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The Dichotomy within Masculinity in Fadia Faqir's *The Cry of the Dove*: A Self-Orientalist Approach

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ABSTRACT

The representation of masculinity is a prevalent theme in literary studies that critique Orientalist discourse within Western literature. This exploration often highlights the dichotomy inherent in the portrayal of masculinity, contrasting the representations of Western and Eastern men in Orientalist texts. In her article "Re-Orientalism: The Perpetration and Development of Orientalism by Orientals," Lisa Lau (2009) introduces the concepts of 're-Orientalism' and 'self-Orientalism,' arguing that Orientalist depictions are not only perpetuated in Western narratives but are also internalized within Eastern literary productions. Lau posits that writers from Eastern backgrounds frequently do not wholly reject these Orientalist narratives; instead, they engage with and occasionally affirm them, thereby reinforcing a binary opposition between the East and West in their works. Despite the relevance of this theory, the contributions of Anglophone Arab authors, such as Fadia Faqir, have not been thoroughly analyzed through the lens of Self-Orientalism. Consequently, this study seeks to investigate the representation of masculinity in Faqir's *The Cry of the Dove* (2007) within the framework of Self-Orientalism, with a focus on determining whether Faqir challenges or internalizes Orientalist stereotypes. This theoretical perspective suggests that Anglophone

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authors tend to internalize Orientalist stereotypes, constructing a dichotomy that attributes negative characteristics to Eastern individuals while ascribing positive traits to their Western counterparts. Through a detailed examination of male characters in the novel, this study reveals that Faqir internalizes these Orientalist representations, thereby establishing a contrasting portrayal of masculinity: Arab and Muslim men are depicted as lustful, cruel, and hypocritical, in stark contrast to their Western counterparts, who are characterized as respectful, tender, and virtuous.

Keywords: Fadia Faqir, self-Orientalism, representation, the dichotomy within masculinity

ازدواجية الصورة الذكورية في رواية "صرخة الحمامة" للكاتبة فادية فقير: مقاربة من منظور الاستشراق الذاتي

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الـمـسـتـخـلـص

تعدّ دراسة تمثيل الذكورة في الأدب موضوعًا شائعًا في النقد الأدبي الذي ينتقد الخطاب الاستشراقي في الأدب الغربي. وغالباً ما يسلط هذا الاستكشاف الضوء على التناقض الكامن في تصوير الذكورة، حيث يقارن بين تمثيل الرجال الغربيين والشرقيين في النصوص الاستشراقية. في مقالها " إعادة تشكيل الاستشراق الاستشراق: دور الشرقيين في استمرار النظرة الاستشراقية"، تقدم ليزا لاو (2009) مفهوم "إعادة الاستشراق" أو"الاستشراق الذاتي"، مؤكدةً أن التصورات الاستشراقية لا تقتصر على الروايات الغربية فحسب، بل تتغلغل أيضًا في الإنتاجات الأدبية الشرقية. وتفترض لاو أن الكُتّاب من الخلفيات الشرقية لا يرفضون هذه الروايات الاستشراقية بالكامل، بل يتفاعلون معها، ويؤكدون عليها في بعض الأحيان، مما يعزز التناظر الثنائي بين الشرق والغرب في أعمالهم. رغم أهمية هذه النظرية، لم يتم تحليل مساهمات الكُتّاب العرب الناطقين باللغة الإنجليزية، مثل فادية فقير، كلّياً من خلال منظور الاستشراق الذاتي. ولذلك، تسعى هذه الدراسة إلى التحقيق في تمثيل الذكورة في رواية فقير "صرخة الحمامة" (2007) في إطار الاستشراق الذاتي، مع التركيز على تحديد ما إذا كانت فقير تتحدى أو تتبنى الصور النمطية الاستشراقية. ويشير هذا الإطار النظري إلى أن الكُتّاب الناطقين باللغة الإنجليزية يميلون إلى تأصيل الصور النمطية الاستشراقية، وبناء ثنائية تنسب الصفات السلبية للأفراد الشرقيين بينما تنسب الصفات الإيجابية إلى نظرائهم الغربيين. ومن خلال فحص دقيق للشخصيات

الذكور في الرواية، تكشف هذه الدراسة أن فقير تتبنى هذه التمثيلات الاستشراقية، وتُنشئ تصويرًا متناقضًا للذكورة: حيث يتم تصوير الرجال العرب والمسلمين على أنهم شهوانيون وقساة ومنافقون، على النقيض من نظرائهم الغربيين، الذين يتميزون بالاحترام والرقة والفضيلة.

