

**People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
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**Afghanistan through Orientalism and Neo-Orientalism in
Gately's *Lipstick in Afghanistan* (2010) and Faqir's
Willow Trees Don't Weep (2014)**

Dissertation submitted to the Department of English as a partial fulfilment of the requirements for Master's degree in Literature and Civilisation.

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2023 - 2024

Dedication

I want to dedicate the work to myself first, thank you my soul for keeping together even in the darkest moments. This dissertation would not be complete without the countless hours of passion for research, the unwavering determination, strength, and inspiration to produce this memoir. I would like to thank my parents for their support, sacrifices and prayers.

After all, this work is dedicated to those who truly love me, including the long list of my family, and my friends Hadjer, Malika, Ferial...etc. All my love to the ones who motivated me when I was alone, depressed and broken, including Dounia, may Allah bless her. Thank you all.

Acknowledgments

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. Peace and blessing be upon the noblest of messengers, our prophet Mohamed, peace be upon him. I would like to express my great gratitude to my esteemed **Doctor Souad BAGHLI BERBAR**, for her invaluable guidance and support throughout the progression of my dissertation. I appreciate your acceptance to work with me as my supervisor for Master research.

The thoughtful knowledge in various subjects, the insightful and positive feedbacks, with constructive spirit pushed me beyond limits to produce this work. I am sincerely grateful for the time you devoted to reply my emails even out of work. Besides, I am pleased because you believed in my abilities and your constant encouragement to complete this research as it should be. You are an outstanding and exceptional supervisor that one would ever be your supervisee. You will always be the source of inspiration to me.

My sincere thanks go to the members of the jury **Prof. Wassila HAMZA REGUIG MOURO** and **Dr. Amel RAHMOUNI** to kindly accept evaluating my dissertation, and for the time you spent reading it.

I would like to thank SIDI AISSA Rabie Walid and NOUAR Ahmed without whom the acquisition of the primary and some secondary sources would not be possible. I am profoundly appreciative for your help.

I appreciate the support of all my English teachers especially those who taught me Literature and Civilization from the first year of Licence till Master degree. I would like to extend my gratitude to **Mr. TOUNKOB Youcef**, for the valuable advice and constant guidance in Master degree.

Abstract

This dissertation presents a comparative analysis between the Orientalist writer Roberta Gately's novel *Lipstick in Afghanistan*, and *Willow Trees Don't Weep* by the Neo-Orientalist Fadia Faqir. The scope of study is mainly the representation of Afghanistan and its people from the perspective of Orientalism and Neo-Orientalism. The work sheds the light on the historical background of the occurrence of terrorism from the beginning of the assaults of 9/11. It aims to present the perception of the Orientals, and females in particular, since both works are produced by women writers. Therefore, this research will examine the reasons and circumstances that gave birth to the emergence of Orientalism as an academic field to an urgent concern about the superiority of the West and the inferiority of the East. Then, taking into accounts the attacks of 9/11 in America and the extent of their impact on the formation of Neo-Orientalism, besides providing a deep insight on the perspectives of two above mentioned writers concerning the depiction of Afghanistan and its population. Hence, the comparative analysis shows that Gately's work, though containing the usual stereotypical images about the East, still gives a positive impression about the Orientalist perception whereas Faqir's novel, with Middle Eastern roots, is based upon the Neo-Orientalist lenses and the use of preconceived notions about the Orient, due to the great number of negative portrayals, particularly in terms of Islam.

Table of Contents

Dedication.....	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iii
Abstract.....	iv
Table of Contents.....	v
General Introduction	1
Chapter One: Delving into the Historical Background of Orientalism and the Establishment of Neo-Orientalism.....	5
1.1. Introduction.....	6
1.2. The Definition of Orientalism.....	6
1.2.1. The Origins of Orientalism	9
1.2.2. The Construction of “the Other”	10
1.3. The Orientalist Images During the 19 th and 20 th Centuries	12
1.3.1. Exaggeration and Mystery	14
1.3.2. Magical Orient.....	15
1.3.3. Exoticism.....	16
1.3.4. Eroticism	18
1.4. 9/11 and Its Influence on the Western Perception of the Orient	19
1.4.1. The Emergence of Neo-Orientalism in 21 st -Century Literary Works	20
1.4.2. The Twenty-First Century Neo-Orientalist Images	22
1.4.3. Fanaticism and Terrorism.....	24
1.5. Neo-Orientalism in Afghanistan and the Western Portrayals	26
1.6. Conclusion	29
Chapter Two: Comparing Roberta Gately’s <i>Lipstick in Afghanistan</i> and Fadia Faqir’s <i>Willow Trees Don’t Weep</i>	30
2.1. Introduction.....	31
2.2. <i>Lipstick in Afghanistan</i>	31
2.2.1. Characters’ Portrayals	33

2.2.2 The Description of the Setting	35
2.3. The Orientalist Depictions	37
2.3.1. The Representation of Islam in <i>Lipstick in Afghanistan</i>	41
2.3.2. The Significance of the Lipstick in the Novel	42
2.4. <i>Willow Trees Don't Weep</i>	43
2.4.1. Characters' Portrayals	45
2.4.2. The Description of the Setting	49
2.5. The Orientalist Depictions	51
2.5.1. The Representation of Islam in <i>Willow Trees Don't Weep</i>	56
2.5.2. The Significance of the Willow Trees in the Novel.....	61
2.6. The Comparative Study of the Two Novels	62
2.6.1. The Similarities	63
2.6.2. The Differences	66
2.7. Conclusion	68
General Conclusion	70
Works Cited	74

General Introduction

The representation of the Orient and its peoples was subjected to open Western interpretations through literature, taking into account Orientalism and Neo-Orientalism as intertwined frameworks. Orientalism first appeared as a field of study of the Orient for academic purposes, but started to change when the Orient became a representative of certain images which were inaccurate, exaggerated, and far from reality. Writers and novelists who are the so-called Orientalists, took advantage from this opportunity to throw on the Orient misguided facts for the purpose of superiority.

The encounter between East and West started centuries before, when the Middle Eastern and North African regions were powerful. The West was however unsatisfied with this success and wanted to have authority over the East. Several writers produced literature for political agendas before it was for academic studies. Therefore, they seized the opportunity to depict the Orient and its peoples negatively to serve their needs. The Orient however, became a symbol for these misrepresentations as far as literature is concerned.

Gradually, the West gained influence over the East. It turned to be a justification for imperialism and colonialism. Supposedly, bringing enlightenment and civilization to these backward countries. With each century of multiple books about the Orient, the images began to be distorted. In some instances, the writer positively depicted the Orient as a good place with unmeritable people, which should be occupied by Christians. In other works, it was a neutral vision, but mostly the best book sellers were those which provided falsified and misguided versions of the Orient.

By the translation of *The Arabian Nights*, during the eighteenth century, the representations were amplified to represent the East as magic, exotic, erotic, with sultans in rule. These images were imposed by the West from the universe of *The Arabian Nights*. The sequences of portrayals did not reach their final stage, but developed to another form. Orientals were depicted as being violent people, fantasist, extremist and by extension terrorists. These accumulations gave birth to Neo-Orientalism with the attacks of 9/11 in America. Every Muslim there was accused to be a terrorist and involved in the bombing, where they received harsh treatment from people all over the world.

This new sub-field concerns not only the Orientalists but also the Orientals, who accepted the images built upon them. Hence, this dissertation is primarily a comparative

study between the two dichotomies; Orientalism and Neo-Orientalism, analysing the encounter between East and West. As the corpus of study, a novel by an American writer Roberta Gately *Lipstick in Afghanistan*, and British-Jordanian writer Fadia Faqir's *Willow Trees Don't Weep*.

Orientalism as a field of study did not only concern literature but reshape the Orientals lives, through the Orientalist depictions. One may be aware about these misguided facts that destroyed the reality of the MENA regions and peoples. The choice of the topic is after all, inspired from the rejection of these supposedly facts that were built centuries ago by those who had power. The Orientalists are the first responsible who contributed into the making of the East as inferior in comparison to the West. The two selected novels were set in Afghanistan. the place is however an extension of Orientalism especially with 9/11 attacks, it became a source of danger and a place for terrorism.

The research work is done taking into consideration the following questions to provide answers by the end of this dissertation:

- What are the circumstances and reasons that led to the birth of Orientalism?
- How did 9/11 contribute into the establishment of Neo-Orientalism?
- How did the American and the British-Jordanian writers depict the Orient and its peoples?
- What are similarities and differences that led the two works to overlap?

This study uses the comparative literary analysis for these pieces of writing. The first chapter is mainly devoted to historical background of Orientalism and Neo-Orientalism. First, providing the definition from dictionaries, and different scholars, then tracing back the origins of the field which was a subject of dispute. Additionally, giving a picture of the influence of these representations on the self, which contributed into the making of the other. The second portion of the first chapter is mainly dedicated to Neo-Orientalism and its emergence for the attacks of September 11th, 2001 are to be the fundamental reason for the development from Orientalism to Neo-Orientalism. The representations however are more narrowed to only Muslims.

The second chapter will provide a deep analysis of the two novels aiming to spot the similarities and differences found between them. As a start, the first portion is devoted to analysing Roberta Gately's *Lipstick in Afghanistan* in terms of depicting the characters of the novel, taking into account Afghanistan as the setting, moving to illustration of the Orientalist images that were provided by the writer. Then, tackling the issue of representing Islam in the novel. Ultimately, discussing the significance of the title and its relation with the work itself.

Proceeding to the subsequent novel *Willow Trees Don't Weep* by Fadia Faqir, the parallel analysis is done with this novel. It shows the characters of the novel with their depictions by the writer adding to it the journey to Afghanistan where the novel is set. Additionally, devoting a part to the Orientalist depictions by illustrating from the novel different images. Then, transitioning to the representation of Islam within the work by British-Jordanian writer. As a final point, the meaning of the title with its association with certain themes.

The last portion of the second chapter, is put to compare the two works using Orientalism and Neo-Orientalism as lenses. For the most parts, there are common themes, ideas, and images between the two. Conversely, they still differ in crucial elements, representations and positions.

Chapter One: Delving into the Historical Background of Orientalism and the Establishment of Neo-Orientalism

1.1. Introduction

Centuries ago, the west was interested in exploring and studying the East in terms of languages and cultures under the field of Orientalism. Mostly, it has hidden connotations more than it reveals. Thus, the present chapter will provide a background of the so-called Orientalism that intensified and led to the emergence of another type of narratives mainly Neo-Orientalism during the twenty-first century. This field created on-going controversies among Orientals who were portrayed in various misrepresentations.

Hence, the aim of this chapter is to provide a deep understanding of Orientalism as a concept first, then as a field of study. Moreover, providing the historical background of Neo-Orientalism as a new domain in literature. It is necessary to be equipped with the definitions, the history and the evolution of the concept from the nineteenth century till reaching the twenty-first century representations of Orientals as peoples and the Orient as a place.

