari 207.

[88] Pourasgari 8.

[89] Pourasgari 164.

[90] Pourasgari 210.

[91] Pourasgari 164.

[92] Pourasgari 317.

[93] Pourasgari 322.

[94] Pourasgari 20.

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[138] Ferraris 125.

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Chapter IV

Construction of Arab Identity in Arab American Counter-narratives

Nationalisms are about groups, but in a very acute sense exile is a solitude experienced outside the group: the deprivation felt at not being with others in the communal habitation

---Edward Said

The term "Arab Americans" refers to Arab Muslims and non-Muslims and their descendants who have migrated from the Middle East, largely voluntarily, to the United States from the 1880s till the present time. Arab American writers have had a significant presence in the U.S. literary field since the nineteenth century. Though these writers have migrated to the United States from different societies of the Middle East particularly Lebanon, Syria and Palestine, carrying with them different religious and spiritual heritages, yet they "staked out an individual space from which they explore their own relations to identity, culture, religion, and the building or inhabiting of a life in the United States" and tried "to bridge Eastern and Western philosophy, thought, and religion."[1] The first wave of Arab American writings that continues till the early decades of the twentieth century has been more assimilationist. Nevertheless, attempts of assimilation have been subject to many factors that alter the mainstream of Arab American literature. Among these factors are the creation of Israel in 1948 and the ultimate American support for establishing a Jewish state on the Arab lands. The creation of Israel causes Arab Americans to rethink of their position in the United States and bring themselves towards unity with other Arabs especially the Palestinian refugees.[2]

With the start of the twenty-first century, the subject matter in Arab American literature takes a change to meet anti-Arab racism in the U.S. that gets worsened by the 9/11 attacks on the U.S and fueled by U.S. military involvement in the Middle East. Due to these developments, Arab immigrants' different religious and cultural backgrounds are replaced by a common thread of immigration that unifies them. Moreover, the growing racial perception of these immigrants as terrorists enhances the solidification of their unity. Therefore, themes of displacement, discrimination and racism against Arabs and Muslims dominate the majority of texts written during the period from 2001 to 2009. In the introduction to their anthology of Arab-American fiction, *Dinarzad's Children: An Anthology of Contemporary Arab American Fiction*, Pauline Kaldas and Khaled Mattawa comment on the inextricable link between the American politics triggered by the events of 9/11 and the need to assert Arab-American literature on the US literary map:

> Post-September 11, the invasion of Afghanistan, the extralegal treatment of Arab Americans, [and] the war on Iraq must be considered turning points not only for the community but also for the larger American public's awareness of this community's existence. Arab Americans could not try to engage the world and remain anonymous.[3]

In the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the white American rhetoric fuelled by misconstrued patriotism rushed to vilify and marginalize persons of an allegedly suspicious racial makeup. The events lead to a production of white American fiction on Arabs characterized by what Rothberg calls "a failure of the imagination." Therefore, Rothberg argues for a "model of critical multiculturalism"

that will produce "a fiction of international relations and extraterritorial citizenship."[4] This writing strategy is an inherent characteristic in Arab American fiction of the post 9/11 that Georgiana Banita calls "moral racialization" [5]after her examination of Laila Halaby's novel *Once in a Promised Land* (2007). This tendency of replacing the dominant racial discrimination by a moral discourse can be perceived in the following lines taken from an anthology "*E-mails from Scheherazad*" by an Arab American poet and novelist, Mohja Kahf, in which she allows her impatience with the typical Arab stereotypes to come to the fore without fear of direct confronting the post–September 11 American political landscape:

No, I'm not bald under the scarf
No, I'm not from that country
where women can't drive cars
No, I would not like to defect
I'm already American
But thank you for offering
What else do you need to know
relevant to my buying insurance,
opening a bank account,
reserving a seat on a flight?
Yes, I speak English
Yes, I carry explosives
They're called words
And if you don't get up
Off your assumptions,
They're going to blow you away.[6]

Therefore, if reading in previous chapters is mainly based on Orientalist and neo-Orientalist approaches to novels written by white American novelists whose writings, indeed, are influenced by racial prejudices and biased attitudes toward Arab Muslims, a different path is chosen by these writers. It is the imagination of Arab American writers or brown Americans, that has influenced the literary production in this period and which tries to subvert the negative stereotypes by introducing their own "counter-narrative" defined by Edward Said as a "great deconstructive power."[7] This chapter will concentrate on the works of Arab American writers to show that, unlike white American writers, Arab American writers tend to employ literary strategies to subvert stereotypes and misconceptions commonly associated with Arabs in white American literature and popular culture. These writers also tend to look closely at the Arab community from within in order to explore some of the problems that Arab Americans encounter. Therefore, the image of the Arab Muslim community is central to this work. In other words, this type of 'counter-narrative,' in contrast to the American narrative, tends to focus on the marginalized Arab ethnic minority inside the US.

Through their treatment of the experience of Arab Muslim characters, Diana Abu-Jaber and Laila Halaby emphasize the impossibility of achieving an equal life with the white Americans. The two novels, *Crescent* (2003) and *Once in a Promised Land* (2007) are thematically similar. This similarity can be attributed to the similar imagination of writers who descend from the same ethnicity, settle in the same diasporic society and receive the same treatment. They are part of an ethnic community that currently faces a dilemma in terms of its racial classification and suspicious outlook. The obscurity that Arabs witness in the ethnic map inside the United States has made this ethnic group the most invisible among all minorities.

Though, according to the US official Census records, Arabs are considered white, however, this group has no legal position within the spectrum of minority cultures from which it can legally articulate its effective concerns about discrimination. Therefore, the socio-economic, political, religious and ideological dynamics of Arab American communities needs to be adequately addressed and contextualized while discussing a literary work produced by an Arab American writer in this period. These ambiguous racial positions drive Helen Samhan, Executive Director of the Arab American Institute, to state that the current federal white categorization of Arab Americans from the Middle East and North Africa within the "white 'majority' context" does not resolve confusions regarding their racial status.[8]

Laila Halaby's *Once in a Promised Land* (2007) is the story of an Arab couple, Jassim and Salwa, who leaves the deserts of their native Jordan for those of Arizona in the turbulent days following 9/11 to fulfill their quintessential dreams. Yet their life becomes the focus of the FBI investigation and they begin to experience a longing for their homeland. Although the two live far from Ground Zero, they cannot escape the racial discrimination of the citizens and the FBI agents. *Once in a Promised Land* offers an instructive insight into the struggles facing Arab Americans in post 9/11 America. The title the "*promised land*" may be the place of new beginnings and possibilities, the United States, for Arab immigrants. After 9/11, the Americans become increasingly intolerant and distrustful of Arabs and Islamic cultures. The novel portrays the American character's intolerance with and the xenophobic attitude towards Arab immigrants and reveals that post 9/11 America is rife with anti-Arab racism.

Jassim, a hydrologist, believes passionately in his mission to make water accessible to all people in the arid Arizona. His obsession in providing clean water

for the people leads the FBI to suspect him of being a terrorist. His contract with the company he is working for is terminated. Salwa, a Palestinian twice displaced, is a banker and real estate broker. She is treated badly by American customers at the bank and finds good company in Jake, an American co-worker, who later falls in love with her. The racial profiling and the harsh realities of being viewed as outsiders, Jassim and Salwa turn away from each other and begin to lead parallel lives. Jassim accidentally hits a teenage boy with his car and kills him. He keeps this secret from Salwa and finds a way to deal with his own grief. Salwa too keeps several secrets from Jassim. She becomes pregnant against her husband's wishes and is consumed by an eventual miscarriage. By detailing their failing marriage in a hostile society, the novel describes Jassim and Salwa's isolation not only from American society but also from each other.

In *Once in a Promised Land*, Halaby highlights the contradictions in the propagated American Dream for people living on the U.S soil regardless their colour, race and religious affiliation. It further challenges stereotypes about Arab Americans whose figure in US popular representations harkens to the exoticism of distant cultures and places and suggests an irrationality that can be contrasted with the rationality of Western liberal societies. In this counter-narrative, Halaby adopts a literary resistance strategy of storytelling that enables Arab immigrants to come closer to their native culture in times of adversity when the host society shows racial discrimination and injustices. Similarly, in *Crescent*, Diana Abu-Jaber uses intertextuality as a creative strategy of resistance. Her *Crescent* makes references to issues, misconceptions and stereotypes embedded in both European and American texts. In this sense, Abu-Jaber explores a serious issue that members of the Arab American community encounter which partly causes their marginalization in the US

social, political and cultural arenas. By examining these two novels, analysis in this chapter aims at showing how these novels vacillate between a moral understanding of post 9/11 racial discrimination on the one hand and resistance to this discrimination by denouncing terrorism and adherence to Arabic tradition on the other.

Once in a Promised Land denounces the racial prejudices against Arab Muslims in the neo-Oerientalist discourse of white Americans that is "extensively racialized" against people identifiable not just by their religion but also by their racial appearance. Jassim and Salwa Haddad, the main characters, are an Arab American couple who struggle to find a place for themselves and live comfortably with well-paying jobs, fancy cars and more space and privacy than they ever had in Jordan, but for much of the novel they remain confused and thwarted by their mixed identity. The more they struggle for achieving the American Dream the more they become pessimistic and confused. Their lives are further sophisticated by the American "patriotic breathing of those around them" and by what Salwa in particular has perceived as "those red, white, and blue fingers flapping at her, flicking her away."[9] At the end, this couple is informed by everything around them of the impossibility of achieving the American Dream and consequently gets branded as outcasts and thus doomed to suffer a long and spectacular ruin.

Counter-narrative, as a narrative, usually has two main functions that differentiate it from narrative work: (a) it counters an official/dominent narrative, and (b) it functions to open space for alternative narratives to be heard by creating public debate about an official narrative. It performs multiple functions such as offering an alternative representation of the identity of the marginalized people and giving them a voice in stories that critique the Master Narrative. These counter-

narratives "counter not merely (or even necessarily) the grand narratives, but also (or instead) the "official" and "hegemonic" narratives of everyday life."[10] Hegemonic narrative, that is also called a Master narrative or official narrative, is first introduced by the French philosopher and literary theorist Jean-Francois Lyotard in 1984 as a *Grand Narrative* that he defines as "the unifying and legitimating power" whose aim is one "of speculation and emancipation."[11] In the present thesis, the first three chapters have dealt with many kinds of post 9/11 American hegemonic narratives.

This chapter on the other hand examines the way in which post 9/11 Arab American counter-narratives emerge as a direct response to white Master narrative. Post 9/11 Arab American narrative is largely counter-narrative primarily because this narrative defends Arab marginalized ethnicity against a strong white narrative written in a period in which "*Evil*, of course, means *Arabs*. Or, at the very least, it insinuates that evil is exclusive to the Islamic world while the United States has a divine monopoly on goodness,"[12] and Arabs are perceived with "a very special hostility and fear."[13] In 1967, Kenneth Burke noted that literature is fundamentally equipment for living referring to a style of narrative writing that is perceived through a process of deconstructive reading defined by Jacques Derrida as an "oppositional reading" technique.[14] In doing so, Burke and Derrida draw our attention to our usage of literature as a strategy that shapes our understanding of the world we write and read.

Counter-narrative voice in *Once in a Promised Land* directly deals with the backlash of the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and its effect on the lives of Arab immigrants. By following the experience of the Arab Muslim immigrants inside the American society, readers witness how the prejudices and the sad reality of being considered outsiders cause Jassim's and Salwa's alienation not only from American

society, but also from one another. Ironically, isolation outside, in places of work, leads to lack of communication between them at home causing an accumulation of secrets to a point where it seems impossible to tell the other what is going on and they begin leading parallel lives. On the one hand, Salwa is shocked to find herself pregnant against her husband's wish and goes on in a sexual affair with Jake, her bank co-worker after she finds her husband has no interest in children. On the other hand, Jassim, tries to soften his isolation in the company of an American waitress named Penny after having killed a boy in a car accident. This lack of communication aggravates the situation and leads to a tragic denouement. When Salwa tells Jassim about her plans to go back to Jordan for some time without him, he realizes that the lack of communication might mean the end of their relationship:

> In leaving out what was most on his mind, Jassim realized that they had spent their lives together not saying what mattered most, dancing around the peripheries instead of participating. He had seen in her a passion and excitement for life that had become dulled almost immediately upon their arrival in the United States. What he wanted in her could not exist in America. Could not exist with him, perhaps.[15]

Halaby initiates her novel with a preface informing the reader that her main characters are Arab Muslims: "Salwa and Jassim are both Arabs. Both Muslims. But of course they have nothing to do with what happened to the World Trade Center. Nothing and everything," a statement that reveals the fact against which Arab Muslims are judged inside the American society.[16] Though, Halaby tries to distance her protagonists from their religious background in order to achieve assimilation, racism overcomes all their attempts. This indicates that the lofty ideals about fairness and equal opportunity characterizing the social structure of the country are

hypocritical. In the preface to the novel, both Salwa and Jassim are referred to as being Muslims; the first page of the novel identifies Jassim as a non-believer: "Jassim did not believe in God, but he did believe in Balance."[17] Later in the novel Jassim reflects on how his belief in God weakened and his awareness of his bodily instincts became stronger through swimming: "I have not prayed in a mosque since I was a young man…*Because I don't believe in God*…?"[18] He remembers his father saying "without God there would be no hope" when he asks him "Baba, why do you believe in God?"[19] However, Jassim does not agree with his father, but he does not say out loud what he thinks: "*I don't believe in God, and I hope.*"[20]

Jassim embodies Arab immigrants' wish to achieve assimilation. As a hydrologist working in the U.S. to promote accessibility to clean water, he is an important contributing part of the American system, yet he is cast out. Each of the characters has a separate and growing experience of what America has made him or her. Arabs who want to assimilate remain outsiders and part of 9/11 events that constitute ethnicity primarily made up of political and cultural influence of the 9/11. Therefore, assimilative demands for Arabs and Arab Americans are very high and at the same time they are rejected. The American Dream becomes accessible to Arabs only if they renounce their multiple national belongings, religion and culture and submit to the demands of a melting-pot America which are unbearable standards to the Arab community who is not ready to reject its own heritage, yet doomed to outsiderness:

> You [Arab immigrants] will not fit in here unless you behave appropriately, and this will be possible only if the differences that set you apart from us – your language, your culture, your religion, your attitude – are somehow naturalized, normalized, muted, consigned to

another time, or linked to a place and a way of life you have left behind.[21]

Though the American Dream ensures certain values like equality, freedom and justice to be available to any person in the United States without having a person to melt in that culture, however, some scholars reveal the hypocrisy of the American Dream and question the legitimacy of its demands. After the second world war, Gunnar Myrdal, a Swedish social economist and his colleague Sissela Bok call attention to "*An American Dilemma*" when they recognize the failure of U.S. society to live up to its stated values of equality and justice for everyone regardless of race.[22] This dilemma is recognized at the end by Jassim and Salwa who voluntarily leave their homes to America to discover that what is presented as "freedom" and "opportunity" for all is a thinly veiled system of discrimination that often excludes them.

