



## Representation of Islam in Post 9/11 English Novels

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### Abstract

Present research aims to study the representation of Islam in post 9/11 English novels. To this aim 31 post 9/11 English novels were divided into eight categories based on the angles from which they had looked at 9/11 event, and one novel of each category, a better received one, was chosen through cluster sampling to be studied. As the study went on two categories were deleted for not being related to the subject. Thus six novels by Updike, DeLillo, Ferrigno, see, Halaby, and Kalfus were studied. Using representation theory and Foucault's discursive formation approach, the effort was taken to identify the latent and manifest discourses shaping and shaped by these texts as well as the characteristics attributed to Islam and Muslims. The results showed that the discourse shaping the texts (war against terrorism) and discourses shaped by the texts (Muslims are all the same, Muslims are violent and promote violence, and Zionists are innocent) are in line with the power discourse in four of the six novels; whereas, in the remaining two novels, the approach taken toward power discourse is quite subversive. This of course signifies the presence of a multiple voice in the American society although the weaker voice is not heard as well as the loud voice.

**Keywords:** Representation, Islam, Muslims, discourse, 9/11, novel.

### Introduction

"Behavior depends on the image"<sup>1</sup>, Boulding proposes in *The Image*. He believes the image is gradually formed as a puzzle is formed when the related pieces are put together in their proper places. These pieces are the information pieces we are constantly receiving, and he concludes that it, in a sense equals knowledge<sup>1</sup>. In human beings, the image of the world changes with the physical development and so does the behavioral pattern.

These pieces of information or messages are therefore the constituents of the image and not the image. They are potentially able to change the image. When we receive a message, it might leave our image as it is, or it might cause a slight or significant change in it. Boulding further argues that image equals to the subjective knowledge structure and penetration to the knowledge structure or the image is possible through repetition. Messages are also of the public or private nature. When one of them hits the image the first time, it faces the wall of the value system of the individual and it will be evaluated as good or bad. If it is good, it will be accepted, otherwise it will be resisted. All living organisms initiate and receive messages. The difference between man and lower organism is that man initiates and receives messages himself, whereas lower organisms receive messages from nature only. Man's ability to converse, discourse, is another difference between man and other creatures. Conversation reveals the man's image, whereas no lower animal is capable of such revelation. It is through the man's conversation practice that the

man's image is improved, and the term employed for explaining it is "universe of discourse".

Representation is, in a sense, transmitting messages to shape a certain mental image. Mitchell says: "representation is an extremely elastic notion, which extends all the way from a stone representing a man to a novel representing the day in the life of several Dubliners"<sup>2</sup>. Representation as defined by the encyclopedia of the sciences of learning is "an internally generated knowledge structure used to store and manipulate information"<sup>3</sup>.

Viewing these definitions in the light of Boulding's definition of image one would see that all forms of representation either visual as films, television, photographs, paintings, advertisements or written as academic texts, novels and other literature can be as Baldonado puts it "clear images, material reproductions, performances and simulations"<sup>4</sup>. They are expected to truly represent the "real" thing; whereas, representations as reflections of reality has been a matter of dispute between philosophers, historians and artists for centuries.

Aside from the historical background, representation is a critical concept in post-colonial studies. Baldonado, in an essay on representation concludes that: "representations then can never truly be real or objective; instead, they are constructed images, images that need to be interrogated for their ideological content"<sup>4</sup>. She also emphasizes that "if there is always an element of interpretation involved in representation, we must

then note who may be doing the interpreting"<sup>4</sup>. Spivak, who strongly takes side with the subaltern, defines representation stating two aspects for it: "proxy" (speaking for) and "portrait"(portraying) and emphasizes "the complicity between them". She refers to the "speaking in the name of" as a problem: "It is not a solution, the idea of the disenfranchise speaking for the selves, or the radical critics speaking for them, this question of representation, self representation, representing others, is a problem"<sup>5</sup>. Spivak demands "persistent critique" to stand against "constructing the other simply as an object of knowledge, leaving out the real others because of the ones who are getting access into public places due to the waves of benevolence and so on"<sup>5</sup>.

Edward Said, in *Orientalism*, also holds that representations can never be truly objective:

In any instance of at least written language, there is no such thing as a delivered presence, but a re-presence, or a representation. The value, efficacy, strength, apparent veracity of a written statement about the orient therefore relies very little, and cannot instrumentally depend, on the orient as such. On the contrary, the written statement is a presence to the reader by virtue of its having excluded, displaced, and made supererogatory any such real thing as "the orient"<sup>6</sup>.

Representation and image making are two expressions for the same concept. Before representation becomes a critical concept in post-colonial studies, image making was used. Norman Daniel used the concept of image making in 1960 for the same meaning that representation implied later.

In summer 1993 Samuel p. Huntington proposed a hypothesis concerning the nature of the future global conflicts<sup>7</sup>. He emphatically announced the religion and culture as the major rupture source of clashes throughout the world. Eight years later, on September eleven 2001, an air raid brought down World Trade Towers killing and injuring hundreds of people in Manhattan, New York. The attack shocked the whole world and terrorized the people all over the United States. Soon it was announced that Al-Qaida, an "Islamic" group lead by someone called Osama bin laden is held responsible for the terrorist attack. In the coming days the following conclusions were automatically drawn by the media and their full and live coverage of the event and its aftermath:

Terrorists have attacked the United States. The United States is faced with a serious terrorist threat from now on. America has to defend itself against terrorists. This attack is organized and carried out by Al-Qaida. Al-Qaida is an Islamic organization.