1.2. The Definition of Orientalism

Orientalism stands for different meanings by multiple scholars, writers, intellectuals, novelists and other artists. In *Orientalism: History, Theory and the Arts*, John Mackenzie stated that:

in the last quarter of the eighteenth century and the first quarter of the nineteenth, the word came, in the context of British Rule in India, to acquire a third meaning. There it was used to refer to or identify a 'conservative and romantic' approach to the problems of government, faced by the officials of the East India Company (cited by Macfie³).

According to Mackenzie, Orientalism in the late 1700s and early 1800s, refers to a specific European interest in Eastern languages and cultures. However, the concept took a sharp turn with the British occupation of India through the East India Company. During this period of time, it became a Western ideology among British authority in India. Thus, this concept started to bear unchanged meaning from that time to the aftermath of the Second World War.

Likewise, according to *Oxford Reference*, Orientalism denotes the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries' western productions by the so-called philologists or mainly

the Orientalists. As determined by *The Oxford English Dictionary*, Orientalism came into view in Joseph Spence's writing, mostly *Literary Scholar and Anecdotalist* in 1747. However, *The Cambridge Dictionary* put it differently; Orientalism is predominately the inappropriate European depictions of the Middle East, East, and South Asia. They portrayed them as monolithic, uncivilized, and strange peoples who are in need of European interference to rescue them.

Orientalism is essentially dealt with in the field of the humanities and social sciences. It came to be a prominent field in 1978 with the publication of the innovative book *Orientalism* by the late American-Palestinian scholar and critique Edward Said. Said covered the concept based on certain notions, including Michel Foucault's notion of discourse. Equally important, Said believed that Orientalism is a system of knowledge. Therefore, Westerners produced this knowledge, mainly texts, through which falsified images are thrown over the shoulders of the Orient. Although Westerners differ in producing knowledge about the Orient, nonetheless the ultimate purpose is quite the same, which is to create and build images about this part of the world. This latter helped the European audience to easily recognize the East and its peoples. Said in his tome *Orientalism* declared that these texts provide the west with a vision about the Orient by approving certain representations that facilitate the ascendancy of Western audience, the way they portrayed the peoples and places of the MENA regions (Said 3).

Said within his book, also stressed the fact that Westerners shape their ideas about the East to depict them as inferior in comparison to the Occident as superior. They built differences between the two worlds in order to prove their dominance over the Orient. In the nineteenth century, Europe had a hold over the Orient, through the production of knowledge about the latter, created by the former governments, institutions and scholars mainly (Said 94).

He drew attention to the fact that, there are certain writers, novelists, and poets who dynamically contributed into the making and the spreading of the body of knowledge about the MENA peoples and places. The depiction, as it is agreed by Said and proponents of Postcolonial theory, is however a fictitious version of the Orient, which is neither neutral nor innocent.

In an interview with Michaël Zeeman, Edward Said pinpoints the strong link between artistic and academic works and Western ideology. As a matter of fact, it

quenched the profit of Western power structures (Said 32:57). He adds in his book that Orientalism is the distinction in terms of “ontological” and “epistemological” way of thinking between the Orient and the Occident (Said 2). Additionally, he asserts Orientalism as a “Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient” (Said 3). Said simplifies the meaning of Orientalism as a concept. It is a European discourse used to present the Orient for the Occident’s audience, and therefore be able to expand in terms of colonialism and ultimately to dominate the East. Moreover, through Orientalism Westerners constructed in a body of a knowledge images about “the other” as opposed to the Europeans. Accordingly, they heap up the notion of superiority and link inferiority to the Easterners.

Said has attacked the Western misrepresentations of the Other. He argues that the Occident lens distorts not only the actual representativeness of the place, but also the Middle Eastern and North African peoples. He claims that Orientalism is regarded as a system of cultural and knowledgeable colonization that substantiates the European expansionism, more than it seems to be innocently a field of scholarship.

Thus, Orientalism, according to Sadik Jalal al-’Azm in his essay about “Orientalism and Orientalism in Reverse”, is regarded as a “complex and growing phenomenon”, which witnessed development due to the European expansionism in history. It is basically concerned with the different institutions, principles, and representations. Nevertheless, these portrayals are oversimplifications, based on Western ideologies, that contributed to the framing of the Orient (cited by Kolluoglu-Kirli 98).

A.L Macfie, in his book *Orientalism*, suggests that it also includes several domains:

a corporate institution, designed for dealing with the Orient, a partial view of Islam, an instrument of Western imperialism, a style of thought, based on an ontological and epistemological distinction between Orient and Occident, and even an ideology, justifying and accounting for the subjugation of blacks, Palestinian Arabs, women and many other supposedly deprived groups and peoples (Macfie 4).

Macfie argues that Orientalism refers to a Western way of thinking that facilitates dealing with the Orient in particular. However, it comprises racist views against Muslims and Islam, which can be seen as a way of European interventionism. This ideology is used as a justification for the marginalization of humans, which puts countless sets of peoples under subjugation and denigration as people of color, Palestinian Arabs, and Females.

Definitions of Orientalism differ and vary from a source to another, since the concept itself is dynamic. However, it did not appear haphazardly from the vein. Rather, it has deep roots in history, though scholars were unable to agree upon one origin for Orientalism.

1.2.1. The Origins of Orientalism

The spread of Islam during the seventh and eighth centuries marked a source of threat to the presence of Christianity among other religions. Therefore, the Christians started to build deceitfulness depictions about Muslims and Islamic religion to devaluate this creed and extend Christianity instead. Gbelekale Hassan in his publication “Orientalism and its Impact on the Muslim World” stated that in the first place the magneticity of Islam in some parts of the world led to nearly two-hundred years of wars between them in the eleventh century (3). The crusades were mainly this religious struggle against the hasty diffusion of Islam. These given preconceived myths are to be considered as the early beginning of Orientalism in the confrontation between Islam and Christianity.

It is hard to recognize the origins of Orientalism, since scholars differ in tracing back its roots. For Said in his article “Orientalism Reconsidered”, conjoining the origins of Orientalism with political affairs, states that:

it seems to me patently impossible to dismiss the truth of Orientalism's political origin and its continuing political actuality, we are obliged on intellectual as well as political grounds to investigate the resistance to the politics of Orientalism, a resistance that is richly symptomatic of precisely what is denied. (Said 91)

Said believes that Orientalism has political roots, allowing imperialism and colonization of the East. Moreover, the legacies of Orientalism in politics are still felt.

Therefore, he insists on studying the motivations and the reasons behind the stereotypical images about the Orient. But the truth is still hidden about the Eastern cultures because of the resistance against Orientalism.

Equally important within Orientalism, claims that the European representation of the Orient about generating stereotypes and images are in fact a reflection of the Western imagination. Thus, the portrayals are not the actual representations of the East, which substitute the real Orient (Said 21-22).

Walter D. Ward in his article “Orientalism and the Study of the Pre-modern Middle East” states that when Samuel. P. Huntington produced “Clash of civilizations and the Remaking of World Order” in 1993, it was regarded as an opus that supported colonization in the Middle East (Ward 8). In his work, Huntington is convinced that future quarrels would not be between nations, but civilizations. Besides, he distinguishes between foremost civilizations as the Western and Islamic ones among others, the distinction occurring at the level of cultures, religions, and history. The latter would cause conflicts in values and interests.

From another angle, in *Dangerous Knowledge: Orientalism and its Discontents*, Robert Irwin assumes that the origins of Orientalism according to some proposals is back to the decisions made after the Council of Vienna in 1311-12. During the meeting, a set of regulations were put to be followed in order to deal with the Eastern cultures, especially Islam. As a matter of fact, the Islamic religion was a source of danger to Christians (Irwin 6).

Orientalism is, accordingly, the accumulations of scholarly studies that shape the pretended form of the Orient. Subsequently, it led to the creation of the Other as the enemy of the self.

1.2.2. The Construction of “the Other”

Western identity drives people to believe in its superiority, through the domination of “the Other”. Psychologically speaking, this superficial idea persuades Easterners to acknowledge it and, in some instances, to agree upon their inferiority (Almahady 16). By creating this oppositeness, the West defines the Orientals who do not belong to them as “the Other”, meaning that they are not “one of us”. Eventually, the West as the center, and the Orient as the periphery. In essence, this notion is born out of the differences between the two worlds, where the West built a harsh boundary.

Jean-François Staszak defines the other based on two groups, the first group is mainly referred to as “Us” or “the Self”, those who follow the norms and are considered as superior, because they are the dominant ones. The second category is generally “Them” or “the Other”, initially because they are seen as different from the first group in certain criteria. Besides, they are a threat to the major group, and treated as inferior type. To all intents and purposes, these differences contributed to the making of images about the other in a given society (Staszak 2).

Orientalists for instance as analyzed by Said in his book *Orientalism*, are portrayed by the West as brutes, savages, uncivilized, dark-skinned people. These classifications are drawn by Europeans through the invention of a fictional Orient. By doing so, the Orient attains a new identity from the Occident.

Said pointed out that “For Orientalism was ultimately a political vision of reality whose structure promoted the difference between the familiar (Europe, the West, “us”) and the strange (the Orient, the East, “them”)” (Said 43). He analyzed the two dichotomies of East and West based on the Otherness of the East as the strange and the alien and the familiarity of the West as the “Us” and ultimately, the norms.

Huntington in his book *the Clash of Civilization: and the Remaking of World Order*, states that the world is divided into two parts:

People are always tempted to divide people into us and them, the in-group and the other, our civilization and those barbarians. Scholars have analyzed the world in terms of the Orient and the Occident, North and South, center and periphery, the West and the rest (Huntington 32).

He claims that “The Other” is usually the savage one who has no civilization in comparison to “Them”. Besides, the division of the world according to academic studies is the Orient as the margin, versus the Occident as the core of the globe. Thus, the marginalized people cannot have a fixed identity, or define the self, without relying on the dominant identity. As Karl Max said that “they cannot represent themselves; they must be represented” (cited by Said 293). In other words, Orientalists are unable to define themselves, or speak, but even if they voice out their thoughts, they cannot be heard.

The out-group peoples have different characteristics as culture, religion and their origin; besides, they mostly lack identity. The in-group peoples are those who adhere to superiority and have the congruent characteristics to be labeled as “Us”.

Moreover, they are in charge of portraying others as different from their race by giving them the designation of “The Other”. Consequently, the process of othering serves the Europeans to marginalize, exoticize and by extension to brutalize Orientals. However, these depictions were mainly constructed centuries ago, especially during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, when Orientalists became obsessed with the Orient and its peoples.