Total melting in the American culture becomes a standard to judge Arab loyalty to America. So "either be with us or you are out of line," a standard rejected by Arabs and Arab Americans in the American society. In *Once in a Promised Land*, Salwa has a tendency to follow this standard but without erasing her identity and Arab heritage. She accepts the American flag on her car, offered to her by her American friend, in order to avoid racist attacks: "Joan gave us both American flag decals for our cars, so that we can announce to every stranger we drive by that we do not intend to blow anything up." "Do you think people who might intend to blow things up are putting those same decals on their cars for disguise?"[23] In Arizona, Jassim and Salwa come under personal scrutiny by citizens inspired by Bush's call to act as the eyes and ears of the government or what Judith Butler would call "petty sovereigns", a task initially reserved for members of bureaucratic institutions but

now extended to the entire nation.[24] Salwa who works in a bank as a teller is verbally assaulted by a bank client, "a native Tucsonan, American born and raised," who prefers to discuss her bank account with someone who can "understand better."[25] With astounding presence of spirit, Salwa offers her the option of a Mexican man, an American lesbian, or their Chinese director. The point Halaby makes here is that after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the Arab Muslim community has fallen many steps behind other immigrant communities and got categorized not only as second class community but also as a social danger to the national security as: "Mahzlims who are just waiting to attack us'' and whose goals must be foiled at any price.[26]

Crescent (2003), Diana Abu-Jaber's second novel, is a story of exile, search for identity and racial discrimination. Abu-Jaber notes that this American perception of the Arabs as potential terrorists has long been in existence before the events of 9/11. Abu-Jaber's *Crescent* opens in 1990 during the Second Gulf War fought between the Western allies, led by America, and Iraq. The novel's whole action takes place in Nadia's Café. With the break of the Gulf War, this Café, readers are told, was known as *Falafel Faroah* and was owned by an Egyptian man. But due to the Gulf War and its negative consequences on the lives of Arabs in the United States, CIA men began frequenting the restaurant in quest of "terrorist schemes developing in the Arab-American community."[27] Frightened, the Egyptian owner called his Lebanese friend, Um-Nadia, to Beirut telling her "if she'd like to buy a restaurant, cheap," an offer that she accepted, "she said, sure, why not?"[28] From this time, the legacy of Nadia's Café was born and called "Real True Arab Food". Therefore, discrimination against Arabs inside the United States began long before the terrorist attacks of the 9/11 but got reinforced after the attacks in a manner that

did not pass without leaving its imprint on the imagination and psyche of these Arab-American feminists as is reflected in their writings.

The main character in the novel is Sirine, a thirty-nine year old Iraqi-American who lives with her uncle and works as the main chef at Nadia's Café. Though she does not speak Arabic, the language of her father, Sirine creates an atmosphere of homeland for Arabs who are fated for loneliness in the American society. The Café provides a comfortable haven for Arabs where they congregate and talk about home. *Crescent* does also interweave a story of love and mutual understanding across different cultures and diverse ethnicities. The novel, for example, creates a physical and psychological ethnic borderland in which Arabs and other minorities such as Latinos, Iranians and Turks coexist and communicate. This interaction among *Crescent*'s ethnic characters emphasizes the ability of minorities in negotiating differences and creating a home in the midst of a foreign and alienating culture.

Abu-Jaber introduces, as the background to the world of racial discrimination, the historical reality of the 2001 terrorist attacks and their effects on the lives of the Arabs who are seen by the larger public as homogeneously complicit in these savage acts. This attitude begins to loom larger in the white American literary production and media after 9/11. Abu-Jaber's *Crescent* provides contrasting images of the lives, aspirations and concerns of these ethnic minorities inside the United States and defend those living in the Middle East as well. While white Americans depict their Arab Muslim characters in a negative manner, Abu-Jaber presents a positive picture of these characters and those drawn from other ethnic minorities like Latinos, Iranians and Turks. While she utilizes the questions of identity, hybridity and multiculturalism to promote a greater degree of racial

integration and coexistence, white American writers use these motifs to further deepen the conflict between ethnic minorities and the mainstream American culture. Therefore, Abu-Jaber's approach is basically cultural and open-minded towards all humans while that of the white Americans is predominantly political and prejudiced against the Arabs, the Muslims and Islam.

In *Crescent*, Arabs are not terrorists; rather they are victims of American racial prejudices. Sirine, an Arab American chef and the most familiar character to Arab immigrants in Los Angeles, wonders why America suspects her fellow Arabs: "Sometimes she used to scan the room and imagine the word *terrorist*. But her gaze ran over the faces and all that came back to her were words like *lonely*, and *young*."[29] In the novel as a whole, terrorism weights heavy on the minds of Arabs living inside the United States. Arab Americans are a rejected ethnicity in America: "They're like animals…all half-animals and half-something else."[30] These racial prejudices affected many young Arabs who prefer not identifying themselves as Arabs: "Ask anyone, Persians, Turks, even Lebanese and Egyptians-none of them want to be the Arab."[31] Aziz, the Syrian poet states: "Islam has a hard enough time in this country."[32] Being a part of this religion, Aziz wonders: "Who knows? I am Aziz, I am large, I contain multitudes. I defy classification."[33] These Arab views asserted by Nathan, a white American friend to Arabs, who acknowledges American racist injustices done to Arabs inside America:

> Things that Americans believe they don't have to learn about. You may want to live a life of benign indifference to the rest of the world, but understand that as long as you live here, murderous things are being done in your name. We have a moral obligation-a pact- to live as fellow citizens of the world. We have broken that pact through our

> indifference to others. And someday, something terrible is going to happen *to us*.[34]

The Arab experience in America is clearly framed by harsh racial discrimination that their lives seem to ebb and flow with international and domestic political changes. Hanif, an Arab professor feels that his experience in the United States as a writer is not encouraging his talent and he feels: "The media is saturated with the imagery of the West. Is it even possible-or desirable-to have an identity apart from this?" and "the C.I.A. is following you around."[35] Aziz narrates that his experience in writing poetry is affected by the environment he lives in: "I got fed up with all the harassments. Do you think I got nice letters? I did not. I got letters saying, no, don't tell such unhappy stories about the Arabs…And from who did I get these letters? From the Arabs who are always complaining that there's not enough truth about Arabs in the magazines and TV."[36] These two views are asserted by another Arab American boy, Jenoob, who replies: "Of course…All we see on the TV or movies about Arabs is they're shooting someone, bombing someone, or kidnapping someone."[37] *Crescent* contrasts these prejudices against many issues in which Abu-Jaber rejects the American negative representation of the Middle East and its people. For instance, *Crescent* describes the brutal American sanctions imposed on Iraq and its devastating effects on the lives of the people to show how brutal the American empire is. This issue is central to the lives of Arabs living inside America because the United States policy plays the major role in destroying Iraq in order to exploit its oil and other resources. Han explains to Sirine the suffering of Iraqis when he receives a letter from his family:

> …the air over the city is electrical, stirring with chemical dust and ashes…The vegetable seller opens his stalls but there isn't enough,

> milk for the children, and the children are everywhere, all over the streets, their eyes too big and their knees and ankles and wrists knobs. If you give one a banana, he will run just out of range in case you change your mind, and then eat it peel and all… Our fine, beautiful country is gone. We can't get away from the smell of burning…There are many diseases, cholera, malaria, typhus, and rickets…Our ancient night flashes with bombs. The Americans still bomb Iraq on nearly a daily basis.[38]

These facts and the imperial purposes behind them are confirmed by Han's American friend, Nathan, who tells Han and other Arabs in a lecture at the university:

> "Let me tell you all something", the man says, his voice charged with emotion. "Let me just tell you this. America simply cannot continue to pillage the natural resources and economies of other countries, to heap its desires and values, its contempt and greed on the backs of others, and not expect there to be consequences. I don't know when and how. But if things continue as they are, there will certainly be consequences. We do not live in a vacuum. We are not the only nation in the world. We have been doing terrible things to countries like Iraq for a very long time."[39]

Abu-Jaber shows a state of resentment among Arabs towards America and its imperial policy in Iraq. While hundreds of thousands of civilians including children die by American aircrafts, America looks the other side. Aziz describes the brutality of the American policy in Iraq: "Now, according to UNICEF, fifty thousand Iraqi adult die because of U.S. sanctions every year, and five thousand children die in Iraq

every month because of the American embargo of food and medicine. The sanctions deny people access to basic health care, clean water, and electricity-they're a systematic violation of the Geneva Convention, which prohibits the starvation of civilians as a method of warfare."[40] Aziz compares these huge losses with the American hypocrisy that "If twenty-five people die in a plane crash in the U.S. it makes headlines". In this situation, *Crescent* provides a call on all American Muslims to do something to prevent these massacres: "American Muslims must do everything they can to show support for their Iraqi brothers and sisters."[41]

As a part of resistance strategy to the western hegemonic discourse, Abu-Jaber uses the intertextual approach to subvert common misconceptions associated with the Arabs. In *Crescent*, a reader comes across episodes that are brought into dialogue with some Western texts like Shakespeare's *Othello* that engage with them in order to challenge certain stereotypes and misconceptions about Arabs on one hand and contrast them on the other. Therefore, *Crescent* uses Ludescher's viewpoint on Arab American literature that aims to show the "human face" of Arab and Arab Americans by "combating the proliferation of anti-Arab stereotypes."[42] With Shakespeare's *Othello*, the most academically critiqued play in literary history, Abu-Jaber contrasts one of the seventeenth century European conceptions on Arabs in which Shakespeare called them 'Moors' and viewed them as superstitious, jealous and irrational. In characterizing Han, a reader admires Han for his genuine love and high level of education who, unlike Shakespeare's Othello, is a contemporary educated Arab man whose love for Sirine is not marred by Othello's jealousy, superstition and irrationality.

Han's love for Sirine forms the main plot that revolves around his ability to submerge himself and his beloved in a romantic world and the concomitants that

emerge. Before they both fall in love, Han invites Sirine to dinner for a series of dates. When she knocks on door at the first invitation "Han immediately opens the door as if he'd been waiting right behind it" and "looks as if he can't quite believe she's standing there."[43] He takes her to the kitchen where he starts preparing the meal and listening to a famous Arab songstress, Fairuz: "Han just seems excited - his skin slightly damp and pink from the kitchen heat."[44] The atmosphere Han creates at his flat is a romantic one. His treatment of Sirine is lovely and calls for admiration as he "places the food in her mouth"…"Min eedi" which he translates "From my hand."[45] As soon as they finish their meal they step to the balcony as "[t]he moon comes out and turns red. They're back sitting side by side on the tiny balcony, eating frozen chocolate layer cake."[46] In this romantic atmosphere, Han introduces his past, personality and situation as Sirine "stays too late, drunk on Han's stories."[47] This episode forms one of the main intertextual contexts on which Abu-Jaber builds *Crescent* as an intertextual novel especially by making it engage with *Othello*, described by Sirine's uncle as a text "written by a mad Englishman" and compares Han's love for Sirine to that of Othello for Desdemona.

