İNCİHAN HOTAMAN

A Tinted View

Neo-Orientalist Discourse in Post 9/11 Fiction

Edited by Tuğba Duzak

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To the bravest man I know, Davut Hotaman who taught me to keep my head high and never to stand for injustice,

and

To the loving memory of the kindest and brightest woman I have ever known: Serpil Türk Hotaman, the poet, the bibliophile, the mother…

Foreword

This book began as an academic inquiry, but it is published with a broader intention: to participate in an ongoing and urgently necessary conversation about representation, power, and discourse in the contemporary world. The research that forms this study was originally completed as my master's thesis at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid. Since then, it has evolved beyond the boundaries of the classroom into a work that seeks to engage readers concerned with literature, media, and the cultural narratives that continue to shape global perception.

At the heart of this book lies a concern that extends well beyond the immediate aftermath of September 11 and speaks directly to the present moment. Although the terrible attacks of 2001 belong to the early years of the twenty-first century, the discursive structures they intensified have not receded. Instead, they have settled into the cultural and political imagination, continuing to shape how conflict, identity, and belonging are articulated. In 2025, amid ongoing global crises and renewed cycles of violence, most notably the continuing devastation of the Palestinian–Israeli war, familiar narratives of civilization and barbarism, security and threat, and innocence and guilt remain strikingly resilient. These narratives circulate across media platforms, political rhetoric, and cultural production, offering simplified frameworks through which complex histories and lived realities are interpreted.

Within such frameworks, Muslim identities are frequently filtered through inherited binaries that privilege suspicion over context and moral hierarchy over historical understanding. The persistence of these patterns reveals how deeply embedded Neo-Orientalist modes of thinking remain, even when they appear in the language of neutrality, humanitarian concern, or liberal reason. To examine Neo-Orientalist discourse, therefore, is not merely to revisit the cultural responses of a past era, but to engage critically in the ways contemporary realities are narrated, legitimized, and rendered intelligible.

This study is guided by the conviction that literature does not exist in isolation. Fiction both reflects and reinforces dominant discourses, often shaping public imagination in ways that are subtle yet profoundly influential. Thus, at its core, this book examines Neo-Orientalist discourse as it emerges in post-9/11 fiction, tracing how older and inherited Orientalist frameworks persist, adapt, and circulate within contemporary literary narratives. Through a comparative reading of key novels from this period, the study explores the varied forms Neo-Orientalism takes, from overt stereotyping to more subtle modes of representation embedded within texts that present themselves as pluralistic or empathetic. By attending closely to narrative voice, characterization, and thematic structure, the book considers how difference is constructed and maintained, and how literature participates in broader cultural negotiations of power and belonging.

I am sincerely thankful to my advisor, María Laura Arce Álvarez, for her support, encouragement, and thoughtful engagement throughout the research and writing process. This book would not exist in its present form without her academic mentorship. I am equally grateful to my dear friend Tuğba Duzak, whose meticulous editing, critical eye,

and generosity of time contributed greatly to the clarity and cohesion of the final manuscript.

While this book originates in academic research, it is written with the intention of addressing readers beyond strict academic contexts. At a time when cultural narratives increasingly shape political realities, I hope this study will encourage careful readings, historical awareness, and critical reflection on the persistence of inherited discourses in contemporary literature.

İncihan Hotaman

Introduction

In his introduction to *Covering Islam*, Edward Said indicates that some of the previously discredited Orientalist ideas about non-white people are slowly resurfacing (xi), it is evident from ongoing social dynamics, from slavery to invasions, from colonialism to modern discrimination of not only women but also many ethnic groups, that discrimination persists without clear indication of decline. What is deemed as Neo-Orientalism is simply one of the contemporary attitudes against the East and particularly, the Muslim population of the world. Neo-Orientalism, which functions quite similarly to classical Orientalism, has one big advantage over its predecessor: the power of mass media. In this sense, the Neo-Orientalist discourse is largely based on the ideology of difference and helps to create binary oppositions between the West and the Islamic world, by associating Islam with violence, irrationality and terrorism (Douai and Lauricella 19). With media and its strong influence over masses, any kind of representation of any group of people is made possible; that is to say, media representations are often treated as authoritative sources by broad audiences. Through this kind of power, Neo-Orientalist discourse contributes to a portrayal of Muslims as inherently violent, a stereotype noted in scholarly analyses of post-9/11 discourse. While the description itself may sound rather dramatic, the impression given by the subtle suggestions about violent east vs civilized west exhibits stylistic elements that emphasize contrast. The subjects of study in this study are

Amy Waldman's *The Submission* and John Updike's *Terrorist*; both novels were chosen because their setting and publishing year was in the post-9/11 era, which is rather significant for this research, as Neo-Orientalism –regardless of its ties to classical Orientalism- is a post September 11 phenomenon. Moreover, the fact that neither author identifies as Muslim, constituted an additional criterion in the selection process, as this was considered to reduce the likelihood of claims that the analysis reflects authorial self-representation or advocacy, thereby supporting the study's aim of maintaining analytical distance in examining the social effects of Neo-Orientalism.

Edward Said once claimed that the hostility between the Eastern and Western world has been in existence since the Middle Ages and it still exists in today's world (qtd in Douai and Lauricella 11). Moreover, through the rather effective use of classical Orientalism, the West has established superiority through the ideas of cultural inferiority of the East and the highly regarded binary oppositions between the two sides of the globe. While many can argue that this concept of superiority and inferiority is old fashioned and probably not in effect anymore, scholarly literature documents an increase in the perception of the barbarism, violence and terror of the East, which suggests otherwise. While the East is no longer being actively represented as lazy, exotic and weak, the representations have taken a turn for the worse, as now, it is seen as an active danger to the existence and values of the West with its violent and unreasonable ways. Altwaiji further explains this notion by pointing out that particularly after the events of September 11, Americans started to view the Muslim population "as fanatical, violent, and lacking in tolerance" (313). This change in the attitude has occurred as a result of the shifts in political power during the 20th century and the American custom of trading a defeated enemy for a new one, which led to the terrible attack on the Twin

Towers on September 11, 2001. As a result of the "War against Terror" started by the Bush administration, the media took the image of the dangerous terrorist and applied it to many different situations, which caused the main representation of Muslims to be heartless terrorists, even though it is commonly known that this is not always the case; Altwaiji argues that the reason behind this negative portrayal is the re-emergence of "classic Orientalist discourse with its binary division of 'us' and 'them'" which leads the representation of Muslims to be closely linked with terrorism in the post-9/11 era (314-315). This Neo-Orientalist approach, along with Tuastad's idea of New-Barbarism, contributed to reinforcing negative stereotypes among audiences who had been already affected by the event. In the first five sections of this study, the evolution of West-Islam relationship, what it entails, and the concepts of New Barbarism and Neo-Orientalism in relation to each other will be explained, while on sections six and seven the application of these theoretical frameworks in Updike' *Terrorist* and Waldman's *The Submission* will be analysed. Furthermore, this study aims to study and examine the different approaches and attitudes of Neo-Orientalism in terms of not only media's representation of Muslims, but also people's attitudes towards them in *The Submission* by Waldman and *Terrorist* by Updike, both of which focus on Muslim people's experiences after September 11, while shedding light upon how Neo-Orientalism functions.

Media, Representation, and Escalating Generalisation

The tense relationship between the Western powers and Islam remains a prominent theme in analyses of geopolitical and cultural interaction, as often seen in TV shows, movies, on news and on social media. This relationship is frequently represented as strained in mainstream discourse, and such framing often goes unexamined. One explanation proposed in scholarship for the limited public scrutiny is the centuries old otherisation and decades of scare tactics. Douai and Lauricella suggest that the constant use of the terrorist frame, on the part of the Western mainstream media, is an indication of a "larger historical legacy" in which Islam has been depicted as "the other" (21). According to Said, there has been no point in history, during which Islam was discussed without "passion, prejudice and political interest" in both America and Europe (*Covering Islam* 24), as "the dichotomy established by many between Islam and the West is based primarily on the false perceptions which have been conveyed traditionally to the different peoples, as a result of a misinterpretation of history" (Martín Muñoz 4). During most of the Middle Ages, Islam was seen as the "demonic religion of apostasy, blasphemy and obscurity" (Said *Covering Islam* 5), as Norman Daniel argues that throughout the 13th and 14th centuries, "the deformed image of Islam was established in the conscious European mind" (24). Martín Muñoz agrees with this idea as she explains

that "the predominant historical interpretation of West-Islam relations has been focused on the ideological principle of antagonism" which can be seen throughout different stages of history from oppositions such as "Byzantium against the Islamic Empire," "the Ottoman Turks against Europe," and "Islamic/Arab nationalism against the West" (4). She further argues that the rivalry between the medieval Christian and Islamic powers has "led Western consciousness to perceive Islam with hostility and mistrust" (Martín Muñoz 4). Cesari clearly agrees with Martín Muñoz, as she indicates that throughout centuries of opposition, one feature of this Islam/West dichotomy makes itself clear: more often than not, "the Western self-definition based on the concepts of progress, nation, rational individual" has been built in its opposition to the Islamic countries (5). Moreover, the difference between Islamic societies and other great civilisations of the East, such as India and China, was that they could be considered as "defeated and distant," while Islam never seemed to submit completely (Said *Covering Islam* 5); also the geopolitical positions of civilizations such as Ottoman Empire and Persia might be one of the reasons why European powers refrained from considering Islam distant. However, even during those times when wars were waged in the name of religion by both sides, the relationship between them always had a "direct experience, … imagination and refinement" (Said *Covering Islam* 13). During "the Oriental Renaissance" of late 18th and early 19th centuries, Islam was considered as a part of the East, "sharing in its mystery, exoticism, corruption and latent power" (Said *Covering Islam* 13). This Orientalist approach easily included Islam to its ever growing list of the others; for what the Orientalist thought does is to divide the world into two parts, the different one called the 'Orient,' the more familiar one called the West, or the 'Occident'. Said explains that this kind of divisions always seem to happen "when one

society or culture thinks about another one, different from itself" (*Covering Islam* 4). As the colonialist interest started to show themselves, the Orient began to mean three very significant things for the West:

> Familiarity, accessibility, representability: these were what Orientalists demonstrated about the Orient. The Orient could be seen, it could be studied, it could be managed. It need not remain a distant, marvelous, incomprehensible, and yet very rich place. It could be brought home — or more simply, Europe could make itself at home there, as it subsequently did. (Said *Covering Islam* 26-27)

This easily explains the point of view of the Western powers which definitely did not shy away from claiming to have rights over the said riches and the people of the Orient, as many Islamic countries were at some point, the colonies of the West, including Egypt, Lebanon and Syria. In addition to that, Jamil acknowledges this point and argues that "[t]hrough Orientalism, the west [has] been able to exercise its dominant position by structuring how the Orient is 'dealt with'" (32). Moreover, as mentioned before, Islam has always been seen as a part of the Orient, but currently –especially after the decolonisation of these countries-, its existence within the Orientalist structure is regarded "with a very special hostility and fear" (Said *Covering Islam* 4), as a result of both the aforementioned fact that major Islamic countries did not fit into the mould of a defeated and distant country, and the continuous misrepresentations of Islam and Muslims in mainstream media. Of course, there were, are and always will be generalisations made about Islam and its nature, and they are often "confined to popular journals or to the media" which in a way helps make them well-known amongst people (Said *Covering Islam* 15).