Media's focus on the subject and their constant coverage of the related issues, created an atmosphere in which the American people were represented by media as expecting the US government to do something about the newly emerged circumstances that gave birth to a new government created discourse of "war against terrorism".

Within the newly emerged atmosphere strategic statements were made by the authorities. George w. Bush said: "this crusade, this war on terrorism is going to take a while." and soon took his word back about announcing the war as crusade. He emphasized the necessity of a new world order, and media began to more openly talk about Islam as a religion with a supportive attitude toward violence and terror by arranging programs to talk about Islam or Muslims only in occasions in which a bomb explosion or a terrorist attack had had happened somewhere around the world. Of course this was a routine already as Edward said mentioned it in "Islam as news" section of *Covering Islam* (1997), but now its frequency enhanced.

As it went on, a new attitude toward Islam and Muslims was shaped in which literature played a role as well. During the years 2001 and 2007, within less than six years, aside from numerous nonfiction books written about the nature of the event many narratives were produced. Among them are more than thirty novels directly related to the 9/11 event (table-1). All of these novels except two are originally written in English although some are written in countries other than the United States. Directly or indirectly, Islam is represented or referred to in post 9/11 English novels. The researcher is looking forward to revealing the picture of Islam as depicted in these novels.

The significance of this research lies in the fact that it bridges the gap between the latest works done in this area and the present. It, in a sense, will update the research previously performed. Another major significance of this research is the identification of post 9/11 discourses and their influence on post 9/11 English novels. It will be shown how post 9/11 discourses shape post 9/11 English novels as new discourses that can be influential to a certain extent in shaping the public opinion. It will also reveal the mechanisms through which these discourses represent Islam, and will show the relationship of the present image of Islam with that of the past. It will accordingly explicate the formation mechanism of the "other" as the enemy and the status of Islam in this regard.

As to the scope of the study, "representation of Islam in post 9/11 English novels" shows the borders of the study. It is limited to the study of novels directly related to September eleven, originally written in English, and with direct references to Islam, Prophet Mohammad, the Quran, and/or Muslims. Thus, after identifying, making a list, and gathering the specifications of such novels (table-1); determining discourses shaping these novels, and the novels' attitudes toward dominant discourse (Table-2); and grouping the novels based on discourses they are emphasizing (table-3); six novels had to be excluded from the list due to the original language not being English (no.1 and no.14, table-1), indirect instead of direct relation to 9/11 event (no.22, Table-2), and not being of a significant help in answering research questions (no.2, no.3, and no.10, Table-2, or their corresponding numbers:5, 4, and 6 in Table-3).

**Table-1**  
**Post 9/11 Novels**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Publisher</b>	<b>Pages</b>	<b>Language</b>
The last night of a damned soul	Slimane benaïssa	2004	Grove press	272	French
The warlord's son	Dan fesperman	2005	Vintage	336	English
Blow the house down	Robert baer	2007	Broadway	304	English
Saturday	Ian mcewan	2006	Anchor	304	English
Terrorist	John updike	2006	Knopf	320	English
Shalimar the clown	Salman rushdie	2006	Random house	416	English
The attack	Yasmina khadra	2006	Nan a. Talese	272	English
The kite runner	Khaled hosseini	2004	Riverhead trade	372	English
The bookseller of kabul	Åsne seierstad	2004	Back bay books	288	English
At risk	Stella rimington	2006	Vintage	416	English
The scorpion's gate	Richard a. Clarke	2006	Berkley	323	English
The last jihad	Joel c. Rosenberg	2006	Tyndale house publishers	352	English
Prayers for the assassin	Robert ferrigno	2006	Pocket books	496	English
*windows on the world	Frédéric beigbeder	2006	Miramax	320	*french
Dear zoe	Philip beard	2006	Plume	208	English
Extremely loud and incredibly close	Jonathan safranfoer	2006	Mariner books	368	English
Incendiary	By chris cleave	2006	Anchor	256	English
Self storage	Gayle brandeis	2007	Ballantine books	288	English
Once in a promised land	Laila halaby	2007	Beacon press	352	English
There will never be another you	Carolyn see	2006	Random house	256	English
Forgetfulness	Ward s. Jus	2006	Houghton mifflin	272	English
*the good life	Jay mcinerney	2007	Vintage	384	English
A disorder peculiar to the country	Ken kalfus	2006	Harper perennial	256	English
The writing on the wall	Lynne sharon schwartz	2006	Counterpoint	304	English
The reluctant fundamentalist	Mohsin hamid	2007	Houghton mifflin harcourt	192	English
Moth smoke	Mohsin hamid	2001	Picador	256	English
The afghan	Frederick forsyth	2007	Signet	400	English
Falling man	Don delillo	2007	Scribner	256	English
The submission	Amy waldman	2011	Farrar, straus and giroux	320	English
Harbor	Lorraine adams	2005	Vintage	304	English
A day at the beach	Helen schulman	2007	Houghton mifflin	224	English