1.3. The Orientalist Images During the 19th and 20th Centuries

During the nineteenth century, Romanticism was the predominant movement that flourished due to the translation of the famous frame narrative *The Arabian Nights* or *The Thousand and One Nights* (“Alf Laila wa Laila” in Arabic version), which is regarded as a great milestone of Orientalism. Firstly, translated by the French scholar and Orientalist Jean Antonio Galland who relied on the Syrian manuscript, and introduced it in French to Europe between 1704 and 1717 in twelve volumes, it is a collection of different Middle Eastern and Indian stories with neither a specific author, nor an exact date for its publication.

Galland, at the beginning of this collection, admitted that he added “Aladdin”, “Ali Baba”, and “Sindbad the Sailor”. However, he unfaithfully translated the tale to serve his needs and political purposes for the sake of destroying and distorting the image of the Orient and its peoples. Subsequently, this tale was translated into multiple languages including English by the British Orientalist writer Sir Richard Burton and the British lexicographer Edward Lane. Nevertheless, Edward Lane expurgated the tale from erotic images, since they were narrated in family gathering.

This later paved the way for Romanticism in Europe with the beginning of the imaginative writings. Accordingly, the Orientalist discourse managed to manipulate the original version of the tale by using Oriental setting and characters who in the long run are depicted as lustful, wicked, idiotic, wizards, among other bizarre portrayals. The Orientalists are, therefore, regarded as the first hand for picturing the Orient to the Western audience. Correspondingly, the audience believed in the universe of *The Arabian Nights*, since the production of the nineteenth century was mainly the introduction of magical elements to books and novels that became the essential pillar of the coming centuries, particularly with travel literature, to shape the mysterious Orient.

Rana Kabbani in *Europe's Myths of Orient: Devise and Rule* claims that centuries before, travelling was highly associated with men of high standing, since the traveler was supported in many walks of life. His travel records eventually play a crucial role in shaping the perception of specific places and peoples since he bases realities upon his position and restricted values (Kabbani 1).

She adds that the traveler frequently relies on false images, or unrealistic ones, to satisfy the audience's interests. Accordingly, the provided images were strengthened through the process of intertextuality, which became a tradition among writers, novelists, artists and others, to follow the same path (Kabbani 2). Thus, the produced knowledge about the Orient continues to exist, but with varying degrees and ways. Additionally, travelers were mainly "the seeing eye, and the recounting voice" (Kabbani 6). Thus, the audience believed that this type of knowledge portrayed only the truth that they can rely upon. Nevertheless, they were unconscious that writers, novelists and others were biased in some instances, and counting on previous knowledge to construct a more intensified one.

Said on the other hand states that "The increasing influence of travel literature, imaginary utopias, moral voyages, and scientific reporting brought the Orient into sharper and more extended focus" (Said 117). Put simply, travel literature among other factors contributed in making the Orient as a place of study and great attention for various scholars. They wrote about the Orient for the same purpose, and though they traveled to it, their Orientalist perception is deeply inserted into their subconsciousness.

By the same token, Said considers that the construction of the anecdotal images about the Orient is merely the combination of "lies or myths" (Said 6). Accordingly, the Orientalist discourse during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is considered as the starting point of "Orientalizing the Orient" and the building of the stereotypical images about the Orient. The Orientalists portrayed Orientals as lechers, sorcerers, backward, uncivilized, brutes among other unrealistic characterizations.

In that case, novels, books, and any type of narrative relied mainly upon four fundamental and inevitable components to deal with the Orient. First of all, exaggeration in terms of events, actions or characters. Secondly, depicting the place as a magical one, which differs from the West. Thirdly, exoticizing the Orient and its people, as if they came from a distant planet. Lastly, the erotic images about the Orientals, who were

accused to be sinking in lascivious life along with women kept in the “Harem” to please men.

1.3.1. Exaggeration and Mystery

In the Orientalist writings during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries exaggeration and mystery among other elements were predominately used to construct a more intensified image about the Orient. As Said states that “standardization and cultural stereotyping have intensified the hold of the nineteenth-century academic and imaginative demonology ‘the mysterious Orient’” (Said 26). Significantly, Said demonstrates that during the nineteenth century Orientalists oversimplified and exaggerated in portraying the East. Moreover, the Orient was also a place of mystery and ultimately different from the West, through academic studies and fictional or non-fictional works which contributed into the strengthening of this idea.

The Orientalists believed that the more exaggeration and mystery they can produce in their works, the better. Said points out that “for a writer to use the word Oriental was a reference for the reader to identify a specific body of knowledge about the Orient” (Said 205) due to the fact that the audience were familiar with the universe of *the Arabian Nights*, and they can easily imagine the Orient through these supposedly authentic images. Orientals were even unnatural beings, when acting differently from the Western norms, they were portrayed as strangers and mysterious (Said 39). However, the European is the one who follows the norms, and therefore is portrayed as “normal” (Said 40).

The technique of exaggeration in novels was at the level of describing the grandiose palaces, the infinite wealth of characters, and the opulence of gardens as in the tales of *The Arabian Nights*. Basically, writers tended to magnified every detail in the depiction of the Orient to draw a realm overflowing with a utopian atmosphere in an exaggerated manner. Characters on the other hand, were often portrayed as the villains of the novel, who are thirsty for seizing power and forbidden knowledge. They are usually dark-skinned and almond-shaped eyes with a gigantic body; along with the description of setting, which refers to an outlandish place.

In *Talisman* (1825) by Sir Walter Scott, who is considered as one of Romanticism pillars in English literature, for example, both the characters and the events are amplified. As Saladin who is characterized by his foxy mind with an extraordinary

heroism in conjunction with mysterious settings of the Orient as the dark forests of Jerusalem. In the case of Paul Bowles', *The Sheltering Sky* (1949), the image of the desert is more intensified. It is depicted as vast and empty as their souls, since they were facing existential issues. Also, it mirrors the inner hardships and the struggles to find the purpose of life in a confused circle. Moreover, the desert was a place of danger and shrouded in mystery, where many people die and the dreams fade away.

Consequently, these exaggerated representations of the MENA regions and peoples became an essential way of dealing with matters regarding the Orient. Writers, novelists, artists, and others had recourse to this element in their writings for the interest of the readers first, because they expected such images. Secondly, for political matters, since these writings fulfill the function of a propaganda that advocates for the superiority of the West over the East. Though not only exaggeration and mystery are used in writings, but even the depiction of the place as a magical one, where witchcrafts are found.

1.3.2. Magical Orient

The translation of *The Arabian Nights* is considered as another form of dealing with the Orient. As a matter of fact, the Orientals' portrayals are intensified and amplified into a more stereotypical image about the Orient that witnessed an evolution throughout years. The nineteenth and twentieth centuries writings accordingly transported the reader into an environment of flying carpets, jinns, outlandish creatures, the image of the desert and others.

The Western audience were convinced about the miraculous Orient along the characteristics of *The Arabian Nights*. Geoffrey Nash claims that Galland's translation of *The Arabian Nights* contributed strongly into the establishment of a magical world where writers of the coming generation of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, were inspired to include the mystical element within novels (Nash 47). It is regarded as another intensified degree of depicting the place and the Middle-Easterner and North-African peoples.

The use of sorcery, in fact, was an essential ingredient for creating a magical version of the Orient. Even realistic travel books, which were supposed to be authentic, were based on preconceived notions and the influence of *The Arabian Nights*. As Kabbani argued, "magic and sorcery were traditionally linked in the European

imagination with the Orient” (Kabbani 40). Hence, the Orientalists invented this magical version and it became deeply instilled in their minds. In fact, it was a window for a magical realm extracted from the universe of *The Arabian Nights* into a more enchanting sphere by the coming years.

The supernatural element in novels served as an escaping door for Western audience from the reality of their lives, where they could easily be transported to a magical part of the world full of witchcraft and fascinating adventures; such as Scott’s *Talisman*, a historical, fictional novel about the third crusade, built upon a Muslim leader of the Middle East, the great figure of Saladin. Though the novel portrayed some authentic images, it remains an Orientalist work merged with magical ingredients to captivate the European readers for Saladin, who was supposedly disguised as “Adonbec El-Hakim”, the doctor who would heal his Christian counterpart, is portrayed as a wizard. He was ultimately the one that “Azrael or the angel of death” fears, and has a rare herb that turns to be a Talisman. It is in fact, a supernatural power that could save souls from fatality.

In the twentieth century Robert Hichens also shares equivalent themes in his fictional novel *The Garden of Allah* of 1904. Despite its genre, there are some realities within the lines. However, no Orientalist work is devoid of the habitual cliches, concerning the use of magic. In fact, Domini Enfielden, the main character of the novel, went to the Orient as an escape from Western problems. Nevertheless, Hichens represents the city of Beni Mora in Biskra as “magically clean” (Hichens 43). She was also transported to the world of *The Arabian Nights*, when she felt that she was on “the magic carpet” (Hichens 53). Therefore, the place is portrayed as a magic land.

Considerably enough, the Orientalist works go beyond any limit and surpass the human mind. Exoticism was, on the other hand, found nearly in every Orientalist work. Since the core of Orientalism is the notion of distinction between the two dichotomies, the latter, in a large part, contributed in painting an image out of the ordinary unlike the West.

1.3.3. Exoticism

The notion of exoticism is also regarded as another orientalist pillar in Western writing, where Orientals and landscapes are presented differently from the Western ones. As a matter of fact, Orientals became synonymous with exotic beings, under the influence of

Western writers who portrayed them as such based on *The Arabian Nights* elements. Equally significant, the “usual” is mainly the West while all that contrasts with it, is depicted as the “unusual” or the Orient.

The French art historian Philippe Jullian expresses that “Orientalism is only a phase in the cult of the Exotic” (cited by Julia Kuehn 31), accordingly, the East is purely a chapter of the Western fascination, because they are more interested in the study of the strangeness and the mysterious side of the place. Comparatively, Martha Conant stated that the exotic East is the captivating and the congruent place for European imagination (Conant 1).

As an illustration, in Benjamin Disraeli’s *Tancred or the New Crusade* (1847), Fakerdeen, among the main characters of the novel, is depicted as an exotic figure. Even the misspelling of his name (Fakhreddin), is purposefully put to show his exotic attitude toward Islam, which means lack of religion. This figure has a strange wisdom and a wild way of dealing with political matters, in addition to his captivating manner, that seized Disraeli’s attraction.

In T.E. Lawrence’s *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* (1926), when he travelled to the Middle East, he was looking for the exotic lands there and escaping from the strict Victorian values. He as other Orientalists premised the work on the notion of exoticism and the heterogeneity found between the two worlds. He also managed to transport exotic events to his audience even in actual contexts. Hence, the East turns out to be an exotic journey for the most Orientalist travelers.

Moreover, the Bazzars, for example, are generally full of peculiar people with vendors out of the ordinary who are selling exceptional goods found only in the Orient, adding to the strangeness of the distinctive scents. As for the case of Domini in *The Garden of Allah* who went to the Orient market to buy an Eastern perfume. The Amber was suggested for her, and she was fully transported to the universe of *The Arabian Nights*, when “it filled her brain with exotic visions” (Hichens 53).