الكلمات الدالة: فادية فقير، الاستشراق الذاتي، التمثيل، ازدواجية الصورة الذكورية

1. INTRODUCTION

For centuries, the representation of Arabs and Muslims has been a subject of contention and dispute, as identified by Said's *Orientalism* (1978), which highlights how the West spoke of and, more crucially, spoke for the Arabs and Muslims: how the West's interests and perspectives have shaped the discourse surrounding them. In their analysis, Lamiaa Rasheed and Reem Hamad (2021) assert that "colonial texts have depicted Arabs and Muslims as nearly synonymous with the Orient and the Other, in stark contrast to the United States and Europe, referred to as the Occident" (p. 122). Across centuries of colonial rule, the term "Oriental" has been repeatedly utilized, creating an intricate tapestry of depictions to represent specific ideologies and lifestyles and to evoke stereotypical traits of the Oriental: sensual, primitive, barbaric, exotic, static, and irrational—traits that are in binary opposition to those of the West: intellectual, advanced, civilized, modern, and rational. Contemporary Anglophone Arab novelists have brought the image of the Oriental back to the Orientalist environment, where the roles have changed, with the Anglophone Arab novelists playing the role of the Orientalists, engaging in the process of perpetuating Orientalist stereotypes in portraying their own people using the Western-style and mode of thinking in their work. Instead of rejecting or blurring the distinction between 'us' and 'them,' 'here' and 'there,' they actually tend to confirm it. Such an act on the part of Anglophone Arab authors is often referred to as the phenomenon of 'self-Orientalism' or 're-Orientalism:' a term introduced by Lisa Lau (2014) in her article "Introducing Re-Orientalism Theory and Discourse" to denote the detrimental self-representation by writers affiliated with Eastern cultures, which ultimately serves to glorify and elevate Western ideals.

The work of female authors significantly accounts for a large proportion of the total narrative production of Anglophone Arab literature. The topics they tackle revolve mostly around the position and suffering of women in the shadow of a traditional patriarchal society (Al Maleh, 2009, p. 13; Rasheed & Saeed, 2024, p. 114). The presence of male figures dominates these narratives, which can be attributed to the fact that the stories are told from the perspective of female protagonists. While certain works by Anglophone Arab women authors address the exacerbation of harmful stereotypes regarding Arabs, (Ismael & Rasheed, 2023, p. 187), others, through their narratives that are centered on female protagonists, often cast Arab/Muslim men as antagonists, characterized in ways that echo negative stereotypes prevalent in Orientalist discourse (Azzam, 2021, p. 9). These narratives reflect a monolithic representation of Arab masculinity that resonates with Edward Said's critiques of Orientalist literature (Said, 1978, pp. 38-39). Specifically, they portray Arab masculinity as characterized by sexual and moral decay, alongside a propensity for cruelty towards women. A recurring trait

among many Arab and Muslim male characters, in these narratives, is their lustful gaze and lascivious behavior towards unfamiliar women, coupled with harshness and cruelty directed at female family members. Furthermore, they often depict religious characters as embodying hypocrisy. In contrast, they present idealized representations of Western masculinity, illustrating men who possess qualities that starkly diverge from those attributed to their Arab counterparts. Among these narratives are the work of the British-Arab writer Fadia Faqir, who is more knowledgeable about native culture than her peers are because she is an immigrant writer who was born in Jordan and spent her childhood there. Therefore, she is supposed to challenge the misconceptions and present Motherland in its true form, not to contribute to perpetuating the Orientalist stereotypes.

1.1Fadia Faqir

Fadia Faqir, a dual citizen of Britain and Jordan born in 1956 in Amman, is an accomplished writer and academic who studied English literature at the University of Jordan and later earned her MA and Ph.D. in Critical and Creative Writing in the UK. She held various academic positions at prestigious institutions, including Oxford and Durham, where she taught Arabic language and modern Arabic literature while balancing her writing career. In 2004, she chose to focus solely on her writing, drawing on her extensive knowledge of both Arabic and English literature. Her career began with the publication of her first novel, *Nisanit*, in 1990, followed by four other novels, including *The Pillars of Salt* and *The Cry of the Dove*, which received international critical acclaim and were translated into multiple languages.

Faqir writes exclusively in English, citing personal and political oppression in Jordan as a necessity that prevented her from writing in Arabic despite her focus on Arab themes and characters (Faqir, 2016; Moore, 2011). Faqir approaches Arabic from a feminist perspective, viewing it as a product of a male-dominated culture filled with taboos, which leads her to write in English to address sensitive issues that she feels cannot be tackled in her mother tongue (Faqir, 2016). She believes that writing in English allows her to reach an international audience eager for literature on topics like women's rights, domestic violence, and patriarchy (Faqir, 2016). Her work critiques the oppressive structures within Arab society, particularly the Personal Status Law that limits women's freedoms, drawing from her own experiences of social and religious tyranny in her family (Faqir, 2020). Influenced by her mother's liberal views, Faqir expresses her desires despite familial conflicts while also grappling with personal loss, such as losing custody of her son (Faqir, 2011; Moore, 2011).

1.2 The Cry of the Dove

The Cry of the Dove (2007) is Faqir's most favorably lauded novel by Western readers. Transworld Publishers first published it in Britain under the title *My Name Is Salma*. The rights to publish the work were competed over by major publishing houses. Grove Atlantic publishes it in the United States under the title *The Cry of the Dove*. Harper Collins is the novel's Canadian publisher, and it is also being published in translation in Italy, France, Spain, Denmark, and the Middle East. Faqir refers to the novel as a direct reflection of her own life and the lives of others she knows. It reflects

some aspects of her troubled relationship with her son, whom she had to abandon after her ex-husband took him away from her.