**Table-2**  
**.Post 9/11 novel writers attitude toward dominant discourse**

Title	Author	Year	Publisher	Pages	Original Language	Attitude toward Dominant Discourse	Aspect(s) of the 9/11 event emphasized
The last night of a damned soul	Slimane ben aïssa	2004	Grove press	272	Fr	Supportive	Explication of the psychological, political, and religious realities that may underpin terrorism
The warlord's son	Dan fesperman	2005	Vintage	336	Eng	Supportive	Necessity of cooperation between us. And pakistan against taliban
Blow the house down	Robert baer	2007	Broadway	304	Eng	Supportive	Investigating the world of terrorism even for a cia agent is stepping into a dark and dangerous territory
Saturday	Ian mcewan	2006	Anchor	304	Eng	Supportive	Life is overshadowed with terror and there is no room for optimism
Terrorist	John updike	2006	Knopf	320	Eng	Supportive	Refers to the socio-economic, cultural and religious realities that underpin terrorism. The quran includes verses that can stimulate and calm down the violence
Shalimar the clown	Salman rushdie	2006	Random house	416	Eng	Supportive	Rushdie delves into the roots of terrorism and explores the turmoil generated by different faiths and cultures attempting to coexist.
The attack	Yasmina khadra	2006	Nan Talese a.	272	Eng	Neutral	The reality of terrorism and its incalculable spiritual costs. When horror strikes, the heart is always its first target. It strikes both sides. In an interview with the german radio station swr1 in 2006, khadra said "the west interprets the world as it likes. It develops certain theories that fit into its world outlook, but do not always represent the reality. Being a muslim, i suggest a new perspective on afghanistan, on religious fanaticism and what i would call religiopathy. My novel, the swallows of kabul, gives readers in the west a chance to understand the core of a problem that they usually only touch on the surface. Because fanaticism is a threat for all, i contribute to the understanding of its causes and backgrounds. Perhaps then it will be possible to

							find a way to bring it under control.”
The kite runner	Khaled hosseini	2004	Riverhead trade	372	Eng	Supportive	Loyalty toward the native taliban torn country and its poor people regardless of their religion. Fanaticism is hurting people regardless of their sect and the people are needy and deserve to be saved.
The bookseller of kabul	Åsne Seierstad	2004	Back bay books	288	Eng	Supportive	The miserable life of the people, especially women in today’s afghanistan and after the fall of the taliban where the shadow of taliban presence still exists.
At risk	Stella rimington	2006	Vintage	416	Eng	Supportive	Experts know their job well in counter terrorism mi5 department and they very well fight the its (islamic terror syndicate)
The scorpion's gate	Richard a. Clarke	2006	Berkley	323	Eng	Supportive	Story of politics, oil, espionage, and the earthshaking consequences that may lie at the end of the road ahead/ the scorpion's gate is a fabulous thriller in which anti-terrorist expert richard a. Clarke extrapolates what the future might hold based on what if consequences of decisions made by the current administration.
The last jihad	Joel c. Rosenberg	2006	Tyndale house publishers	352	Eng	Supportive	Terrorists prevent american strategists to bring peace and prosperity to tel-aviv and gaza
Prayers for the assassin	Robert ferrigno	2006	Pocket books	496	Eng	Supportive	Islam advocates terrorism
Windows on the world	Frédéricbei gbeder	2006	Miramax	320	Fr	Supportive	French novelist strongly sympathizes with the 9/11 victims muslims are killing the innocent people.
Dear zoe	Philip beard	2006	Plume	208	Eng	Supportive	Sympathizes with the victims of 9/11 time will heal the wound
Extremely loud and incredibly close	Jonathan safranfoer	2006	Mariner books	368	Eng	Subversive	Loss and recovery sympathizing with the victims the next generation is expected to unfold the mystery of the event
Incendiary	By chris cleave	2006	Anchor	256	Eng	Subversive	Terrorism burns everything, but "it's like the proverb that we are poking sticks into the wasps' nests and my job is to run around and stop the wasps stinging us. It's never going to happen. We've simply got to stop doing just a few of the things that make these people want to murder us."
Self storage	Gayle brandeis	2007	Ballantine books	288	Eng	Supportive	"a novel of passion and consequence, identity and

							accountability. I love the narrator, her children, her wild ride, and this truly american story of getting mad and getting wise." barbara kingsolver Dehumanizing the other
Once in a promised land	Laila halaby	2007	Beacon press	352	Eng	Subversive	Side effects and the consequences of 9/11 for arab americans. Racialization, and humiliation of the arabs in america. Necessity of trans-cultural interactions
There will never be another you	Carolyn see	2006	Random house	256	Eng	Subversive	Terrorism against the u.s. Eventually assumes the form of environmental disaster. Meaningful juxtaposition of global issues and domestic ones: crises in the former can connect with, influence, and even determine the outcome of crises in the latter
Forgetfulness	Ward s. Jus	2006	Houghton mifflin harcourt	272	Eng	Supportive	The world regress to primitive blood thirsty tribalism/ we forget the inhumane act of the "other"
The good life	Jay mcinerney	2007	Vintage	384	Eng	-	*implicitly related to 9/11
A disorder peculiar to the country	Ken kalfus	2006	Harper perennial	256	Eng	Supportive	Our domestic problems are a lot graver than 9/11 we shouldn't have made the greater trouble, iraq war, for our people
The writing on the wall	Lynne sharon sc-hwartz	2006	Counter Point	304	Eng	Subversive	9/11 added to our problems domestic and global classification "politicians don't tell the truth"
The reluctant fundamentalist	Mohsin hamid	2007	Houghton mifflin harcourt	192	Eng	Supportive	The miserable consequences of the 9/11 for the pakistanis in america
Moth smoke	Mohsin hamid	2001	Picador	256	Eng	Supportive	The corruption of the system and the miseries of the people in an islamic society
The afghan	Frederick forsyth	2007	Signet	400	Eng	Supportive	Islam and muslims are looked upon from inside / they are very frightening
Falling man	Don delillo	2007	Scribner	256	Eng	Supportive	Muslims are violent terrorists
The submission	Amy waldman	2011	Farrar, straus and giroux	320	Eng	Supportive	An ultra-humane response to an ultra-inhumane act. "truly american story of getting mad getting wise."
Harbor	Lorraine adams	2005	Vintage	304	Eng	Supportive	Dehumanization and marginalization of muslims
A day at the beach	Helen schulman	2007	Houghton mifflin	224	Eng	Supportive	9/11 domestic consequences