Using a few Orientalist generalizations to characterize the entire Islamic world became common practice over time.

Journalists started to make overly dramatic statements about Islam frequently, and these statements are still –to this day- being dramatized by the media (Said *Covering Islam* xvi). This is further explained by Martín Muñoz who points out that the "biased presentation of international events … has no doubt fostered the perception of a threat" (4), as Cesari indicates that systematic analysis of several different sources dictates the existence of "a persistent linking of Islam to un-civic behaviour and terrorism" in the West (5). Through media that has become a large contributor to the creation of negative images linked to Muslims (Esposito 2010: 30), an association between Islam and Fundamentalism – which is closely related with terrorism – is established, which causes people to regard these concepts as if they are the same. According to Said, the image of Islam became a caricaturist uniform in media, as he asserts that

> [f]or whether one looked at such recent, critically acclaimed fiction … or at grade-school history textbooks, comic strips, television serials, films, and cartoons, the iconography of Islam was uniform, was uniformly ubiquitous, and drew its material from the same time-honored view of Islam: hence the frequent caricatures of Muslims as oil suppliers, as terrorists, and more recently, as bloodthirsty mobs. (*Covering Islam* 6)

Similarly, Esposito also illustrates that "[c]onservative columnists, some of them best-selling authors or prominent radio and television talk show hosts with large audiences, have regularly employed hate speech and dangerous invective aimed at not just extremists but at Islam and Muslims in general" (20). Basically, the message given through these misrepresentations and overgeneralisations is that "fundamentalism equals Islam equals everything-we-must-now-fight-against, as we did with communism during the Cold War"; moreover, some critics describe this conflict

as "graver, more profound and dangerous with Islam" (Said *Covering Islam* xix). However, most of these arguments ignore the fact that many of the major Muslim countries –such as Malaysia, Turkiye, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Morocco- are official allies of the United States of America (Said *Covering Islam* xx).

It is understandable that this framing of the Muslim identity as a "threat" has been compared to the Red Scare, as Islam did not become the enemy number one of the West until the fall of the Berlin Wall, and communism with it. Richard Gray suggests that it was right after the collapse of communism that Islam became the next "sinister other that enabled American self-definition" (135). Therefore, it is possible to suggest that as the Cold War ended, Islam became the new representation of America's major enemy, as Zulaika and Williams indicate that to the average American, the communism threat left its place to terrorism (3). Scanlan further demonstrates this point and discloses that after World War II, all the fear and anger caused by fascism was channelled into Communism, and with the fall of the Berlin Wall "the evil empire called for a 'new public enemy number one' and terrorism stepped up to that role" (*Plotting Terror* 1). Moreover, Scanlan calls these continuous changes in enemies "Orwellian transformations in the identity of the enemy" and adds that constructions about terrorism in social, political and journalistic rhetoric was unavoidable after that (*Plotting Terror* 1). Therefore, with all these misconceptions and misplacements of anger, it is easy for us to imagine how even before the events of September 11, Islam served as a source of violence and terrorism in Western media's eyes (Hartnell 98) and why for most Americans "Islam is nothing but trouble" (Said *Covering Islam* xiv).

Perception of Islam in the West

In order to have a better understanding of the conflict between Islam and the West, first, we must focus on the question of religion in terms of how it is perceived. This question not only covers the association of Islam with terrorism but also examines the conflict of Islam versus the West. According to Noam Chomsky, the culture of terrorism has grown so much that it is in every aspect of our lives now (256), and the unceasing existence of terrorism both in media and fiction, eventually leads us to believe that it is a continuous, obstinate threat to our lives. However, the attribution of these violent and unconscionable acts to Islam as a whole, has become another trend. One may question why this attribution is incorrect and the answer is that violent acts are attributed to Islam, even though religious extremism is spreading all around the world (Said *Covering Islam* 33). For example, the acts like the massacre of Muslims in Bosnia, the Jonestown massacre, the Oklahoma bombing and more recently, the attack on the mosques of New Zealand are not equated in any shape or form to Christianity; the mere fact that this kind of association is often seen in news regarding Islam, suggests that "that sort of equation has been reserved for Islam" (Said *Covering Islam* 9). Unfortunately, this double standard is evident not only in the way the media associates Islam with terrorism, but also in the minimal regard displayed to the lives of Muslims victims such as Bosnia Muslims who were victims of "ethnic cleansing" or the Chechnya Muslims who

were suppressed by Russia. This discrepancy communicates a reality of two different sets of rules for similar situations, depending on the religion of the casualties (Said *Covering Islam* xiv). Regarding these unforgettable crimes of the past, many Muslims believe that if the people of Bosnia, Palestine or Chechnya were Christians, the West would have done more to help or to stop the suffering; for instance, the fact that Israel –who occupies Arab Muslim territories- has never been imposed on with a penalty, has deepened the polarity between two sides (Said Covering Islam xiv).

The conflict between Islam and the West appears to be a conflict between a geographical position and a religion. "Islam vs the West" is the basic conflict that is both rooted in the issue and somehow manages to give life to many other conflicts such as "Europe vs Islam" or "USA vs Islam" (Said *Covering Islam* 12). But, why is it called "West vs Islam," and not "Christianity vs Islam," as that would make much more sense, considering the issues of polarity? The reason behind this curious fact is that within the dominant discourse, the West seems "greater than and has surpassed the stage of Christianity," while the Islamic world seems to be stuck in its primitive and backwards ways (Said *Covering Islam* 10-11). While the West is both modern and "greater than the sums of its parts," the Islamic world is "no more than Islam" and reduced to a few arbitrarily chosen characteristics despite the vast assortment of its cultures (Said *Covering Islam* 10-11).

New Barbarism after September 11

The aftermath of the 9/11 attacks was profound, leaving an indelible mark on industries, jobs, markets, politics, and, most importantly, the lives of countless people, including survivors, families of the victims, and witnesses of the event (Houen 2002: 4). For those who directly experienced the tragedy, the events of September 11 created an irreparable "fracture" in their lives, marking a before-and-after division in their sense of safety, normalcy, and worldview (Frank and Gruber 2012: 4). The trauma of that day resonated globally, reshaping perceptions and priorities in unprecedented ways. As Rosenblatt observed, September 11 was often referred to as the "end of irony," symbolizing a shift toward viewing matters with greater seriousness and gravity (qtd. in Frank and Gruber 2012: 1).

While the human cost of the attacks cannot be overstated, the geopolitical and cultural aftermath also left a lasting impact. Altwaiji describes 2001 as the "year zero" or the "transformative moment" in which the relationship between the East and the West deteriorated significantly (2014: 313). The Middle East became a focal point of "the American drive for global hegemony" (Altwaiji 2014: 321), and "[m]edia interest in Islam exploded in the months after 9/11" (Mamdani 2002: 766). Representations of September 11 in news media, movies, and literature often tended to "restate and reaffirm the centrality of the West" (Hartnell 2011: 477), framing the conflict as one between "the modern Western state versus

peripheralized peoples" (Tuastad 2003: 597). In this context, Altwaiji compares Said's analysis of the East-West dynamic to post-9/11 discourses, observing that the already fraught relationship worsened in the aftermath of the attacks (2014: 317). David Holloway asserts that "the pre-9/11 and post-9/11 worlds were broadly continuous, not discontinuous," even though "[p]ublic discourse on 9/11 – both American mainstream media and in statements by governing officials – strongly stressed the singularity and, hence, the unpredictability of the bombings" (qtd in Frank and Gruber 2012: 5), since it was not the first and only attempt to bring down the towers – as it was the case in the 1993 bombing of the same site. The fact that Frank and Gruber argue the idea that the events of 9/11 were not a part of a series of events, relies on the concept of historical forgetting (2012: 5) which, according to Holloway, "played directly to partisan political agendas in Washington" as the function of September 11 as a "historical rupture" is what was used to support the Bush Doctrine "of pre-emptive war, unilateral policy-making and 'regime change' in 'rogue states'" (qtd in Frank and Gruber 2012: 5).

In order to cause this historical forgetting, to create justifications for United States' foreign actions and to deepen the binary oppositions between "the modern western state versus peripheralised peoples", the western mainstream media started to utilize the long-standing stereotypes and previously disputed claims about Islam and Muslims (Tuastad 2003: 597). According to Alex Houen, who points out how much of the same imageries – such as the videos of the falling towers – has been used by the mainstream media in regard to 9/11 and its aftermath, the entire situation "amassed essentially to a monumental collusion of symbols, metaphors and other shadowy figures" (2002: 4). Additionally, at the time, what went on in newspapers and news outlets were

what people generally considered as the legitimate truth for the rest of their lives, because of their faith in the accuracy of its information. In this regard, Scanlan argues that newspapers – and all other mainstream media sources in general since this theory is also applicable in the 21st century – had the power to normalize or stigmatize certain events and actions ("After the Apocalypse" 2012: 4-5). Furthermore, it could be argued that journalism, at times, inadvertently gained from the public's heightened attention to terrorism, as the shock and fear surrounding such events often drove increased sales and stock valuations (Zulaika and Williams 1996: 7).

In many contemporary media sources, violence in Muslim-majority countries is often portrayed as the inherent essence of Islam, with little to no acknowledgment of local circumstances, history, or cultural context (Said *Covering Islam* 1997: xxii). This tendency to present negative aspects of Islamic cultures and Muslim societies without addressing the surrounding conditions or the unrest caused by historical events is referred to as "New Barbarism". Paul Richards and Dag Tuastad define New Barbarism as the framing of political violence in a way that omits political and economic interests or contexts, instead attributing such violence to supposed traits inherent in local cultures (Tuastad 2003: 592). This approach allows media narratives to focus solely on the alleged inherent violence of Islam, without providing adequate information about political, cultural, or historical factors, thereby creating misleading impressions among audiences. Tuastad further explains that by separating the "center" from the "periphery" and projecting central conflicts onto marginalized regions, such violence is often framed as irrational and without legitimate cause—except for the implied violence attributed to Islam itself. This framing reinforces binary oppositions such as "us vs. them," "the civilized vs. the savage," or "order vs. disorder" (Tuastad 2003: 597). In simpler terms, New

Barbarism functions by highlighting violence while omitting viable and intelligible historical, cultural, and political contexts, creating the perception that violence is an intrinsic aspect of Islam. This leads audiences to mistakenly associate Muslims with irrationality and brutality. Additionally, mainstream media often relies disproportionately on Western official and government sources, while Muslim voices are underrepresented or entirely excluded (Douai and Lauricella 2014: 18). This overreliance on Western sources privileges certain perspectives and narratives, marginalizing the voices of those directly involved in or affected by conflicts. By silencing Muslim sources and failing to provide balanced reporting, mainstream media gains control of the narrative, allowing for misrepresentation and perpetuating stereotypes.

The absence of necessary context and background in such reporting fosters the perception of Islam as a violent and irrational religion, denying audiences a more nuanced and humane understanding of these issues (Said *Covering Islam* 1997: xlvii). Douai and Lauricella emphasize that current reporting often lacks the critical cultural and historical contexts necessary for a more accurate portrayal of Islam and Muslim societies (2014: 21). They argue that mainstream media should prioritize the political and religious history of Islamic nations and provide greater context in their coverage of contemporary Muslim issues. The lack of alternative perspectives in mainstream media coverage indicates a failure to "enlighten" audiences about the religious and cultural roots of Islam's conflicts (Douai and Lauricella 2014: 18). Without these cultural and historical frames, misunderstanding and misrepresentation of Islam are likely to persist, as Douai and Lauricella suggest (2014: 18).