Like Han, Othello tells Desdemona stories of his past as a warrior and wanderer since his "boyish days" that he spent in achieving "disastrous chances."[48] Of course, Desdemona falls in love with Othello not only because of his passionate nature, deep love and tenderness but because of the adventures he has undertaken as Othello narrates:

> Upon this hint I spake:
>
> She loved me for the dangers I had pass'd;
>
> And I loved her that she did pity them.
>
> This only is the witchcraft I have used:-

Here comes the lady; let her witness it.[49]

By comparing and contrasting characters with Shakespeare's characters, *Crescent* provides a challenge to some Orientalist perceptions of Arabs who are viewed as jealous, superstitious and irrational. This kind of characterization confirms Homi Bhabha's statement on challenging a stereotype that "the stereotype is a complex, ambivalent, contradictory mode of representation, as anxious as it is assertive."[50] Through this strategy of intertextuality, *Crescent* subverts certain stereotypes in Othello and adheres to Jonathan Cullar's notion of "*Presupposition and Intertextuality*" as a strategy of engaging with other texts:

> It leads one to think of a text as a dialogue with other texts, an act of absorption, parody, and criticism, rather than as autonomous artifact which harmoniously reconciles the possible attitudes towards a given problem; it alerts one to the artifice of literature, the special conventions and interpretive operations on which it is based; and it makes one particularly sensitive to the special referentiality of literary works…The consequences of the notion of intertextuality are undoubtedly rich, but it proves itself, nevertheless, an extremely difficult concept to work with.[51]

In Han and Othello, the reader gets two different personalities in terms of irrationality and jealousy. Engaging with Othello's handkerchief, for instance, that has been associated with magic and superstition, aims at subverting one of the Orientalist conceptions that view Arabs or as Shakespeare calls them "Moors" are irrational and superstitious. In *Othello*, the handkerchief, Othello's first gift to Desdemona, becomes a cause of rage when Desdemona loses it as it appears when

Othello asks her for the handkerchief and stresses the value the handkerchief has for him:

> Othello: That is a fault. That handkerchief
> Did an Egyptian to my mother give;
> She was a charmer, and could almost read
> The thoughts of people: she told her, while she kept it,
> 'Twould make her amiable and subdue my father
> Entirely to her love; but if she lost it
> Or made a gift of it, my father's eye
> Should hold her loathed, and his spirits should hunt
> After new fancies: she, dying, gave it me;
> And bid me, when my fate would have me wive,
> To give it her. I did so: and take heed on't;
> Make it a darling like your precious eye;
> To lose't or give't away were such perdition
> As nothing else could match.[52]

Crescent adopts the idea of Othello's handkerchief and employs it to cast out the perception of superstition and irrationality of the Arabs. In *Crescent*, Han's first gift to Sirine is the Scarf which is known for its beauty and superiority that its "material is so soft between her fingers it feels like dipping her hand into water. The material floats and gleams in her lap."[53] Han informs Sirine that his mother's village is reflected in this scarf and its embroidery: "This is the traditional pattern of my mother's village in the south…If you study them, you can figure out where a certain embroidery stitch has come from."[54] The scarf his family sent him as a reminder of his own homeland, means something big for Han. In addition to this trait, the scarf

reminds him of his mother as he tells the reader: "My mother was wearing this when my father fell in love with her."[55] It is here where *Crescent* tries to subvert misconceptions about Arabs who are viewed as superstitious. Unlike, Othello's handkerchief that "magic in the web of it", Han's scarf is merely "a small thing…a beautiful thing."[56]

The loss of these two tokens creates different attitudes in Othello and Han. In *Crescent*, when Sirine loses the scarf at the Thanksgiving dinner, she becomes very scared in case Han knows: "Sirine makes everyone swear they won't breathe a word of this to Han."[57] Like Othello's handkerchief, this episode contributes to the tragic atmosphere of the novel. Initially, the loss of the scarf creates psychological pain in Sirine and causes a temporary anger in Han:

> "Where is it?" he says…"The *scarf.* What did you do with the scarf I gave you? Why don't you ever wear it?" Her mouth opens but she stammers, her voice rattling in her throat. "I guess-I just-I haven't had-"…"I trusted you with that one thing, just that one small thing, Sirine." He looks away from her. "How could I have been such a fool?" His eyes return to her and now they are flat, sharp stone. "How could I have trusted something so precious with someone like *you*?"[58]

Though Han's initial reaction is one of anger that does not differ from that of Othello, *Crescent* challenges Shakespeare's perception of the Arabs. Unlike Othello, Han feels ashamed of his outrageous behavior toward his beloved when she loses that piece of cloth. Soon he goes to Sirine and apologizes for his behaviour. His love and rationality surpass Othello's irrational and superstitious mind. He tells her: "The scarf was just a thing. If you have lost it or not, things are things and that's it. A scarf is a scarf, right? You, on the other hand, are the whole world."[59] A reader can find

that Han's love for Sirine is a genuine one and not marred by magic like Othello's. Therefore, Crescent basically aims at contrasting a stereotype on Arabs in the Orientalist discourse represented by Shakespeare's Othello.

Similarly, Han's and Othello's mothers are used to provide a critique of the Western perception of the Arab woman who is viewed as oppressed by her religion. In an interview with Andrea Shalal-Esa, Abu-Jaber notes: "I feel like if there's a choice … between speaking and suppressing yourself that inevitably you have to speak. Audre Lorde once said, 'Your silence will not protect you.' That's a really hard lesson to learn, and sometimes you have to learn that the hard way. It's an instinct to try to hide if you're feeling like you're under attack, to be quiet."[60] Subverting stereotypes through strategy of the intertextuality is common and primarily associated with post-structuralist thought. Roland Barthes provides a deconstructive view of intertextuality of the author in his famous essay *Death of the Author* (1967) in which he affirms that literary texts are no longer the product of an author's original thoughts. He argues that a text is "a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture" and the writer's "only power is to mix writings, to counter the ones with others, in such a way as never to rest on any one of them."[61]

Accordingly, in *Crescent*, unlike in Shakespeare's *Othello*, the Arab woman plays a central role in her own life. Contrasted to the absent mother of Othello, Abdelrahman's mother, who is also Han's aunt, travels around the world to find her missing son, Abdelrahman who "makes money by selling himself off, then pretending to drown while escaping."[62] The Arab woman in *Crescent* is present to challenge their stereotypes. If Shakespeare associates Othello's mother with magic and superstition, Abu-Jaber subverts this conception. Aunt Camille is more resourceful and determined, and crosses oceans and continents searching for her son.

She is "a perspicacious woman" who "was no dumb-dumb."[63] Camille tries hard to prevent her son from his bad habit: "I told him a thousand times, no more fake drowning! But did he listen? No! He'd turn right around and do exactly the opposite."[64] As the reader follows her search in Asia and deep in Africa, he admires her strong personality compared to that of Western men too. For instance, when she goes with the British traveler Sir Richard Burton, she does not like his personality because he follows his wife and shows no interest in finding her son: "Sir Richard was not too sure he wanted to be released" and claims "imprisoned people always get confused about whether they actually want to get out of their chains…his wife was more clearheaded about the whole situation."[65]

Perhaps the most interesting feature of the white American tradition today is its propensity to mainstream thought to forget adjectives and qualifiers. As a result, a handful of terrorists has come to represent 300 million Arabs. Halaby's narrative in *Once in a Promised Land* is used to this end. Halaby uses Salwa, who is born in America and has the American citizenship, in order to show that Arab heritage becomes intolerable after 9/11. In the 2008 Human Rights First's hate crime survey, Arabs are the most exposed ethnicity to American assaults: "The more serious of these offenses included assaults— sometimes deadly—against Muslim religious leaders, ordinary Muslims, and those perceived to be Muslim."[66] Once Salwa goes back to America, she tries to show more Americanness in her personality by showing a face "Made in USA. Miss America", yet this does not help her live as free as other ethnicities such as Africans, Indians, Hispanic and other communities.[67] This anti-Arab backlash resulted by September 11 urge Arab Americans into total assimilation, a desire reinforced by the discourse that Salaita terms "*imperative patriotism*" drawn from "a longstanding sensibility that nonconformity to whatever

at the time is considered to be 'the national interest' is unpatriotic," and "generates its strength most consistently at the level of morality."[68]

In *Once in a Promised Land*, it is easy to see how imperative patriotism and the negotiation of morality are played. Salwa becomes involved in an affair with Jake, a younger co-worker and her husband comes perilously close to having an affair with an American waitress; both are guilty of betraying familial bonds which leads to their isolation. The isolation and condemnation of this couple as outsiders and immoral in fact form the basis of the narrative, which describes a whole string of catastrophes culminating in Jassim's dismissal from his job despite his excellent efforts in the company. Of course, termination of Jassim's contract is purportedly based on something other than his racial profile; after all, as Salaita has stated, "imperative patriotism relies on a perceived pragmatism in order to command moral legitimacy."[69] In this case, the pragmatism consists in the boss's concern that the suspicion evoked by Jassim in his clients, coupled with Jassim's neglect of his duties as a result of personal troubles, would greatly endanger the position and profitability of his business. These personal troubles consist in Salwa's secret pregnancy and secret miscarriage, as well as an accident in which Jassim runs over and kills a young boy on a skateboard. As a result of these misfortunes, both of which Jassim could have done nothing to prevent, Jassim begins to neglect his professional duties, thus endangering his position and making it easier for his employer and American intelligence to single him out as a potential danger to the American national security.

Similarly, Salwa goes astray from what is considered moral and professional conduct. As a real estate agent, she seems complicit in the image of the United States as an agent of territorial violation and occupation. Salaita argues on anti-Arab racism as a function of the geopolitical interaction between the Arab and the American

worlds: "A correlative settler colonialism in the West Bank, after all, accounts for much of the tension among the United States and Arab nations—and, by extension, Arab Americans."[70] As soon as Salwa exceeds the limits allowed by her position, she sleeps with her young American lover in the bedroom of one of the properties she has been assigned to sell. Tragically for Salwa, her lover feels slapped when she refuses to abandon her marriage to Jassim (choosing to return to Jordan instead), he attacks her physically and portrays her native place as a "pigsty." Ironically, the moment these words are spoken, Jake's own apartment looks much more like a pigsty than any location Salwa may have come from; but in Jake's mind at this point in the narrative, race, femininity, and moral power are knotted together:

> Why did you come here? You came because you want sex. That's why. That's what all of this has been about…No, Jake. I am saying goodbye…"When do you leave?" "Monday."…"So you're running back to the pigsty?" Salwa's brain skipped. "Pardon?" "I said you're running back to the pigsty you came from."…She saw that he was holding something rectangular that caught the sun. A part of her brain processed that he was giving her a gift, a picture, and that for some reason he was lifting it into the air. In one powerful blink, it came down on her cheek, just below her eye, and she felt as if her face had been sliced with something that was part sledgehammer, part knife. She screamed and bent her head forward, covered her face, caught her blood…Another blow, aimed at the back of her head…"Bitch! Goddamn fucking Arab bitch."[71]

Episodes of sexual affairs between Arab woman and American man that later turn into an aggressive attack reinforces the idea that Arab ethnicity and heritage are

no longer acceptable inside the United States. This attitude can be seen in many American characters. For example, Professor Jassim is reported to the FBI by the receptionists of the company he is working with simply for personal hatred for Arabs: "…after September 11, Bella and Lisa were both really angry. They wanted to get revenge and they wanted to be involved in that revenge."[72] Similarly, Trini's dialogue with Penny, a waitress and Jassim's best friend shows the same sentiment towards Jassim:

> I don't get you, Penny. How can you like that guy and then you want to blow up his whole country…Jassim is a good guy-he's not like them, shouldn't be judged like them. But those people over there, they oppress women and kill each other. They're the ones who should be bombed…Men over there can marry four women at once, make them wear those sheets over their whole bodies.[73]

Racial discrimination against Arab immigrants inside the American society and nostalgic feelings are also the focus of Abu-Jaber's *Crescent*. This concern of Halaby and Abu-Jaber is commonly shared by Arab American writers and critics. In *Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People*, for instance, Jack Shaheen notes that Hollywood has been producing distorted movies which have affected the image of Arabs in general inside America. In his study, Shaheen surveys more than nine hundred films whose basic tenet is "all Arabs are Muslims and all Muslims are Arabs" and their common understanding of this group of people is simple that an Arab is "heartless, brutal, uncivilized, religious fanatics."[74] While Shaheen focuses on the negative image of Arabs in American culture, some other critics shed light on the complicated context in which Arab Americans produce their counter-narratives. Judith Gabriel refers the complex situation that Arab American writers live due to

the tense relationship between Arab and American worlds where these writers "are trying to maintain both their Arab and their American identities, without sacrificing one or the other."[75] Therefore, Gabriel advises that negotiating "complex interlacing of the forces of identity and the forces of art" should be taken into consideration along with the fear of disclosure that "is often most paralyzing when it involves women's issues, particularly those that involve intergenerational conflicts."[76]

On this ground, Salaita emphasizes the importance of developing a 'critical matrix' that is expressed from inside the Arab American community and will enhance the Arab American artistic endeavor. Salaita observes that "this [Arab American] artistic growth can play a crucial role in the external interpretation, acceptance, and humanization of Arab Americans and the Arab people as a whole" since Arab American community and their literature is interconnected: "By exploring the community, Arab-American critics will find the relevance of the text, and the community will in turn sustain the criticism."[77] In brief, Salaita calls on Arab American writers to common grounds and connections between their community and their literary production on one hand, and between their literary work and the context in which these works are produced on the other. In this context, literary representations become one way of engaging with the issues that Arab American communities encounter.

Crescent introduces the experiences of exilic identities and alienation of Arabs as "sadder than others" in a country where they are born and live. It explores the life of Arab American intellectuals, the hollowness of their existence inside America and their resistance to assimilate into a hostile society. Nadia's café is the centre where all Arabs gather. All Arab visitors to the café are males, as the readers are told: "The Arab families usually keep their daughters safe at home. The few

women who do manage to come to America are good students-they study at the library and cook for themselves, and only the men spend their time arguing and being lonely, drinking tea and trying to talk to Um-Nadia, and Sirine."[78] Though all these immigrants are highly educated, they are unable to find jobs due to the rampant racism in this society. As a result, they are "always so lonely, the sadness like blue hollows in their throats, blue motes for their wives and children back home…days of coffee, drinking and talking…For many of them the café was a little flavor of home."[79] An Arab immigrant would often loaf at the counter and relate to Sirine "how painful it is to be an immigrant – even if it was what he'd wanted all his life – sometimes especially if it is what he'd wanted all his life."[80]

The novel is set in a part of Los Angeles referred to as "Teherangeles" due to the large number of Iranians living there. In the novel, Sirine, the protagonist, is a half-Iraqi and half-American chef at Nadia's Café where Arab Professors and students spend their time eating and talking about home. Her uncle, who remains unnamed till the end of the novel, is the only Arab professor who works in an unnamed nearby university. Throughout the novel, Arabs are out of place inside the American society. It is only the café that brings them together to interact through their shared experience of exile and alienation: "Um Nadia says the loneliness of an Arab is a terrible thing; it is all-consuming. It is already present like a little shadow under the heart when he lays his head on his mother's lap; it threatens to swallow him whole when he loves his own country, even though he marries and travels and talks to friends twenty-four hours a day."[81] It appears that Arab Americans seem to be fated for loneliness, which explains their constant need for company inside the American society, as is evident in the popularity of Nadia's Café.