As far as the exotic flora and fauna are concerned, the desert in this novel became an essential character which is portrayed as “the garden of oblivion” (Hichens 20). Though it is not a garden, rather an oasis, Hichens described it as an exotic area of forgetfulness, functioning as a way of getting rid of hardships and personal matters.

Women on the other hand, are also part of this exotic technique in portraying Orientals. Therefore, the establishment of exotic scenes was highly significant, particularly with uncanny females, to grasp the audience's attention. This unfair representation of women marked a black point in their history, since they were a source of fear and magnificence belonging to a completely distinct world from the West. Indeed, this exotic side cannot be complete in an Orientalist work without referring to eroticism.

1.3.4. Eroticism

The Orientalist discourse covered also the invented erotic aspect about the East. In fact, the version of Burton's translation targeted mainly the "erotic and crude passages before his readers" (Sallis 4). Identically, the Orient became, therefore, a place for sexual pleasure associated with "Harems" along with captive women for pleasing men. Said in his analysis of the Orientalist discourse argues that "The Orient was a place where one could look for sexual experience unobtainable in Europe" (Said 190).

Furthermore, Kabbani claims that the invented Arabian tale of *The History of Caliph Vathek* by William Beckford was after all the source for the most decadent narratives of the nineteenth century (Kabbani 31). Travelers were more delightful for this erotic side of the Orient, which was derived from the universe of *The Arabian Nights*.

Kabbani also asserts that "*The Arabian Nights* was manipulated into an occasion for a sexual discourse" (Kabbani 36). Equally important, she proclaims that Orientals were portrayed as slothful, preoccupied with sensuality and violence, since the East was portrayed as such in Western writings (Kabbani 6). Moreover, the place was an illicit background for indulgence in the sexual senses, with easily-reached women whose main task is to satisfy others (Kabbani 7). The notion of eroticism in Orientalist novels is primarily a focus over Oriental women who were usually accused as seductive beings along with their sensual desires to quench the thirst of men. Nevertheless, Oriental women were objectivized to reinforce the dehumanizing image of these women.

An influential work of the nineteenth century can be the Orientalist epistolary novel, *The Lustful Turk, or Lascivious Scenes from a Harem*, which was anonymously published in 1828. This novel is classified among the pre-Victorian erotic works, and it

is highly distinguished for its graphic description of sexual activities. The setting and characters are for the most part Orientals with the stereotypical image of harems during the Ottoman empire. It contains letters between Emily Barlow and her dear friend Sylvia. Emily was forcibly captured by North African pirates who sold her to an Ottoman ruler and she was added to the harem where the erotic practices occurred. These images about the Turks made it a controversial novel among others, due to its theme of sexual desires of Turkish and foreign women in the harem as a place of lust.

In the same way, Paul Bowles' *the Sheltering Sky* (1949) though written in a different century, presents the same typical images of the erotic East. The theme of sexuality is among the major ones treated in this novel, where the Orient is portrayed as a place for romance and sexual fulfillment. As an instance Port Moresby, the first main Western character was ready to meet an Oriental whore, to quench his lustful thirst, because in this place, forbidden matters become possible and legal. Another illustration is the story of the three Oriental girls; Outka, Mimouna, and Aicha, as the growing of their intense sexual desire for the man of their dream; a Targui who made love with each of them. Therefore, this novel represents mainly the sensual encounters between different characters as Kit Moresby with Belqassim and all the erotic scenes that were described in details.

1.4. 9/11 and Its Influence on the Western Perception of the Orient

The terrorist attacks of September, 11th 2001, mark the day when the image of the Orient took another form. Al-Qaeda was considered as the first responsible for the attacks, they are a group of extremist religious people, shrouded in mystery and violence deeds under the umbrella of Islam. Osama Bin Laden was the so-called leader of this group and they were under the Taliban protection.

In fact, the Taliban represents another extremist group with religious goals, who are supposedly embodying Islamic religion with their strict norms that were forced on Afghanistan society. The Taliban, indeed, came to rule Afghanistan in the 1990s by spreading their toxic instructions in the country. It is important to realize that the United States intervention and the beginning of the war on terror in Afghanistan was a reaction

to the 9/11 attacks, in order to remove the Taliban from power and put an end to the Al-Qaeda and its violent endeavors.

Said in analyzing Orientalism pinpoints that Arabs were seen as violent and bloodshed creatures by nature (Said 287). Basically, in the aftermath of the attacks, the world witnessed a harsh reaction from the West towards Islam religion and Muslims because the intense hostility was not born overnight, rather the Orientalist negative accumulations had started with Orientalism. Though some Muslims are born in America, Britain, or elsewhere, they are treated in the same way as Arab Muslims. They are depicted as part of a homogenous and monolithic bloc, carrying indistinguishable values.

Walter Laqueur's *No End to War: Terrorism in The Twenty-First Century* book asserts that the West was looking for an enemy after the cold war, and that Islam was the congruent one to fulfill the mission for countless factors (Laqueur 128). Uniquely, Muslims were depicted only in the milieu of wars. Further, the portrayals intensify to the point that Orientals are viewed as the terrorists hiding in Islam as a religion of subjugation and coercion, where women are tortured in the veil clothes.

Under those circumstances, the West seized this opportunity to represent the Middle Eastern and North African peoples in a misinterpretation and negatively-attributed new characteristics. The images became more amplified during the twenty-first century, especially after 9/11 attacks, where the East was the focus area of Western studies. The American war in Afghanistan and Iraq was, after all, a justification for enlightening these backward regions and instilling a democratic system in them.

1.4.1. The Emergence of Neo-Orientalism in 21st-Century Literary Works

The concept of Neo-Orientalism is from the first place a continuation of the usual stereotypical images and misrepresentations of the MENA peoples and regions, but it is particularly limited to Muslims. Notwithstanding that, the Orientalist formation of these descriptions, however, derive from the Western pro-Israeli groups and the Neo-Conservatists supporters. Ali Behdad and Juliet Williams in their book *Neo-Orientalism* define it “as a supplement to enduring modes of Orientalist representation” (284). They refer to it as “a mode of representation” (Behdad and Williams 284) by a group of intellectuals, scholars and artists “Western” as well as “Middle Eastern”, producing a

certain type of knowledge aiming to distort the image of Muslims and Islam to serve their own political agendas.

Regarding Neo-Orientalism and its conceptual implication, the produced narratives are not limited to Westerners as it was the case for Orientalism but also non-Westerners, in this case Orientals. Habib Malik, Azar Nafisi, Fouad Ajami and others are among Muslim Arabs who deal with Neo-Orientalism and the representation of Islam in their works. In his “Preface of Orientalism”, Said classifies the concept of twenty-first century Orientalism as “belligerent Neo-Orientalism” (Said 6), pinpointing its strong relation to war and violence. In fact, there are various fictional and non-fictional novels from Orientalists and Neo-Orientalists writers and novelists of the twenty-first century with themes regarding terrorism and an emphasis over Muslims and Islamic beliefs.

With attention to these themes, Yusuf Toropov’s novel *Jihadi: A Love Story*, published in 2015 tackles themes of terrorism, faith, extremism, and misinterpretation of Islam. The novel turns around Ali Liddell, a former intelligence agent, who was accused in connection with terrorism and left a memoir that was read by a psychologist, through flashbacks. The novel is set between the U.S. and Iraq. Within it, a young American woman had problems with her husband and under this circumstance, was drawn into an extreme world. She was influenced by Abdul with whom she became close in relation and Ajmal, the responsible for her radicalization. The lady’s choice was, however, a surprising one to her family and friends, who in return were struggling to help her. The novel explores the idea of extremism as a dark hole which consumes people and it is impossible to get out from it.

Islam on the other hand, is interpreted as a dynamic religion with different values and beliefs, and it is a free decision to follow any rule. Additionally, though there are Muslims in the novel, Islam symbolizes a justification for the violent activities and extremist ideologies. Furthermore, the narrative presents a side where religious teachings are manipulated for personal purposes or political agendas by a societal representative as the Imam who was behind Abdul’s joining the extreme group.

In the same token, John Updike’s *Terrorist*, which was published after 9/11, in 2006, is also a novel full of the trendy messages and images about Islam and its relation with terrorism. The novel explores the story of Ahmad, a Muslim boy, whose religious

guide is Shaikh Rashid, another Muslim. The rest of the characters are an atheist like his mother Teresa Mulloy, who is obsessed by illicit relations with different men practicing sexual activities, since his father left them when Ahmad was three years; and a Jewish believer as Jack Levy, whom Mulloy has love affairs with. Besides, Ahmad is a truck driver, and under this toxic influence, he was persuaded to fulfill a suicide mission, using his truck. The supposed religious representative Shaikh Rashid is in charge of Ahmad as a terrorist. However, by the end of the novel, Jack convinces him to abandon this mission after a series of events.

Updike's portrayal of Islam is nevertheless biased because he relies on pre-conceived notions about this faith. The title itself is an attractive one, because readers are familiar with terrorism especially during the first years after the attacks, which are regarded as the source for many invented images. Updike also distorted some verses from the Quran to offer a negative impression about the religion. Additionally, Muhamad Shahbaz Arif reveals the manipulation of beliefs and Islamic values as depicted through the character of Shaikh Rashid, who abused Ahmad as a puppet in his hand to serve his needs (Arif 557).

In his analysis of the novel, Arif states that "Updike was no exception, and he comes up with his most coveted novel "Terrorist", echoing the mainstream thought of the West about an intrinsic relationship between Islam and terrorism" (Arif 558). The novel is after all, a source for other Neo-Orientalists writings which contributed negatively to the misrepresentation of Islam and its followers. The created images are stereotypical, including extremism and Islamic religion, the portrayal of wars in Muslim lands, the typical description of the Oriental Muslim with the beard and the turban; besides the misrepresentation of veiled women as being suffocated with Islamic rules.

1.4.2. The Twenty-First Century Neo-Orientalist Images

Any Neo-Orientalist work encompasses analogous themes with varying degrees of dealing with the Orient. Khalid Mosleh Alrasheed states that "the Orientalist discourse represents Arabs/Muslims as unwelcome other nationally and as a threat internationally" (Alrasheed 17). Neo-Orientalism, truly, is an establishment of ideas, opinions, ideologies, and justification for wars, which are constructed by supporters of the Zionist entity, Western scholars, in addition to some Orientals who stand with the European

way of thinking. The produced images are basically the predominate reason for the discrimination of Muslims in different societies.

