Chapter V

Conclusion

*After such knowledge, what forgiveness?*

--- T. S. Eliot

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

The September 11 attacks and the so-called “War on Terror” brought the Middle East and the old Orientalist discourse, with its binary division between “us” and “them”, into focus once more. The misperception of the West toward the East and more specifically the Muslim world is not a new phenomenon but has deep roots in the past. Since the Crusades, Islam was regarded and represented in a way that created and intensified xenophobic feelings in the Western psyche. The Western knowledge of the East was often constructed through different ways that dramatized,
developed and deepened such feelings. Literary texts are one of most influential means that shape Westerners’ knowledge, attitude and interest toward the Orient.

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

The tumultuous legacy of 9/11 has led to a quest for meaning among critics and novelists, an effort made to understand the complex social implications of this horrific event. Don DeLillo, a prominent American novelist, advocates the importance of narratives about the event: “We need them, even the common tools of the terrorists, to set against the massive spectacle that continues to seem unmanageable, too powerful a thing to set into our frame of practiced response.”

The multitude of responses to the event over the past twelve years has demonstrated many perspectives on the attacks, including those of the American citizens who attempt to understand Islam, the Muslims and their heritage. Therefore, representation of the Muslims seems to become a tool for engaging with the alien and his culture.

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

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

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

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

Updike’s *Terrorist* (2006) is clearly a frontal response to 9/11 terrorist attacks. On representing the attacks and the perpetrators, Updike states: “I had something to say from the standpoint of a terrorist…I felt that I could understand the animosity and hatred which an Islamic believer would have for our system.”

*Terrorist* represents the fruits of this attempt. The novel Orientalizes Islam and Arab Muslims and reproduces the prevalent stereotypes about Islam specifically fostering violent thinking and intolerance towards non-Muslims. The main characters, Ahmad and Shaikh Rashid show deep animosity to America, its citizens and its way of life.
The hostile feeling they reflect is a mirror of the Islamic creed and is supported by quotes from the Quran itself.

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

Updike is keen in popularizing his secular philosophy. He contrasts Islam with secularism and suggests irreligion as a substitute for traditional religions. Islam creates fanatics and is based on superstition and unseen elements while secularism is based on seen and scientific matter that guarantees prosperity in the world. Updike's secular attitude influences his perception of Islam negatively. Updike compares Muslim characters with the non-Muslims and offers the reader a set of secular characters and bestows on them the American ideals of individuality, equality and tolerance. This representation of the Muslims proves Updike’s bias for secularism. All his secular characters have a permissive attitude because they are not connected to any religion that claims superiority. For instance, Jack Levy, one of the secular characters whose religion “meant nothing to him”, is made to carry an extraordinary amount of weight in the novel. Updike positions secular characters in the novel as a mouthpiece for the multicultural harmony in America and the American security issues.
The study reveals that Updike situates his *Terrorist* in the larger framework of the neo-liberal agenda of the United States. From the opening paragraph of the novel, the reader finds that Ahmed is scared of the neo-liberal America and its materialist way of life. Ahmed shows fear of his faith being stolen: “Devils, Ahmad thinks. These devils seek to take away my God”\(^5\). Ahmad fears becoming trapped within this debased world and feels betrayed by what he regards as “an imperialist economic system rigged in favor of rich Christian infidels.”\(^6\) Ahmad attacks what he regards as the false promises of American consumer culture, telling his high school guidance counselor Jack Levy that the nation “has no God [and] is obsessed with sex and luxury goods” and reflecting elsewhere that “all America wants of its citizens…is for us to buy—to spend money for foolish luxuries and thus to propel the economy forward.”\(^7\)

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

9/11 attacks play a major role in Clancy’s representation of Arab Muslims. Clancy’s *The Teeth of the Tiger*’s whole action revolves around fighting and killing Arab terrorists. As a counter-terrorist discourse, the fight against Arab terrorists is supported by the author’s strong patriotism and anti-terrorism. This patriotic spirit
results in demonizing Islam and Arab Muslims and speaks highly of American professional soldiers, FBI, CIA, Coast Guard and policemen involved in eradicating Arab terrorism. Preserving and restoring American national security require the novel to find enemies who plan to destroy America, an easy task in the fictional world. Therefore, the best choice for the author is to pick his enemies from real past events which are still alive in popular memory, something the reader can relate to. The most recurring enemy-image in the American contemporary cultural products has definitely come from the Middle East.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Clarke’s Orientalist view is identical with the American hegemonic policy in this rich region which can be summed up in the infamous quote attributed to Henry Kissinger in 1974: “Oil is much too important a commodity to be left in the hands of the Arabs.” As Arab opposition to the American hegemony increased in the twenty-first century in the form of nationalist movements, U.S. military, intelligence and writers articulated a new demonology of Arab terrorism. Once again American
writers adopt the colonial counterterrorism discourses of the British writers of the 1930s in which terrorism was a common term for indigenous resistance to colonialism.

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

The American narrative on the Muslim woman in post 9/11 literature forms a central part of the American narrative on Islam, a part whose basic tenet is that Islam is innately and immutably oppressive to women. In this narrative, issues of marriage, dress and segregation epitomize oppression of woman and are perceived as the fundamental reasons for the backwardness of Islamic societies. Representations of Arab woman in American writings point to the popularity of such Orientalist
representations of Arab woman well before that mythical story of 9/11. Though the events of 9/11, 2001 certainly stimulated an upsurge of images of oppressed women in American literature, American audiences have been familiar with such images for far longer. In fact, the representation of Muslim woman has a good presence in American writings since the Gilded Age as interpretive schemata through which American consumers of the images engaged with the themes of erotic fantasy and patriarchal domination.