Clash of cultures is quite clear in *Crescent*. The racial attitude of the host society toward this ethnic group and the difference in lifestyles of both represent the difference in social relations between the US and the Arab world. Their life is mingled with a passion for Arab tradition, largely Arab cooking: "For many of them the café was a little flavour of home" since "Americans, he would tell her, don't have the time or the space in their lives for the sort of friendship."[82] Commenting exile, Said states: "Exile is strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience. It is the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home: its essential sadness can never be surmounted."[83] Exiled thinkers and writers, Said adds, "lend dignity to a condition legislated to deny dignity - to deny an identity to people. For them, it is apparent that, to concentrate on exile as a contemporary political punishment."[84] In *Crescent*, Han is the embodiment of Arab intellectuals' suffering inside the American society after the 9/11. He listens to a song called "Andaloussiya" that reminds him of the time when "Muslims and Jews lived together and devised miraculous works of philosophy and architecture."[85] Han feels astray in the town where he lives and where he even finds it difficult to locate Sirine's flat though it is close to him: "I really don't get the geography of this town," he says. "It seems like things keep swimming around me."[86]

Similarly, Arabs who show readiness to assimilate in and indulge in the mainstream American life are eventually pushed back to face the political situation of America and Arab world. This is reflected on the life of Arab intellectuals in America who are viewed as "terrorist spies."[87] To Han, America is no longer a place of literary achievement largely because of the media: "The question in the contemporary era is, what does it mean to call oneself an 'Egyptian writer' or even a 'Middle East writer' anymore?...The media is saturated with the imagery of the

West."[88] When Sirine asks Han "Do you think you could live here?" his answer shows willingness in assimilating: "I think so." He looks at her for a moment. "That's what I'm trying to find out."[89] Though Han tries to adjust to a new life, he fails. It is only Arab TV channels, food and the love relationship with an Arab American girl that makes Han temporarily feel "the opposite of exile". But the more time he spends the more he feels alienated as he comments on life in America:

> Exile is like… It's a dim gray room, full of sounds and shadows, but there's nothing real or actual inside of it. You're constantly thinking that you see old friends on the street-or old enemies that make you shout out in your dreams...Everything that you were-every sight, sound, taste, memory, all of that – has been wiped away. You forget everything you thought you knew. You have to let yourself forget or you'll just go crazy. Sometimes when I see some of those homeless people on the streets-you know, the ones walking around talking to the air, shuffling around, old torn-up clothes-sometimes I think I've never felt so close to anyone as those people. They know what it feels like-they live in between worlds so they're not really anywhere. Exiled from themselves.[90]

Crescent draws on the sense of fragmentation that an Arab immigrant experiences inside the American society after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. The reader feels this state of displacement and homelessness through Han's experience: "For a moment-for a moment, I forget where I was. I forgot that this was America. I was on the banks of the Tigris."[91] It is only later that Han realizes that "exile is bigger than everything else in my life" when the pull of home becomes stronger.[92] He begins to withdraw into memories of home that seem to tug at him, drawing him further and

further away from the reality of the US: "Leaving my country was like-I don't know-like part of my body was torn away. I have phantom pains from the loss of that part-I'm haunted by myself."[93] Finally, he reaches to the conclusion that leaving America for Iraq becomes a must, as he writes in a letter to Sirine: "I'm driven by the prospect of my return: my country won't let go of me – it's filled me up."[94] In short, coexistence between Arabs and Americans seems to be irreconcilable due to the unprecedented flow of discriminations against Arabs after the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

Halaby compares these social and personal alienations experienced by Arab immigrants to the ability of the white Americans in breaking the ice between them and Arabs. Contrasted to Jassim, Jack Franks, a client of Salwa and a retired marine officer, has less difficulty with breaking cultural boundaries. As soon as he meets Jassim at the pool for the first time and learns that Jassim is from Jordan, he immediately introduces his own understanding of Jassim as "an outsider" and associates Jassim with another Joranian man with whom his daughter ran away. Consequently, he constructs a bad perception of Jassim, considers him to be a potential terrorist and begins his contact with the FBI:

> These are some scary times we live in, he resonated to himself. My number-one duty is to help protect my country. The president said that specifically, that it is our job to be on the alert for suspicious behavior, to help the police, to be the eyes and ears of the community. Besides, if it turns out to be nothing, then no harm done to anyone. Dammit, if you're going to live in this country, you're going to have to abide by the rules here.[95]

Contrary to Jack's thought; Jassim loves America and does not have any intention to harm the country where he is planning to live the rest of his life. Though

he believes that "it [Jordan] would always be home", "he had no desire to return" because he thinks "What would he do there? He couldn't imagine living in that bureaucracy again, had become comfortable in this easy, predictable life."[96] Jassim, further, has even assimilated some typical American social practices such as having talks with people he does not know: "That was something Jassim admired about Americans, something he had done his best to absorb for himself: they didn't allow social constraints to get in the way of the day's plan."[97] Though this quote indicates that Jassim has adopted the American life style by breaking certain boundaries, however, after the car accident he admits that he feels alienated and his longing for his home, Jordan, starts: "And for the first time he felt unsettled in his beloved America, vaguely longed for home, where he could nestle in the safe, predictable bosom of other Arabs."[98]

Setting her novel in the early days of post-September 11th America, Halaby draws the structure of *Once in a Promised Land* from Arabian folklore to illuminate the futile search for identity in an inhospitable society and reinforce the characters' attachment to their home. She begins the novel by alluding to the traditional fairy tale more familiar to Arab readers, "*Kan ya ma kan fee qadeem az-zamaan*," which she perfectly translates as "they say there was or there wasn't in olden times."[99] So any Arab reader of the novel feels that the novel brings him/her back to stories told by grandparents. Inserting Arab folktales in the novel has a nationalist indication especially in episodes where the writer seems to be very obsessed with the loss of Palestine. At the heart of the novel is a rendition of an Arab folktale, about a *ghoula* (a female demonic figure of Arabic folklore) who lures her innocent victims into her grip so that she can eat them up once they are within her clutches. In this episode, only a very clever poor boy, Nus Nsays, manages to defeat her by his patience and

tricks. The image of this clever poor boy has reference to Palestinians' suffering at the hand of the Israeli brutal colonizers: "Every Palestinian has a habit of Nus Nsays within him. Or her."[100] Arab nationalist issues have a good presence in this narration as reflected in Arab-Israeli conflict on water and land. Arab characters' determination to save their land and water from Israel parallels their hope of achieving the American Dream. Jassim, before his marriage to Salwa, goes to Jordan and gives a lecture in Amman University addressing Jordanian students:

> When the Europeans settlers came, they diverted rivers and tried to harness them, with little regard for the people they might be affecting, which is similar to what the Israelis did when they hijacked the River Jordan in 1964; the 1967 war started because Israel was caught trying to divert the Jordan away from the West Bank and Jordan. The result of that war was that Israel controlled-controls still-most of the headwaters of the Jordan, much of the Jordan itself, and is in partial or total control of all the aquifers.[101]

Adherence to home and heritage is seen as a natural result of the racism and discrimination against Arabs and Arab Americans in the United States after the 9/11. Abu Jalal, Jassim's uncle, comments: "Imagine, in the face of Palestine being destroyed, of more people being made refugees, of their culture being stolen, of Jordan being placed on the brink of civil unrest as a result."[102] This feeling is shared by Arab immigrants inside the United States who appreciate their failure of assimilation even though they are Americans by citizenship. Jassim reminds his wife: "We are both of us too wedded to our countries", a place that "pumps through the blood, but America stays in the mouth."[103] Therefore, America becomes a symbol of failure and familial disintegration for Arabs who search for better life

while Arabia offers shelter and remedy for the tragic experience of American life. After their marriage falls apart and their dreams vanish, Salwa curses herself for being born in America: "I hate myself, feel so disgusted…I want to peel off my skin."[104] Later, the obsession with the American Dream is altered:

> What Jassim didn't know and what Salwa hadn't fully realized yet was that in breathing her first breath on American soil, she had been cursed. Because while place of birth does not alter genetic material, it does stitch itself under the skin and stay attached by virtue of invisible threads, so that if a person leaves that place for somewhere else (whether because she's been kicked out and forcibly sent away or because she is simply returning to the home of her parents), there is always an uncomfortable tugging as the silken (in her case) threads are pulled taut.[105]

Arab immigrant category in *Once in a Promised Land* represents a wave of immigrants who left home due to political instability and war. It is the category that processes a strong commitment to home and Arab nationalism. This wave of immigrants, according to Naber, is marked by "a rising ethno-political consciousness among members of the Arab American community."[106] This is explained by the fact that the American utter support for Israel against Arabs causes this wave of immigrants to grow up with a feeling of a need to emphasize their distinct identity and claim their rights as a minority group. Therefore, this nationalistic sense that characterizes this wave of immigrants is more politically powerful than the nationalism of previous immigrants because this wave that "brought new and specific forms of Arab nationalism to the US and began to self-identify according to the classification "Arab" more than the previous immigrant wave."[107]

These boundaries that identify this group of immigrants is seen in many characters in the novel. In Jassim, we see a man "filled with dreams of saving Jordan from drought and dependency."[108] According to him, the Palestinian and Jodanian shortage of water is caused largely by the Israeli piracy in the area: "Israelis who divert water" because "water is life" for Palestinians.[109] This attitude is seen in his father, Abu Jassim, who believes: "what happened to Palestine was a question both of pride and of humanity" and whose "sympathy for the Palestinians was both intellectual and emotional; his ire was immense and came from the injustice not just on a human level but also on an organizational level: something so wrong should not have been allowed to happen among civilized people."[110]

Halaby highlights the benefits of one's native culture in the difficult times. In her failure, Salwa is advised by her friend to return home and let home culture erase the memory of the American experiences: ""Salwa, listen to me. You need to go home for a little while. You need to be with your mother and sisters." *And your culture, where things like this can't happen*…"It will help you to see things as they are, and it's been years since you visited. Right now is a good time…and being home will be good for you.""[111] The point Halaby makes here is clear that Arabs and Arab Americans cannot live in America anymore and any hope for a better life for them should not be thought of after the tragic attacks of 9/11:

> If wishes came true, she would wish that things were now as they once had been, but Salwa knew in the marrow of her bones that wishes don't come true for Arabs in America, recognized that shift had come just months before, on the very day when she had tried with all her soul to drown her deception. It was not just her Lie that had

> brought distance between her and her husband and surrounded them with tension, it was the patriotic breathing of those around them.[112]

In *Crescent*, Abu-Jaber's use of characters affiliated to different ethnic groups aims at breaking the barriers separating Arabs from other minorities inside the United States. Therefore, *Crescent* contributes to any discussion of borderlands in ethnic studies in which interethnic relationships between different ethnicities in a society are negotiated. To put it in Bhabha's own words, these writers occupy "a cultural space - a third space - where the negotiation of incommensurable differences creates a tension peculiar to borderline existences."[113] Bhabha refers to these created borderlines in writing as tools that "open the way to conceptualizing an *inte*rnational culture, based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the *diversity* of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's *hybridity.*"[114] Borderlines are present in *Crescent* where people of different cultures occupy the same territory, where under, lower, middle and upper classes touch, where the space between two individuals shrinks with intimacy. In fact, *Crescent* represents an ethnic borderland, Arab-American community which is apparent in its interaction with cultures of different ethnicities as the reader notices the visible negotiation of differences through the interaction of these communities in and outside Nadia's cafe.

Abu-Jaber breaks the barriers of color and ethnicity in order to achieve mutual relationships in the hostile American society. The novel weaves a story of love and mutual understanding across different cultures and diverse ethnicities that include Arab Americans, Iranians, Turks and Latinos. The common understanding between these groups is seen in Um-Nadia, the owner of the café, who gives her viewpoint of the world as "Life is argument! Um-Nadia says. When Sirine laughs and asks, what are they fighting about? Um-Nadia says, What else?"[115] Throughout

the novel, these ethnic communities are brought to interact through their experience of discrimination and alienation in the white American society. As Aziz gives his view "I contain multitudes. I defy classification."[116] This view is seen in Nathan, the only white American who has a relationship with these ethnic minorities and who does not have an assertive notion of what his identity is. Nathan always identifies himself with his love for Han's sister, Laila: "I wanted to marry her. But I was just a guest in her world— her parents, her brothers. I couldn't take her away."[117] His love for Han and Iraq surpasses his American sense of belonging:

> There's a glow about them, the light caught in such a way that an onlooker might say the photographer was discreet and respectful, even reverential. She never realized before how important was Han to Nathan, or how consumed Nathan was by their relationship. And now that Han is gone, there is something gratifying, even moving, about this attention…She rubs her eyes and temples and experiences an upwelling of pity for both herself and Nathan, a sense of his loneliness and isolation, lost her among his images. Both of them locked into separate griefs.[118]

Classified in the same category, Arab Americans and Latinos try to diminish all the cultural barriers between their two different ethnicities inside the United States and consider themselves as one community. Further, they resist the idea of stereotyping or categorization and insist on negotiating their own differences for achieving common coexistence with each other. The following dialogue between Aziz and his Latino friend, Victor, embodies this sense of unity in the racial society: "They think we're all terrorists anyway," Aziz says cheerfully, scooping up a forkful of smashed potatoes" to which Victor replies "Who's 'they'?" I don't think that."[119]

Aziz erases any difference between him as an Arab and Victor who is Latino as he tells him: “If you and I were out shopping at the mall do you think any of the white guys there could tell the difference between us? They'd think you were one of my terrorist buddies.”[120]

Demolishing differences between members of these minorities is the core of *Crescent*. Sirine, a daughter of an Iraqi father and an Irish-American mother is a personification of this tradition. She inherits this tradition from her parents who have been working for humanitarian organizations and got killed working for a disaster relief NGO: “They were emergency care personnel for the American Red Cross, killed in a clash between tribes while on assignment in Africa.”[121] Though she appears to be anxious about her origin and culture, she denies any judgment based on racial or ethnic basis. Sirine concludes that skin colour remains an erroneous and a slippery racial and ethnic marker. Accepting one another is a prominent theme in *Crescent*. Like Sirine, her uncle introduces Han, an Iraqi exile with whom she later develops a love relationship that agitates her nostalgia for her Arab heritage, as an ideal man: “I’m telling you, he looks like a hero. Like Ulysses…If I were a girl, I’d be crazy for Ulysses.”[122] And in order to bring his niece closer to Han, he always makes connections between the two: “her uncle keeps introducing him to Sirine, saying their names over and over, “Sirine, Hanif, Hanif, Sirine.””[123]