Neo-Orientalism and the Post 9/11 Era

Neo-Orientalist discourse employs the ideology of difference to construct binary oppositions that frame the clash between cultures as inherent and insurmountable, often associating Islam with violence and terrorism (Douai and Lauricella 2014: 19). Altwaiji further highlights that "fighting tyranny in the Middle East, barbarism, and the aggressive nature of the local culture are the basic tenets of neo-Orientalism, though the propagated message of this academia denies the relevance of hegemony" (2014: 321). By reinforcing these narratives, Neo-Orientalism deepens the divide between the West and Muslim-majority countries, presenting Western powers as heroes of justice and liberation while perpetuating the assumption that terrorism is an exclusively Muslim phenomenon. According to Hellmich, Neo-Orientalism neglects the local and nuanced aspects of regional conflicts, emphasizing instead a "homogeneous Islamist terrorist threat" (qtd. in Samiei 24). Altwaiji similarly notes that the concept of "new barbarism" plays a critical role in Neo-Orientalist discourse, simplifying complex sociopolitical realities (2014: 319). Mamdani critiques this framework, arguing that it ignores the recent histories of entire regions and the conditions that gave rise to political Islam in the first place (2002: 767). He suggests that contemporary politics in Muslim-majority countries should not be dismissed as mere reflections of archaic cultural norms. Instead, both culture and politics must be understood as shaped by contemporary

conflicts, historical developments, and political relations (Mamdani 2002: 767). Terrorism, Mamdani argues, is not an isolated or ahistorical phenomenon but rather a modern construct rooted in specific historical and political contexts. He stresses the need to place cultural debates within these broader frameworks to avoid reductive interpretations (2002: 767). Furthermore, he dispels the misconception that Islam is inherently violent or permissive of unrestricted warfare, noting that historians of Islam have demonstrated that "coexistence and toleration have been the norm, rather than the exception, in the political history of Islam" (768). Said supports this view, emphasizing that despite the oversimplifications, generalizations, and exaggerations often found in Western media and anti-Islamic rhetoric, history has shown that secularism, rather than fundamentalism, has been a unifying force in many Islamic societies (*Covering Islam* 1997: xxvii). Smith adds that the term "fundamentalist" is both inaccurate and misleading when applied broadly to Muslim societies (1999: xii). As an example, Turkiye, which faced the threat of partition by colonial powers after World War I, demonstrates how a secular government succeeded in maintaining societal cohesion and functionality, even in a predominantly Muslim population.

Although Neo-Orientalism is a rather dominant discourse today, it is not a completely new one, as it has its roots in classical Orientalism. According to Behdad and Williams, while Neo-Orientalism includes new forms of othering, it is still a mode of representation based on Orientalism (284). Moreover, Said lists the principle tenets of Orientalism by saying that

> one is the absolute and systematic difference between the West, which is rational, developed, humane, superior, and the Orient, which is aberrant, undeveloped, inferior. Another dogma is that abstractions about the Orient,

> particularly those based on texts representing a "classical" Oriental civilization, are always preferable to direct that the Orient is eternal, uniform, and incapable of defining itself; therefore it is assumed that a highly generalized and systematic vocabulary for describing the Orient from a Western standpoint is inevitable and even scientifically "objective." A fourth dogma is that the Orient is at bottom something either to be feared (the Yellow Peril, the Mongol hordes, the brown dominions) or to be controlled (by pacification, research and development, outright occupation whenever possible). (*Orientalism* 300-301)

Although the times of colonial occupation and imperial rule are behind us "the processes and the practises of domination, as well as economic exploitation, all signifying present day imperialism" still remain (Al-Ali 19). While the dogmas of Orientalism may seem out of time and old-fashioned, it is impossible to deny that these beliefs still exist, and they will most likely continue to exist as long as these binary oppositions are being established, and the focus remains on our differences, rather than our common humanity. In this sense, with all the common elements they have, Neo-Orientalism is, indeed, an extension of classical Orientalism, as Behdad and Williams indicate that

> [l]ike its classical counterpart, for example, neo-Orientalism is monolithic, totalizing, reliant on a binary logic, and based on an assumption of moral and cultural superiority over the Oriental other. To put the point more aphoristically, neo-Orientalism should be understood not as *sui generis* but rather as a supplement to enduring modes of Orientalist representation. (284 – Emphasis mine)

Said also argues that one of the many illusions that still remain is the idea that Islamic world is in a "timeless childhood"; kept away from developing and improving by superstitions, and forever stuck in middle ages (*Covering Islam* 30), which is an idea Martín Muñoz further explains

as one of the results of the lack of consideration for the local history and socio-cultural conditions which "leads to a view of the Muslim world as an immobile universe" (5). Douai and Lauricella explain this kind of continuous belief by pointing out that in recent analyses of Western media coverage of War on Terror, it is possible to see modern manifestations of Orientalist thought and approach through the thoroughly selected images that helps to construct binary oppositions (11). However, aside from their common points and aims, one of the most significant points that differentiates Neo-Orientalism from the classical Orientalism is the fact that it "entails a popular mode of representing, a kind of doxa about the Middle East and Muslims that is disseminated, thanks to new technologies of communication, throughout the world" (Behdad and Williams 284). Furthermore, aside from the mode of representation, another point where Neo-Orientalism differs from Orientalism is the fact that it uses an "ahistorical form of historicism," as Neo-Orientalists often have the tendency to misrepresent or overlook certain aspects of recent events, while claiming to pay attention to historical and cultural shifts in the region (Behdad and Williams 285). Another important element of Neo-Orientalism is that, unlike the classical Orientalism, in which some degree of mutual exchange and experience between the cultures was directly involved in the discourse, Neo-Orientalism uses "superficial empirical observations about Muslim societies and cultures to make great generalizations about them" (Behdad and Williams 285). Moreover, Altwaiji indicates that while classical Orientalism was used as a tool for European colonial powers, Neo-Orientalism aims to serve the political hegemonies and neo-colonial interests (321). Another comparison between the two similar discourses comes from Dag Tuastad, who suggests that a critical reading of Orientalist and Neo-Orientalist sources would make one understand how "the influence of

colonialism and imperialism are ignored"; he further points out that the conditions of many Muslim countries are being ignored by scholars and instead, "the basic tenets of Neo-Orientalism are universalised" (595). Altwaiji agrees with Tuastad and adds that reading post 9/11 Neo-Orientalist statements would make one question the way "the influence of neo-colonialism and neo-imperialism are ignored," and how Islam, as one of the largest religions on Earth is seen as "anti-modern and anti-west" (316). All of these differences –in one way or another- can be attributed to the presence and effect of New Barbarism, as it is not only an essential tool of Neo-Orientalism, it is also the perfect cultural weapon for the 21st century. By leaving out inconvenient facts, ignoring historical and cultural influences of violent conflicts and deepening binary oppositions by not providing the necessary context, and presenting arbitrarily chosen representations of Muslims and the Islamic world in general, New Barbarism promoted by mainstream media sources and entertainment industry can be considered as the biggest ally of Neo-Orientalism and the Western hegemony.

As mentioned before, the misrepresentation of Muslims and the terrorist fear existed even before the September 11 attack. Then, what changed? What paved the way for the emergence of Neo-Orientalism as a dominant discourse? Neo-Orientalism is clearly more connected to post 9/11 United States and the cultural shifts caused by the attack which is why Altwaiji argues that War on Terror once again put the focus on the Orientalist idea of "us versus them" (314-315). He further explains that

> [t]he 9/11 terrorist attacks, the American military retaliation, and world politics changes contributed to the re-evaluation of the classic Orient. Therefore, the 9/11 attacks have been a global symbolic event marked by American retaliation acts, changing East-West relationship, and world politics

> changes. The result of this symbolic change is the emergence of neo-Orientalist academia. (Altwaiji 314)

After September 11, with the War on Terror being established through the Bush Doctrine, the western media gave a great deal of attention to "Muslim countries, issues related to religious extremism and radicalisation and, more generally, the salience of Islam and Muslims in international news coverage" (Douai and Lauricella 8). As the representations of Muslims became more and more along the lines of a threat in the post-9/11 media, "terrorism [became] the most available term for labelling this group of people" (Altwaiji 314-315). Shihada adds to this point by indicating that the media influence was one of the branches on which the War on Terror was fought, with a "negative American media campaign of misrepresentations and stereotypes about Muslims and Islam" (453). Moreover, it can be said that while the hostility and misconceptions regarding Islam was nothing new to Western media, it was only after September 11 that the Middle East became the focus of "the American drive for global hegemony" (Altwaiji 321).

Although it was not just America which was affected, as Behdad and Williams point out that while Neo-Orientalism is a "predominantly a North American phenomenon, [it] is not limited to the US" (284). The fact that commonly used terrorist frames go beyond US mainstream media suggests that there is a "larger Neo-Orientalist, discursive narrative" that helps to shape people's understanding of Islam and Muslims globally (Douai and Lauricella 19). It further illustrates that it was not only the US media that was influenced by the War on Terror; it also affected non-US media coverage (Douai and Lauricella 18). Moreover, Mamdani observes the statements given by many world leaders who suggested that we need to differentiate between "good Muslims" and "bad Muslims", and by doing so, he demonstrates that a message depicting

Islam as "the devil [that] must be exorcized" was given to the public repeatedly (766). All these facts support the idea that War on Terror has become "a new ideological filter in Western/US media's treatment of international conflicts" (Douai and Lauricella 20). Furthermore, Altwaiji indicates that the binarisms of Neo-Orientalism seem to be accepted not only in the US but also in other Western countries, as understood from generalisations about the East made by their most prominent leaders (316). Brzezinski suggests that all these generalisations, misconceptions and misrepresentations are in order to establish hegemony, or as he calls it "political and cultural critical leverage" (qtd in Altwaiji 315). As Samuel Huntington wrote in 1981, about the misdirection of masses for the interests of the government "you may have to sell [intervention or other military action] in such a way as to create the misimpression that it is the Soviet Union that you are fighting. That is what the United States has done ever since the Truman Doctrine" (qtd in Chomsky 2). Thus, through the applications of Neo-Orientalism and consequently New Barbarism, these narratives construct an image of an adversary requiring confrontation, disseminated broadly through popular media and entertainment industries. Chomsky explains governments' need for this kind of misimpression by explaining that

> [i]n general, it is necessary to ensure that the domestic population remains largely inert, limited in the capacity to develop independent modes of thought and perception and to formulate and press effectively for alternative policies—even alternative institutional arrangements—that might well be seen as preferable if the framework of ideology were to be challenged. (3)