The portrayal of Muslims has been destroyed after 9/11 attacks since the focus is over them worldwide. As Said stated, “not for nothing did Islam come to symbolize terror, devastation, the demonic, hordes of hated barbarianism. For Europe, Islam was a lasting trauma” (Said 59). From the Middle Ages and during the Crusade wars, Islam was a threat to other religions and Christianity in particular. Hence, bloodshed and brutality were always related to Muslims, and they were often depicted as uncivilized. Accordingly, these wars marked a black point in the history of Islam with Europe, which resulted in xenophobia and Islamophobia. The latter is a concept that appeared first in the 1910s and 1920s and refers to the deep fear of Islam. However, it has come into view with the occurrence of the twenty-first century attacks. Xenophobia is a phenomenon that makes natives feel afraid from foreigners, in this case from Orientals and especially Muslims.

The spotlight of the Neo-Orientalist discourse is fundamentally Muslims and Islam, where the depiction shifted from violent people to terrorists. Islam, specifically, was the main factor behind the prevailing images. In fact, it was being judged as “a misguided version of Christianity” (Said 61). Also, in some cases it was seen as “a real provocation” (Said 74). In other words, the West sees this religion as a symbol of fear, threat, falsehood, wars, and blood. As evidence, Alrasheed claims that after 9/11 the description of “Islam as violent, barbarous, and blood thirsty” became more legitimate (Alrasheed 15). However, violence in some instances is required against non-Muslims, where they are fighting for Allah (Laqueur 2003). The Neo-Orientalist discourse instilled in the Western mind that Islam is a divider between the world and the sunshine side of it (Alrasheed 15). Surprisingly enough, the expression of “Allah u Akbar”, which is a recurrent devotional invocation to exalt the superiority of Allah, has become a reference to terrorist assaults and sudden explosions since it is associated with the terrorists’ cry. Western narratives were responsible for creating this type of distorted images.

Another important point is the well-known concept of Jihad, which became a tradition to refer to in literary works. Laqueur provides two meanings for it, the first of which is refers to a context of holy wars where fighting occurs. The second is more

likely a religious one, since it is “the struggle for one’s soul against one’s own base instinct” (Laqueur 130). He adds that fighting for Allah and Islam is “a religious duty” (Laqueur 141), whereas the West takes for granted the violent concept to suit the European ideology.

Moreover, the Orientalist works focus on veiled Oriental women to establish an oppressed image of Muslims who are presented as the victims of Islam and they are incapable of defying the societal chains. As Huntington links Islam in the same way to a despotism system with tyrannic rules (Huntington 264). Correspondingly, the Islamic values are interpreted as a faith repressive to Muslim veiled-women. They are depicted as voiceless females, wives of strict husbands, and are compelled to be uneducated and married at an early age. However, the truth that the West ignores is that Islam was the first religion to give freedom and rights to women unlike Europe where women were living under these conditions until recently in modern times. Therefore, the narratives are the mirror of the actual West, but they get rid of it when dealing with the Orient.

The Western examination is not limited to women only, but also to Oriental men for whom the West established a fixed figure. The typical Oriental is generally a long-bearded man with a turban and ultimately a terrorist. His appearance is mostly outrageous and frightening. He puts on dark clothes with Kalashnikov rifles as a symbol of violence. Additionally, Oriental areas are generally described as dangerous places with frequent conflicts and daily wars.

The distortion of certain Islamic images primarily stems from their association with violent extremist groups. However, the latter have no relation with Islam, but their vicious deeds are regarded as contributions in the building of a misleading version of Islam and Muslims. Consequently, the European audience adopted a misinterpreted perception about the East and Islamic faith. All these images are consequences of fanaticism and by extension terrorism.

1.4.3. Fanaticism and Terrorism

Fanaticism derives from Latin “*fanaticus*”, which is according to the *Cambridge Dictionary* “an extreme belief that may lead to unreasonable or violent behavior”. In literature, during the twentieth century, Hitchens in his novel *The Garden of Allah*, the concept was first used to refer to the Orientals. Starting from this novel, the concept

began to gain its popularity among British and American novelist and writers. It refers to an adaptation of extreme views and does not concern an exact community. Nevertheless, the Orientalist and Neo-Orientalist works apposed this religious belief to Muslims.

Laqueur in his book *The New Terrorism: Fanaticism and The Arms of Mass Destruction*, refers to the fanatics as “divorced from rational thought” and “mentally unbalanced” (Laqueur 40). As Paul Katsafanas and Quassim Cassam described, the fanatics as closed-minded. This characterization became part of “the other”, who are often depicted as zealot extremists, and the Islamic societies turn out to be a breeding ground for fanaticism, extremism and religious bigotry.

Laqueur states that “Fanaticism is an essential part of terrorism, for how can one expect militants to kill and be killed but on the basis of a very strong, single-minded belief” (27). He noticeably suggests that these beliefs are keys for the murderer, since the person who is devoid of extreme principles is unable to commit violence. In fact, religion is the factor which derives scholars and intellectuals to shed the light on Islamic teaching and interprets it in a severe way. Fanaticism therefore, gives birth to terrorism as a widespread phenomenon all over the world.

Laqueur also distinguishes in his book two types of terrorists; the traditional and the new one. The former consists of thousands of members, and the latter gathers small groups with few people (Laqueur 5). He furthermore associates terrorism with violence, “but not every form of violence is terrorism” (Laqueur8). Put differently, violence as an activity refers to a physical harming of the targeted people for certain conflicts. By contrast, terrorism can be considered as one type of violence which specifically concerns the killing of everyone for indistinct reasons. Consequently, the Muslims became the source of threatening stability and global security.

On account of this, former Canadian prime minister Stephen Harper declared that “the biggest security threat to Canada a decade after 9/11 is Islamic terrorism” (*CBC News*). Likewise, the former American secretary of state Lawrence Eagleburger commented on the attacks saying that “there is only one way to begin to deal with people like this, and that is you have to kill some of them even if they are not immediately directly involved in this thing” (Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting).

Muslims all over the world are treated similarly, and they are all seen as terrorists. Thus, the American interference in the Orient is a political excuse for countering terrorism. Identically, the American lawyer, Ann Coulter, in Universal press Syndicate notes that “this is no time to be precious about locating the exact individuals directly involved in this particular terrorist... we should invade their countries, kill their leaders and convert them to Christianity” (Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting). The horrible activities by Westerners are not considered as a terrorist practice, but when the Easterners defend themselves, they are judged to be committing atrocious crimes and appointed as terrorists. As Alrasheed claims, “any terrorist attack that happens in the West is unequivocally deemed as ‘terrorism’” (13). Then again, the focus of this phenomenon is put only over the Oriental regions and especially Muslim communities. The central origin of these attacks is directed towards Afghanistan in the first place.

1.5. Neo-Orientalism in Afghanistan and the Western Portrayals

On 24th of December, 1979 the USSR invaded Afghanistan, during the Soviet-Afghan war. The U.S. on the other hand, appreciated the Afghan Mujahedeen’s role against the invasion, when they managed to defend the country, since the Soviet Union was an important competitor of America. However, after the 9/11 attacks, and when Afghanistan was again accomplishing the same task of protecting the country from the invaders and foreigners, the Mujahedeen ended up as terrorists. The situation is twisted according to the needs of the West.

Indeed, the events of 9/11 signaled the beginning of terrorism as a new global era. The attacks specified the U.S.A, but the aftereffects covered the Orient as part of the world, and Afghanistan, among the dangerous areas of terrorism. During this time Afghanistan was judged to be the source of the attacks. Laqueur claims that this place is of great signification in “the spread of terrorism” (145). *CBC News* published that “when people think of Islamic terrorism, they think of Afghanistan” (*CBC News*). Subsequently, the place became tightly linked with terrorism and bloody wars.

Afghanistan is seen as a dark spot, full of fanatics, extremists, and terrorists. Since the Taliban were ruling the country, its people were living under unbearable conditions and rigorous rules. Iftikhar H. Malik in her book *Crescent Between Cross and Star*, asserts that the Taliban’s policies are categorized as harsh ones, with a

misinterpretation of Islam and misguided version of women's rights (16). With attention to this, George W. Bush delivered an *Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People* where he provides a justification for the immediate American intervention in Afghanistan:

Afghanistan's people have been brutalized -- many are starving and many have fled. Women are not allowed to attend school. You can be jailed for owning a television. Religion can be practiced only as their leaders dictate. A man can be jailed in Afghanistan if his beard is not long enough (Bush).

Afghanistan became a symbol of cruelty, harshness and obviously a location of horrible crime-scene. Women, on the other hand, are believed to be under the mercy of extremist religion where they have no right to speak or to be educated. Additionally, the image of the beard is intentionally used to build a negative stereotypical perception about the people.

Equally important, the West portrayed Afghanistan as a place lacking security and stability and war-torn nation, because of the constant violence wars and attacks since the insurgency of the Taliban. The Westerners took advantage of the period and produced a great deal of books about the issue of terrorism set in the Orient, particularly events taking place in Afghanistan.

The spread of books about Afghanistan are abundant and judged to be the bestsellers at that time. In 2010, Eric Blehm published *The Only Thing Worth Dying For: How Eleven Green Berets Fought for a New Afghanistan*. In the same year another account was written by Rob Maylor about Robert Macklin's *Sniper Elite: The World of a Top Special Forces and Marksman*. Four year later, Mark Owen and Kevin Maurer followed the identical mode of depicting the Orient and its peoples through their work *No Easy Day*. The setting of all these pieces of writings is intentionally put in Afghanistan and Iraq as areas of dreadful scenes and events along with Oriental characters and their negative descriptions.

The West grabbed the hold of the catastrophic situation in Afghanistan under the Taliban rule and used it for political interests. The books portray the image of women negatively with the veil as suffocating clothes for Afghani females. In the same token, women during the Taliban rule were prohibited from practicing any sort of social

activity as working or studying, instead, they were imprisoned in homes taking care of house matters. Children were also forbidden from playing different games along with others. Besides, amusements activities were banned because the Taliban believed that such kind of pleasures are regarded as the path of destruction for correctly practicing the religious procedures.

Above all, women were totally marginalized and had no say in any subject. The image of wearing the “Burqa” in Afghanistan is another representation of women, and it is seen by Behdad and Williams as a transitional phase from “a mysterious and inaccessible space for eroticism and lusty sexuality” to “a signifier of oppression” (Behdad and William 285). Ultimately, the veil in Afghanistan in this case is perceived as an icon of restricted freedom under the Taliban regime.

Men, on the other side, are depicted as the oppressors of Afghani women. They are described as dark-skinned with wrathful appearances, with strict decrees imposed on their wives, daughters, and sisters. The typical Afghani man in Western literature is the long-bearded man with turban on his head and an arm to murder innocent civilians in the streets. The diction used by the Afghani is a jargon of extremism and fanatic ideas, with a reference to fallacious Islamic values and beliefs. He resorts to religion for justifying the dreadful massacres as a way for the holy war and Jihad, i.e., the fight for Allah. However, it is a misleading ideology followed by terrorists under the pretense of Islamic religion.