Establishing ties between Arab Americans and other communities in *Crescent* involves a readiness for understanding their own similarities and differences. Demonstrating these ties is achieved by different characters who provide spaces for communication and mutual relationships. Sirine, the main character, lives with her uncle and works as chef at Nadia’s Café where Arab students and other ethnic minorities meet, eat and chat. This café, of course, plays a central role in

establishing an ethnic borderline. Sirine's love relationship to Han represents negotiation of American and Arab identities and cultures. Though, Han and Sirine differ in their status, the former is exiled by Saddam Hussein while the latter is an Arab American, they manage to bridge these differences. Abu-Jaber's art of characterization aims at negotiating these differences between Arabs belonging to different ethnic geographies. For instance, representing Arab students as Schmaal, Jenoob, Shark, and Gharb which in Arabic mean North, South, East, and West respectively, aims at negotiating the geographical differences between Arab countries through this personification. Though these characters belong to different backgrounds, yet they manage to bridge their differences through the café which provides them "the flavors that remind them of their homes" and its TV that provides them "news from Qatar, variety shows and a shopping channel from Kuwait, endless Egypt movies, Bedouin soap operas in Arabic."[124]

Sirine's hybrid heritage is used in the novel as a tool for demolishing racial boundaries of identification. For instance, when she is asked about her faith, she responds: ""I suppose I don't actually have one,"…. "I mean, my parents didn't, so…" "Well, I believe in lots of things.""[125] This hybridity helps her get connected to all races and build bridges of communication and understanding among Arab and non-Arab ethnic and cultural groups. Her boyfriend shows a similar view that religion does not matter for him "I'm no longer a believer but I still consider myself a Muslim… "I don't believe in a specific notion of God. But I do believe in social constructions, notions of allegiance…"[126] Similarly, Nathan, a white American, has a great sense of communal life with different ethnic minorities in his society. His interest in Arabic literature and his translation of Ernest Hemingway into Arabic are indicative of his endeavor to cross boundaries and establish bridges of understanding

between different cultures. Though white American, Nathan's life resembles that of immigrants who suffer loneliness. He is looking for communal life and belonging that the other minorities are also seeking. He tells Sirine:

> I was sure I would feel that way, absolutely and completely, for the rest of my life…I grew up half-wild. My parents divorced when I was a kid and all I knew about families was what I learned from watching other people. I went into the Middle East without any idea of who I was – there was no needle on my compass, you know? But the people in Iraq – this sounds dumb and romantic – but the thing is, they really seemed to know who they were. They dressed the way their grandparents dressed, they ate the way they've eaten for hundreds of years.[127]

In addition to bridging the barriers between Arabs and Arab Americans, *Crescent* expands this strategy to bridge barriers between Arabs and Latinos. At the café, Sirine is helped by two Latinos: Victor Hernandez from Mexico and Cristobal from El Salvador. Though Hernandez and Cristobal belong to different backgrounds, nevertheless they share the feeling of displacement experienced by Arabs. For Victor: "there wasn't anything for him here in America". He asks Sirine if she ever "felt like it was all a big lousy dream", and gets the answer "America is most definitely not a dream."[128] Similarly, Cristobal, a refugee who had escaped from El Salvador after the "*guardia*" of their "crazy dictator" had "firebombed his whole family" feels as an "Outsider."[129] For these figures, dictatorships at home unify their suffering. For example, Victor knows what will happen to Han if she returns to Iraq and therefore he advises Sirine: "…listen, I'm telling you, you can't let Han go back there. They will kill him for sure. Places like that, people like Han are the first ones

to go…That's how it always goes."[130] This feeling is seen in Cristobal, when Hanif suddenly returns to Iraq that he may become a victim of Saddam Hussein. Cristobal asks Sirine: "What will happen to Han now? What will they do to him?"[131] Being from El Salvador, a similar dictatorship to Iraq, Cristobal "must somehow know the answer to that."[132] Though Cristobal is not familiar with the Iraqi situation and Han's history, he manages to make connections between the two political dictatorships of Iraq and El Salvador. Accordingly, Crescent manages to bridge boundaries between different ethnic groups in the diaspora.

Therefore, 9/11 is an important turning point in the psyche of Middle Eastern Muslim Americans to the extent that it causes them to reevaluate their place in America and its promises of freedom and equality. In a study on the labor market presented in National Poverty Centre in 2009, Faisal Rabby and William M. Rodgers III state: "We find that 9-11 and the anti-terrorism measures were associated with a relative decrease in employment, hours worked, and the earnings of immigrants from Muslim-majority countries. The largest decreases were among the youngest immigrant men (ages 16 to 25) from the Middle East (excluding Israel)."[133] Halaby shows how these events have negatively affected the life of Arabs, especially at workplaces inside the United States through Jassim and Salwa who have been treated with suspicion and disrespect simply for being Arabs. In a telephone conversation with Jayne Benjulian, Halaby states: "Actually, I wanted to see what would happen to a very successful immigrant who had something happen to him—an accident—and how it would affect him. In my mind, I started with the accident and worked backwards."[134] Jassim's personal life is brought to light by the FBI which exerts lots of pressure to fire him from his job where he has been working in a company as a hydrologist for almost twelve years. Similarly, the accident that results

in the death of an American boy who jumps to the road is understood by the FBI as a terrorist act though the police report clears Jassim from any intention of killing the boy. This issue illustrates a racist attitude towards Arab immigrants as his wife comments:

> …do you see, Jassim? If we had been home and you had hit that boy, his family would have gotten involved from the beginning. Here, no one cared until they found out who you were, and –they're not looking at who you are as a person, at all the great work you have done. They are looking at the fact that you're an Arab. Do you think that any American would be scrutinized in this way? [135]

Similarly, at public places, Arab immigrants are not safe from racial prejudice and hate. At the local gym where Jassim used to have his daily swim as "a morning ritual as close to prayer as he could allow", he is confronted by the receptionist who informs him that "someone pooped in the pool" suspecting him.[136] Although this has not attracted the attention of the federal authorities, contamination of the pool seems to be related to Jassim's suspicious presence at the gym. Though Jassim does not carry any negative attitude toward anything in America, symbolically he becomes attached to the defilement of the pool. These perceptions become part of American understanding of the Arabs. Such prejudices are expressed by Penny's roommate who warns Penny against Jassim and his traditions: "Men over there can marry four women at once, make them wear those sheets over their whole bodies."[137] These boundaries, both from the inside and the outside, affect the perception and ideas about gender roles in America and in the Arab world. This connection between Arabs and suspicion is highlighted on September 17, 2001 by U.S. Representative John Cooksey who made a statement to Louisiana radio stations

that anyone who is "wearing a diaper on his head" must not be surprised to get interrogated at any time after the 9/11.[138]

Rapid increase in complaints and reported hate crimes against Arabs indicates a radical change in the mentality of the white Americans against the Arabs. Council on Arab-Islamic Relations' report of 2009 shows that the number of complaints in 2008 increased to three thousand compared to six hundred complaints in 2001. Arab efforts and participation in the development of American life is not evaluated by what they achieve, rather judgment takes place on racial and ethnic backgrounds. Arab American community comes to be defined in terms of Islam that is viewed as worse than Nazis and a very evil and wicked religion. Halaby tries to express the view that racist attitudes towards the Arabs overcome all Arab positive attitudes towards America. For example, Jassim's great efforts to preserve a huge quantity of rainwater for American barren areas come to be perceived as a threat to American security after 9/11:

> He had come to America a simple, focused man who wanted to expand his knowledge so that he could improve life for others… In more than a decade of good citizenship, he had never for a moment imagined that his success would be crossed out by a government censor's permanent marker, that his mission would be absorbed by his nationality, or that Homeland Security would have anything to do with him. Things like that aren't supposed to happen in America.[139]

His interrogation by the two FBI agents in a restaurant is a fruit of his good efforts and intention: "The FBI is trying to get information on every Arab in the country right now. Our government is at a loss, so they're grasping at straws. Jassim is a straw."[140] The information the FBI agents disclose about Jassim and his family

reveal that they know more about Jassim's family than even Jassim does. As the title *Once in a Promised Land* indicates, Arabs become a rejected component in a land they hoped to live as free and safe as other ethnicities. Another incident occurs for Jassim is in a shopping mall when he encounters a security agent:

> Salwa's eyes were on her husband at first but glided over to land behind him on the security guard, puffed up and close to bursting out her uniform…"Is there a problem?" Salwa asked in English over her husband's shoulder. "No ma'am." "Then why are you following my husband?". "I am doing my job, ma'am." "Which is what exactly?" asked Salwa with open scissors in her voice. "To protect the security of this establishment." "And how you are you doing that by following my husband?[141]

These unjustified interrogations result in radical change in Jassim's personality and his perception of the American society. He begins to regard his surroundings with logic and candor of his own when his hope for a better life appears to him "like a ghost who might vanish at any time without being noticed…a visitor to this country, to this woman, to this life."[142] The world surrounding him is perceived from a very detached perspective. Compared to Jassim, Salwa has a more realistic personality. The racist situations she comes across inside the US are more and even sharper. When a customer in the bank interrogates her, Salwa shows prided at being Palestinian: "Where are you from?" asked the woman. "I am Palestinian from Jordan." The woman continued to look at her. Chewed it over. Spat it back out. "What does that mean?"… "What do you mean that you are Palestinian from Jordan?" Does it mean you will steal my money and blow up my world?...You're out of line, lady."[143] This incident solidifies Salwa's belief: "I don't think it would be

easy to be an Arab these days. I mean, with what's going on and investigations and all that"[144] and reinforces her hope in her homeland and native identity: "Palestinian by blood, Jordanian by residence, and American by citizenship" and "Palestinian, Muslim, recent mother of buckets of blood."[145]

Salwa differs from Jassim in her assertive mood too. She is a strong woman who knows her duties and needs. She has always been fighting to protect Jassim from American racist discrimination. When Jassim is suspected and confronted by the mall-assistant, it is Salwa who defends him, confronts the shop-assistant and involves the shop manager in the discussion. She is the one who takes the protective role instead of being the one who receives protection. Jassim acknowledges her strong personality when he is interrogated by the FBI and immediately wishes Salwa to be with him: "Salwa, whom he longed for right now. If Salwa were here, she would be able to make this right, would turn the investigators' questions around so they could see how ridiculous they were."[146] This assertive and strong personality does not exist in Jassim. At the end of the novel, when Salwa is attacked by Jake and enters the hospital, Jassim appears as a helpless man who fails to defend his wife: "Salwa, I am so sorry it has come to this. For what happened. I feel that I am responsible."[147]

This assertiveness in Salwa's personality is recognized by Arabs at home. When Jassim reaches Salwa's house in Jordan to ask her hand in formal marriage, her father informs Jassim of Salwa's strong personality: "…she is really first world. A colonizer."[148] Further, Salwa's non-traditional attitude is appreciated soon after her marriage. Unlike traditional Arab women, Salwa soon takes on Jassim's last name which is not in Arabic tradition. When Hassan, her ex-boy friend calls her to America, he is informed by a voicemail about this change "Salwa Haddad" which he

could not believe: "…he never thought Salwa would be one of them. She had erased Palestine from her very name. He couldn't believe it."[149] Salwa's crossing of this boundary is very important in the Arab mind as when Hassan feels that Salwa is erasing her identity and therefore she is not an insider.

Salwa's high spirit does not exist in Jassim who feels exposed and depressed with no possibility of redemption. His spirit as a pre-9/11 Arab immigrant professor who lives as "an Arab in a Mercedes, oblivious of the sizzling around him" is destroyed after the 9/11 terrorist attacks when "his diorama sufficiently shaken, he began to see, slowed down, and looked at those looking back. And for the first time he felt unsettled in his beloved America."[150] The terrorist attacks of the 9/11 not only peeled "the safety film from people's eyeballs, allowing in what is really there rather than the filtered view through the comfort of routine.", but pushed Jassim to go back to the fearful, loathing gaze of anti-Arab racism by looking at himself through a hate-tinted lens and internalizing the racist profiling to which he is outwardly subjected.[151] His achievement in the firm he works for slackens, his moral standards decline at a steep clip, his hitherto balanced and friendly vision of the American society suddenly change into a damning view that diagnoses a social apartheid in an "unwelcoming" society where "more liberal streets where fear and hatred were disguised."[152]

Salwa, in her attempts of assimilation, tries to maintain certain limits and boundaries. She does not cut herself from her culture and religion as Jassim does. If Jassim identifies himself as a non-believer, he does not go to the mosque or celebrate Eid, the novel shows that Salwa fasts in Ramadan and celebrates Eid. Even though religion is not dominantly present in the story, Salwa's use of language with her Arab friend Randa demonstrates the influence of religion on her talk. Similarly, the

telephone call between her and Hassan, her Jordanian ex-boyfriend, is full of references to God. The expressions "Thank God", "God willing" and "Praise God" seem to be integrated in every sentence. The same can be noticed in the conversations between Salwa and Randa, although here the occurrence of such expressions is less dominant. The reason for integrating religious expressions in their language might be the existence of an implicit boundary that distinguishes their language from American language. In other words, it can be interpreted as a means to maintain a connection with the home where Arabic language is full of such religious expressions.