The novel explores the non-linear narrative of Salma, a Bedouin Jordanian girl, as she navigates the complexities of her dual identities, the clash between different worlds, and the clash between cultures. Salma resided in a small family unit consisting of her father, mother, and brother, all of whom were governed by a patriarchal system that mirrors the broader societal structure. Salma found herself entangled in an extramarital relationship with a young man named Hamdan, and her suffering commenced when she became pregnant, and Hamdan denied paternity. In her desperation, Salma confided in her school teacher about the tragedy that had befallen her. The teacher, recognizing the danger Salma was in, decided to intervene by involving the police. This action aimed to protect Salma from her brother's potential violent retribution, as societal norms and customs dictate that brothers are responsible for restoring honor through violent means.

Consequently, Salma was incarcerated, marking the beginning of a new chapter in her life. Within the confines of prison, she encountered other women who had also fallen victims to societal expectations and cultural norms, each possessing their unique narratives of suffering. Amidst the confines of the prison and the shroud of darkness, Salma brought forth her daughter, only to have her whisked away by her fellow inmates and placed in an orphanage. They believed this was in the best interest of the child, but for Salma, it was a crushing blow. The weight of sorrow bore down upon her as she grappled with the harsh reality of what had transpired.

With assistance from a network of individuals, Salma managed to escape her village (Hima) through Lebanon, and eventually found refuge in Exeter, England. In Exeter, she adopted the name Sally Asher and received support in constructing a new identity. However, her survival in an unfamiliar environment proved arduous as she confronted numerous geographical, cultural, and linguistic barriers. The narrative effectively intertwines the lives of Salma and Sally, providing readers with insights into both the past and present and revealing unresolved conflicts within the protagonist's life. Despite her efforts to secure employment, learn a foreign language, adapt to an alien culture, get married to an English man, and have a new child, Salma/Sally remained trapped by the weight of her past experiences. Leaving behind her mother and newborn daughter in her village engendered overwhelming feelings of guilt and confusion. Ultimately, after years of being uprooted from her home country, Salma made the difficult decision to abandon her husband and baby boy in Exeter to return to her homeland. The haunting memory of her long-lost daughter, Layla, who was forcibly separated from her, tormented Salma throughout her journey. Tragically, upon her return to the village, Salma fell victim to an act of honor-based murder perpetrated by her brother, Mahmoud.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Fadia Faqir's *The Cry of the Dove* (2007) presents a detailed portrayal of masculinity through the depiction of eight male characters, comprising four Arab/Muslim men and four Western men, each of whom exerts a significant influence—either positive or negative—on the protagonist, Salma. This study contends that Faqir, as an Anglophone

Arab writer, appears to internalize Orientalist discourse in her representation of masculinity. To explore this hypothesis, the research draws upon the theoretical frameworks established by self-Orientalist scholars such as Edward Said, Lisa Lau, and Dwivedi, among others, to assess whether Faqir's depiction of masculinity reflects an internalization of self-Orientalist narratives.

1.4 Research Objectives

This study aims to investigate the representation of masculinity in Faqir's *The Cry of the Dove* (2007) through the lens of self-Orientalism with the objective of assessing whether the narrative engages in the internalization of negative orientalist stereotypes in the depiction of Arab/Muslim men.

1.5 Previous Studies

Most of the scholarly works shed light on only cultural and social concerns emphasized within the novel. One prominent study is Wafa Lasri and Wassila Mouro's "Fadia Faqir's *The Cry of the Dove*: Identity Wandering between Tradition and Modernity." The purpose of the research was to shed light on the country of Jordan as it balances between its cultural traditions and externally mandated changes. The main focus of the paper was to examine the impact of having a dual identity on an individual's sense of belonging. To this end, the author incorporated a personal element in the form of the protagonist, who traversed through a journey of self-discovery while grappling with conflicting identities that oscillated between the traditional and the modern. Another study, conducted by Ahlem Belarbi and entitled "An Intercultural and Dialogic Analysis of Faqir's *The Cry of the Dove*," examined the representation of dialogism and interculturality in Fadia Faqir's novel, *The Cry of the Dove*, with a specific focus on the portrayal of these elements by Faqir as an Arab Anglophone woman writer. The analysis delved into the ways in which Faqir utilizes dialogism and interculturality within her work, exploring the interplay between different cultures and the ways in which characters engage in dialogue. By examining Faqir's unique perspective as an Arab Anglophone woman writer, this study sought to shed light on the intricate dynamics of dialogism and interculturality within the novel.

1.6 The Significance of the Study

Although *The Cry of the Dove* has been widely examined in favor of topics related to gender, society, and culture, there is a lack of critical academic analysis of the novel, and Anglophone Arab fiction in general, through the lens of self-Orientalism. While existing research on self-Orientalism primarily focuses on visual and auditory materials, this study distinguishes itself by examining a literary text from a self-Orientalist viewpoint. Doing so not only contributes to the limited scholarship on this subject but also encourages readers to engage with such work in a novel and challenging manner.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

The scope of the study is limited to the self-depiction of Arabs and Muslims, highlighting the Orientalist stereotypes ascribed to Arab/Muslim male figures. It is limited to Fadia

Faqir's *The Cry of the Dove*. Moreover, the conceptual framework of the study is limited to Lisa Lau's Self-orientalism and the contributions of other theorists in this field.

2. THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

This study examines the novel through the lens of 'self-Orientalism.' The term 'self-Orientalism' is derived from the pioneering critical work of Edward Said, *Orientalism* (1978), which is widely recognized as the cornerstone and primary catalyst of what developed into the broad conceptual framework known as 'postcolonialism.' According to Zackary Lockman, Edward Said's Orientalism is widely recognized as one of the most impactful and influential scholarly books within the field of humanities published in English during the last quarter of the twentieth century (2004, p. 190). The book has changed and shifted the way of seeing and preserving the East, as well as highlighted the 'colonial discourse' that introduces the Orient as the Other. Said contends that Orientalism is an inherent system through which the West not only constructs but also controls the Orient through dominance within power relations and some methods of cultural and political appropriation, such as employing false representations through literature, art, visual media, film, and travel writing (p. 3). In fact, classical literature and history have used the term "Oriental" to indicate the East in similar mythologies. This term carries more than just a fixed set of ideas about the East.

One contemporary manifestation of Orientalism is the phenomenon of 'self-Orientalism' or 're-Orientalism'. In contrast to Orientalism, which is rooted in the idealized self-portrayal of the Western world, resulting in the marginalization and exoticization of the East, self-Orientalism, as introduced by Lisa Lau, is rooted in the contemptuous self-portrayal of the Eastern world, resulting in extolling and idealizing the West. Lau points out that the Eastern perspective can be just as Western-centric as that of the West, as it tends to rely on the West as a point of reference (Lau, 2014, p. 4). Joanna Liddle and Shirin Raj (1998) emphasize this point by claiming that knowledge is still the possession of the West regardless of the East's attempts to self-represent. They argue that the more powerful hold a greater level of authority over knowledge than those who lack power, which aids in the development of universalized perceptions of both the powerful and powerless (Liddle & Raj, 1998, p. 497). This approach to discourse can result in an emphasis on messages that are geared towards addressing the West instead of solely focusing on the East. Thus, the discourse of self-Orientalism involves examining how modern-day authors from the Orient provide commentary on, question, alter, and sometimes even perpetuate Orientalism practices, as well as the strategies they employ in doing so (Liddle & Raj, 1998, p. 497). The West continues to be regarded as the "Centre" in how these representations are framed and how the audience is anticipated (Liddle & Raj, 1998, p. 497). Therefore, the West retains its advantageous position as the "Centre." Self-Orientalism theory acknowledges that Eastern representations are, to a significant degree, filtered through Western lenses, within Western discourse frames, and through Western knowledge systems (Lau, 2014, p. 5).

The practice of Oriental authors writing about the Orient in English for a Western audience is a prevalent phenomenon. This approach presents the Orient through a Western lens, using Western cultural references, ideals, and values, and catering to Western tastes. It is this approach that led to the re-rise of Orientalism. Lau (2014) argues

that many of the dichotomies are actually internalized within the artist, and the output is a combination of influences that bear the postcolonial legacy while incorporating a wider range of cultural references (p. 20). Therefore, Self-orientalism is a type of discourse that, instead of resisting the dominant and hegemonic influence of the Western world, acknowledges the pragmatic reality that it cannot fully detach itself from Western references, influences, and even oppressions.

Lisa Lau and Cristina Mendes (2011) declare that self-Orientalism encompasses the complex dynamics through which cultural producers of Eastern backgrounds navigate their connection with a constructed Orient and are confronted with choices that range from conforming to perceived Western reader expectations, strategically engaging with these expectations or boldly rejecting them altogether (p. 1). The literary works of Oriental writers may inadvertently perpetuate essentialized and simplified narratives, as well as "collude in serving up unwholesome picture" of the Eastern society and "pander to western satiation" (Lau, 2014, p. 8), rather than offering nuanced and authentic portrayals of their own societies. This internalized self-Orientalism can limit the diversity of voices and perspectives within the literary canon and perpetuate harmful stereotypes and misconceptions.

According to Deepika Bahri (2003), oriental novels that portray people from the East as exotic and othered actually reinforce the idea that Western culture is superior (p. 122). They depict the Orientals as "teeming, corrupt, disordered, immoral, the darker twin, the doppelganger of the enlightened" Westerners (Dwivedi, 2014b, p. 96). This process is identified as 'Reversed Othering' by Santos and Yan (2009, p. 309) or self-othering, representing a distinct form of Othering. This type of 'Othering' is frequently observed in the literary works of Oriental novelists, as they tend - in contrast to Western writers - to distance themselves from and romanticize their own people and culture, resulting in their marginalization and disdain. This practice leads to a reversal of roles, where the writer, instead of representing the Eastern "self" in opposition to Western concepts, inadvertently reinforces these very concepts, positioning the East, and thus themselves, as the "other."