Therefore, the dominant discourse functions most effectively when its frameworks maintain cultural prominence. In order to assure that, culture talk is instilled

into people, which is the tendency to consider culture in political terms suggesting that culture is territorial and geographic –the association of Islam with Middle East can be an example of culture talk, since the majority of Muslims in the world live in Africa and Asia (Mamdani 767). According to Mamdani, culture talk is inclined to portray people as though everything about their individual self is exclusively shaped by the seemingly unchanging culture in which they are born; he further points out that this kind of belief "dehistoricizes the construction of political identities" (767). By associating a political inclement with a whole community, the practice of collective punishment and discipline is encouraged and even condoned, which in return leads to the justification of waging a war on an entire country on the basis that all Muslims are associated with terrorists (Mamdani 767), or simply not doing anything to help while innocent civilians like Bosnian Muslims suffer (Said *Covering Islam* xiv). However, to instil culture talk into people's lives, symbolic power, which Dag Tuastad identifies as "the power to construct a hegemonic version of reality," is more than necessary (591). In these terms, it is clear to see how Western mainstream media utilizes its symbolic power to shape the masses' views of Muslims and Islam through the uses of New Barbarism and culture talk. Tuastad further explains that symbolic power can also be considered as a "means to produce distorted images of the dominated people" which once again affirms the existence of a hegemony (591). In the case of Neo-Orientalism, the said dominated people are not only the people whose countries are directly involved in conflicts with the US, but also the people who are pushed to peripheries and are not at the centre of the dominant ideology presented by the western mainstream media sources. Altwaiji suggests that the production of these distorted realities of the dominated people through the use of symbolic power is caused by the generalisations of the

terrorist frame (313-314). Even with their common misuse, Douai and Lauricella point out that media frames are normally necessary for the audience to make sense of a situation and they are "deeply embedded in the complex institutional and cultural contexts, in which they exist" (11). Moreover, they are "social construct[s] of reality" and also shaped by "the social, cultural and institutional forces in the society" (Douai and Lauricella 11). According to the data analyses done by Douai and Lauricella, the mainstream media has used the "terrorist frame" more than any other frame while reporting the conflict regarding two sects of Islam in the Middle East, even though the topic in question had nothing to do with terrorism (17-19). They also point out that while a neutral tone has been used by media sources sometimes, they remained "overshadowed by the prominence of negative coverage" (Douai and Lauricella 17). Furthermore, the issue of using a terrorist frame is not unique to mainstream news media, it can also be observed in the entertainment industry. There can be found a large multiplicity of large-scale action movies whose main villains are primitive, violent, Muslim terrorists who want nothing more than to bring destruction to the Western world. Said argues that the main aim of presenting Muslims as mindless, bloodthirsty villains in movies such as *Delta Force* (1985) and the *Indiana Jones Saga*, is to demonise Muslims and portray the heroism of the Western/American protagonist (*Covering Islam* xxvii); Esposito further explains the reason behind this kind of typical villainisation as he says that "[t]he goal of these anti-Muslim individuals and organizations is … to marginalize the Muslim representation in politics, government, and major American organizations" (19-20). Scanlan further points out that with the increasing number of movies like these and the constant negative framing of the media, over time the distinction between the news and entertainment has started to blur, as news showed

images of bombings and murders, and the entertainment industry made use of the same images in the form of popular, blockbuster movies and thrilling novels (*Plotting Terror* 1). The mindset created by this constant blitz of terrorist frames and negative generalisations, combined with misrepresentations and misconceptions, can be summarised as the mindset of "anything that emanates from 'there', threatens those who belong and live 'here'" (Douai and Lauricella 20). Through all these, Muslims have been represented as potential threats to "the stability and democratic values of the American society," as even some of the most reliable news sources were seen presenting Muslims as "terrorist threats" and praising "the heroic deeds" of US government (Shihada 453). Douai and Lauricella further explain that by now, the terrorist frame has become more than a tool to help the audience make sense of the conflict and has turned into "a familiar window through which Islam's … tensions are explained to Western readers" (18), and dominant frames such as the terrorist frame are being used as "tailored narratives" (20). The difference between two concepts might not seem significant; however, the simple fact that the terrorist frame has become familiar and easily comprehensible to the audience suggests that the people now accept the frame without questioning.

Although no definitive framework for addressing the issues identified within Neo-Orientalist approaches has yet emerged, Kandiyoti insists that our focus should remain on the similarities and humanity of the two sides; rather than fixating on the differences, as concentrating on the differences that lie at the bottom of the conflict "keep[s] our gaze fixed upon the effects of the discursive hegemony of the West" (qtd in Al-Ali 24-25).

Terrorist by John Updike

John Updike's *Terrorist* is clearly both a part of the post-9/11 literature and terrorist fiction, as we can gather from its content, publishing date (2006) and the time setting within its plot. The fact that it belongs to a post-9/11 era is rather significant, as Scranton argues that "September 11 presents a profound challenge to the art of fiction, because of its global scope, its wide social and political significance, its immense symbolic weight and because it has left so little of the event itself to the imagination" (123). Moreover, post-9/11 fiction illustrates a "failure of imagination" as "[its] fiction frequently claims to be grappling with public and collective history" (Rothberg 153). Furthermore, Anthony Kubiak argues that the main aim of any terrorist fiction should be "to explore the motives and ideas behind the sociopolitical and psychic act of terrorism" (qtd in Frank and Gruber 12). Scanlan also indicates that the question of representation is the starting point of studying terrorism in literature, as there is more accuracy involved ("After the Apocalypse" 141). Since many of these points can be observed in *Terrorist*, it can be suggested that Updike's aim of writing the novel was to shed some light upon the psychology and the life of a terrorist –which as this study will argue, he has failed to do so.

Updike's *Terrorist* tells us the story of Ahmad Ashmawy Mulloy, the son of an Egyptian father and an Irish-American mother. As a result of the influence of the imam of his local mosque, Ahmad gives up on going to college, attracting the

attention of Jack Levy, a counsellor in Ahmad's high school. The novel follows Jack and Ahmad throughout the next few months, and gives the reader some views regarding their respective lives. While Ahmad graduates, obtains a truck driving license, starts working for Chehab family as a driver and ultimately agrees to be a part of a plot that would mean the deaths of hundreds, Jack Levy finds himself bored of life and in an affair with Ahmad's mother Terry. Updike uses third person point of view, however, he also goes between different centres of consciousness, including but not limited to Ahmad and Jack (Däwes 507). At the end of the novel, Jack gets on Ahmad's bomb-ridden truck, with the intention to convince him to stop, although as their conversation progresses, he finds himself less and less willing to live; on the other hand, with the influence of Jack's words, his own belief of destruction versus creation, and the smiles of the two children in another car, Ahmad gives up on causing suffering and pain.

Ahmad's journey of becoming someone capable of mass murder starts with the manipulation of his religious mentor Shaikh Rashid, continuing with the influence of Charlie Chehab, who ironically turns out to be an undercover CIA agent, and luckily ends with Jack Levy. The first inclination we have about the power and influence Shaikh Rashid has over Ahmad, is when Ahmad insistently says that his mentor wants him to be a truck driver with the words "[m] y teacher thinks I should drive a truck" (Updike 41), which does not seem at all that suspicious at the beginning of the novel, long before the plot starts to unravel; however, upon completing the novel, it becomes apparent that it has always been Rashid's intention to use Ahmad and his devotion for some kind of plot, right from the beginning. The narrative offers early implications that suggest manipulation, as the seeds of doubt have been planted long before Ahmad starts

working for the Chehab family and gets under the influence of Charlie Chehab. Rashid's influence does not end at simply advising Ahmad, but he helps him get books for the license tests, which suggests that he actively encourages Ahmad to be what he shapes him to be (Updike 74). When Ahmad questions Rashid about how Allah is supposed to be merciful and tolerant, Rashid discourages Ahmad from developing a more compassionate perspective, and compares non-Muslims to cockroaches who need to be eliminated by saying:

> "No," Shaikh Rashid agreed with satisfaction, as a delicate hand tugged lightly at his beard. "You want to destroy them. They are vexing you with their uncleanness. They would take over your table, your kitchen; they will settle into the very food as it passes into your mouth if you do not destroy them. They have no feelings. They are manifestations of Satan, and God will destroy them without mercy on the day of final reckoning. God will rejoice at their suffering. Do thou likewise, Ahmad. To imagine that cockroaches deserve mercy is to place yourself above ar-Rahim, to presume to be more merciful than the Merciful.' (Updike 77).

However, Ahmad, who is not yet a terrorist but well on his way, silently disagrees with Rashid, his mentor, regarding his metaphor and views about non-Muslims' lack of true emotion, as he knows from his friend, Joryleen, who sings in the church choir that they also have feelings and emotions, Ahmad thinks that Rashid has been using metaphors as a "shield against reality" (Updike 77). A clue regarding why Ahmad is susceptible to manipulation despite still remaining somehow compassionate, is given by his mother, Terry, who explains to Jack Levy that Ahmad is still naïve enough to believe in the sincerity and knowledge of adults (Updike 88) which explains how Rashid is effortlessly able to influence him, notwithstanding Ahmad's conflicting views. The manipulation of the young man continues with Rashid subtly

asking Ahmad whether or not he wishes to go to paradise or heaven, further encouraging him when his answer is yes (Updike 106-108). After Ahmad's graduation, Rashid recommends him to get a job with the Chehab family (Updike 144); presumably because he knows (or thinks he knows) that with the help of Charlie Chehab –who, unknown to Rashid, is actually an undercover CIA agent, helping to plan a terrorist plot to flush out the real terrorist group (Updike 290)- they would be able to convince and gently guide Ahmad to the path of destruction. Charlie, who has Ahmad under his influence now as his new "mentor" (Updike 188), talks about how he is glad to see the twin towers gone and openly says that he does not feel bad about the victims of the attack as they were furthering the "interests of American empire," and asks Ahmad whether or not he would "fight them," to which Ahmad answers positively, even though he is not quite sure who "they" are (Updike 187-188). The next attempt of influencing Ahmad arrives in the shape of Joryleen Grant who has been somewhat a friend to Ahmad in high school. Charlie hires Joryleen, who now works as a prostitute for her boyfriend Tylenol; however, unbeknownst to Charlie, Ahmad refuses to have any kind of sexual relation with Joryleen as he feels bad for the situation she is in (Updike 217-222). In this scene with Ahmad and Joryleen lying next to each other and talking, Joryleen makes a curious observation about the intentions of Charlie and his reasons behind arranging her services, as she says that "[i]t's almost like they're fattening you up" and advises him to stay away from the truck (Updike 227). It is clear that to someone not as naïve or devoted as Ahmad, there is some sort of manipulation going on, and as a person who has been manipulated into becoming a prostitute, the readers can understand that Joryleen recognises influence and manipulation when she sees it. Unlike Ahmad who

thinks he is on the right path, Joryleen is aware that he has been prepared for the slaughter by Charlie. The next part in Rashid's and Charlie's plan come to fruition, as Rashid summons Ahmad, praising him for his willingness to die for their cause; and Ahmad, while being confused and unsure at first, quickly, too quickly to be realistic, agrees to be the key part of the plot: the driver of a bomb-ridden truck (Updike 231-236). Ahmad's trajectory toward participating in an act of terrorism comes to an end the moment Jack Levy hops onto the truck Ahmad intends to blow up (Updike 288). From that moment onwards, Jack relays the things he has learned from his sister-in-law who works with the Homeland Secretary and explains what Charlie –who has been murdered/beheaded by other extremists who have learned his identity- has been doing (Updike 288-292). As his attempts of convincing Ahmad fails one after another, Jack also starts to get excited about their upcoming deaths, since he has been so sick and tired of his life and its meaninglessness (Updike 303-304). However, as the ultimate moment draws close and as the kids in the car ahead of them continue to smile and wave to him, Ahmad starts to remember the merciful and life-giving parts of Allah that Rashid tried to bury deep:

> God does not want to destroy: it was He who made the world.… He does not want us to desecrate His creation by willing death. He wills life. Ahmad returns his right hand to the steering wheel. The two children in the vehicle ahead, lovingly dressed and groomed by their parents, bathed and soothed every night, gaze toward him solemnly, having sensed the something erratic in his focus, the something unnatural in the expression of his face, mixed with the glaze of his windshield. Reassuringly he lifts the fingers of his right hand from the steering wheel and waves them, like the legs of a beetle on its back. Recognized at last, the children smile, and Ahmad cannot

> but smile back. He glances at his watch: nine-eighteen. The moment for maximum damage has slipped by; the bend in the tunnel is slowly being pulled into a widening rectangle of daylight. (Updike 306-307)

Mansutti argues that at this point Ahmad is mostly persuaded by the smiling children he watches and not Jack (109) and subsequently abandons the plan to carry out the attack. Together with Jack, he starts to drive back to Jersey to surrender himself, only half listening to Jack's reassuring words about him being set up by a CIA operative in a shady operation (Updike 308-309).