The production of Neo-Orientalist literature was not limited to men only, women were also part of building and reinforcing certain images. As an illustration after the fall of the Taliban in 2002, Asne Seierstad, wrote a non-fiction work entitled *The Bookseller of Kabul*, which is regarded among the best seller books since it provides a glimpse about Afghanistan and its society. It is set in Afghanistan where a bookseller named Sultan Khan, hosted Seierstad, a journalist who spent four months in his home with the family, aiming at exploring the Afghan culture, traditions, struggles, and challenges faced during the Taliban regime. Seierstad focused mainly on the oppression of women in that period. Considering the journalistic approach used by the writer, the book delves into the hardships and the resilience of Afghani females against the tyrant Taliban with their extremist system.

1.6. Conclusion

This chapter delves into the ocean of Orientalism as a concept introduced first by the late Palestinian-American Edward Said in his book *Orientalism*. It provides a historical presentation of the concept and its definition by different scholars besides an overview about the origins of Orientalism and how this field of study was among other factors that led to the construction of “the Other”. Furthermore, the built-up images as magic, mystery, exoticism and eroticism that categorized the 19th and 20th century Orientalist works were the predominating depictions of the Orientals as a community and the Orient as an exotic place.

Orientalism however, during the 21st century took another form, mainly Neo-Orientalism with its groundbreaking attacks of 9/11. The attacks played a crucial role in forming a more intensified image about the Orientals as terrorists, where Afghanistan was regarded as the starting point of spreading terrorism all over the world. Post 9/11 period is characterized by a high hostility towards Muslims as a community and Islam as a religion. Afghanistan was the most targeted place, in comparison to other areas, and inspired many writers and novelists to use it as the setting of their works.

Chapter Two: Comparing Roberta Gately's *Lipstick in Afghanistan* and Fadia Faqir's *Willow Trees Don't Weep*

2.1. Introduction

The twenty-first century marked the start of another era of more distorted images, which concerns Muslims and the misrepresentation of Islam from the first place. The so-called field of study Orientalism resulted in Neo-Orientalism after the assaults of September 11th, 2001 which brought into suspicion every Muslim around the world, while the clash against the issue of terrorism became an emergent and global concern. Literary works depicted the falsifications that were deeply instilled in the subconsciousness of the writer and straightforwardly transported to the mind of the reader. Regarding the latter, Roberta Gately's *Lipstick in Afghanistan* and Fadia Faqir's *Willow Tress Don't Weep*, are similar in certain particularities, though there are undeniable divergences between the two.

Thus, this chapter presents two different perspectives vis-à-vis Neo-Orientalism, delving into terrorism with various Western and Muslim characters adjusting with the typical images of the people and places. It provides a comparative study of the aforementioned literary works, taking into consideration themes and messages behind these novels and the multifaceted ways of terrorism, which is not limited only to war zones, but also how the lives of ordinary people are affected and changed.

2.2. *Lipstick in Afghanistan*

The novel was published in 2010 by Roberta Gately, an American writer and humanitarian aid worker, who served as a nurse in many parts of the world, including Africa, Pakistan and Afghanistan (Audible). Gately provided medical care for those who were in need of it. Likewise, writing novels was another hobby and skill which generated an atmosphere of war-torn zones. She managed to share with the audience her experiences, challenges and pitfalls of being an aid worker in such dangerous places.

Lipstick in Afghanistan is her debut novel, set in Afghanistan during the time Gately spent nearly two years of medical assistance in it. The novel presented different characters in multiple places. Elsa Murphy is the main character who lives in Dorchester along with her mother Margert and her sick niece Diana. In 1994, Elsa was interested in helping Rwandan refugees after reading about them in a two-months old magazine. She

wanted to be a nurse and offer medical aid to them, and Maureen encouraged Elsa to enter the world of nursing. She ultimately graduated from Boston college in 2000, after a considerable time, getting experience in the clinic as a volunteer with Maureen.

Elsa contacted “Aide de Monde”, the French organization responsible for supporting the poor and devastated countries. Afghanistan is considered among the war-torn places that requires aid, but after 9/11 attacks, the mission was canceled for obvious reasons. Nevertheless, the same place was offered to Elsa and she gladly accepted it, especially that she had no family left, neither her mother nor niece, who were both dead. Before travelling to Afghanistan, Elsa found the tube of lipstick of her older sister in Janice’s bureau (Gately 6), which she believes to be a magic weapon with which she can defy all rules and reach any place, even hazardous areas like Afghanistan. Ultimately, she traveled to Paris under the ADM protection to get medical supplies for Bamiyan hospital.

Accordingly, flights to Afghanistan were extremely dangerous, with the rise of terrorism and the rule of the Taliban in the country (Gately 29). Elsa was compelled to pass by Peshawar with Ajmal, her guide, then to Kabul, and she settled in a small local of ADM office, where she could enjoy all the walks of life that Bamiyan did not have. The last trip was to Bamiyan, where she finally reached her targeted place. Hamid was her right hand during her long-stay there. Elsa was offered a small house in the outskirts of the village whereas in the clinic, she was with Laila and her husband Ezat, who worked with her. After a long series of events and challenges, Elsa adapted to the customs and culture of Afghanistan and she became a friend of everyone, including UN soldiers and her love story with the Lieutenant Michael Young. Elsa was warned about this issue and she fell into unbearable consequences.

On the other hand, is the story of Parween an Afghan girl who was forced to marry Khalid Raziq at an early age, but fortunately, her match with him went perfectly and she managed to learn English with him, since Parween is uneducated girl. The novel explores themes of success, forbidden love, strong friendship, diaspora, nostalgic memories, and a sense of belonging to a different culture. There are several Oriental and Western characters in this novel, varied between men, women and children. In some

instances, the writer carried the same way of describing the typical Muslim after the assaults of 9/11 while in other ones, she remained neutral in dealing with them.

2.2.1. Characterizations' Portrayals

Lipstick in Afghanistan is a rich novel, full of distinct characters and roles, ranging from Americans, French, to Afghans. Elsa is the pillar character of the novel, a Bostonian girl who defied the American social norms and challenged the world outside with her lipstick; the magic and secret arm. Throughout the novel, Elsa passed by difficult tasks and missions which supplied her with a great strength. She was the lovely character from the beginning till the end, and she easily became the closest friend of Afghani people. She also offered help to everyone, without any exception, even for the Taliban who were captured. Elsa quickly adapted to the social life in Afghanistan and Bamiyan in particular, with its conventional and cultural customs. She additionally, wore "the burqa"; the traditional clothes of the area, where she felt as if "she might have stepped from a history book" (Gately 33). The burqa was a way to be hidden from the eyes of the Taliban and strangers.

The writer puts Elsa in a position of tolerance and assimilation with Afghan culture as when she sat across-legged on the floor to eat with the fingers, the daily rice and warm naan (Gately 38). Elsa also disobeyed the French rules concerning the soldiers, and entered the world of forbidden love with Mike. She not only was the nurse of the villager, but she became one of them, with Hamid who taught her Dari dialect to deal with them at ease (Gately 60-61). She even saved the life of Meena, a girl of nine years old, who was sold to a wicked man to pay for the father's debts. This step made the villagers proud of Elsa more than anything did, because Meena was treated roughly, from beating to burning. Gately aims to convey a strong message through Elsa, among other characters, that love, friendship and courage exist even in the darkest times. The personality of Elsa improved gradually, as she became the closet friend of Amina (Gately 118) and even arranged for her a marriage with Sidiq. Equally important, Parween also became her new friend and she was pleased by this (Gately 157).

Saleh Parween is another significant character in this novel who married her cousin Raziq at a very young age, and her life turned to be a happy one. She was lucky enough in such traditional match with Raziq, the gentleman who educated Parween and

taught her even English. Parween lost her husband who was killed by the Taliban, a few years after giving birth to little Zahra. As a matter of fact, Parween did not grieve for long; instead, she resisted against the Taliban and promised to take revenge from them. In the eyes of Elsa, Parween was seen as a woman different from the others in the village, because the death of her husband and Mariam, her dear friend, provided her with power, intelligence, and a thirst for vengeance.

Parween was depicted as “lady rebel” (Gately 272), who took off her veil and “dressed as a boy” (Gately 272) to confront the terrorists. At the end she announced to be “Shaheed” (Gately 272) for Afghanistan as a whole and for Bamiyan villagers in particular, but not a terrorist since she was defending herself from the evil Taliban. The word of her death spread at once beyond the village, as “a fierce warrior” (Gately 273). She made the people and her family proud of her courage and resistance.

Khalid Raziq, on the other hand, is an educated man, an honorable husband and her beloved friend (Gately 91). He was different from other men and encouraged Parween to be educated as well (Gately 89). He taught her English, and she took advantage from it later on, after his death. He had never been disappointed to have a daughter instead of a son (Gately 92). By contrast, he was a comprehensible man, and by no means as others who claimed to kill their wives. Though Parween lived in a society where man controlled everything, she was able to be unique and make a move.

The Taliban are nonetheless the evil antagonists behind the attacks of 9/11 in America. They are in fact, a group of extremist people with long beards and turbans holding the Kalashnikov as an arm, under a false pretense of Islam. They imposed strict rules on people to satisfy their needs and supposedly apply the right Islamic regulations. The Taliban are presented as “mad dogs” (Gately 95), stupid and cowards as Parween called them (Gately 109). They are seen as invaders of Afghanistan, due to their immoral behaviors toward the villagers. The Taliban did not exclude anyone from brutal torture, men and animals were treated alike. Innocent people were killed or jailed for no reason, and taken from the street to be shot in a group for silly reasons as trimming and shaving their beards. Women were not allowed to walk outside alone without a man or the Burqa covering the whole face (Gately 94). Otherwise, unveiled women would be killed publicly (Gately 95).

The Taliban insulted the people in many ways among which they accused the group that they caught as infidels, and all their women including daughter, wives, mothers as whores (Gately 97) because they disobeyed the norms put by the Taliban. Indeed, they occupied the village of Bamiyan for three years (Gately 104). They assumed the position of “pious men of religion” (Gately 106), but they enjoyed sexual pleasure with any lady at hand. Mariam, for instance, married an old-man as the third wife, in hope of giving birth to a boy; she was offered to the Taliban in a golden plate. Mariam was thrown away by her filthy husband who never treated her properly. She “was forced to open her legs to them all”, and above this, the Taliban covered her body with beats and bruises (Gately 106). Parween described them as “stray dogs... lower than rats” (Gately 255).

Afghanistan was a patriarchal society at that time, there were several muted female characters who gave up to their lives and had no clue. Laila is a physician with Elsa in the clinic along with her husband Ezat. She was living under the mercy of her partner and she was unable to break his words. In addition, Amina the neighbor of Elsa and “the protector of her virtue and her reputation” (Gately 58), was hired to cook and clean for Elsa. Amina’s life was suspended on getting married, but due to her extra finger, she did not make it right. Gately put Amina in this role to show the effect of male-controlled in a society and that women cannot be independent, or have a simple life. Furthermore, Rahima is Parween’s mother who had no say about the match of Parween and Raziq. These characters are conditioned by the setting in which they are found.