Novels number 1 and 14 are excluded due to their french language, and novel number 22 is excluded for the irrelevance to 9/11

**Table-3**  
**Aspects of the 9/11 event emphasized**

Aspect(s) emphasized	Novel number in table-1 or -2
Roots	5, 6, 7
Domestic consequences	4,15, 16, 17, 20, 24, 31
Global consequences	8, 9, 11, 12, 25, 20
Curiosity about terrorism forbidden	3*
Necessity of pakistan cooperation with u.s. Against taliban	2*
Counter attack experts are active	10*
Supporters of terrorism	13
Transculturation	18, 19
The other is savage and violent not us	21, 28, 29
Muslims' miseries	26, 27, 30
National authority and domestic problems	23

\*starred novels (3,2,10) are excluded novels due to their irrelevance to research questions

**Table-4**  
**Novels Selected for the Study**

Aspect emphasized	Novel number in table-1 or table-2
Roots	5*, 6, 7*
Domestic consequences	4,15, 16, 17, 20*, 24, 31
Global consequences	8, 9, 11, 12, 25, 20*
Supporters of terrorism	13*
Transculturation	18, 19*
The other is savage and violent not us	21, 28*, 29
Muslims' miseries	26*, 27, 30
National authority and domestic problems	23*

\*starred novels are the novels selected for the study

**Table-5**  
**Primary description of post 9/11 english novels selected for the study**

Title	Author	Year	Publisher	Pages	Original Language	Attitude toward dominant discourse	Aspect(s) Emphasized
Terrorist	John updike	2006	Knopf	320	English	Supportive	Refers to the socio-economic, cultural and religious realities that underpin terrorism. The quran includes verses that can stimulate and calm down the violence.
The attack	Yasmina khadra	2006	Nan a. Talese	272	English	Neutral	The reality of terrorism and its incalculable spiritual costs. When horror strikes, the heart is always its first target. It strikes both sides.
Prayers for the assassin	Robert ferrigno	2006	Pocket books	496	English	Supportive	Islam advocates terrorism.
Once in a promised land	Laila halaby	2007	Beacon press	352	English	Subversive	Side effects and the consequences of 9/11 for arab americans. Racialization, and humiliation of the arabs in america. Necessity of trans-cultural interactions

There will never be another you	Carolyn see	2006	Random house	256	English	Subversive	Terrorism against the u.s. Eventually assumes the form of environmental disaster. Meaningful juxtaposition of global issues and domestic ones: crises in the former can connect with, influence, and even determine the outcome of crises in the latter.
A disorder peculiar to the country	Ken kalfus	2006	Harper perennial	256	English	Supportive	Our domestic problems are a lot graver than 9/11. We shouldn't have made the greater trouble, iraq war, for our people
Moth smoke	Mohsin hamid	2001	Picador	256	English	Supportive	The corruption of the system and the miseries of the people in an islamic society
Falling man	Don delillo	2007	Scribner	256	English	Supportive	Muslims are violent terrorists.

Novel no. 7 was found irrelevant to the research questions, and no.26 was not originally written in english, therefore they were crossed off the list in final revision

Some works are already done on studying the image of Islam in English literature. Smith (1939), Daniel (1960), Wazzan (1998), and reeves (2000), are the major writers who have already industriously tried to explore the image of Islam and Prophet Mohammad in English literature. But Wazzan's work covers up to the middle of the twentieth century and reeves' book only covers the representation of the prophet Mohammad in Europe. Aside from the partial works, analyzing one or two of the 9/11 novels in an article, the researcher has not been able to locate any comprehensive job concerning representation of Islam in post 9/11 English novels. Most of the partial works mentioned above, of course, do not offer a solid justification for the selection of the novels being studied. Since John Updike and Don DeLillo's are present in many of these studies, the researchers seem to be somehow canonizing the novelists by their similar choices.

This research, therefore, aims to fill the gap between the year 2001 and the present, and its major objective is to examine the discourses which are behind the representation of Islam in post 9/11 English novels. To achieve this aim, the researcher will have to identify the dominant discourses after 9/11 and show how these discourses have influenced the post 9/11 English novels, or in a sense how post 9/11 English novels are shaped by post 9/11 discourses.