Although Updike seems to be working within the terms of ethnic stereotypes to "attempt to deconstruct as opposed to reinforce" (Hartnell 497), Banerjee suggests that his novel, at the end, becomes nothing more than a "mere gesturing at what may indeed be obvious, even stereotypical facts about what the war on terror calls 'Muslim identity'" (25). The simple fact that the West often overlooks the moderate majority of Muslims who agree with human rights, democracy, science and technology, and denies the compatibility of Islam with modernity, since some fundamentalist groups "have been imaged as representing the whole Muslim community" (Pirnajmuddin and Salehnia 176), is one of the biggest issues seen within Updike's *Terrorist*, as Däwes explains that "representation always involves issues of hierarchy and power" (497). Alosman and his colleagues point out that "Updike's *Terrorist* has been also demonstrated as a neo-Orientalist work with regard to its representation of the Muslim other" (59), and Shihada argues that *Terrorist* is a reinforcement of the dominant post-9/11 literature (454), as "Updike focuses on the Orientalist and Neo-Orientalist binary opposition of 'the Self'/'the Other', represented by Jack and Ahmad" (Salehnia 484). Moreover, in terms of his representations of Muslims and Islam, Salehnia accuses Updike of "participating in the

literary terrorism which was practiced as the direct result of the terror attacks of September 11" (486). The narrative of *Terrorist* suggests that Updike is working outside his cultural and experiential familiarity (Wolff 120). Hartnell points out that while his intentions have been rather genuine and good, his minimal knowledge of Islam which was derived from "a casual survey of the Qur'an and a book called *Islam Today*" combined with the misrepresentations found in his novels suggests that

> [o]nly a very generous reading of Updike could credit *Terrorist* with deconstructing the colonial binary; in spite of his apparently genuine attempt to displace reductive readings of Islamist violence, "Islam" does ultimately emerge as other in Updike's novel, its practitioners sometimes drawn in commonplace Orientalist stereotypes. (479)

His lack of sufficient information can be seen as one of the reasons why Hartnell argues that his starting point for *Terrorist* appears to be "an initial alienation from Islam as a religion tainted by violence", as the central theme in his novel seems to be the "violent Islam" (485-498). While Updike has not been identified as an orientalist–by himself or by others, Pirnajmuddin and Salehnia argue that his representation of Islam with its "one-dimensional, fanatic" nature, suggests that he has been profoundly influenced by Neo-Orientalist representations of Muslims and Islam (178). The narrative gives the reader a picture of Islam as a threat to the Western world as a result of both Updike's limited knowledge on the subject (Arif and Ahmad 558), and the influence of Neo-Orientalist discourse. Hartnell agrees with this idea as she suggests that Updike's representation of Islam "assumes the shape of a hollow stereotype" which leads us to the conclusion that he participates in the long tradition of stereotyping Islam, which derived from classical Orientalism and continues with Neo-

Orientalism (495-498). Even Däwes who defends that the novel aims to see the world from the point of view of the terrorist in order to portray them as human beings like everyone else, accepts that *Terrorist* "fuels dichotomies of cultural differences and thus confirms stereotypical notions of the Other" (508). Moreover, Pirnajmuddin and Salehnia argue that Updike sets the ground for Neo-Orientalist binary oppositions in his novel (180), as Islam and Muslims within the novel are represented –and thus measured– within American sociocultural context "through the means of differentiation" which shows us the existence of ideology of difference within the text (Alosman et al 58). Furthermore, the novel opens with the lines "[d] evils, Ahmad thinks. These devils seek to take away my God" (Updike 3); therefore it can be seen that right from the very first sentence of the novel, Ahmad, the protagonist, is represented as the Muslim other that we are used to seeing on many mainstream media platforms: an irrational, fanatic Muslim (Pirnajmuddin and Salehnia 178). While novel gives us some clues about how and why Ahmad becomes more and more devoted to his religion –his lack of a father figure, sense of not belonging as a result of his skin colour, and family background are amongst the reasons Updike implies within his novel– one thing the text refuses to provide for the readers is any knowledge of Ahmad's character before he has been recruited by the imam of his local mosque. From the beginning to the end, Ahmad is a judgemental young man, who judges others by the rules of his own religion –as seen from his first conversation with Joryleen Grant– even though he shows some level of compassion in certain parts of the novel, mostly towards Joryleen and his mother, the picture of a young Muslim Updike portrays for his readers appears to be simply more of a stereotype than anything else. This once again can be seen in how Ahmad answers Jack Levy's question about liking the American way. When Levy questions Ahmad

whether or not he hates the American way just as his mentor does Ahmad replies as "I of course do not hate all Americans. But the American way is the way of infidels. It is headed for a terrible doom" (Updike 39). With this simple answer, Updike presents a characterization that aligns with the established post-9/11 stereotypes of domestic radicalization: someone who does not consider himself an American and carries a deeply rooted hatred for what America represents. Another scene in which Updike's tendency to portray Ahmad as a stereotypical terrorist is revealed at the end of the novel, when Ahmad easily accepts the mantle of the martyrdom without much convincing, even though, throughout the novel his distrust of Shaikh Rashid –the imam, the mentor- is clearly visible (Updike 233-234). Therefore, with this acceptance of not only his own death but mass murder, the novel reflects a portrayal of Islam with characteristics associated with authoritarian depictions in Orientalist analysis. Ahmad, while vary of Rashid, still accepts the mission given to him, even though he is not very clear when exactly he volunteered, as seen from his answer to Rashid's statement of "'[h]e informs me that you have expressed a willingness to die for jihad.' 'I did?'" (Updike 233). Throughout the novel, Ahmad, while judgemental to all non-Muslims in his life –including but not limited to his mother and Jack Levy-, is very obedient and silent towards the Muslims; on more than one occasion he answers them in a manner he thinks they would enjoy and not the way he actually thinks. Moreover, Ahmad, as nothing but a tool in Updike's plot, seems to be the representation of a "prototype terrorist, often presented by Western media" (Arif and Ahmad 559). An example of this can be seen in this very significant scene when Charlie questions Ahmad's willingness to fight and die for their cause by asking "'[w]ould you fight them, then?' Ahmad has missed what 'them' refers to, but says 'Yes' as if answering a roll call" (Updike 188).

Another significant representational pattern in the novel is the perceived difference between the attitudes of the church and the mosque towards newcomers and/or visitors, which can be seen in the scene in which Joryleen asks to visit Ahmad's mosque, just as he has visited her church (Updike 69). To her request –which he believes to be sincere and genuine- Ahmad replies "[t]hat would not do. We could not sit together, and you could not attend without a course of instruction, and a demonstration of sincerity" (Updike 69), which suggests that mosque access is limited to Muslims only. The scene implies restricted access, despite the fact that many mosques permit visitation under various conditions. This portrayal, aside from indicating that outsiders are unwelcome in Muslim prayer spaces, also reinforces the impression that mosques are places of self-isolation from the non-Muslim society. Moreover, another distinct distortion of religion can be seen at the very end of the novel, when Ahmad's thoughts after abandoning the terrorist mission is revealed to us as "[t]hese devils, Ahmad thinks, have taken away my God" (Updike 310). Hartnell argues that the victory of Ahmad's conscience over his religious devotion "has deprived him from Islam" (487) which once again suggests that within Updike's representation of Islam and Muslims, Islam consists of violence only as suggested by Neo-Orientalist discourse, and by turning his back to mass murder and terror, Ahmad also turns his back to his religion. According to Mitra and her colleagues, Neo-Orientalist thought identifies Islam and Muslims as a "global threat to Western civilization" which is a sentiment that can clearly be understood from Updike's novel and its ending. Moreover, faulty and unreliable Neo-Oriental characteristics attributed to Muslims can be seen in the novel through "Ahmad's religious superiority complex" (Alosman et al 62); it can be argued that within Neo-Orientalist discourse, this complex may be seen as another

way of justifying differentiation and otherisation of Muslims, as the idea itself suggests that it is the Muslim community itself, that differentiates and otherizes non-Muslims, whereas in the post-9/11 landscape it is the Muslims of varying ethnic backgrounds who are "presented with their difference and abnormality from the ordinary" (Alosman et al 62). Pirnajmuddin and Salehnia argue that it is the narrative voice that "distances [itself] from the focalizer in order to remind the readers that this is the way the Muslims see [them]". Furthermore, the ending carries more significance than this, as according to Pirnajmuddin and Salehnia,

> [t]hroughout the novel, Updike's Neo-Orientalist stance is sustained; Islam's essential, radical 'otherness' and ultimately its inferiority and menace are the latent and manifest assumptions. Beside the narrative techniques, Updike takes advantage of an epiphany, not only to celebrate Ahmad's sense of freedom at the end of the novel, but also to end the novel with another binary: the superiority and power of the West over the East. … This ending, confirming the sustained stance of Updike throughout the novel, leaves the reader assured of the superiority of the secular, modern, democratic and rationalist West (here Jack) over the religious, extremist, backward, totalitarian and exotic East (here Ahmad and Shaikh Rashid). (183-184)

Alosman and his colleagues argue that in this sense, terror has been viewed as "exclusively Islamic" and as a "shortcut to paradise," and this kind of representation of Muslims and Islam "smears the religion of Islam for its inhumane tendencies" (62). From Ahmad's attitude and the character of Shaikh Rashid, a fundamentalist interpretation of the religion is presented as Islam itself (Pirnajmuddin and Salehnia 182), which is why it can be argued that Updike's *Terrorist* "echoes Neo-Orientalist ideology right from the beginning till the end" (Arif and Ahmad 554).