2.2.2. The Description of the Setting

The journey of Elsa in *Lipstick in Afghanistan* started in Boston where she lives. As she embarks in the journey, Elsa passed first by Paris, to bring with her some needed medical supplies to Bamiyan clinic. Then, the next station was Peshawar an important point which was the entrance to all help coming for Afghanistan. Peshawar is depicted as “a crumbling old city”, peopled with different sorts of populations including aid workers and refugees (Gately 29). Gately refers to Rudyard Kipling’s description of the Pakistani city as “the oldest land” (Gately 31); an indication that the town symbolizes a rich and deep history dating back even to ancient civilizations. Even its population seemed to

pass by disastrous moments, and this can be seen through the faces of starving children and beggars (Gately 31).

The last but not least is Kabul, which is portrayed as a more luxurious city with all the daily necessities. Notwithstanding the devastated buildings, Kabul combines the traditional and modern landscapes. Elsa would profit from the stay in Kabul with the running water and electricity, because life in Bamiyan would be totally hard for her. Equally important, in describing places, areas, rooms, streets, alleys, roads and villages, Gately frequently uses the terms “dust and dirt”. It may allude to the stagnation of the country, and that the Orient is still a backward world, stuck in the past, which can result in an increase of diseases and poverty.

Elsa settled for a long time in Bamiyan and it was the place where her life took another turn. She was offered the former house of the Taliban in the outskirts of the village. Gately refers to Bamiyan as a “Biblical area” just because the first scenes that attracted Elsa’s attention were the veiled women and the bearded men, where animals live along with humans (Gately 39). It implies how Bamiyan was a poor and devastated place, as Hamid tells Elsa that “Bamiyan... is dusty and primitive” (Gately 42). For the most part, the clinic is where Elsa can be found with Hamid, Laila, and Ezat since she was sent there for helping people.

Elsa went with Mike on a picnic beyond the village near a stream and Gately gave a positive description of the place as being “a little slice of paradise” (Gately 177). Though Afghanistan as a country is depicted by Pierre Dubois, one of Elsa’s French guides, as “a dangerous place” (Gately 54), foreigners like this couple enjoyed the spot inside a devastated country and under dreadful circumstances. Notwithstanding the gorgeousness of the scene, there are “dangers everywhere” (Gately 180).

Moreover, there is a mention of a village in the novel, which is Mashaal, where Mariam lives when she got married. The village, set to be a “Hazara village” (Gately 187), gathers the ethnic minority group in Afghanistan who are most hated and tortured by the Taliban, with less veiled women. Sattar is also another different area from Bamiyan, considered as a “ghost town” (Gately 248) since the Taliban were settling around. Its landscapes narrate the troublesome moments of wars and the presence of the Taliban. The town with its piles of destructed buildings with an atmosphere of darkness

is eventually “a dangerous place” as well (Gately 252). Even its villagers are not very welcoming people as the shopkeeper Rasul.

As far as Friday is concerned, most villagers perceived it as a holy day when people are off their jobs. At the beginning, Elsa took advantage of the day to write reports and work, however as soon as she became one of them, the rules changed. During this day, villagers would travel to other areas, gathering with the family and in some instances spend it in the well. The well however, is a place where women used to wash the clothes and waited till, they get dried; meanwhile they gossip and narrate stories. The well symbolizes a site of entertainment, relaxation, and building new friendships. Yet, the overwhelming impression is that of Orientalist perceptions.

2.3. The Orientalist Depictions

The novel *Lipstick in Afghanistan* is not devoid of the Orientalist images that contributed in shaping another form of Orientalism and the misrepresentation of the East. The representations are mostly usual, with some additional ones as the veil and the beard. Turbaned and bearded-men were present in the novel, they caught the attention of Elsa as soon as she arrived to Bamiyan. Absolutely, such sort of people is found in this place, and not in other places. The same description is used for portraying the Taliban with “Matted beards and greasy turbans” (Gately 95) with an emphasis on their dirt. They imposed on women to wear the burqa while men need to have a long-beard, otherwise consequences will be hard. Gately draws this image about the Taliban as terrorists and readers were eager to have more knowledge concerning the way of living under their rule. However, the West already took a standing point in the issue, and accused every Muslim with a beard as a terrorist.

The image of women is the spotlight in the novel, they were deprived from the simplest things. In terms of couples, the husband treated the wife as a “veritable slave” and as a machine of producing sons as the case of Mariam’s husband (Gately 84). In other instances, even daughters are tortured as Meena, a girl of nine years old, with Noor-Mohamed who took her in exchange for paying the debts of her father. Notwithstanding that he goes to the mosque along with his family (Gately 165), he hit and burnt her. There is sort of contradiction and hidden message, because Gately wanted to convey the idea that appearances may fool people easily.

Women like Mariam and Parween took off their veils and dressed like boys to fight the Taliban. The position of women in Afghanistan started to improve since they did not all remain in the domestic sphere of cooking, cleaning and raising children. They went beyond the comfortable zone and dared to resist against this strict group even at the cost of their lives. By all means, the women became a symbol of courage, pride and being a shaheed not a terrorist in the eyes of Elsa, the foreign lady, and the villagers.

The image of the burqa is frequently repeated throughout the novel. It gives a picture of enormity and intimation (Gately 32), meaning that there is a certain profile linked with the dress. Muslim women of the MENA regions equal the burqa, threat, and danger in the minds of the West. The traditional clothes were “cumbersome” (Gately 38) when Elsa first wore them; however, she got used to them by the time she traveled to Mashaal and Sattar. Though women were covering their heads with the veil, they did not wear the full burqa until the Taliban came to rule. Parween was against the idea of the burqa, thinking that it made women ignored and marginalized (Gately 95). On the other side, the burqa was used by other characters to realize different goals. Elsa for instance, wore the burqa to be hidden from the villagers’ eyes, when they went to Mashaal to check the rumors about Mariam’s husband (Gately 184). Again, when they went to Sattar, in order to look for a place to build a school. The traditional dress, according to Elsa, symbolizes safety, security and most importantly invisibility (Gately 222).

However, it is also used for the same purpose by Mike. Elsa convinced him “to shroud the self in the burqa” (Gately 223) and meet her secretly in her house where they made love. On the one hand, the dress was not properly used, it was denigrated and the author manipulated the image of the burqa, for the West believed that people can recourse to it to accomplish immoral actions. It is the same for Muslims who wear it, and are perceived as terrorists, as their appearances and deeds are not unlike. On the other hand, Mike resorts to the Burqa in order not to put Elsa in a position of being labeled as a whore in the village (Gately 222). Elsa hoped to make a good impression on Afghan people by respecting their rules concerning relationships between man and woman.

As far as the Afghan traditions are concerned, Elsa found problems to adapt at the beginning. However, as soon as she became one of them, everything changed. Parween even declared that she is surely a true Afghan woman (Gately 175), for the great job she did to help villagers. Among Islamic gestures toward women is to put the right hand over the heart and bow the head down, showing respect to a foreign lady. Elsa through her journey met several men who did so and treated her with politeness and according to religious needs. The scene is repeated multiple times, to depict an image of how much Afghani people respected strangers and women in particular. Elsa showed consideration to the matter, and things got clearer with them. But, as a non-Muslim American, she shook hands with others as Pierre (Gately 41), and with Lieutenant Dave Martin (Gately 114).

Exoticism and mystery also found in the novel. During her journey to Afghanistan, she dressed in a different style from the people of the area. This difference is perceived as an “exotic crowd” (Gately 30). Indeed, strangeness can only be associated with oriental places. Another instance is when she smelled the exotic food and spices to announce the beginning of being in a distinct place from home (Gately 35). The Hazara were also depicted as “exotic and mysterious all at once” (Gately 48). Additionally, in the Bamiyan marketplace, Parween heard an “exotic Indian Music” (Gately 73). Even nights in Bamiyan were magic with colored lights (Gately 74).

With attention to strangeness and mystery, Elsa prior to wear “the mysterious garment”, was afraid to travel with it. However, when she put it on, “it was like being enveloped in a tent” (Gately 185). This depiction is purposefully used to convey the usual stereotype regarding the image of the Orient and its relation with the desert, tents, and riding camels. Instead, Gately could have easily described it as a large dress.

In the course of the novel, Afghanistan was in tough era, no schools were found, after the Taliban destroyed them all. Because they were deprived from education, when the United Nations planned to build schools, the word in its self was magic (Gately 240). Besides, Mariam was depicted as having “large brown eyes that saw everything” (Gately 80), those eyes can only be found in fairy-tales; this description is certainly exaggerated in portraying Mariam’s eyes.

The presence of jinn in novels became an obligatory element to refer to the Orient and its peoples. In *Lipstick in Afghanistan*, during her first meeting with Mariam when they were little girls, Parween saw her fighting with a boy in the field. Parween thought it was “the work of jinn” (Gately 75), later confirming that it is a fight. Taken from the universe of *The Arabian Nights* this image is still referred to, even in twenty-first century novels. Stories of jinn were also exchanged in the well with old-gossiping ladies (Gately 80). Another emphasis over the jinn deeds occurs with Amina’s husband Sidiq, who was always frowned-face, but it was his jinn from the inside (Gately 117). Indeed, he claimed that the jinn stole the soul and the body when he was in prison, which later on prevented him from getting married (Gately 118). Mysteriously, the jinn left his soul as soon as he drank tea with Elsa who arranged a dinner with Amina (Gately 120).

Violence was deemed to be a characteristic of Orientals centuries ago, and it still continues to be. Only Afghan people were described as angry; Hamid for instance, was usually seen by Elsa in this way (Gately 41). Even in the pitch of his voice, Elsa could figure out his anger (Gately 49). Besides, her first confrontation with Ezat discloses his “permanent frown” (Gately 49). In another scene he was “clearly angry” (Gately 61). In fact, certain factors contributed to this attitude, the first of which is that the country endured hard times including wars and the strict rules of the Taliban. Second, his job at the clinic is a very tough task to accomplish, so that with all the surrounding stress and panic, happiness faded away.

Between the lines of the novel, the writer displays more feelings among which is the sense of humanity. As illustration, Elsa felt sorry for Rwandan refugees just by seeing their pictures in the magazine (Gately 6). She accordingly valued the meaning of her boring life in comparison to those who are starving and dying over there. Another case is when Mike accidentally shot a child, he did not leave him but brought him to the clinic (Gately 199). He added that he would shoot any bad guy even Hamid (Gately 201). It implies that there is no mercy in the heart of soldiers, though it is their nature and mission. Gately in this incident reveals that American soldiers are not just invaders of the country, they are often protectors. But she shows humanity only on the part of Western characters while Orientals are harshly depicted.