Comprehensive and partial study of the literary works is of our concern in this research. Among the comprehensive studies done, Byron porter smith is a prominent figure whose work entitled *Islam in English literature* is the first work of this type. He has covered the crusade period to halfway through the

twentieth century. The book is comprised of an introduction and six chapters. He begins with briefly touching the crusade period and fully explains the representation of Islam in English literature of *The Middle Ages and the Renaissance* in the first chapter. *The Age of Dryden* is the title of the second chapter. *The Age of Pope* and *The Age of Johnson* are the title of the third and fourth chapters respectively. Chapter five covers *The Romantic Age and the Early Victorian Age*. The picture of Islam that he explores in English literature up to the 1840 is a dark, gloomy picture, full of unrealistic, legendary and contemptuous stories about prophet Mohammad, Islam, the Quran and the rituals such as fasting, and pilgrimage to Mecca. During this period prophet Mohammad is referred to as a liar, deceiver, or an impostor who is a threat to the individual's moral safety. There is a very mild change in the use of contemptuous labels up to 1840. Chapter six titled *The Hero as the Prophet* refers to Thomas Carlyle's famous article about prophet Muhammad. Smith signifies a significant change that gradually appears in the attitude of English literature toward Prophet Muhammad after Carlyle's article. This article condemns the church and the Christian's attitude toward Islam and Prophet Mohammad and demands a different treatment of the worldwide religion and its messenger (of course the messenger of Islam, not the messenger of god yet). Although Carlyle faces some criticism for his article, yet from then on even his criticizers do not use the label impostor any more<sup>8</sup>. Smith considers the weakening of the Othman empire, industrial revolution and the west's need for new markets as well as good news delivered by the travelers concerning economic promise of Islamic lands, if the relation with Islamic countries is straightened and strengthened, as the major reasons for creation of the appropriate circumstances

necessary for such modification. He considers 1840 as a turning point in the position and gradually in the attitude of the English literature toward Islam and Muslims<sup>8</sup>. He believes from then on the interaction with and the studies about the world of Islam tends toward becoming logical than remaining vulgar.

The second work of the kind was published in 1998 and is in Arabic without any English translation. It is titled *صوره الاسلام في الادب الانجليزي* by Adnan Mohammad Abdul-Aziz Wazzan. Wazzan, in the introduction of his book, tells the difference of his work with that of Smith's. He believes Smith's work is more of a report type and lacks causal and analytic explanations, but he has tried to fill this vacuum in his own work. Plus he has tried to sort out and answer the accusations attributed to Islam, Prophet Mohammad, and Islamic major principles and rituals by devoting a considerable part of his book to it.

Although last but not least is the book written by Minou Reeves (Samimi) entitled *Muhammad in Europe: A Thousand Years of Western Myth-Making* (2000) which is written in English and translated by Abboss Mehr Pooya into Farsi (2003). The book covers the representation of Islam in European literature from the middle ages to the end of the twentieth century. She has studied English, German, French, Italian and Latin sources, yet backbone of the information based on which the book content moves forward seems to be close to Smith's. She not only tries to report representations, but also explains the correct account of the historical events according to authentic Islamic sources. She, based on a firm reasoning, explains many of the objections and refutations concerning Islam and the Quran. As she explains in the introduction of her book:

*Over the course of thirteen centuries, stubbornly biased and consistently negative representations have persisted, presenting images which bear no resemblance to the noble man familiar to Muslims. Muhammad in Europe traces this consistent tradition of distortion and provides an account of the reasons behind it<sup>9</sup>.*

Aside from the comprehensive sources, there are a good number of references covering the representation of Islam either in a certain genre, during a certain period of time, or in the English written texts of a certain country. Among them stands *Image of Islam and Muslims in English Fiction* which is collection of seven articles edited by a. R. Kidwai. The first chapter or article of this book gives a useful and brief account of the presentation of Islam and Muslims in British fiction that as the writer, Jamal A. I. Mohd, has mentioned in his notes: "it must be placed on record that some of the material of this survey is gleaned from ...Wazzan's ...and ...Smith's..."<sup>10</sup>. The fourth chapter of this book is an article by the editor titled: *Pulp Fiction or Hate Literature* in which he states: "western literary figures, barring a few exceptions, have portrayed Muslims as fanatical in religion, tyrannical, especially in relation to women, and given to lust and violence"<sup>10</sup>. The rest of chapters are the representations of Islam and Muslims as portrayed by E. M.

Forster's in *A Passage to India*, or in English literary works of some of the Indian writers.

## Methodology

One of the areas of comparative literature studies is imagology. Imagology studies the image of a nation, gender, religion, or ethnicity in the works of other cultures. Imagological studies lead us to an image which is usually called stereotype. Images ought to represent reality, but parallel to this true function a false and deceitful effort is also shaped. Due to the availability of advanced communication theories and technologies for producing and propagating an image, it is not as easy to distinguish the false image from the true ones. This is where the imagology steps in to help us identify and study the image. But before studying the image, the discourse delivering the image, and prior to that the literary text presenting the discourse, out to be examined. The approach that fits this explication task is new historicism.

## Results and Discussion

To judge a school of thought the messenger, the leaders, the manifest, and the followers are thoroughly studied first and the school of thought is then judged according to one or a combination of these factors. The novelists whose works are under study have also taken the effort to do the studying of terrorism in American society, its roots, its radius of influence, and its national and international consequences, etc... . The novels under study, though they are about 9/11 historical event, yet they are all studying Islam in one way or another for two reasons: first because when they say terrorism they use it as a synonym to Islam; second because four of the six novels have studied in detail one of the factors mentioned above. Updike has thoroughly studied the Quran. Kalfus has focused on the Muslim. Ferrigno has studied the imaginary Muslim leaders and DeLillo has focused on the Muslim. Those studying the Muslim, or the leaders, have also occasional references to the rules and regulations of Islam, or to verses from the Quran so as to show the Muslims' ideological motivations based on which they lay certain charges as violence, or dogmatism against both Islam and Muslims. The fifth novel Halaby's *once in a promised land* has studied the miseries Muslims have suffered in America after 9/11 as the consequences of the event. The sixth novel, Carolyn See's *There Will Never Be Another You* is certainly a peculiar novel in subject positioning which is already partly discussed in previous chapter. She by not mentioning Islam or Muslims under certain tense circumstances that everybody is pointing to Islam and Muslims as the suspects, silently and skillfully cries her attitude, embedded between the lines, toward what the government and government affiliated organizations and media are propagating by considering them all "a big lie". She strongly removes Islam and Muslims from the circle of suspects and bravely looks for the problem in American cultural weaknesses. She reminds us of Foucault's argument about subject positioning in *the order of things*<sup>13</sup> in which he shows a painting that