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

Several feminist writers have explored the way in which Laura Bush’s views support literary discourses that link the oppression of women to Islamic violence and terror. Sherry Jones follows the same approach in her *The Jewel of Medina* (2008) in
which women are humiliated by Prophet Muhammad and forced to marry him in battlefields. *The Jewel* is a platform for the propositions of the political development after 9/11. Like Laura Bush, Jones explores the fragile position of woman in Islamic society through characters whom she believes to be the embodiment of woman’s suffering in Islamic society. She speaks authoritatively and negatively about the Oriental woman, her mentality, her intentions, her aspirations and her concerns. From beginning to end, the hinge is sex; the sexual encounters between Mohammad and women never cease. To a Muslim reader, the novel is filled with blasphemous depictions of the Prophet Muhammad, his wives, especially A’isha and her secret love and her marriage. Above all, Jones narrates Islamic history as a love story.

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

It becomes an acceptable view that Islam is by its very nature responsible for woman’s suffering in Islamic societies:
“You must first understand Islam and in order to truly comprehend Islam, you must go to the source of where it all started-the modern Saudi Arabia.”

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

In *The Dawn and Finding Nouf*, Sahar and Nouf are the emblems of women’s reaction and represent exceptional women in the Saudi society. Inspired by her American friend Dawn, Sahar manages to escape to America on the day of her wedding. The existence of the American girl, Dawn, is to sacrifice her life in Saudi Arabia in order to inspire, enlighten and lay down plans for Arab women. The escape of Sahar to America after Dawn is murdered by her Saudi brother-in-law fixes the notion of the Muslim woman as a slave and pinpoints the place where women are given freedom. In *Finding Nouf*, Ferraris propagates the notion that woman’s suffering in Islamic societies is not related to certain sects of Islam or particular Muslims but to the basic teachings of Islam that encourages honour killing. Unlike Sahar, Nouf fails to escape to America though she offers her American friend Eric Scarsberry a million of Saudi riyals and gets killed as a result. Representing the Arab society as a prison-like enclosure in which women are stockpiled for the lascivious desires of the male, provides a salient feature of American imperialism and functions as an articulation of the confluence of imperialism and colonialism in post 9/11 American literary writings.
Though Ferraris has lived in Saudi Arabia for a couple of years, the reader comes across numerous errors in time and place in the novel which challenge the novel’s authenticity. Ferraris, for instance, speaks about the short distance between Jeddah and Muscat; however it is impossible to take an overnight bus from Jeddah to Muscat. She also speaks about islands two kilometers far from Jeddah, while there are none. It looks strange that Ferraris mentions women who are shopping before the break of the morning light whereas women do not go shopping at that hour, nor are any shops open. One of the most ridiculous errors is that one of the possibilities of the death of Nouf is by drowning in the desert, yet on page 91 readers are told: “In Jeddah it rained once a year, for approximately five minutes if they were lucky.” Further, she mentions that oil wells are more in Jeddah than in the Eastern Province; however most of the Saudi oil wells are located in the Eastern Province.

Parallel to the white novels, this study has also identified a category of American fiction that tackles the events of 9/11 in a different way. This category is the Arab American fiction that produces a representation of Arab American community in post 9/11 America. In contrast to the racial representation of Arab Muslims in white American fiction, this category of Arab American counter-narratives focus on the effects of 9/11 attacks on the lives of Arab Muslims living inside the United States. In other words, these counter-narratives demonstrate greater fear of racial profiling towards Arab Muslims and try to subvert white American representations of Islam and Muslims by providing contrasting views. The primary realization faced by the majority of Arab American writers is that their community is replaced by blanket negative representations that make them the most invisible among all minorities. This category of fiction offers an exploration of the self and the suffering of the Arab-American community.
Arab American writers employ literary strategies to subvert stereotypes and misconceptions commonly associated with Arabs. If white American writers represent an Arab as violent, an uncivilized brute and a terrorist, Arab American writers challenge the autonomy of stereotypes produced by white Americans by giving opposite representations. In *Crescent*, Abu-Jaber achieves this representation through a strategy of intertextuality in which her novel enters into a dialogue with Western canonical texts like Updike’s *Terrorist*, Clancy’s *The Teeth of the Tiger* and even Shakespeare’s *Othello*. In this creative strategy of resistance, *Crescent* attempts to question some of the themes, issues, images, misconceptions and stereotypes embedded in the Western texts. As a strategy of literary resistance, *Crescent* does also incorporate the events of 9/11 into the fabric of its narrative mainstream. The novel creates a physical and psychological ethnic borderland in which different ethnic communities coexist and communicate. The basis of such acts of interethnic bridging encourages a search for commonality in a hostile society. Only through such strategies can the ethnic borderland transcend exclusionary limitations and become a transformative site extending beyond the refused other.

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

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

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

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

The American representation of Islam and Muslims in post 9/11 fiction reflects no profundity of research about Islam, the Quran, the Prophet and Islamic society and therefore, readers are exposed to an amalgamation of fabrication, racism, half-truths and the distortion of reality. Further, this fiction is largely based on an archive of old information and ideas in which the Middle East has been projected as exotic, passive, barbaric, and inferior by nature and thus it is both a threat and at the same time conquerable. This post 9/11 American constructed knowledge of the East
is not gained through a real encounter with the so-called Orientals. Rather, this knowledge is still based on constructed fictions, not facts, within the dominant discourse. This fictional knowledge produced by the Americans is considered to be the symptom of Arabs’ incivility from which they must be redeemed. This knowledge of the Orient for the Western audience is believable because the author is writing about something which is distant and unfamiliar.

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


5 Updike, Terrorist 80.

6 Updike 80.

7 Updike 38-72.

8 Updike 136.

9 Updike 205.


15 Pourasgari Preface.