Moreover, differentiation and otherisation of the Muslim other within the novel is another significant point in which the Neo-Orientalist discourse makes itself known to the reader. Mansutti explains that particularly after September 11, and presumably after the emergence of Neo-Orientalism, Muslims in the United States, particularly Arab Americans, were feared for their appearance which put them in a position where their "Arabness" ended up overcoming their "Americanness" (106-107). Meanwhile, Alosman and his colleagues argue that within Updike's novel, the depiction of Islam and Muslims is restricted within the framework of differentiation (68), which, aside from all the points previously made, can also be seen in the way Ahmad is referred to as "Arab" by his peers. Hartnell suggests that "what marks him out from the American mainstream is not so much his religion but rather, his ethnicity" (496), which explains why he feels as "an outsider among outsiders" (Updike 244). Moreover, Banerjee questions the "obsession with skin colour" that we see in Updike's novel, as *Terrorist* is supposed to be "presumably concerned with giving us the psychology of a terrorist" (13): the fact that this remains as a presumption only suggests the existence of racial profiling within the novel. Mansutti clarifies that this profiling suggests "certain racial features highlight the predisposition in a person to commit a crime" (113), which is incredibly important as Banerjee questions why the olive skin colour of the protagonist should provide us with clues regarding his psyche and strongly argues that

> Updike's novel tells us that the only legitimate reason to tell an ethnic story is the attempt to draw a psychological profile of the killer, to reconstruct – and not simply to imagine, let alone invent – what makes cultural difference tick. What Updike's novel implies is that we may once more have become enamored with the hues of whiteness; and we may be enamored with the hues of (true) whiteness because all other hues have become suspect. (16)

Furthermore, the represented differentiation of Ahmad within the novel does not appear to be unique to his skin colour, as Pirnajmuddin and Salehnia argue that

> Updike, in a Neo-Orientalist gesture, takes advantage of this form of narration and identifies Ahmad as 'the other' in contrast to the narrative voice as 'the us'. Here, the narrator, reporting from Ahmad's mind, not only narrates what he (Ahmad) sees but also penetrates into his very depths of mind in order to image him as a teen fundamentally different from his peers. Instead of getting pleasure, natural for a teen, from such an erotic atmosphere and relishing the thought of being part of it, Ahmad detaches himself, as a Muslim, from those who are despised, in his view, as the Westerners. (179)

Overall, Updike's representation of Islam, leaves no space for Ahmad to exist as a Muslim American; the only visible choices given to him are either to be a Muslim or to be an American (Pirnajmuddin and Salehnia 183).

Another problem with the representation in Updike's *Terrorist*, is the fact that "[t]hrough Ahmad's character Updike tries to lay emphasis on his conception of the American superiority as well as Muslim's inferiority" (Alosman et al 63) and achieves to create this binary opposition through the Muslim and non-Muslim characters in the novel. The only Muslims who do not end up becoming terrorists or fundamentalists in the novel, are Habib Chehab who defends the interests of the United States to his son and employees, and Charlie Chehab who acts like a fundamentalist and recruits Ahmad for the terrorist mission as a part of his undercover identity with the CIA. On the other hand, the two other major Muslim characters we see in the novel are, Ahmad, who obediently –and rather unrealistically- accepts committing mass murder, and Shaikh Rashid who has been guiding and grooming Ahmad on the path of hatred, discrimination, religious superiority and terror. Moreover, the non-Muslim

characters, heavily represented by Jack Levy, are seen as faulty but still on the right path and willing to help others. Therefore, it can be said that while the non-Muslim characters are depicted in a more positive light, Muslim characters have been depicted "antithetically" (Alosman et al 68), with the exception of the Chehabs who are much more Americanised than Ahmad and Rashid, in terms of their life style and views, which gives the readers the impression that only westernised Muslims can be trusted –an idea that ignores the cultural values of millions.

The dualism between Jack Levy and Ahmad is another important part of characterisation of Muslims and non-Muslims in the novel, as Ahmad's religious superiority complex creates an "us vs them" dichotomy (Alosman et al 62). Salehnia argues that "Updike focuses on the Orientalist and Neo-Orientalist binary opposition of 'the Self'/'the Other', represented by Jack and Ahmad" (484). Alosman and his colleagues argue that the binary opposition between Jack and Ahmad can be easily noticed from their basic characteristics, as Jack represents "the modernized American citizen who has replaced old religious superstitions with a modernised conception of the world," whereas Ahmad is represented with his "inability to modernize, revolutionize his traditional beliefs and cope with American multicultural modernity" (63). The most visible place where their duality makes itself known is the scene where Levy compares their respective experiences at the age of eleven by asking "'How old were you when you . . . when you found your faith?' 'Age eleven, sir.' 'Funny—that's the age when I announced I was giving up the violin. Defied my parents. Asserted myself. The hell with everybody'" (Updike 42). The autonomous nature of the modernised Western man is being compared to the obedient traditional Muslim in this scene; Jack finds it "funny" that at the same age he has chosen to be his own person, Ahmad has

chosen to be a part of a religion that will expect obedience from him. Jack and Ahmad share some similarities within their duality as well, the most significant one being their shared hatred for consumerism (Salehnia 486). However, even though they are both willing to die at some point and they both hate the consumerist part of America, it is the Muslim character that becomes a terrorist, which is an implication that helps to create the image of the 'violent Muslim other'. Moreover, the simple fact that Ahmad has been manipulated and groomed by the Muslims in his life but has been loved and protected by the non-Muslims is also an important point that suggests a binary opposition between Updike's Muslim and non-Muslim characters (Salehnia 487). Once again, the comparison between the Muslim and non-Muslim characters can be observed through Jack Levy and Ahmad's father Omar Ashmawy. Jack is still somehow committed to his family even though he is unfaithful to his wife, whereas Omar has left his family as he could not deal with the responsibility; furthermore "[s]uch contrast, between the non-Muslim and Muslim characters, further illustrates the politics of orientalism … imposed on the Muslim other as a lazy and dependent opportunist" (Alosman et al 66).

Another important aspect of the novel is the use of Qur'anic verses within. Alosman and his colleagues argue that not only throughout the novel, Islam has been differentiated from Christianity, but Updike has also used "misinterpreted" verses to clarify his points (61). John Strawson notes that for Updike, "like the Orientalists of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, language holds a special place for him—thus [in *Terrorist*] we are faced with a significant amount of transliterated Qur'anic Arabic. This draws on the Orientalist trope that to know the language is to know the mind of the other" (qtd in Hartnell 485). Therefore, it is clear that aside from not having sufficient knowledge, nor enough experience

on the subject, Updike uses the translated verses to have a sense of understanding about the life and the psychological processes of the Muslim other; however, as Banerjee points out the only psychological profile he provides within the novel is of Jack Levy's and not Ahmad's (25).

According to Däwes, the narrator of the novel actively challenges the stereotypical notions of radicalism and jihad (507-508); nevertheless, this idea can be easily disproved. On the one hand Ahmed does, indeed, point out that jihad does not particularly mean violence by clarifying that "'Jihad doesn't have to mean war,' his voice shyly cracking. 'It means striving, along the path of God. It can mean inner struggle.'" (Updike 149), which may give the reader the same impression that Däwes has about challenging and deconstructing the idea of radicalism and jihad; however, on the other hand, Ahmed's "willingness to die for jihad" (Updike 233) clearly conflicts with the concept of jihad as an inner process. Moreover, Updike's representation of Ahmed as a typical terrorist with little to no inner conflict –or free will- casts a shadow on the idea of challenging the stereotypes, and once again illustrates how Updike, himself, has been affected by Neo-Orientalist discourse while creating his main Muslim character. Similar to Däwes, Hartnell also argues that the simple fact "that a serious writer like Updike has claimed ground largely dominated since 9/11 by the mainstream media marks a progression from the Orientalist depictions of Islam particularly prevalent in the public spheres of the US and Britain" (478); however, considering the fact that the representation of the Muslim other can be summarized as a blindly obedient terrorist unless Americanized, it is apt to suggest that this move from Orientalist depiction is not headed to a more fair representation, but to a Neo-Orientalist one.

Banerjee argues that "Updike's novel may in fact only be a psychograph of its author and of the political climate which gave rise to the psychographing of potential terrorists in the first place" (15). Hartnell agrees with this point as she clarifies that the critique of the United States and its sociocultural conditions that we see in the novel are Updike's own views (484). Moreover, Banerjee asserts that "[i]n pretending to provide us with psychology of a Muslim terrorist, Updike leaves us with mere racial profiling" (19), and therefore, the message understood from his novel equals to be the one of "Islam is inimical to modernity" (Pirnajmuddin and Salehnia 181). Updike, with this novel, has the power to alter perceptions of the masses about Islam and Muslims, like many other before and after him; however, according to Arif and Ahmad, he uses this power by "creat[ing] a binary of what is American and what is non-American or, in other words, what is modern secularism and what is Islamic fundamentalism" (555-556), which is probably why Pirnajmuddin and Salehnia refer to Updike's *Terrorist* as "blatantly propagandistic" (185). Overall, as Arif and Ahmad once again clarifies "[t]he epitome of the entire discussion entails that Updike's *Terrorist* proves to be a neo-orientalist narrative of the Arabo-Islamic world. He follows the Neo Orientalists' assumption about the Arab world as the new barbarians whose culture, above all, encourages violence, whose cultures, rather than anything else, perpetuates violence" (559). Therefore, it can be said the novel not only functions as a piece of Neo-Orientalist tool, but it also demonstrates Updike's failure of objectively portraying the mind of a would-be terrorist, without being affected by Neo-Orientalist discourse.

The Submission by Amy Waldman

The Submission, the first novel of the former New York Times reporter Amy Waldman, can be considered as "a piece of literary journalism, which employs the polyphonic voices of the American public sphere where politicians, journalists, families of the [9/11] victims, Christians and Muslims, radicals and moderates are called upon to participate in the debate" (Gheorghiu 16); the debate being whether or not a Muslim's design of a September 11 memorial can be considered acceptable. T' Hart argues that Waldman's *The Submission* "does not seek to bring out polarities" but functions as a piece of social realism in order to give its readers a general view of the society (15). Gheorghiu points out that one of the aims of Waldman writing this novel is clearly to "demonstrate the Islamophobic atmosphere in America in the aftermath of September 11" (208), which she achieves to do so, through the story of a Muslim architect and the backlash he receives as his design is chosen for the September 11 memorial. Moreover, Miller argues that "the novel invites readers to think critically about powerful post-9/11 stereotypes that seek to define the political other" (22), as Mohammad (Mo) Khan becomes the focus of media and the dominant discourse of otherisation through binary oppositions and stereotyping, when the news of his achievement finds its way to provocative media platforms and to the outraged public. Through the reactions and responses of both media and the general public, the novel manages to provide its readers with two distinctive

representations; the representation of the United States of America and the representation of the Muslim Other (Gheorghiu 108). Furthermore, Miller argues that Waldman's *The Submission* invites readers to consider "how they think about not only the response in the United States to 9/11 but also the ongoing, often misguided, fight for national narrative supremacy" (28), as it "portrays the endeavours of politics, media and individuals" (T' Hart 17) to get their way and influence others to do the same. Accordingly, this part of the study aims to study and examine the ways in which the Neo-Orientalist attitudes of not only the media, but also of the public and the politicians can be observed in *The Submission*.

The novel starts with Mo Khan's design being chosen as the winner of the memorial design competition; unfortunately, the jurors' initial agreement is short-lived, as it becomes clear that they have chosen a Muslim –as understood from the name Mohammad. The following discussion helps the reader understand not only the dilemma hidden within the issue, but also people's opinions about it. When Alyssa Spier –a reporter- gets the wind of the story, the juror's attempts at keeping the issue silent turns out to be in vain. As the news spread throughout the nation, we are given the different points of view of distinctively different people, some of which are supportive of Mo, some simply are not. The issue soon becomes a matter of public debate as every news channel, newspaper and public figure start to make their views explicitly clear to the public, which deepens the binary oppositions constructed in the post-9/11 era. Amid these developments, Mo, whose identity is not only being assumed, but also being reinvented, encounters increasing personal and public pressures. However, he is not the only one who is in the process of changing, as the narrative indicates that other characters also undergo shifts in perspective. Claire Burwell, who has been the most prominent supporter of

the Garden –Mo's design-, becomes increasingly affected by media portrayals of Mo, prompting her to question his motivations. Moreover, by the end of the novel, the issue is not solved completely, but is merely avoided, as Claire, along with MACC (Muslim American Coordinating Council) who both have been on the side of Mo's design before, organise a press conference to ask Mo to withdraw from the competition and bring an end to the ongoing hostility and discussions. Furthermore, throughout the novel, as the tensions grow stronger and stronger, as readers, we are able to observe the effects of Neo-Orientalism in practice, through the actions of media sources, politicians and the public.