These changes in Jassim's personality including his new perception of America can be justified. The racial discrimination he faces is felt by his employer, Marcus, who goes through a detailed and excessive investigation by the FBI regarding Jassim's possible connection to the terrorist network of Al-Qaeda: "They say he sent money home to Jordan the day after the Twin Towers fell."[153] Marcus further informs Jassim: "They [FBI] asked me what your reaction was to September 11. They asked what sorts of Internet sites you look at…They asked me about your reaction to the war in Afghanistan."[154] They investigate his religiosity: "How often do you pray in a mosque?...What was your wife's reaction to September 11?"… "Why did she send fourteen thousand dollars to Jordan on September twelfth?""[155] Later, Marcus' ability to view the situation so reasonably does not prevent him, however, from firing this Arab scientist when he receives a newspaper article titled "Engineering Mistakes in the Building of the Twin Towers" and written for this particular purpose: "Jassim, please know that I am your friend. This is not an easy time for Middle Eastern people in this country. If you need anything, please come to me, to us. My family and I want you to know that."[156]

In the novel, it is easy to notice how Jassim's character changes. For instance, the excellent English language he masters in America is challenged by his isolation. Immediately after the accident, Jassim's fluent English escapes him and it becomes difficult for him to use it: "For all the years his tongue had been using English to communicate, he now found it difficult to work through, standing at the end of each sentence and translating it back to make sure he said what he had wanted to say."[157] During the investigation he feels as if his language is not understood by the police officers and the paramedics: "The words he spoke had not conveyed what he had intended by them. He could never decide if it was his English, his actual use of language, or if it was because people didn't really listen and instead put into words they heard the words they expected to hear."[158]

Language in *Once in a Promised Land* is not only a means of communication; rather, it is a link of the immigrants to their homeland. For example, Jassim's problem in his communication might have been caused by the boundaries he creates through his use of both Arabic and English. In many situations he uses both languages. For example, when he feels sexually attracted to Penny and invites her to go with him, he scolds himself in English: "What in God's name, on God's earth, am I doing? he asked himself out loud in English."[159] However, when he decides to cancel the date, he speaks Arabic: "I can't do this, he said aloud in Arabic."[160] Like Jassim, female characters always create this boundary in their daily life. Randa, Salwa's best friend, constantly mixes the two languages: ""I'm cleaning the kitchen, folding laundry, and watching a Lebanese game show". And then in English she added, "*I am Randa, Mistress of Multitasking*. I'll make tea.""[161] The use of the language here does not indicate two different languages only but also certain habits of two different cultures. For instance, her use of "*Multitasking*" refers

to a typical American life style of life at home and at the same time she is connected to her homeland through a Lebanese TV program. Similarly, at the beginning of the novel we are introduced to Salwa's definition of language as a medium of thought and intimacy. In many situations Salwa creates boundaries between the two languages. When she contemplates the kiss she receives from Jake she comments: ""What have I done?" Salwa demanded herself in English, this being an American problem, an American situation. She promised herself to think about it only in English, even as her brain shouted at her in Arabic, cursed her with her mother's words.""[162]

Arabic food does also refer to a boundary created by Arab immigrants and play a significant role in the formation of Arab identity in *Once in a Promised Land* and *Crescent*. In *Once in a Promised Land*, though Jassim and Slaw have been living in America for nine years, their food is still Arabic. Usually, Salwa prepares *baklava* and *musakhan*, typical Arabic foods. Food remains an important anchor in the memories of the past. Constantly, Jassim joyfully remembers the food he had in Jordan with his uncle: "Lamb that had been roasted with garlic in the outdoor stove. For years to come Jassim could taste it, the garlic having left a pleasant taste in the recesses of his mouth and, later, in his years of being away, a taste of home."[163] Salwa and Randa, too, are very much connected to traditional food that seems to lessen their isolation. Salwa comments on Arabic coffee prepared by Randa: "The coffee boiled away thousands of miles of homesickness."[164] Attachment to Arabic coffee takes them back home and distances them from the American life not because of its taste but because of the Arabic tradition of introducing coffee for guests and visitors: "I'll make you Arabic coffee. You can't come over here unannounced and not have tea or coffee. That would be too American."[165]

Further, this attachment to Arab food does not distance them from American and other cuisines. After the accident, when Jassim does not want to cook he decides to order some Thai food: "Thankful for the luxury of living in a country where any kind of food was minutes away, he got the pile of menus from a drawer beneath the counter and began picking through."[166] Similarly, at the Fitness Bar where Jassim used to swim, he drinks American coffee. Though it is the first time since he lives in America that he enters such a place soon he becomes familiar with the typical breakfasts served there. While he normally never takes breakfast, he is seduced by Penny, the waitress, to try it out. As a result, he ends up eating sausages and eggs which, to his own surprise, taste good: "He bit into a biscuit and was startled by how tasty it was. Not heavy or filling, though, and he found himself eating quickly, propelled by each bite to have another one."[167] When he visits the bar a second time he immediately orders some breakfast, namely pancakes and sausages. Jassim again adjusts a boundary to that of the host country.

Food, as a potential bridge for cultural dialogue and as an identity marker, is also used in *Crescent* to bring Arab immigrants together at Nadia's café. Food plays functions as a complex language for communicating love, memory and exile between immigrants. In *Crescent* food does also bring people of different ethnicities to interact and share their common experience. It becomes a metaphor for the interconnections within the ethnic borderland between different ethnic characters. In her interview with Andrea Shalal-Esa, Abu-Jaber states: "Food is such a great human connector, it's so intimate…let the food be a metaphor for their experience…that's why food has been such an important metaphor. To me, that's one of the most immediate and powerful ways of creating the metaphor of the hearth and a gathering place, a place where the collective forms."[168] In spite of the feelings of displacement,

homelessness, nostalgia that overcome the narrative, native food creates a feeling of home among Arab Americans and communal life between them and other ethnic groups as readers notice in their communication over the Thanksgiving feast, a dinner party at Sirine's uncle's house to which people from different cultural backgrounds are invited:

> The conversation at the table meanders through the rest of the meal. While Nathan becomes moody and withdrawn, the rest of them talk about the foreign but not unpleasant experience of eating turkey, and the pleasure of the rice stuffing…. They gossip about the café customers and the professors at the university and then they start to talk about Middle Eastern politics, which upsets everyone.[169]

Creation of friendly communal life is the result of food shared between different people as the above quote indicates. What is noted here is that religion does not play any role in bringing people of different religious affiliations together. All these characters do not care about religion, culture or ideology they follow. The only message given in the narrative is that all attempts of bridging the gaps between immigrants are done through food which happens to be cooked at an Arabian café. Realization of the effect of food on these immigrants can be seen in Han who shows more inclination to Arab food than to the Arab woman he loves largely because food creates a home away from home for him. His constant meeting with Sirine, who cooks for him, reminds him of food he has at home "My sister was about to call me in to eat. It's like the light broke into me and brought it all back and then I had to return to this place."[170] This feeling grows within Sirine too who spends too much time looking up "Iraqi dishes, trying to find the childhood foods that she'd heard Han speak of, the sfeehas-savory pies stuffed with meat and spinach-and round mensaf

trays piled with lamb and rice and yogurt sauce with onions, and for dessert, tender ma'mul cookies that dissolve in the mouth."[171]

Therefore, the Middle East café, Sirine and the food she cooks become the most important bridges connecting to home as Sirine comments "food was better than love: surer, truer."[172] Sirine's role as a bridge through cooking food and participating in its consumption with different ethnicities facilitates achieving communal life with varied ethnic, national, and cultural identities. Such a type of portrayal is best exemplified by the dinner party at Sirine Uncle's house described as "Vast and steaming, crowded" where "Sirine and her uncle try to invite over anyone who need a place."[173] In fact, this event sheds light too on erasing the cultural barriers between Arab immigrants and other ethnicities in America. The conversation between the Egyptian student Gharb and Aziz regarding the mix meeting with women shows a possibility of achieving common life with other immigrants: ""All these guys and girls all together."…"Yes, imagine the possibilities," Aziz says. "That's what I mean," Gharb says. "In my village, the guys and women eat apart from each other…I like it, of course. I do!"[174] These views are met with the reaction of Um-Nadia who describes how people gather and eat in her native place "In Beirut, it's always boy-girl, et cetera, et cetera. Much more sophisticated" which differs from Iraqi tradition as Sirine's uncle notes: "In our village, the big parties always separated men and women."[175]

Arabic food prepared at the café such as lentils fried with rice and onions, roasted lamb, baba ghannuj, rice and pine nuts, fava bean dip, laban sauce and eggplant constitutes a reconstruction of Sirine's past and the memory of her parents. It transports her to the lost world of her parents, American Red Cross volunteers who had died in Africa. When she joins Nadia's café, "she went through her parents' old

recipes and began cooking the favorite-but almost forgotten-dishes of her childhood. She felt as if she were returning to her parents' tiny kitchen and her earliest memories."[176] In other words, the Arabian food she prepares reminds her of both a physical replication of the culture that her Iraqi father practices and a lost homeland: "The flavors remind them of their homes."[177] Thus, food is a medium that connects people together regardless their ethnic and cultural affiliation. For instance, at the café, Sirine is helped by other displaced Latin ethnic minorities such as Victor and Cristobal, who all together serve to exemplify such a community. This coexistence at the café reinforces the sense of mutual understanding between immigrants as Victor comments:

> "Chef isn't an American cook," Victor Hernandez says. "Not like the way Americans do food-just dumping salt into the pot. All the flavors go in the same direction. Chef cooks like we do. In Mexico, we put cinnamon in with the chocolate and pepper in the sweetcakes, so things pull apart, you know, make it bigger?""[178]

In addition for being a tool for connecting different ethnicities, food does also play a contrast role. As much as it brings immigrants together inside the United States, it widens the gap between immigrants and the American culture. This is appreciated in the way the immigrants try to escape indulgence in the American foods: "butter instead of olive oil; potatoes instead of rice; beef instead of lamb" which Han interprets "a shift of ingredients like a move from native tongue into a foreign language."[179] This is because, according to Han, commitment to native food is like adherence to mother tongue: "food is their private language…The words flow into the eating."[180] Therefore, food in *Crescent* plays a two-fold role. On the one hand, it breaks all the barriers between immigrants through which all physical and

psychological ethnic borderlines are erased for the sake of communication and coexistence away from home and distances them from the hostile environment that views them as refused race on the other.

The present dynamic of the American culture is a key crosscutting theme and, as such, exacerbates trends in racism, discrimination, and Othering Arabs as the reader observes in Arab American fiction. Edward Said contends, in *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World*, that there is a consensus on "Islam as a kind of scapegoat for everything we do not happen to like about the world's new political, social and economic patterns. For the right, Islam represents barbarism; for the left, medieval theocracy; for the center, a kind of distasteful exoticism."[181] According to media expert Jack Shaheen, since the Oklahoma terrorist attack of 1995, the American media have projected negative stereotypes of Arabs and keep producing images parallel to the images of the Jews in Nazi-inspired German movies.[182] In *Once in a Promised Land*, Halaby shows that the representation of Arab Muslims in the American media relates to the lack of acceptance of differences that creates public panic around the terrorist threat:

> Later, as she was driving home, Salwa stopped at a red light with her windows closed against the unbearable heat, which seemed as though it would never, ever end. She pressed the forward scan button on the radio, searching for the station with soft rock and no commercials. A man's voice blared out: "Is anyone fed up yet? Is anyone sick of nothing being done about all those Arab terrorists? In the name of Jesus Christ! They live with us. Among us! Mahzlims who are just waiting to attack us. They just want …"[183]

The tragic attacks of 9/11 have instigated many questions about the American relationship with the Arab world. Perhaps the most appreciated form of this relationship as perceived by the majority of the Americans is "Why do they hate us?", an exclamation that has inspired many white fiction writers to give answers to this outrageous question. Generally their answers as examined in the two previous chapters are clearly of hegemony and imperialism as the word "us" suggests. In other words, the question clearly implies that this alleged hatred is directed toward every American and not toward specific American institutions. Hence, the white American discourse on Arabs reflects the answer of the majority of the Americans to the question. Accordingly, Arab American fiction emerges as a counter-narrative produced by writers who found themselves being compromised as "members of a demonized community" and whose task "tended to address communal concerns more than individual ones."[184]

The period that follows the terrorist attacks of the 9/11 does not only engender a need on the part of Arab-Americans to confront the terrorism and fanaticism charges targeting them, but has made it crucial for Arab American fiction writers to highlight the historical injustices that Arabs in the Middle East had been subjected to by US foreign policy. By doing so, these writers contextualize the 9/11 attacks and move them beyond simplistic rationalizations. Therefore, the post 9/11 era does not indicate an emergence of a new Arab American literature, rather it contributes to the maturation of this community's literature which has already attained a complexity in its themes and concerns before the 9/11 attacks as Said notes in *Covering Islam*:

> …the tendency to reduce Islam to a handful of rules, stereotypes, and generalizations about the faith, its founder, and all of its people, then

> the reinforcement of every negative fact associated with Islam-its violence, primitiveness, atavism, threatening qualities. And all this without any serious effort at defining the term "fundamentalism," or giving precise meaning either to "radicalism" or "extremism," or giving those phenomena some context (for example, saying that 5 percent, or 10 percent, or 50 percent of all Muslims are fundamentalists).[185]

This complexity is portrayed differently by writers whose responses to American racism differ from one another. For writers like Laila Halaby, Diana Abu-Jaber and Muhja Kahf, subjugation of Arab ethnicity has its roots, in addition to the terrorist attacks of 9/11, in the growing American imperial ambitions in the Middle East. For Naomi Shihab Nye, terrorism has been the main cause for Arab suffering inside the US. Her "*An Open Letter from Naomi Shihab Nye to Any Would-Be Terrorists*," that was published weeks after 9/11, embodies loathing of terrorist acts and as well as its ostracizing effects on Arab-American and Muslim-American minorities. Addressing "any would-be terrorists," Nye focuses on terrorism as the only factor affecting the lives of Arabs as she writes to a faceless terrorist: "I beg you…as your distant Arab cousin, as your American neighbor, listen to me. Our hearts are broken, as yours may also feel broken in some ways we can't understand, unless you tell us in words. Killing people won't tell us…Find another way to live."[186] Regardless of complexities in approaching issues related to Arabs inside America, these differences create the opportunity to voice Arab American concerns in the period after 9/11 and help bring Arab American literature into the larger socio-political dynamics of the twenty-first century American society.

Novels written by Arab American writers in the aftermath of 9/11 terrorist attacks emphasize the impossibility of achieving an equal life with the White Americans. These novels expose the contradictions in the propagated American Dream for people living on the U.S soil regardless their color, race and religious affiliation. In contrast to the White American writers, Arab American writers demonstrate fear of the increasing racial profiling towards Arab Muslims and try to subvert white American misrepresentation of Islam and Muslim by providing contrasted views. If an Arab is represented as violent, uncivilized brute and terrorist in White American fiction, Arab American writers challenge this stereotyping. An Arab is represented as a victim of generalization, racial profiling and physical assaults. Arab American characters, who are represented as victims, tend to build communal life with other minorities like Latinos, Turks and Iranians and try to bridge the gap of differences by diminishing all cultural boundaries of identification in order to achieve mutual understanding and relationship in this hostile environment.