although the subject is not positioned within or at the center of the painting, yet the people in the picture, somehow by the direction of their look, and other indications tell us what the main subject is, although the main subject is not centralized and is unseen, but it is undeniably the main subject and the viewer accepts it. Stuart hall explains how Foucault shows, "through a complex inter-play between *presence* (what you see, the visible) and *absence* (what you can't see, what has displaced it within the frame) that representation works as much through what is not shown, as through what is"<sup>15</sup>.

**Fictionality Verses Authenticity:** Authenticity is one of the major problems with the four novels. Judging a school of thought as philosophically complex as Islam without any reference to Islamic historians, sources, scholars, or specialists reduces to a great extent the authentic value of the representation. This is why the representation here is more of an image making nature than a sincere effort in representing Islam.

One might think these novels are fictional and some are too imaginary to be considered or taken seriously. The answer would be that in such cases the novelist has taken an utterly skillful approach by which he has allowed himself to attribute to Islam and Muslims what-ever kind of wrong he desires without any official obligation to prove the claim. Many charges are laid against Islam and Muslims without any effort to submit any authentic document what so ever. Therefore the fictional characteristic of the novels are functioning as a means of covering the writer's obligation to prove their claims. However discourses involved in novels under study are classified as those shaping the novels and those shaped by the novels:

**Discourses Shaping the Novels:** Due to differences of the approaches taken by the novelists they are divided into two groups of a four (Updike, DeLillo, Kalfus, and Ferrigno) and a two (Halaby, and see). The group of four is comprised of the ones with supportive approach to power discourse while the group of two has taken a subversive approach.

**War against terrorism:** Within the historical context of 9/11 event and the socio-political circumstances created afterward, discussed in the first chapter, "war against terrorism" turned out to be a dominant discourse, since it was strongly emphasized by bush administration at the time, and the Obama administration afterward. This is thus the discourse taken for granted by the group of four novels. Four of the six novels do not show the slightest doubt about the necessity of the war against terrorism. What there remains to be done and seems to be the responsibility of the novelists of the group of four is to identify the two sides of this war and the nature of each. This is why Updike tried to show how contradictive, violence promoting, and sometimes sadistic the Quran tends to be. DeLillo shows how ugly Muslims are either physically, behaviorally, and ideologically. Kalfus shows how inefficient and undesirable a Muslim is in family, national, and international scale. And Ferrigno shows how power thirsty the leaders of the Islamic

republic of the United States are; how backward the rules and regulations of Islam are; and how ignorant and violent Muslim people are. Since the four writers have attempted to identify the two sides of the war, it proves the fact that all of them have taken for granted the dominant and power discourse of "war against terrorism".

**All Muslims Are the Same:** The second discourse which functions as the premise of the argument of the four novels is that "all Muslims are the same". All four novels are attributing certain violent, inhumane and illogical actions to Muslims and directly (Updike, DeLillo, Ferrigno) and indirectly (Kalfus) consider Islam responsible for those violent acts. It is already thoroughly discussed why this discourse is a necessary forepart for the succeeding measures. Without considering all Muslims the same how can one attribute certain characteristics to them all? Certain proofs are already given in previous chapter as to how it totally resembles the Orientalists' technique and their attitude toward the orient. It was mentioned there that the French poet and Orientalist Gerard de Nerval in his book entitled "journey to the orient" emphasizes that all orients are the same which is considered a forepart for the succeeding attribution of certain characteristics to the orient and defining it as orientalist desired. Therefore a historical experience about the orient is repeated and applied to Muslims.

**Discourses Shaped By the Novels:** The main argument of this dissertation has to do with discourses shaped by the novels under study. If we are to draw the common denominator of the arguments the four novels are making, or the discourses these novels are shaping they can be organized as follows:

**Muslims Are Violent:** Almost all four novelists' main concern seems to be shaping this discourse. Muslims are fearfully violent. Ahmad in Updike's *Terrorist* is a terrorist utterly influenced and trained by sheikh Rashid ideologically. He is convinced by sheikh Rashid to become a truck driver. He finally knowingly drives a truck full of explosives toward a main bridge as a target and is quite ready to explode the truck. Aside from Ahmad as a Muslim terrorist, there are several references to the verses of the Quran that is meant to show how harsh and violent Muslims and Islamic recommendations are. Ferrigno in *Prayers for the Assassin* also introduces a series of Muslim characters in executive and political positions in an imaginary Islamic republic in the United States who are fully engaged in corruption, power struggle, carnage, bomb planting, hypocrisy, and passenger trafficking. DeLillo in *Falling Man* also represents Muslims as viewed from three angles; physical, behavioral, and ideological. He emphatically tries to prove Muslims the ugliest from these angles. Referring to one and only one verse of the Quran that says "there is no doubt in this book", he also condemns Islam for dogmatism and claims that Islam does not allow Muslims to criticize their thoughts and correct themselves. He also coins the expression "sword verses" of the Quran to prove that Muslims' violence is rooted in the Quran. The fourth novel is *A Disorder Peculiar to the Country*