According to Lau (2014), when Western readers engage with Oriental Anglophone literature, they have particular and precise expectations. This is because they are not simply reading about the Orient, but also about their own Western identities (Lau, 2014, p. 17), which are reflected back to them through the process of reading. This reflection is often flattering and comforting, which makes it a particularly captivating aspect of Oriental Anglophone literature for Western readers. To successfully produce, promote, and distribute dark Oriental society to a Western audience, it must conform to their expectations while simultaneously maintaining an alluring sense of otherness, foreignness, and exoticism. Wajid Riaz and Nighat Ahmad (2020) comment;

> Because of the epistemic privilege that the author has gained by being an expatriate and being an […] Anglophone fiction writer, non-native readers will consider this depiction as an authentic record on the history and culture […] because for them the author has a privileged location and he can speak on their behalf. For readers who have no firsthand contact [with the Orient], and their only source of information is the orientalist images, will see this fiction influencing their perception on and about [the Orient], because we cannot

> ignore its influence on people's worldview. Moreover, the educational aspect of fiction can be judged from its wider readership. (Riaz & Ahmad, 2020, p. 154)

The presentation of exoticized society must be approached with precision and care, as Huggan noted, due to the interdependent relationship between the Western audience and their engagement with exoticism. He argues:

> Mainstream culture is always altered by its contact with the margins, even if it finds ingenious ways of looking, of pretending to look, the same. Exoticism helps maintain this pretence; it acts as the safety-net that supports these potentially dangerous transactions, as the regulating-mechanism that attempts to manoeuvre difference back again to the same. (Huggan, 2001, p. 22)

Instead of striving for authentic and unbiased representations that transcend reductive stereotypes and foster a more comprehensive understanding of Arabs and Muslims, Fadia Faqir falls into the trap of self-Orientalism in this novel, as she perpetuates the Orientalist stereotypes pertaining to Arab and Muslim men, portraying them as lustful, cruel, and hypocritical. This depiction stands in stark contrast to the idealized representation of Western men, who are characterized by positive traits such as religious virtue, affection, and supportive paternal, brotherly, or friendly relationships. Such contrasts appear to be aimed at garnering acceptance from a Western readership.

3. DISCUSSION

Arab/Muslim masculinity has been a significant theme in Orientalist writings in which men are often depicted as sexually perverse and morally bankrupt, holding cruelty towards women in general (Dagistanli & Grewal, 2012, p. 130; Said, 1978, p. 48). Lisa Lau (2009) argues that even within the literary works of Anglophone Oriental writers, the representation of Orientals remains subject to the same Orientalist frameworks critiqued by Edward Said in relation to Western literature; specifically, these portrayals often emphasize negative characteristics in juxtaposition to their Western counterparts (p. 573). The juxtaposition of Western and Eastern characters establishes a binary opposition framework that exacerbates the inherent contradictions between the two entities, ultimately reinforcing the dominance of Western power structures over the East (Rasheed & Hamad, 2021, p. 128). Within the periphery of the novel, there exist depictions of Arab and Muslim male figures that would have remained unaddressed had the author not sought to draw comparisons between them and Western characters who exerted a beneficial influence on the protagonist, Salma. These individuals are portrayed with exotic and unfavorable attributes, including tendencies towards cruelty and mistreatment of women, an overbearing display of male dominance, a pronounced sensuality and lasciviousness, and a hypocritical adherence to religious customs. Such portrayals serve to highlight the dichotomy between the positive impact of Western male characters and the negative traits ascribed to the Arab and Muslim male characters. Lau (2014) asserts that attributing negative characteristics to Orientals rather than offering nuanced and authentic portrayals serves to internalize the Orientalist stereotypes in the Western readers' consciousness (p. 8).

In the opening pages of the novel, the narrative sequentially introduces three Arab male characters who are connected to the protagonist, Salma, in various relationships: Haj Ibrahim (her father), Mahmoud (her brother), and Hamdan (her lover). The author reveals the personal characteristics of each character from Salma's perspective. For instance, Salma recounted her father's admonition regarding the modesty of her appearance, "Your breasts are like melons, cover them up!" (Faqir, 2007, p. 9). Additionally, she described her brother's watchful gaze as she attempted to conceal her body, while Hamdan's initial focus on her physical attributes is highlighted. Through these interactions, the author presents three traits associated with traditional Arab male figures, both within and beyond the novel: the outward display of religious piety, excessive male oppression, and a tendency towards lasciviousness and the exploitation of women. This portrayal of Arab men is identified by Lau (2014) as a significant perpetuation of the Orientalist stereotypes of dark Orientals with dark and othered identities.

In the initial chapters of the novel, Salma's father, Haj Ibrahim, is introduced as a character who is indirectly portrayed through Salma's perspective in relation to religious matters. Salma described her father as a pious and devout man, emphasizing his advice to her about the virtues of being Muslim and the promise of paradise. She recounted his words, "You are lucky to be born Muslim, ... because your final abode is paradise. You will sit there in a cloud of perfume drinking milk and honey" (Faqir, 2007, p. 13), which presents an image of her father as a committed follower of Islamic teachings advocating for adherence to them.