Anti-Arab attitudes have their roots in pre 9/11 America. In Abu-Jaber's *Crescent,* this pre 9/11 history of anti-Arab racism is shaped by many events like the Arab oil embargo imposed on America in 1967 and the Iranian hostage crisis of 1979 and confrontations that involved Arab and Muslim terrorists such as bombing the American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998 and the Oklahoma bombing of 1995. The events of 9/11 are considered by many to be a major transformative event in the history of America and a memory fault-line that increased the racial profiling against Arab Americans and altered the situation of Arab community inside America. The post 9/11 climate becomes ripe for manifestations of political racism and moral exclusion. This study found that, a majority of Arab Muslims believe their

identity is under siege and their cultural heritage is under attack after the terrorist attacks of 9/11.

One common issue that is strongly highlighted in post 9/11 Arab American novel is the increased anti-Arabism inside the American society. Arab American characters feel they are removed not only from the Middle East but also removed from the United States. This hybrid feeling characterizes the protagonists and corresponds with the feelings of minor characters. The two novels tell stories of how the protagonists try to find a way of dealing with the boundaries created by the whites. Demolishing these boundaries happens either by creating communal life with other minorities or by relating to their religion, language, music, food, gender and class which seem to shape the identity of the protagonists and other characters. Although the two stories deal with the same theme of Arab-American immigrant experience, each story tells a unique experience of its protagonist and in this way they draw attention to the diverse make-up of the Arab American population which contains Christians and Muslims, rich and poor, recent immigrants and people raised in America, etc.

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Chapter V

Conclusion

After such knowledge, what forgiveness?

---T. S. Eliot

On August 24, 2010, Ahmed Sharif, a practicing Muslim man who works as a taxi driver in New York, was allegedly stabbed in the throat, arms and hand by twenty-one-year-old Michael Enright after Sharif answered questions about his religion.[1] More than a decade after the September 11, 2001, the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington continue to play a vital catalytic role in the American perception of Islam and Muslims. Representations of Islam and Muslims become more prevalent in post 9/11 fiction and terrorism becomes the most available term to identify Arab Muslims. The war on terrorism does not only involve a fight against Arab terrorists but also dedicates great efforts for observing and keeping an eye on every Muslim, as Canadian prime Minister said: "Islamic terrorism is the greatest threat to Canada's security"[2] on Sep 6, 2011. This view, including American assumptions spanning many fields of cultural studies, assumes that Islam is a threat to the Western way of life.

The September 11 attacks and the so-called "War on Terror" brought the Middle East and the old Orientalist discourse, with its binary division between "us" and "them", into focus once more. The misperception of the West toward the East and more specifically the Muslim world is not a new phenomenon but has deep roots in the past. Since the Crusades, Islam was regarded and represented in a way that created and intensified xenophobic feelings in the Western psyche. The Western knowledge of the East was often constructed through different ways that dramatized,

developed and deepened such feelings. Literary texts are one of most influential means that shape Westerners' knowledge, attitude and interest toward the Orient.

If the world changed after 9/11, literary writing also changed and therefore, the literature of this period is a reflection of its historical context and social feelings. It situates texts in history and exposes the ways in which historical contexts influence the production of meanings. White American writers like John Updike faced up to terror and represented it in their own ways. Updike's *Terrorist* (2006), as a frontal response to terrorism, sets out to do this by highlighting the threat of terrorism and how a young boy can be drawn to terrorist actions. Updike observes that writers cannot ignore the 9/11 events because novelists are aware of being on thin ice and dealing with questions concerning terrorist acts and loss of lives.

The tumultuous legacy of 9/11 has led to a quest for meaning among critics and novelists, an effort made to understand the complex social implications of this horrific event. Don DeLillo, a prominent American novelist, advocates the importance of narratives about the event: "We need them, even the common tools of the terrorists, to set against the massive spectacle that continues to seem unmanageable, too powerful a thing to set into our frame of practiced response."[3] The multitude of responses to the event over the past twelve years has demonstrated many perspectives on the attacks, including those of the American citizens who attempt to understand Islam, the Muslims and their heritage. Therefore, representation of the Muslims seems to become a tool for engaging with the alien and his culture.

The study in this thesis has focused on nine post 9/11 American novels which deal with the representation of Islam, Arab Muslims and the effects of the attacks on the life of Arabs living inside the American society. The second and third chapters

attempted to document the portrayal of Arab Muslims and Islam in White American novels. Accordingly, the study in these two chapters finds that Arab Muslims are negatively introduced to American readers to the extent that every Arab Muslim feels his religion and cultural heritage are under an excessive cultural attack by white American fiction. Though, these novels often claim to deal with the post-traumatic aftermath of the 9/11 events, writers regularly use the racial stereotyping and go further, to the seventh century, Prophet Muhammad's era, to examine the nature of Islam, Prophet Muhammad and his wives. It seems that 9/11 racial attitudes toward Muslims and Arabs have hardened and strengthened the old Orientalist discourse on Islam and Muslims.

The representation of Arab Muslims in the post 9/11 American novel is systematically introduced to the American readers. The systematicity lies in the American literary interest in tracing the history of Islam from its early formative days in the seventh century as a cruel religion and its Prophet as intolerant towards other faiths. Despite the fact that the vast majority of Muslims condemned the 9/11 terrorist acts and introduced the Islamic view on these terrorist attacks, all Muslims including, their religion, are perceived as a part of the conspiracy or at least supporters of the terrorists. Many post 9/11 white American writers fail to differentiate between Arabs and Muslims, on one hand, and terrorists, on the other. Against this background, the majority of American writers rely heavily on ready-made Orientalist sources for re-representing Islam and Muslims while others content themselves with sources written on Afghani Taliban to know the entire Islamic world.

So far 9/11 Orientalist scholarship has focused on fiction that portrays Islam, Arab Muslims and Arab nationalism overtly in the light of existing stereotypes of

pre 9/11. This study of post-9/11 fiction has attempted to elucidate the textual appearances of these stereotypes as well as their narrative role in prospering intensified stereotypes in post 9/11 fiction. Notwithstanding the imitation of the old Orientalist representation of Islam and Arab Muslims significantly, post-9/11 fiction is, undoubtedly, the most apparent confirmation of the hypothesis of the study.

Existing 9/11 Orientalist scholarship has succeeded in positioning post 9/11 fiction within a broader historical context. This study shows that post 9/11 fiction highlights the possibility of knowing history as a deeply ethical dilemma. Post 9/11 Orientalist scholarship reveals the foreseen connections between 9/11 terrorist attacks and other historical turning points of the past centuries, drawing on their capacity, to cast contemporary fiction in a new cross-historical and transnational light. Hence, isolating the 9/11 decade (2001–11) as a neat historical and literary paradigm would detract from its cultural diversity, from its imperviousness to Western historicization and from its attempts to rewrite the tenets and responsibilities of narrative ethics, and in particular of the novel, as permanently charged and altered by the events of September 11.

Updike's *Terrorist* (2006) is clearly a frontal response to 9/11 terrorist attacks. On representing the attacks and the perpetrators, Updike states: "I had something to say from the standpoint of a terrorist…I felt that I could understand the animosity and hatred which an Islamic believer would have for our system."[4] *Terrorist* represents the fruits of this attempt. The novel Orientalizes Islam and Arab Muslims and reproduces the prevalent stereotypes about Islam specifically fostering violent thinking and intolerance towards non-Muslims. The main characters, Ahmad and Shaikh Rashid show deep animosity to America, its citizens and its way of life.

The hostile feeling they reflect is a mirror of the Islamic creed and is supported by quotes from the Quran itself.

The mosque in *Terrorist* is a terrorist base and a centre of personality transformation. The mosque's teachings make Ahmed avoid socializing with Americans and reject the friendship offers he receives from fellow Americans. In *Terrorist* Arab characters are superstitious, irrational and backward persons who choose to be guided by imperfect, obscure and opaque mandates written hundreds of years ago. Throughout the novel, both Ahmad and Shaikh Rashid are depicted as being assertive about the Islamic promises of a next life and the existence of *houri*, beautiful women, in heaven as a reward for true Muslims.

Updike is keen in popularizing his secular philosophy. He contrasts Islam with secularism and suggests irreligion as a substitute for traditional religions. Islam creates fanatics and is based on superstition and unseen elements while secularism is based on seen and scientific matter that guarantees prosperity in the world. Updike's secular attitude influences his perception of Islam negatively. Updike compares Muslim characters with the non-Muslims and offers the reader a set of secular characters and bestows on them the American ideals of individuality, equality and tolerance. This representation of the Muslims proves Updike's bias for secularism. All his secular characters have a permissive attitude because they are not connected to any religion that claims superiority. For instance, Jack Levy, one of the secular characters whose religion "meant nothing to him", is made to carry an extraordinary amount of weight in the novel. Updike positions secular characters in the novel as a mouthpiece for the multicultural harmony in America and the American security issues.

The study reveals that Updike situates his *Terrorist* in the larger framework of the neo-liberal agenda of the United States. From the opening paragraph of the novel, the reader finds that Ahmed is scared of the neo-liberal America and its materialist way of life. Ahmed shows fear of his faith being stolen: "Devils, Ahmad thinks. These devils seek to take away my God".[5] Ahmad fears becoming trapped within this debased world and feels betrayed by what he regards as "an imperialist economic system rigged in favor of rich Christian infidels."[6] Ahmad attacks what he regards as the false promises of American consumer culture, telling his high school guidance counselor Jack Levy that the nation "has no God [and] is obsessed with sex and luxury goods" and reflecting elsewhere that "all America wants of its citizens…is for us to buy–to spend money for foolish luxuries and thus to propel the economy forward."[7]

Secularism overcomes Islamic radicalism. Levy's secular role is to save Ahmed and make him appreciate his position as a member of a diverse and tolerant society. For Levy, America has betrayed its earlier promise of opportunity and protection for all. He too believes that "too many losers and the winners winning too big."[8] It has left young people like Ahmad foundering in relativism and yearning for the certainty provided by fundamentalist religion. In conversation with his wife, he even suggests a reason behind Ahmad's attraction to radical Islam; a reason that once again centers on the idea of American decline: "[Kids] like Ahmad need to have something they don't get from society."[9]

9/11 attacks play a major role in Clancy's representation of Arab Muslims. Clancy's *The Teeth of the Tiger*'s whole action revolves around fighting and killing Arab terrorists. As a counter-terrorist discourse, the fight against Arab terrorists is supported by the author's strong patriotism and anti-terrorism. This patriotic spirit

results in demonizing Islam and Arab Muslims and speaks highly of American professional soldiers, FBI, CIA, Coast Guard and policemen involved in eradicating Arab terrorism. Preserving and restoring American national security require the novel to find enemies who plan to destroy America, an easy task in the fictional world. Therefore, the best choice for the author is to pick his enemies from real past events which are still alive in popular memory, something the reader can relate to. The most recurring enemy-image in the American contemporary cultural products has definitely come from the Middle East.

Clancy introduces Arab characters through binary opposition in which Arab Muslims are seen as uncivilized brutes, savages and terrorists. This stereotypical representation tends to lump Arabs, Muslims and Middle East into one highly negative image of violence, terror and danger. This representation is not purely drawn from actual experience but has its roots in American Orientalist texts that represent events such as Iranian Hostage Crisis, Oklahoma bombing and embassies bombing. The novel represents the pervasive influence of decades of deeply rooted Orientalism and is continuing this tradition in a more subtle and assertive way.

Like pre 9/11 Orientalist texts, the Islamic world in *The Teeth of the Tiger* is still representing an entity of threat to the American existence. The Islamic world, particularly Arab countries, is drawn in sharp contrast with America, the American way of life and all its claimed manifestations such as civilization, humanity, rational thought and pluralism. The religious and political fanaticism of Arab Muslims provides a demonized enemy. There is no attempt at sympathizing or giving a background view on motivating factors; the enemy is savage, immoral, and sexualized in every way. The portrayal of these Arab Muslims in such an excessive way in Clancy's *The Teeth* provides the justification for the presence of the

American troops in the Middle East to fight terrorism in its nest and ensure the safety of the American citizens and interests.

The Teeth endorses the existence of a scholarship called neo-Orientalism in which Islam is essentially and by nature backward and barbaric and considers everything related to Muslim individuals as being based on such notions. This scholarship tends to Islamicize all sorts of abnormalities of individuals and generalize the wrongdoings of individuals and groups such as al-Qaida to all Muslims.

One significant point in the novel is the absence of any feelings toward the victims among the Arab Muslims who are innocents and not involved in fights. There is no sympathy for men, women and children killed in the American fight on Arab terrorists. Clancy is so preoccupied with a sense of self-pity that he ignores any capability of humanity, love, joy and suffering on the other side. The portrayal of the American victims in the novel puts a human face on those people who are killed and creates an impression that every one of them is a human being who deserves a full and happy life while the Arab victims, who are naturally innocents, are not represented at all.

Following in the footsteps of Updike and Clancy; John Elray, in a historical novel *Khalifah*, traces Islam from its very beginning and provides readers with a representation of the prominent Islamic figures who followed Muhammad. *Khalifah* introduce Islam as, from the outset, a bloody religion and Prophet Muhammad as a man who believed that violence is an instrument of faith. The Prophet uses terror, aggression and barbaric force to spread his religion and quench the voices of the people of other faiths. By representing Islam as a religion of violence and barbarism

and its prophet as a violent and intolerant man, Elray seems to have reached an answer to the question of the root of terrorism.

John Elray brings the Islamic and Christian cultures into clash though there was no clash of civilizations in the sense Bernard Lewis and Samuel Huntington employed in their arguments on the clash of civilizations. The early Islamic battles against the Christians represent the barbarism of the Muslims against the civilized Christians. The Islamic threat in *Khalifah* is compounded by historical antagonism and the overtly political role that Islam plays in the lives of its followers today.