While there are many instances in the novel in which we can observe the Neo-Orientalist attitudes, as Gheorghiu says "[i]n the end, it comes down to the media" (223). Ostwal, explains that the American media "can be viewed as arousing unrest by mis-representing the Muslims through their news casts" (7). Building on this Altwaiji points out that by effectively reinforcing the binary oppositions between cultures and emphasising the terrorist frames that will cause fear and paranoia amongst people, American media has accepted the possible side effects these kind of narratives will have on the Muslim population living peacefully in the United States, hence, "paving the way for prejudices" (315), which can be clearly seen in the actions of Alyssa Spier in the novel. As a reporter, who shamelessly adds a picture of "man in a balaclava, scary as a terrorist" (Waldman 52) to create sensational news with the implication that the winner of the contest is a terrorist, Alyssa Spier has no regard for facts or objectivity, as she "writes to shock" (T' Hart 22). T' Hart argues that Spier is one of the greatest facilitators of emotional manipulation, as she keeps insisting on "sustaining the victimization that validates the eradication of the evil Other who imposes injustice onto society" (22). Ostwal points out

that Alyssa manages to turn the situation from bad to worse with her provocative reports and language (7); she not only reveals the world that the winner is a Muslim man –that can be associated with terrorists- but she also "writes polarizing articles about Islam, and incessantly reorganizes and manipulates information about Mo Khan to stereotype him as a dangerous Muslim, a threat to the nation" (T' Hart 23). T' Hart further argues that with the way she "decontextualizes and abstracts the events," she also happens to be repeating "the popular angle of the 9/11 narrative that also offered binary decision between the good or evil through two completely opposed categories (the virtuous victim-hero America and its villainous attacker)" (23). This particular point is made rather clear within the article Spier writes which explicitly claims that "[t]he problem with Islam is Islam" (Waldman 106), indicating that the mere existence of Islam and Muslims is a problem that needs to be solved. She also advocates on a radio show that "[f]or all we know some one-eyed, bearded killer wearing pajamas came up with this" (Waldman 91), further deepening the fear and panic amongst people, and effectively proving how some simple words said on mainstream media have an immense effect on the public. In the same way, Maio defends that it was the exact moment when the media exposes the religion of the winner to the general public that "fear and hatemongering begin" (3). She further argues that "Mo becomes a scapegoat and a representation of fear through the way he is portrayed in the media in the novel" (Maio 10), which, as we can clearly see, is one of the ways in which the Neo-Orientalist approach of media makes itself known within *The Submission*. Moreover, "[a]s a consequence, Khan's complex identity needs to be simplified by the media: he is either a patriot American who only wants to comfort the victims with his design, or a radical who has created an

Islamic Garden to mock the victims" (Baelo-Allue 176), as we can understand from these lines:

> Mo read that he was Pakistani, Saudi, and Qatari; that he was not an American citizen; that he had donated to organizations backing terrorism; that he had dated half the female architects in New York; that as a Muslim he didn't date at all; that his father ran a shady Islamic charity; that his brother-how badly Mo, as an only child, had wanted a brother!-had started a radical Muslim students' association at his university. He was called, besides decadent, abstinent, deviant, violent, insolent, abhorrent, aberrant, and typical. (Waldman 126)

In this part of the novel, it is easy for us to observe that almost all representations of Mo in the media are based on his identity as a Muslim man, even though, he has made it clear on more than one occasion that he does not practise despite "the symbolism of his name" (Maio 7)-, which shows us another important role of the Neo-Orientalist discourse in the novel: its part in shaping Mo's identity. Peter Ferry asserts that "Waldman writes a character with enough self-awareness and a power to reflect upon the fractured nature of his identity, which ultimately proves highly successful in allowing him and therefore the reader, to consider the complexities of being 'a global citizen'" (179). Moreover, Maio indicates that the events of the novel unfold in such a way that Mo has to admit to himself, even with his American upbringing, as long as he is labelled as a Muslim and burdened with Islam's prophet's name, he will never be truly accepted, as no matter how hard he tries to separate his identity into different parts just as the media does, he is unable to do so, since he is not just a Muslim or an American –he is the combination of both (2-3). His identity evolves throughout the book and his name plays a big part in the shaping of his identity as it carries additional cultural and religious significance; moreover, according to Gheorghiu, Mohammad, along with

its variations, is a common name both in the Islamic world and in the West, which is why she suggests that the fact that Waldman named her character in such a stereotypical way to represent the Muslim Other, indicates that she "wanted to make her antihero an Everyman" (207-208). In fact, that idea is supported within the novel, when Alyssa Spier comments on the commonality of Mo's name as "'Mohammad Khan': the 'John Smith' of the Muslim world" (Waldman 93), and thus, in a world where all Muslims are painted with the same brush, Mohammad Khan stands for millions like him, as someone who is "framed by the dominant voices of American fear" (Maio 4). Considering the fact that it was the announcement of his name that initiated a rather complex series of events, it can be further argued that his name is his label, as it carries enormous amounts of social, cultural and historical significance that Mo cannot avoid, no matter how much he tries. At this point, Maio demonstrates that Mo, indeed, has been trying to detach himself from the significance of his name and his identity as a Muslim, by shortening his name from Mohammad to Mo (4). Esposito explains that the identities of Muslims living in the West have been "shaped by their religious, ethnic and cultural backgrounds" (23), which leads us to the conclusion that Mo's attempts of disentangling himself from the significance of his name and his cultural background, is his way of trying to establish his own identity without the additional assumptions made about him, as Maio points out "[n]o matter how unfounded this fear is, real people are being affected by the stigma of what certain names signify" (6).

Another instance, in which we can see media's manipulation of Mo's intentions can be seen in his interview with a radio show, where his words are constantly being misinterpreted as the interviewer keeps on asking questions to mislead him as we can see in this scene:

"So what did you feel, really feel, the day of the attack?"

"I felt devastated, like all of us. Like a hole had been blasted in me."

"That sounds pretty bad," Sarge said. "It must have been like finding out your brother is the Unabomber."

"No, that's not what I meant."

"And so you came up with this memorial, which has attracted a fair bit of controversy. Tell me, where'd you get the idea?"

Mo was still stuck on the Unabomber comment, wondering if he should try again to rebut it. Too late. "From my imagination," he said. "I thought a garden would be symbolically resonant as a memorial, given its interplay of life and death and"

"Got it. So is it, actually, an Islamic garden?"

"It's just a garden."

"A martyrs' paradise?"

"It's a garden."

"A jihadi playground?"

"It's a garden."

"A joke on the American people?"

"Excuse me? The American people include me." (Waldman 188-189)

In this particular scene, we can observe that he is questioned in a similar manner to a foreigner; that is to say, the interviewer is simply acting as if the person in front of him is not a part of this country and culture. Also, his insistence that the garden must have a connection to Islam suggests that they are unable to see behind the religious background of Mo and have deemed that it is impossible for a Muslim to design something unrelated to Islam. Furthermore, Gheorghiu

asserts that one of the ways in which the media misrepresents Khan is also observed in their refusal to call him Mo in their reports –like many of his friends do (215), as "Mo didn't have the ring-theological, historical, hysterical-of Mohammad" (Waldman 96). Even though, he is going by Mo and has next to no religious beliefs, his full name carries significant cultural and religious meanings and connotations, which is "seized on in the press and in the media and serves as more ammo in the fight against Mohammad building the garden," and the media's portrayal of him as "the face of what Americans fear" does not help him either (Maio 4-5).

Another character that is affected by the media's misrepresentation is Asma Anwar whose husband was one of the victims of the September 11 attack (Waldman 70), and whose voice has been silenced by the governor in the novel. When Asma talks rather passionately about how her husband was one of the victims and a Muslim during the public hearing regarding Mo's garden, the public is affected by her compassion and story. However, as many powerful people are against this, it is heavily implied within the novel that Asma's status as an illegal immigrant has been made public intentionally, in order to contradict and impugn her words, as we can understand from the words of the Governor herself, as she says "'[y]ou're referring to what Kyle so nicely framed as the Bangladeshi bounce' Kyle shifted as if he itched 'and I think that's been taken care of.' Her smile was breezy" (Waldman 247). Here, we can understand how "[t]he media narrative decontextualizes and thus amplifies public anger and fear, according to governor's political plan," which not only presents us with a view regarding the simplicity of using the power of media to disregard what is not desired, but also, through the character of the governor, depicts the people in power who control the dominant discourse for their own gains. Miller agrees with this idea, as she clarifies that

the "public spectacle is a political construction: rather than build space for public debate, those in power often reinforce ideological walls between individuals and then attempt to resolve conflict with political policies shaped in their own image and to their own ends" (15), and this is the exact same thing we see the governor doing. Therefore, it can be argued that *The Submission* also "demonstrates the political dangers of such fixed ideas about narrative control through the character of New York's governor. The governor is busy crafting, behind the scenes of the public hearing about Mohammad Khan's memorial design, an emotionally charged event that will advance her own political career" (Miller 20). The governor turns the emotional unrest of the public into a political reality she can benefit from, and thus acts as an "editor in chief of this public narrative," which is why Miller further argues that "[t]he novel explores the paralyzing power of the governor's dominant script by demonstrating its impact on a character who is even more clearly a victim of this public discourse than Mohammad Khan: Asma Anwar" (20). T' Hart suggests that the governor appeals to the fear of the Islamic threat, and "manipulates the situation to her own advantage by increasing existing fear and implying new suffering, and then takes this opportunity to convince the public that she will prevent and overcome that suffering if they allow her to take charge" (19) –basically indicating to the reader that this kind of Neo-Orientalist talk does not have the best interest of the people at heart, but the best interest of power.

Another way in which we can observe Neo-Orientalism reflected in the novel can be found in the ways people change their opinions or actions as a result of the presence and effects of Neo-Orientalist discourse in the media. Miller explains that "[m]uch like the New York Times editors who admitted to rushing stories into print both before and during the Iraq invasion in 2003, the media in *The Submission* hastily and

dangerously shape national ideas about the 'war on terror' by shutting down meaningful public discussion before it even begins," which not only indicates that the actions of media seen in the novel are accurate, but also points out the highly manipulative nature of media. The influence of media and the Neo-Orientalist thought can be best observed within Claire's character, as she becomes more and more untrusting towards Mo and even asks him to withdraw, while at the beginning she has been the only one amongst the jurors who did not mind having a Muslim designer for the memorial. While she keeps on insisting that every individual matters, she also hypocritically starts to combine all Muslims as a part of a whole, effectively ignoring their individual lives and personalities, as she questions her friend Jack by saying "[l]et me ask you a question. You, with your liberal causes, how do you reconcile your support for Islam with your support for gay rights, for feminism, when you look at how women, or gays, or minorities get treated in so many Muslim countries?" (Waldman 203). For a person who keeps insisting on the individual rights of all September 11 victims, Claire has no problem with turning this individual issue about Mo Khan into an issue of supporting or not supporting every action taken by every Muslim, which may be why Jamil argues that "Claire represents the public transcript about Muslims and terrorism" (39). Jamil suggests that the underlying reason why Claire keeps on insistently asking about the inspiration behind the garden, is her newly found belief that since he is a Muslim, his inspiration should also be Islamic; she further argues that "[h]er distrust and suspicion are overt, exposing also her assumptions that have structured the entire conversation: her white, western privilege, her 'us' against his 'them', her belief that he is a Muslim who cannot be trusted, who has a hidden agenda, who is threatening, and who is responsible for terrorism" (36). Furthermore, the way

Claire is so easily influenced by Spier and her Neo-Orientalist attitude can be considered as a confirmation of the fact that the mainstream media "harbour particular power for shaping experiences of the 9/11 events" (Anker qtd in T' Hart 23). In this sense, the character of Claire not only proves that the influence media sources have on us is undeniable, but she also stands as an example of what kind of effect Neo-Orientalism has on people.