in which Ken Kalfus tries to represent the antihero character as an abnormal Muslim in family, social and international level. He is too weak and undetermined to be able to solve his family problems, and that's why he gives in to divorce. In the national scale he is also an undesirable character who is not communicable. He is a curmudgeon and cannot see others' success or well being. He tries his best to reverse their fortune. He is not a successful employee at work either. Neither his previous nor his present boss like or approve of his attitude toward his co-workers. Under the pressure of the problems that he is not capable enough to solve, he finally decides to buy a suicide belt to blow himself, his family, and half a block out of frustration and weakness. At international level, challenging the government policies in supporting Israel, even though he might be telling the truth in certain cases, yet it is natural that the reader would doubt to accept the "truth" from such a wicked and frustrated character. Thus Kalfus is making an undesirable image of the Muslims too.

It is true that the four novelists have already accepted the power discourse of war against terrorism, but it does not seem accidental that all four novels focus on charging Islam and Muslims with more or less the same accusations. Why none of them try to do the least research about the differences between Sunni, Shiite, Salafi, and Wahhabi sects? Why do they so easily accept to take for granted that all Muslims are the same? It should be clarified that no generalization is performed here; all the researcher is claiming is that the majority of the novels (four of the six) studied have certain characteristic in common. The point is that these four writers seem to have found it necessary to represent Muslims as one and the same so as to be able to lay certain charges against them.

**Islam Promotes Violence:** The second discourse the four novels have shaped is the accusation of Islam for approving and promoting violence. Updike's whole effort is directed toward proving this point. Ferrigno's whole story hinges around this point. He has designed all characters, as Muslim leaders involved in violent acts of all kind. Kalfus does put down and humiliate Muslims to a great extent with occasional references to Islam. DeLillo also introduces the Islamic rules and regulations as the source or the cause of Muslims' physical, behavioral, and ideological ugliness, and accuses the Quran for preventing Muslims from revision of their thought and practice.

**Zionists Are Innocent:** "Zionists Are Innocent" is another major discourse which is somehow or another shaped by each of the four novels. In Updike's *terrorist* one of the main characters is Jack Levy a Jewish advisor at high school. He is smart enough to identify the potential terrorist, Ahmad, at the very early stages of his terrorist character development and training at the mosque. He carefully follows him to the point when he is on his way to a main bridge in the city with a truck full of explosives determined to explode the truck under the bridge killing God knows how many innocent people. Jack Levy locates him and talk him out of it. He convinces Ahmad not to explode the truck

and saves not only the bridge, but the innocent people, Ahmad, and Ahmad's mother. Jack Levy turns out to be a real hero saving so many and preventing a national security disaster. Thus Updike goes beyond proving Jack Levy, who is a Jew politically in line and supportive of the Zionism, innocent in 9/11 terrorist attack and quite cooperative in anti-terrorist activities of the authorities and especially with the CIA. He represents him as a smart, anti terrorism, heroic agent.

In Ferrigno's *prayers for the assassin*, the whole story hinges around Sara's historical research to verify the Islamic republic of the United States' charge of the "Zionist's attack [9/11] laid against Zionists. After suffering the burden of a breathtaking study she wins the game by revealing the truth about the accusation, and announces the Zionists innocent. Ferrigno does not say Jews; he openly uses the term Zionism throughout the book.

DeLillo also takes the Jews to the sky on the one hand saying "god used to be an urban Jew." And humiliates the Muslims by showing how trivial and vulgar their denunciation of the Jews is on the other hand. Two major characters who are Muslim (Amir and Hammad) that they later develop to terrorists have studied architecture and engineering. One of them blames the Jews for defects in the building construction saying:

The Jews build walls too thin, aisles too narrow. The Jews built the toilet in this flat too close to the floor so a man's stream of liquid leaves his body and travels so far it makes a noise and a splash which people in the next room can sit and listen to. Thanks to the thin Jew walls<sup>16</sup>.

This is how Jews are exalted and Muslims debased in DeLillo's *falling man*.

Ken Kalfus also takes side with the Jews, while he disgraces Muslims. Kalfus' *a disorder peculiar to the country* is the story of the married couple; Marshall, who is a Muslim and Joyce his Jewish wife. When Marshall is represented as an undetermined, lazy, inefficient employee, and irresponsible, inconsiderate, and undesirable character as a father, and a husband, his wife who is Jewish is quite normal, reasonable, knows what she expects and wants and is quite clement. Thus directly or indirectly the Jews are exalted while Muslims are humiliated whereas Jews have always been looked down upon in English and European literature as usurers, dirty, stingy people.

**A Different Voice:** Baldonado, in an essay on representation concludes that: "representations, then can never truly be real or objective, instead, they are constructed images, images that need to be interrogated for their ideological content"<sup>4</sup>. She also emphasizes that "if there is always an element of interpretation involved in representation, we must then note who may be doing the interpreting"<sup>4</sup>. This idea is also somehow confirmed by Edward Said when he talks about representation of the orient by western Orientalists<sup>6</sup>.

The remaining two novels (Carolyn see's *there will never be another you*, and Laila Halaby's *once in a promised land*) out of the six novels under study have a subversive approach toward power discourse.