However, a few lines later, Salma revealed that her father did not pray regularly, as the prayer mat would be displaced whenever something happened that required supplication (p. 12). This portrayal aligns with the character of Sadiq, a Pakistani Muslim who owned an alcohol store in Exeter. Sadiq is depicted as pretending to be pious and religious while engaging in activities that contradict Islamic principles. The narrator stated that "he prayed five times a day. Whenever [she] walked past his shop, his mat would be spread on the floor and he would be standing, hands on tummy, eyes closed, muttering verses from the Qur'an" (p. 12). At the same time, he engaged in selling the forbidden alcohol in Islam, a character that aligns with Salma's father in the aspect of hypocrisy or pretending to be religious and pious. Whenever her father's religiosity is mentioned, Salma also reflects on Sadiq's supposed sincerity and vice versa. The narrator juxtaposes scenes involving both characters, highlighting their outward display of religiosity and their underlying hypocrisy.

> Through the large glass shop front, I could see Sadiq spreading his prayer mat on the floor. He stood on the edge, placed his hands behind his ears and began the takbeer. ... Sadiq knelt down, prostrated then placed his forehead on the mat. My father stood up and placed his hands under his ribcage and began reciting. ... He began the tasleem, ... then he waved to me. I walked towards his outstretched chipped hands. He held me up and then sat me down in his lap saying, `Good morning, my little chick.' Sadiq suddenly opened the door and said, `Good morning, memsahib! Do you want me to teach you how to pray to Allah also?' I waved a hello and crossed the street quickly. (Faqir, 2007, p. 141)

However, the distinction between the character of Sadiq and Salma's father lies in the former's overtly lascivious behavior towards women. Sadiq is depicted as consuming the Sunday Sport newspaper solely for the purpose of ogling at slender blonde women (p. 73), demonstrating an exclusive preoccupation with women and engaging in lascivious behavior, including making suggestive sexual gestures and remarks toward Salma, in multiple instances throughout the novel (p. 85; pp. 181-182). There is also Hamdan, Salma's lover, who, despite being depicted as a lustful young man who sexually exploited Salma, is portrayed as a pious and modest individual, with the narrative highlighting his prayerful expression upon returning from prayer (p. 17). The juxtaposition of these characters' outward religiosity with their contradictory actions exemplifies hypocrisy. The more concerning implication is that three out of four Muslim characters in the narrative exhibit this trait. This portrayal suggests that the author affirms the notion that religious devotion among Arab and Muslim men is merely a facade, concealing their sensual desires and social duplicity (Dwivedi, 2014b, p. 87). This portrayal of Haj Ibrahim, Sadiq the Pakistani, and Hamdan can be interpreted as a form of self-Orientalism, perpetuating stereotypes about Arab and Muslim men.

The character of Hamdan in the novel embodies an Orientalist stereotype prevalent in Western perceptions of Arab men as lascivious and exploitative (Lau, 2014, p. 9). He is portrayed as a figure who objectifies women and only sees them as objects of desire. While Hamdan may share this trait with Sadiq, he is different in his cruelty and his attitudes towards Salma. Salma said, "I looked at the wardrobe and saw the familiar face of Hamdan, the twin of my soul. He was tall, strong and dark. I stretched my arms out to him. He walked towards me and said, `How is my little slut, my courtesan, my whore?' My body welcomed his weight, his rough hands, his urgency" (Faqir, 2007, p. 128). Hamdan addressed Salma with derogatory terms such as " my slut," "my whore," "my courtesan," "my slave" (p. 34), and "my mare" (p. 140). This treatment of Salma as a mere object for his pleasure is exemplified by his dismissive and degrading language towards her. The narrative depicts instances where Hamdan expressed anger towards Salma, blaming her for his own desires and attempting to harm her physically. This portrayal of Hamdan perpetuates the stereotype of the Arab man as a cruel and exploitative figure, reinforcing Orientalist notions of Arab masculinity as predatory and misogynistic (Azzam, 2021, pp. 9-10). The character of Hamdan thus serves to strengthen and perpetuate Western stereotypes of Arab men as inherently lascivious and manipulative, contributing to a distorted and essentialized view of Arab masculinity (Dwivedi, 2014a, p. 107).

Moreover, there is the character of Mahmoud, Salma's brother, who is depicted as embodying the stereotypical image of the Arab and Muslim man prevalent in Western literature. He represents the figure of the cruel, harsh, and dominant family man who exercises control over the women of the family (Dwivedi, 2014b, p. 89), including sisters, mothers, and grandmothers. This portrayal is not limited to Mahmoud alone but extends to any brother figure present in the narrative. The Arab brother is depicted as a formidable family member who instills fear and is tasked with enforcing punishment on family members who transgress societal and familial norms, a role that is socially assigned to him. Mahmoud was feared by all the female members of the family, particularly his sister Salma, who was most affected by his cruel and oppressive behavior.