The study of post 9/11 American novel reveals that Arab oil continues to be a central issue in American writings on Arab Muslims. In 2005 Richard A. Clarke, an American novelist and counterterrorism official in the Clinton and Bush's administrations, wrote *The Scorpion's Gate* in which he envisaged an Islamic revolution in Saudi Arabia toppling the house of Saud and establishing an Islamic republic in its place. This revolution is supported by China and aims at throttling down oil supply to America. In *The Scorpion*, Islam gains political landscape which is clearly a pure American formula and not a Middle Eastern one to legalize any intervention in the Middle East, one of the oil-richest regions of the world, under the name of fighting terrorism. This visible resurgence of the American awareness toward Islam resembles the European perception of Judaism in the Middle Ages.

Clarke's Orientalist view is identical with the American hegemonic policy in this rich region which can be summed up in the infamous quote attributed to Henry Kissinger in 1974: "Oil is much too important a commodity to be left in the hands of the Arabs."[10] As Arab opposition to the American hegemony increased in the twenty-first century in the form of nationalist movements, U.S. military, intelligence and writers articulated a new demonology of Arab terrorism. Once again American

writers adopt the colonial counterterrorism discourses of the British writers of the 1930s in which terrorism was a common term for indigenous resistance to colonialism.

Clarke establishes a strong friendship between Arab nationalist movement and China; putting the two into what they are not, and like Huntington, he creates a very serious threat from the Islamic-Confucian connection. Clarke, further, divides his Arab characters into the bad guys and the good guys. Arab nationalists who struggle to improve equal rights and restore the sovereignty of the state are seen as bad guys who pose threat to the American interests in the Gulf area. The royal families, princes and dictators who are in alliance with America are the good guys. In fact, the current waves of protests against authoritarian governments in the Arab world oppose Clarke's representation of Arab nationalism and falsify the Orientalist notion that Arab and Muslim countries host the most terrorists and the fewest democracies in the world. The spark of these revolutions that has started in Tunisia by a desperate unemployed young college graduate on 31 Jan 2011 and destroyed five dictatorships till August 2011 is a movement against arrogant Arab dictators. The basic tenet of these movements is non-violent change, adhering to Gandhi's famous words: "Victory attained by violence is tantamount to a defeat, for it is momentary."[11]

The American narrative on the Muslim woman in post 9/11 literature forms a central part of the American narrative on Islam, a part whose basic tenet is that Islam is innately and immutably oppressive to women. In this narrative, issues of marriage, dress and segregation epitomize oppression of woman and are perceived as the fundamental reasons for the backwardness of Islamic societies. Representations of Arab woman in American writings point to the popularity of such Orientalist

representations of Arab woman well before that mythical story of 9/11. Though the events of 9/11, 2001 certainly stimulated an upsurge of images of oppressed women in American literature, American audiences have been familiar with such images for far longer. In fact, the representation of Muslim woman has a good presence in American writings since the Gilded Age as interpretive schemata through which American consumers of the images engaged with the themes of erotic fantasy and patriarchal domination.

The vast array of post 9/11 representations of Arab woman in American literature demonstrates another key feature of modern American Orientalist discourse. This wave of sympathetic representation exposes the oppression of woman by Arab Muslims where Muslim women are victims of the harsh religious intolerance and cultural practices. This kind of representation includes comparisons between the Islamic and the Western ways of life in order to educate readers about Islam and defend the rights of Muslim women. Only women exposed to the Western culture are reactive, assertive, courageous in the face of such harassment and bold in their statements and actions. In the first weekly presidential radio address given by a First Lady, on November 17, 2001, Laura Bush laid the rhetorical foundations for representing the brown woman: "The fight against terrorism is also a fight for the rights and dignity of women."[12] This point is made clearer in a subsequent radio address to the nation, in which President Bush exhorts every nation to "stand with the civilized world or stand with the terrorists."[13] He locates the current "war on terror" in the same binary framework of superior/inferior.

Several feminist writers have explored the way in which Laura Bush's views support literary discourses that link the oppression of women to Islamic violence and terror. Sherry Jones follows the same approach in her *The Jewel of Medina* (2008) in

which women are humiliated by Prophet Muhammad and forced to marry him in battlefields. *The Jewel* is a platform for the propositions of the political development after 9/11. Like Laura Bush, Jones explores the fragile position of woman in Islamic society through characters whom she believes to be the embodiment of woman's suffering in Islamic society. She speaks authoritatively and negatively about the Oriental woman, her mentality, her intentions, her aspirations and her concerns. From beginning to end, the hinge is sex; the sexual encounters between Mohammad and women never cease. To a Muslim reader, the novel is filled with blasphemous depictions of the Prophet Muhammad, his wives, especially A'isha and her secret love and her marriage. Above all, Jones narrates Islamic history as a love story.

Following in the footsteps of Sherry Jones, Homa Pourasgari and Zoe Ferraris leave Muslim woman in the same position where Jones has left off. In *The Dawn of Saudi* and *Finding Nouf*, Pourasgari and Ferraris explore the situation of Muslim women in modern Saudi society and compare the suffering of these women with the suffering of Prophet Muhammad's wives. Set in Saudi Arabia, the two novels are similar in themes and suffering of the protagonists. The two protagonists fight for freedom and emancipation of woman and reach different ends. In the two texts, Saudi men are depicted as extremists, wife-beaters, rapists and arms dealers while the Saudi women are oppressed, marginalized and silenced by male absolute power that tries to enforce both authority and erotic domination. By expressing the situation of modern Arab women through women who are Muslims, they signal their critique to the unequal rights of men and women in Islam where only in death "women and men receive equal treatment."[14] It becomes an acceptable view that Islam is by its very nature responsible for woman's suffering in Islamic societies:

"You must first understand Islam and in order to truly comprehend Islam, you must go to the source of where it all started-the modern Saudi Arabia."[15]

Pourasgari and Ferraris' representation of Islamic society is based on comparing and contrasting it with the American value, which, to them represents the accepted norm. This binary representation does always contrast a "good" Arab woman who is a paragon of freedom with a "bad" woman who epitomizes submission to male dominancy. Therefore, only Westernized Arab women have strong voice in these novels. Similarly, the presence of the American characters reinforces the binarism of civilized America against the uncivilized Arabia.

In *The Dawn and Finding Nouf*, Sahar and Nouf are the emblems of women's reaction and represent exceptional women in the Saudi society. Inspired by her American friend Dawn, Sahar manages to escape to America on the day of her wedding. The existence of the American girl, Dawn, is to sacrifice her life in Saudi Arabia in order to inspire, enlighten and lay down plans for Arab women. The escape of Sahar to America after Dawn is murdered by her Saudi brother-in-law fixes the notion of the Muslim woman as a slave and pinpoints the place where women are given freedom. In *Finding Nouf*, Ferraris propagates the notion that woman's suffering in Islamic societies is not related to certain sects of Islam or particular Muslims but to the basic teachings of Islam that encourages honour killing. Unlike Sahar, Nouf fails to escape to America though she offers her American friend Eric Scarsberry a million of Saudi riyals and gets killed as a result. Representing the Arab society as a prison-like enclosure in which women are stockpiled for the lascivious desires of the male, provides a salient feature of American imperialism and functions as an articulation of the confluence of imperialism and colonialism in post 9/11 American literary writings.

Though Ferraris has lived in Saudi Arabia for a couple of years, the reader comes across numerous errors in time and place in the novel which challenge the novel's authenticity. Ferraris, for instance, speaks about the short distance between Jeddah and Muscat; however it is impossible to take an overnight bus from Jeddah to Muscat. She also speaks about islands two kilometers far from Jeddah, while there are none. It looks strange that Ferraris mentions women who are shopping before the break of the morning light whereas women do not go shopping at that hour, nor are any shops open. One of the most ridiculous errors is that one of the possibilities of the death of Nouf is by drowning in the desert, yet on page 91 readers are told: "In Jeddah it rained once a year, for approximately five minutes if they were lucky." Further, she mentions that oil wells are more in Jeddah than in the Eastern Province; however most of the Saudi oil wells are located in the Eastern Province.

Parallel to the white novels, this study has also identified a category of American fiction that tackles the events of 9/11 in a different way. This category is the Arab American fiction that produces a representation of Arab American community in post 9/11 America. In contrast to the racial representation of Arab Muslims in white American fiction, this category of Arab American counter-narratives focus on the effects of 9/11 attacks on the lives of Arab Muslims living inside the United States. In other words, these counter-narratives demonstrate greater fear of racial profiling towards Arab Muslims and try to subvert white American representations of Islam and Muslims by providing contrasting views. The primary realization faced by the majority of Arab American writers is that their community is replaced by blanket negative representations that make them the most invisible among all minorities. This category of fiction offers an exploration of the self and the suffering of the Arab-American community.

Arab American writers employ literary strategies to subvert stereotypes and misconceptions commonly associated with Arabs. If white American writers represent an Arab as violent, an uncivilized brute and a terrorist, Arab American writers challenge the autonomy of stereotypes produced by white Americans by giving opposite representations. In *Crescent*, Abu-Jaber achieves this representation through a strategy of intertextuality in which her novel enters into a dialogue with Western canonical texts like Updike's *Terrorist*, Clancy's *The Teeth of the Tiger* and even Shakespeare's *Othello*. In this creative strategy of resistance, *Crescent* attempts to question some of the themes, issues, images, misconceptions and stereotypes embedded in the Western texts. As a strategy of literary resistance, *Crescent* does also incorporate the events of 9/11 into the fabric of its narrative mainstream. The novel creates a physical and psychological ethnic borderland in which different ethnic communities coexist and communicate. The basis of such acts of interethnic bridging encourages a search for commonality in a hostile society. Only through such strategies can the ethnic borderland transcend exclusionary limitations and become a transformative site extending beyond the refused other.

In *Once in a Promised Land*, Laila Halaby offers an instructive insight into two major issues: the struggles facing Arab Americans in post 9/11 America and misrepresentation associated with the Arab American community. Halaby inverts the American gaze upon the Arab world; in doing so, she introduces 9/11 America as a country that is inundated with religious zealotry. The study of this counter-narrative finds that White American characters are increasingly intolerant and distrustful of Arabs and Islamic cultures. Intolerant and xenophobic white Americans are overwrought with paranoia and suspicion of Arabs Muslims. Their interaction with Arab Muslims reveals that America has become rife with anti-Arab racism after 9/11

events. By juxtaposing white American characters and Arab characters who are ultimately defeated by the Americans, Halaby makes it clear that the American dream is unavailable to Arab Americans and the Muslim world citizens alike.

The study reveals that the increasing political tensions between the US and the Arab world after 9/11 attacks have deepened the rising racial consciousness among the whites. When the 9/11 attacks took place, Halaby's Arab American characters become increasingly aware that many Americans have adopted the oppositional discourse propagated by the rhetoric of U.S. politicians at the onset of the war on terror. This rhetoric aggravated the American misperception of Arabic and Islamic immigrants already in existence prior to the 9/11 attacks. Therefore, a tendency to focus on communal life in the work of Arab American writers is clearly highlighted. This tendency extends to include other marginalized minorities like the Latinos, Turks and Iranians. Building communication between marginalized Arab-Americans and other minorities inside America aims at diminishing all cultural boundaries of identification and achieving mutual understanding and relationships in this white environment.

Crescent and *Once in a Promised Land* emphasize the impossibility of achieving an equal life with the Americans. A common theme found in the two novels is the contradiction in the propagated American Dream for all people living on the U.S soil regardless of their colour, race and religious affiliation. In both novels Abu-Jaber and Laila Halaby reveal how the Arab-American community becomes exposed to hatred, discrimination and physical assaults after the 9/11 attacks. Arab-American characters of these novels express the difficulty of their community in suturing their identity to the fabric of American society despite the fact that they are as good and loyal to America as white Americans. As a result, a

movement from the autobiographical individual Arab-American self to the collective experience of an Arab-American community dominates these texts. Further, the resistance to assimilate into American culture and build communal relations is more palpable.

This study of the Arab American novel finds that even in pre 9/11 America, this brown community used to come across, on a regular basis, negative stereotypes that introduce Arab American members as members of a demonized community. The existence of negative stereotypes of Arab Muslims can explain why Arab-American writers in the United States have, of necessity, tended to address more communal concerns than individual ones. In *Crescent*, the reader is confronted with the stereotype of the Arab terrorists, long before the attack on the twin towers on September 11. Prior to the 9/11 attacks, Arab characters in *Crescent* have been the focus of CIA agents who often visit the café in search of Islamic terrorists in 1990s after the Gulf War broke out. The discrimination and intimidation against Arabs therefore began long before 9/11 terrorist attacks on Washington and New York, and was reinforced after the 9/11 attacks in a manner that did not pass without leaving its imprint on the imagination and psyche of this community, as is reflected in their writings.

The American representation of Islam and Muslims in post 9/11 fiction reflects no profundity of research about Islam, the Quran, the Prophet and Islamic society and therefore, readers are exposed to an amalgamation of fabrication, racism, half-truths and the distortion of reality. Further, this fiction is largely based on an archive of old information and ideas in which the Middle East has been projected as exotic, passive, barbaric, and inferior by nature and thus it is both a threat and at the same time conquerable. This post 9/11 American constructed knowledge of the East

is not gained through a real encounter with the so-called Orientals. Rather, this knowledge is still based on constructed fictions, not facts, within the dominant discourse. This fictional knowledge produced by the Americans is considered to be the symptom of Arabs' incivility from which they must be redeemed. This knowledge of the Orient for the Western audience is believable because the author is writing about something which is distant and unfamiliar.

To sum up, the study of post 9/11 novels reveals that Arab Muslims are projected through a binary framework constructed around the notion of civilized/uncivilized and superior/inferior. Similarly, Islam is demonized and projected as a religion of violence, oppression of woman and sexuality. Islam is represented as a religion that teaches killing of non-Muslims and views woman as the property of man. Though these novels have been written in the twenty-first century, American novelists use the same clichés and stereotypes about the Muslims that have existed since the Middle Ages in European Orientalist texts. These old Orientalist sources have become the guiding spirit of Orientalist writers and remained dominant when alternative information has been available.

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