However, Claire's change of heart is not the only instance in which we witness people's Neo-Orientalist tendencies. Gheorghiu argues that Waldman's novel, "fictionalises numerous instances of discursive Islamophobia manifest in political, speeches, media interventions and public points of view" (214). This idea is proven right within the scene when Mo hears his co-workers talking about the terrorist threat, which ends with one of them suggesting to get rid of all Muslims to solve the problem (Waldman 44), here we can see how all Muslim are put in the same equation, just as Anker points out the fact that "September 11 facilitated the consolidation of a new identity category" in which "persons who are or appear 'Middle Eastern, Arab or Muslim'" are clustered together as if they are one whole, instead of numerous different individuals (qtd in T' Hart 17-18). Moreover, the scene in which the crowds start to shout "Save America from Islam! Save America from Islam!"protesting against Mo's design can be given as another example of this idea of Islam being a threat for the United States of America, which was further reinforced by their leader's words about the terrible nature of Islam: "For generations immigrants came to this country and assimilated, accepted American values. But Muslims want to change America-no, they want to conquer it" (Waldman 151). Furthermore, Gauthier suggests that "[t]he population's lack of knowledge about Islam short-circuits their capacity to contemplate other scenarios. In their minds, all Arabs are

Muslims, all Muslims are Islamists, and all Islamists seek the destruction of the Western world" (qtd in Gheorghiu 216) which can definitely be observed in the context of *The Submission*. For example, one of the scenes in which the Neo-Orientalist attitude of a regular person is reflected to us, is where Sean's brother-in-law, Brendan's short-temper regarding Muslims is depicted:

> He'd led a brief protest at his local subway stop after the name Talib Islam was posted under the smiling face on the "Hello, I am your station manager" sign. "They expect us to look at that name every day?" he'd asked. The Transit Authority had posted cops in the station to protect Islam, which made Brendan apoplectic. Then, one day, the manager was gone. Brendan counted it a victory until he learned that Talib Islam had been promoted. (Waldman 119)

In this scene, we can both observe the way Brendan is hateful towards Muslims, and the way his lack of sufficient knowledge –both about Islam and about the subway manager- is clearly made visible. Another important scene where the public's lack of knowledge makes itself known is seen when Sean –one of the protestors- goes to apologise to Zahira, the woman whose hijab he ripped off in the heat of the moment; in the middle of his apology, however, he attempts to defend his decision and gets a response, as he exclaims:

> "But also, we don't make women cover their hair in this country."
>
> "No, we don't make women cover their hair." She put the stress on "we." It seemed to amuse her. "But women are free to choose to, as I did. No one's making me do anything. My own father is against me covering. It's my choice," she repeated. "No one else's." (Waldman 181-182)

In this part, Zahira not only educates Sean about the choice she willingly made as a Muslim woman –as opposed to being forced to do it- but she also deconstructs the binary

opposition of "us versus them," simply with an emphasis, as she makes it clear to him that she is also a part of his country whether he accepts it or not, and thus his collective "we" also stands for her. Furthermore, another point in which the Neo-Orientalist view of Islam as a religion of violence can be observed is when Sean's mother claims that "[i]t's Muslims that are supposed to mistreat women" (Waldman 164), which clearly presents the stereotypical, Neo-Orientalist understanding of Muslims (Gheorghiu 216).

The end of the novel, however, causes some conflicting views with its depiction of Mo in Kabul finding peace in a garden. One of the underlying mysteries of the novel is precisely the unknown reasons and inspirations Mo might have while creating the garden (Baelo-Allue 178). On more than one occasion, Mo asserts that the only motive he had for designing the memorial and entering the competition has been to contribute to the healing of his country and society; nevertheless, his words fall on deaf ears as his motives and the Islamic qualities of the garden are repeatedly questioned. However, the last chapter of the novel enlightens us as to exactly where Mo got his inspiration from: an ancient garden in Kabul, where he found peace and tranquillity. Baelo-Allue suggests that this final scene of him finding the garden in Kabul, and finding serenity in it, "suggests that Khan may have been inspired by an Islamic garden after all" (178); yet, when we look at all the facts provided to us in the last chapter, instead of simply assuming that Khan's garden is also Islamic because he was inspired by a garden in Afghanistan, it is revealed that the garden in question was a resting place of a Mogul emperor, which is highly symbolic as Moguls are known for the religious freedom they provided for their subjects. Moreover, considering the fact that Waldman has chosen Kabul with Mogul history, instead of any other Muslim country that United States have been recently involved with,

suggests that the choice of Afghanistan was on purpose, which leads us to believe that the tolerance and religious freedom provided by the Mogul empire stand as a message in the novel. It is also possible that the peace and tranquillity he has found in the garden were what inspired him, without any religious or political connotations it may have (Baelo-Allue 178). Furthermore, another conflicting point we find at the end of the novel can be seen in the epilogue, where twenty years after the memorial contest, two young journalists come to visit him to interview him about the contest. In this epilogue, Waldman asserts her hopes for the future of a united country with the lines "American Muslims were now, if not embraced, accepted. Trusted. Their rights unquestioned," (287); however, she also points out that there still will be doubt and suspicion, as after watching the video of the garden Mo has built for an unidentified rich Muslim and seeing the Quranic verses on the walls instead of the names of the September 11 victims, Claire once again jumps to conclusions, being unable stop herself from doubting, even though she has no idea what those verses translate into (Waldman 296-298). Although it is pointed out to her that the garden was a commission for a Muslim, and thus has no reason to include the names of the 9/11 victims, Claire sees it as a confirmation of her fears, notwithstanding her lack of assurance on the subject. Moreover, Miller argues that this final scene "emphasizes the continued ease and ongoing power of stereotypes, but it also suggests that recognizing what one does not know might be the first step toward rewriting –rather than retreating from, as Mo does– the nation's post-9/11 public narratives" (26).

Consequently, Maio defends that "[u]nfortunately, Waldman's work of fiction is based in reality. The fear of the 'other' is not just something that is talked about in novels. The fear in the novel is a reflection of the fear the public has in real life" (5). Additionally, Gheorghiu, commending Waldman's

representation, further points out that "[w]hile not missing any of the most common Islamophobic stereotypes in circulation after 9/11, *The Submission* renders them as phonies, malicious statements and misinterpretations, simply because Muslims are not all the same"(210-211), which is an idea T' Hart agrees whole-heartedly as she comments that "by providing a critical view on the interpretation of the events, Waldman contributes to a counter-narrative" that portrays most of the post-9/11 dominant narrative as "highly problematic" (27). Furthermore, Ferry argues that "Waldman goes beyond other writers who have come before her in searching for a greater depth in the Other in her intimate, immediate sense of the tensions that typified the performance and analysis of this contemporary crisis following 9/11" (177), to which Gheorghiu adds that Waldman's portrayal of Islam and Muslims, along with her "construction of Muslim identity is less interested in counteracting the Orientalism of the established Western novelists like … Updike, and much more in producing a piece of social realism along the lines imposed by liberal media" (209). It is also possible to say that Waldman, with her socio-critical analyses of realistic situations, depicts various dynamics through which Neo-Orientalist patterns operate. Through descriptions of characters' interpretations of Islam as violent and the gradual shift in Claire's perspective, *The Submission* illustrates mechanisms through which Neo-Orientalist discourse can operate subtly and without the notice of the individuals.

Conclusion

When we look at both novels in terms of which aspects of Neo-Orientalism they exhibit, a notable difference appears in the ways each novel reflects this discourse. While John Updike's *Terrorist* shows signs of being a device of Neo-Orientalist thought with its stereotypical characters and approach, Amy Waldman's *The Submission* functions as a reflective platform, on which both media's and society's attitudes and ways of interacting with Muslims and Islam are displayed. Moreover, another important aspect that needs to be mentioned, in terms of the novels' differences from each other, is the way they treat their Muslim characters. It can be argued that while Updike's Muslim characters are either stereotyped or Americanized, Waldman's inclusion of multiple Muslim characters allows the novel to portray variations within Muslim communities, which illustrates that the experiences, the viewpoints and attitudes of each individual is different from one another. In this sense, it can be argued that while Updike's *Terrorist* implements the frames enforced by the Neo-Orientalist discourse, Waldman's *The Submission* presents representations that contrast with, or complicate, these frames.

In addition to the large number of lives lost in the attack and the global impact associated with the event, yet another consequence frequently identified in scholarship is the intensification of public anxiety regarding terrorism

following the September 11 attacks (Mitra 228). In order to further illustrate this worsening process, in the second and third sections of this study, the escalation of West-Islam relationship has been discussed and the way Islam has been perceived in contrast to the Western world has been explained. Similarly in sections four and five, how the Neo-Orientalist discourse became involved after the 9/11 attacks and became influential in shaping interpretive responses to the event by regarding "Islam as a global danger to western civilization" (Mitra 228) has been revealed, along with the technique Dag Tuastad refers as New Barbarism, which describes how media narratives can contribute to framing Muslims as potential security threats. However, as Neo-Orientalist thought is not limited to mainstream media platforms, it can also be seen reflected into movies, books, and even the public opinion, through the actions of regular citizens. This differentiation in the way Neo-Orientalist thought can be observed becomes apparent when comparing the two novels. In section six, it is demonstrated that the novel, *Terrorist*, reflects features commonly associated with Neo-Orientalist discourse, especially through its characters (Hartnell 498). It can be further argued that the novel functions as reinforcement of interpretive patterns associated with Neo-Orientalist discourse, as opposed to a reflective surface where we could objectively observe how the discourse operates. On the other hand, as explained in section seven, Waldman's *The Submission* does exactly that: the novel presents multiple perspectives that reveal Neo-Orientalist tendencies among characters, as well as depicting how constant exposure to the discourse can help changing one's mindset. In this sense, the two novels studied in this study may be examined as examples of Neo-Orientalist representation, each in a different manner.

Furthermore, it can be also asserted that while Said's Orientalism has been used in literature analyses since its emergence, Neo-Orientalism has not been as heavily used in terms of literary criticism and theory, which this study also aims to amend, although there remains a substantial scope for further research, considering the vast amount of contemporary literature that has been affected by it, in one way or another. As it is a relatively recent area of academic focus, the application of Neo-Orientalism in literary studies remains limited, which is why this study aims to contribute new ways of thinking, both to literary and Neo-Orientalist studies.

Through the various perspectives on the binary opposition of 'us versus them' we witness in both novels, the narratives suggest that such binaries are constructed rather than inherent and mostly based on selective or framed representations in media accounts. Thus, these narratives invite consideration of shared human concerns beyond constructed differences; in other words, instead of focusing on each other's perceived differences, we must focus on our shared humanity and values in order to create a world where there are no Others.

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