From a young age, Salma experienced physical abuse at the hands of Mahmoud, with her mother watching in distress (Faqir, 2007, p. 65). As she grew older, her brother's harsh behavior continued, prompting her mother to console her in the aftermath of his attacks (p. 73). No one could stand against his tyranny, not even his mother. Salma described her brother as:

> Thin and regal in his wide, long white body shirt. He would look at [her] and try to twist his wispy short moustache then curse. His silver dagger, which had an engraved handle, a blood groove and a leather scabbard, and his cudgel were fixed to his ammunition belt. [...] He would wave his cudgel in the air threateningly whenever [she] moved. [...]He was the desert police on patrol. (p. 167)

Mahmoud is a menacing figure, adorned with weaponry and exuding an air of authority and intimidation. Throughout the novel, Mahmoud is portrayed as a looming specter of punishment and coercion, with others warning Salma of the potential threat posed by her brother if she ever defied societal expectations. "Your brother will shoot you between your eyes" is repeated three times in the novel (p. 25, p. 48, p. 62). At times, Salma saw his specter in every alley and at every street corner, relentlessly pursuing her in a quest to restore the family's 'honor' and eradicate the 'shame' associated with her actions. The portrayal of Mahmoud evokes imagery reminiscent of a villain in fantasy novels, with Salma envisioning him as a terrifying and fantastical character, further reinforcing the perception of him as an oppressive force. Salma saw him in the darkness standing with

> his dagger tied to his side, his ammunition belt wrapped across his chest, his leather sandals worn out, his feet covered with desert dust, his yellow toenails long, chipped and lined with grime and his rifle slung on his right shoulder. Listen for the galloping of horses, for the clank of daggers being pulled out of scabbards, for flat-faced owls hooting in the dark, for bats clapping their wings, for light footsteps, for the abaya robe fluttering in the wind, for the swishing sound of his sharp dagger cutting the air. Sniff the air for the sweat of assassins. Listen to his arm grabbing your neck and pulling it right back, to his dagger slashing through flesh and breaking through bones to reach the heart. (p. 221)

The portrayal of Mahmoud in the novel serves as an affirmation of the author's perspective on the oppression of Arab and Muslim women by men in the Middle East, and Mahmoud's persistent quest for 'wiping the shame' reinforces the Orientalist notion that "the Arab need for vengeance overrides everything, otherwise the Arab would feel "ego-destroying" shame" (Said, 1978, p. 49). It aligns with the viewpoint articulated by Riaz and Ahmed, who argue that such depictions serve as a retrospective validation for colonialism and its purported mission to rescue Eastern women from the clutches of oppressive Eastern men and the constraints imposed on them (p. 153). This portrayal contributes to perpetuating Orientalist stereotypes about Arab and Muslim men as inherently oppressive and justifies external intervention in the name of liberating Eastern women from patriarchal dominance.

Salma's interactions with her father, Haj Ibrahim, Hamdan, Sadiq the Pakistani, and Mahmoud were characterized by negative impacts, as depicted in the novel. These

characters are contrasted with positive Western male figures who had a beneficial influence on Salma and exhibited markedly different traits. Minister Mahoney serves as an exemplary model of religious virtue for Salma, offering a positive contrast to the aforementioned negative influences. Similarly, John, Salma's university tutor who later became her lover and husband, provided her with treatment that diverged from the detrimental behavior exhibited by Hamdan. Max, the owner of the tailoring shop where Salma worked during the day, engaged in extensive conversations with her, in stark contrast to Sadiq's conversations which were tainted with inappropriate sexual remarks. Lastly, Allan, Salma's boss at the night bar, demonstrated a protective and guiding demeanor towards her, prompting Salma to desire a brotherly relationship with him. This dichotomy within masculinity underscores the contrasting impact of Western and Arab figures on Salma, highlighting the varying traits and behaviors exhibited by each group. This dichotomous representation functions to perpetuate the otherness and exoticism associated with Arab identities, while simultaneously positioning Western individuals as inherently superior (Lau, 2014, p. 17).

Minister Mahoney, a devout and religious man, provided Salma with a safe haven for a year upon her arrival in England before relocating to Exeter in the South. Described in the novel as "the kind Quaker priest" (Faqir, 2007, p. 137), he was the first exceptionally compassionate male individual Salma encountered following her release from prison in her village. Salma reflected on Minister Mahoney, contemplating why he had never married despite his evident kindness and peaceful countenance. His age, early fifties, and serene disposition are juxtaposed with the warmth of the fire's light reflecting on his flushed face, peaceful eyes, approving gestures, and slender, elongated fingers (p. 144). In his presence, Salma did not feel like a stranger; rather, he embodied a paternal figure to her (p. 144). Minister Mahoney's genuine religious devotion and compassionate nature stand in contrast to Salma's experiences with her father, Haj Ibrahim, and Sadiq the Pakistani. The narrator says, "[a]lthough he was a man of religion he was so kind and understanding" (p. 110). This statement emphasizes that Minister Mahoney's kindness and understanding were authentic, not a facade to be presented to others, thus challenging Salma's previous encounters with religious figures in the East (p. 110). This portrayal underscores the dichotomy between the transformative impact of Minister Mahoney's genuine compassion and religious devotion on Salma's life and Haj Ibrahim's and Sadiq's religious hypocrisy.