In Carolyn see's novel, when Edith, the omniscient narrator of the story, turns on the TV this is how she reacts toward the government and media:

*"And you turn on the television and the news is not only awful but boring, so that you want to say to those strutting idiots, go ahead, if you want to so much! Bomb every one you can find into smitherens, women and children first and put the rest in jail, and I'm talking every last one of us, so then at least we won't have to listen to your lies and watch your dreadful smirking faces!"*<sup>17</sup>

Larry who is introduced in the story as security personnel and seems more informed and a politically knowledgeable person also says: "we know the government knew about the attacks [9/11] and allowed them to happen" (1). Phillip and Jack who are closely associated with the government anti-bioterrorism program are also quite suspicious about what the government is doing or aiming at<sup>17</sup>.

On the other hand, see does not blame Islam or Muslims for the 9/11 terrorist attack at all. She does not lay any charges against Islam or Muslims either. She does not even mention Islam or Muslims throughout the story. One might say that she is not writing about Islam or Muslims. The point is that any writer writing about 9/11 cannot bypass the issue of Islam or Muslims, because the government and the media has strongly taken the stance that Muslims are the first and the only suspects of this terrorist attack, and have later proved their claim. Under such severe circumstances how can a novelist write a whole novel about 9/11 without mentioning the ones who are widely believed to have committed this terrorist attack? Carolyn see by not mentioning Islam and Muslims and based on her positions toward media and the government propagation, which is touched upon above, believes the major threat to the united states is neither Islam nor Muslims. She quite skillfully views the 9/11 event from a socio-cultural angle. She shows the American culture deficiencies by comparing it with an Asian culture and concludes that it is the selfishness, false fear, and terror, lies told by media, politicians and government officials, and in short cultural deficiencies that are the main cause of the problem in the American society. She skillfully depicts the creation of the best and the most beautiful sacrificial scenes by those who, as we (Americans) define them; are poor, illiterate, uncivilized, and lowbrow people and how they unintentionally humiliate us by their sacrificial behavior to the point that makes us kneel before them and thank them for their praiseworthy practice. They are lucky and in peace. But we in spite of our education and knowledge and civility and science and technology are liable to confusion and bewilderment and

separation and loneliness that without saying are all the outcome of our socio-cultural system. Therefore this is what Carolyn See blames, the socio-cultural system and not Islam or Muslims as the other four writers do.

The second novel of the two subversive ones, Laila Halaby's *Once in a Promised Land*, in an epilogue to the story likens the American cultural system to a Ghula, and the Muslims, or Arabs, who are misfits in American culture, to a baby that the Ghula raises and nourishes so as to feed on it someday in the future. This is the kind of relationship there exists between the American cultural system and an Arab or a Muslim, the wolf – lamb relationship. The Ghula has tied up the girl with so many threads she can hardly move. Finally Hassan who is in love with the girl finds out about the Ghula keeping the girl. He tries to free the girl, who is a grown up now, but he mistakenly stabs the girl instead of Ghula, and has to take her almost dead body home hoping that with proper care she will recover from her wounds<sup>18</sup>. Salwa in American society feels like the girl in the hands of the Ghula. That is probably why she cries that "American dream is a big lie"<sup>18</sup>. After long years of living in the United States; "Salwa know in the marrow of her bones that wishes don't come true for Arabs in America"<sup>18</sup>. She seeks peace in going home and that is why "again the idea of being home settled itself into her, offered her peace for the rest of the morning"<sup>18</sup>. When she is likely to be pregnant she feels a rather severe cultural difference and distance with American culture a distance which is increased by 9/11 consequences: "It is different now, she thought. *If I am pregnant, I cannot raise my child here, away from everything I know*"<sup>18</sup>. And finally when Salwa is talking with her Arab friend, Randa, she also refers to life in America as: "... American life, as I see it, lacks flavor, that tastiness you find at home...happiness is a luxury, don't you think"<sup>18</sup>? Therefore, although life in America with high technology, luxury of living, and the American life style was praised by Salwa here and there before, now when she looks at the mirror she sees that "...these years in America could be erased to nothing. She saw herself no better than before, only older"<sup>18</sup>. The presence of such discourses and Halaby and see's subversive approach are strong indications for the presence of multiple voices. Though not heard or yield to the same amount, yet there are multiple voices present in the American society.

## Conclusion

To sum up there are certain points that are to be given due attention; first is the fact that comparison of discourses shaped by the novels under study with those shaped by orientalists allows us to generalize Edward Said's theory of Orientalism to the attitude and behavior of the west toward Islam and Muslims today. Although there are certain differences in tactics, the strategy seems to be the same; second, although the majority of identified and discussed discourses are in the same direction as the power discourse, yet multiple voices seem to be present though all of them are not heard equally. However the government and media efforts have brought about reverse

results in certain cases such as initiation of people's curiosity for finding out what Islam is all about. Naoual believes: "Islam was unknown to many in America, but after 9/11 many political leaders, scientists, researchers and thinkers consider it necessary to understand Islam correctly,"<sup>19</sup> third, a major reason for shaping these discourses is to smoothly and skillfully change the stingy, dirty, usurer, invader, exploiter, human body member trafficker image of the Zionists by fearfully violent image of the Muslims. As al-twaiji put it:

This reminds readers of the middle ages enmity between Christians and the Jews in Europe when shylock was a symbol for the Jewish hatred for the Christians. Today, shylock and his hatred for Christians do not exist anymore while, interestingly, bin laden becomes the new Muslim shylock who is taken to respond aggression of the Islamic world against the Christian peace-loving world<sup>20</sup>.

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