Dr. John Robson, serving as Salma's university tutor and supervisor, plays a significant role in her life. Their initial encounter took place during Salma's registration for her part-time university degree. Subsequent meetings at the university and beyond led to the blossoming of a romantic relationship between them. The narrative emphasizes the tenderness and affection that John displayed towards Salma, addressing her with endearing terms such as "my love" and expressing genuine care for her well-being. This stands in stark contrast to the portrayal of Hamdan, with whom Salma's relationship is characterized by violence and cruelty. The novel draws a sharp comparison between John and Hamdan, highlighting their differing attitudes towards Salma (p. 207). While John saw Salma as a woman deserving of respect and appreciation, Hamdan objectified her, viewing her solely as a body. Ultimately, Salma's relationship with John culminated in marriage and the birth of their son, underscoring the positive and nurturing nature of their

bond. This juxtaposition serves to demonstrate the contrasting qualities of Arab and Western men in the novel, presenting a dichotomy between tenderness and cruelty in their relationships with Salma.

The initial presentation of Max in the narrative might lead readers to assume a stereotypical image of an Englishman harboring prejudiced biases towards Salma, an outsider, during their first encounter. However, this one-dimensional perception is swiftly challenged and deconstructed as the narrative unfolds, revealing Max's nuanced character and his pivotal role as a mentor and confidante for Salma. The text meticulously constructs Max's persona through concrete actions and gestures that transcend mere words. His kindness manifested in tangible ways: offering Salma employment when others refused, bestowing gifts and birthday tokens, and patiently assisting her in acquiring practical skills like garment-making. These acts speak volumes about his genuine nature and willingness to empower Salma beyond the confines of a typical employer-employee relationship.

Furthermore, Max's sensitivity towards Salma's emotional state is noteworthy. His ability to recognize and navigate her periods of silence, as evidenced by his playful use of Pakistani colloquial English to break the ice (p. 94), underscores his emotional intelligence and empathy. This resonates with a nuanced understanding of cultural codes and a respect for individual idiosyncrasies rather than imposing his own expectations or patronizing behavior (p. 94). Significantly, Max's engagement with Salma extends beyond the realm of everyday tasks and lighthearted jokes. The narrative highlights their open dialogues on crucial political and social issues that hold relevance for Salma. This intellectual exchange exhibits Max's willingness to treat her as an equal, capable of engaging in complex discussions, and dismissing any potential prejudices arising from cultural or societal differences. He neither reduced her to a victim of naivete nor resorted to veiled sexualized remarks, further challenging the initial stereotypical assumptions about his character. Thus, through his practical support, emotional sensitivity, and respectful intellectual engagement, Max emerges as a valuable mentor and confidante for Salma, holding a stronger friendly relationship with Salma than that of Sadiq the Pakistani.

Mr. Alan Wright, the owner of Salma's secondary place of employment at a night bar, is depicted by the narrator as a "real gentleman" (p. 125). Despite his occupation and imperfections, which are not extensively elaborated upon by Salma, Alan falls within the category of Western men who consistently display kindness and compassion towards Salma. He assumes the role of a supportive brother figure, consistently offering assistance to help her navigate the challenges of her new environment and acquire social skills, with the intention of transforming her into a "princess" (p. 137), as he articulated. Salma expressed her desire for Alan to be like a brother to her, describing him as honest, discreet, and protective (p. 66). She reflected on the differences between Alan's caring and watchful demeanor and that of her own brother, pondering the contrasting treatment she received from each. This contemplation serves to highlight the dichotomy between the Western brother, characterized by qualities of affection, concern, protection, and tenderness, and the Arab brother, whose behavior reflects contrasting attributes and who views a sister as a potential source of shame. Salma yearned for a brother akin to Alan,

one who is not critical and possessive, but rather protective and nurturing. This narrative segment underscores the contrasting perceptions of Western and Arab brotherly figures in terms of their attitudes and treatment towards their sisters.

4. CONCLUSION

The novel constructs a dichotomous representation of Arab and Muslim men in comparison to Western men, emphasizing distinct personal attributes and characteristics. This dichotomy is apparent in the portrayal of familial and interpersonal relationships, as the novel utilizes binary oppositions to depict differing archetypes of the father, brother, friend, and lover within Eastern and Western contexts. The characterizations of Arab and Muslim men in the narrative frequently align with negative traits within familial and social spheres, while Western men are depicted as embodying more progressive and egalitarian qualities, thus presenting a contrasting image of masculinity. The novel has introduced the Arab or Muslim man as either a despotic patriarch or an exotic, lascivious figure. This monolithic portrayal reduces Arab men to one-dimensional villains, lacking nuance or humanity, while simultaneously objectifying them as mere subjects of desire, ignoring their agency and multifaceted nature. Conversely, Faqir presents Western men exhibiting positive characteristics, as they demonstrate favorable behavior towards Salma, thereby establishing a perceived superiority over their Arab counterparts. Consequently, this method of juxtaposing the Otherness of Arab and Muslim men with the idealization of Western men internalizes the orientalist discourse and traps the novel within the confines of self-orientalism.

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