2.3.1. The Portrayal of Islam in *Lipstick in Afghanistan*

Islam in the novel was portrayed in an ambivalent manner, and unexpectedly from previous literary works, in an authentic way but with some stereotypical images. Orientals followed the right way of Islamic religion, by holding the right hand over the heart (Gately 31) and respecting the forbidden relation between men and women (Gately 43). In the first journey of Elsa in Bamiyan, the traditional calling for prayer was depicted as “the wailing...for prayer”, though this negative image is soon superseded by “it was beautiful almost” (Gately 45). Elsa gradually started to adjusted to the calling for prayer daily.

As a nurse coming from Boston to Afghanistan, she was perceived as a gift sent from Allah, (Gately 53), with the help she offered, Laila admitted the presence of Elsa, and the right use of God’s name. Throughout the whole novel, Gately frequently used “Inchallah” (Gately 67) in different scenes. It implies that the writer is familiar with Islamic religion. Moreover, at the end of the novel, when they went to Sattar and things changed upside down, Elsa started to pray (Gately 260). Additionally, Elsa said to the dead body of Hamid in Sattar “may Allah watch over you” (Gately 266). In fact, these incidents demonstrated that Elsa is not really a stranger, but one of the Afghan people, because she adapted to the way they live, their customs, traditions and Islamic behaviors.

However, in some cases, Gately misuses the name of Allah and His attributes such as the ability to change the destinies of people. As soon as Parween became a young woman, she was forced to stay at home, take care of her brothers, and do the daily chores. She was not allowed even to go to school, “not even Allah was able to rescue her from her destiny” (Gately 79). Gately misinterprets Islamic religion from this angle, accusing God of the inability to save Parween.

Religiously speaking, the ceremonies of Mariam’s funeral were perfectly described in details. Parween’s family “follow tradition”, from washing to covering the body and burying her (Gately 132). Unquestionably, Gately is acquainted with the Islamic religion in different situations, especially for some details since she has already served as a nurse in Afghanistan, and from her experience she has learned a lot about its people, traditions and religion.

2.3.2. The significance of the Lipstick in the Novel

The tube of lipstick is the secret weapon of Elsa, and the tool that shaped her journey through Afghanistan. Annie, Elsa's friend found it on the desk of Janice, the elder sister of Elsa. Though its color was "outdated" (Gately 8), they applied it. Elsa believed that the lipstick was miraculous, because of its spiritual effects on her (Gately 9). For this reason, when Elsa decided to travel to Afghanistan, the lipstick was the first on the list of luggage (Gately 25). In fact, it was the lipstick that gave her the courage to be in a war zone, to challenge the impossible and most importantly to make friendship and find love.

Elsa started the journey with this lipstick, which provided her with power and made her even taller (Gately 46). It is a sort of magic talisman that supplies her with energy to challenge her new life. She has mysteriously five tubes of lipstick, one for each mood. She prefers to be without the daily necessities of life rather than being deprived from the magic lipstick. The charm of the lipstick has an impression on the appearance of her lips and a great change even on the spirit (Gately 46). Even in Amina's wedding they applied the magical lipstick on the present women (Gately 216). Elsa believed that there is supernatural power with the tube, which can change lives and souls.

During Mariam's wedding, Parween gave her "the old tube of lipstick" (Gately 85), since it was the first time to apply it. She presented as a gift to Mariam, which was considered as "the treasured tube" (Gately 85). The significance of the lipstick is highly important to all of Parween, Mariam, and Elsa. However, when Parween got married, her mother Rahima gave her a tube, which seemed to be an ordinary one and there was no such joy in it, as with Mariam (Gately 86). The lipstick remains as a sign that links Parween with her dearest friend Mariam. Surprisingly enough, the day she died on the way to Bamiyan with a baby in her belly, Elsa found it in the pocket of Mariam after the bus explosion (Gately 125).

Though Parween was a married woman, she had not used it since marriage, and she claimed to Elsa after they became friends that "lipstick is as ordinary as a veil is to us" (Gately 158). Parween compared it with the Muslim veil, which is necessary for any woman, as the lipstick is common among Western women.

Even in her darkest moments, Elsa did not forget to put the lipstick. When Mike came to her house, the lipstick was an obligatory item to use in the evening (Gately 224). Another instance is in Sattar with Parween and Hamid, where Elsa could catch sight of the same lipstick that she gave to Parween on a dinner evening (Gately 262). After Parween's death and burial, Elsa "placed a gleaming tube of lipstick" to denote its resting place (Gately 274). At the end, she offered another lipstick to Zahra as a gift for her dead friend.

Indeed, Elsa loved the villagers so much, made friendships, helped people, and gathered with Mike. Her journey was an unexpected adventure to Afghanistan, a place of danger with the Taliban in rule though she never regretted to be a nurse in Bamiyan despite all she passed through. The lipstick is a symbolic charm that has protected her from the dangers of Oriental terrorism and violence but being a Western token, it had no effect on Oriental women who fell victims to the Taliban. *Lipstick in Afghanistan* can be compared to another adventure in *Willow Trees Don't Weep* by Fadia Faqir. With different challenges and events, it tells the journey of another girl to Afghanistan.

2.4. *Willow Trees Don't Weep*

The novel is written by the British-Jordanian Fadia Faqir, a teacher of creative writing in Durham, U.K. (Banipal parag.2), published in 2014. It recounts the journey of Najwa Rahman, a young Jordanian girl who lost her mother recently because of Cancer. Her father Omar studied nursery and left them when she was three years old. She grew up in a secular house with her Grandmother Zainab in Amman. Najwa as woman bore the challenges of life, her secular mother Raneen and being without a father in an Arab community. Zainab as a wise old-lady warned her granddaughter about Omar whom she must look for, because tongues will wag in the society. The Imam of city's mosque guided her to Hani's parents; a close friend of Omar and the one who convinced him to join the Training Camp in Afghanistan. Her father thought that running from the boring life and be a combat nurse in Afghanistan would improve his life.

Najwa's journey started when she sold the family's jewelries to cover the travel spendings. However, prior to her departure, she realized the grandmother's dream of performing pilgrimage, since it was impossible under the control of Raneen the secular mother. She embarked on the odyssey with a forged visa and the superficial reason of

her trip was mainly the interest in classical music. With attention to the period, she travelled in, flights to Afghanistan were unworkable and she was obliged to pass by Peshawar, Pakistan first, then to visit Al-Zahrani mosque, where she would find Abu Baker who would offer help to reach Khyber Pass. The latter wrote a letter for her to pass and gave her some Afghanis to sustain herself.

Najwa spent the first night in the girls' school, along with other women, to relax and begin the tough journey of looking for Omar Rahman. He was not a very religious man, and he frequently visited the nightclub with Hani. Omar and his friend were forced to fight against the Soviet Union; however, misguided sheikhs like Azzam pushed them to the battle field, in exchange for granting freedom for Palestine through Kabul. Unfortunately, their lives turned upside-down, and Hani became a martyr. In Afghanistan, she was sent to the house of Gulnar, the step-mother of Najwa and her half-sister Amani, who were the other family of Omar. Nonetheless, Amani died because of a drone attack on their compound.

Gulnar after this incident advised Najwa to go to London, where he was last seen. She was instructed by another person called Abu Alaa, who provided her with the number of another person that can bring her together with Omar. On her way to London by plane, she met Andrew whom she asked for help later on. In fact, in 2004, Omar went with Abu Hafs, the warlord of the Taliban, for medical purposes. However, he ended up in jail, because he became a member of the Islamic Deliverance Front, and after a fight with a prisoner he was transferred to Durham's jail.

She found herself in London calling the number that was given by Abu-Alaa. Indeed, this unknown person was named Edward and a newly converted Muslim. Ed had been in prison with Omar for years, and he was responsible for his conversion. He arranged a visit to Durham prison and the first meeting did not take the path she wished. For this reason, Najwa became a receptionist in Ed's hotel and she rested assured that Zainab did the Haj and was back home safely. In the second meeting, Najwa's vision changed towards her father and he instructed her to turn back home and take good care of Zainab, and when she died, Najwa can move to leave with Hani's parents.

After all, the novel is based on mainly three characters, Najwa, Raneen, and Omar, with some secondary characters like Zainab, the religious neighbor, Andrew

and Edward. They are, in a way or another, contributors in the continuation of the events in the novel.

2.4.1. Characters' Portrayals

The main character Najwa is 27 years old, living in prison with her secular mother who did not allow any religious thing to be in the house (Faqr 9). Indeed, Najwa was never permitted to wear a veil like others in the neighborhood, and with no governor, she would be perceived as “harlot” (Faqr 14). She grew up with confusion and multiple questions in head, due to the neglected father. Najwa did not even cry for Raneen, because she was neither a good mother, nor a good wife to Omar (Faqr 257). She claimed that Raneen did not merit even an ordinary funeral (Faqr 4). Accordingly, she started working at a hotel in Amman, after her graduation. Ultimately, Najwa was lost in Amman especially after Raneen’s death with her unknown fate.

She used the veil to serve her needs and being hid in it folds (Faqr 37). The veil was after all a way to “disguise the self” from being known or noticed by others, and she was uncomfortable in it (Faqr 21-22). When Najwa was preparing herself to leave Amman, she broke three rules a day in her community, first she went to the internet café looking for pieces of information about a place, then she obtained a passport on her own, besides getting drunk outside (Faqr 52). As a misguided girl, to surpass the societal norms was an easy matter to her (Faqr 49) and she was pleaded with such deed. In fact, Najwa knew the difference between her and the children at school, in the way they dressed, in holy celebrations as Ramadan (Faqr 9), or Al-Aid where girls and boys put on new clothes (Faqr 234).

Even though Najwa was not praying or wearing the veil frequently, she was different from her mother. She realized the dream of the grandmother and sent her to Mecca (Faqr 61). Moreover, Najwa challenged the difficulties and went to Al-Zahrani mosque, where she pretended that she was doing the ablutions (Faqr 78), in exchange of getting any information or link about her father. The writer followed the image of the Orientals as being liars and treacherous. Even when she was handed the Quran, she claimed that reading verses from it was for “no obvious reason”, because it was only part of Islamic course at school (Faqr 78). Najwa was put in a storm of doubts, because

her position in religion was unclear (Faqr 138). In some instances, she believed that taking off the veil would make Raneen proud (Faqr 165).

Throughout the journey, this character seemed to suffer from suspiciousness about things around her. She recurrently repeated the questions as “was I being watched?” (Faqr 130) among similar ones. She was even put in a situation of fearfulness, doubting that people could recognize that she is without father, as the case with the driver who accidentally watched Najwa (Faqr 15), or as being the daughter of a terrorist (Faqr 230). It is difficult to guess what they were thinking about her from their gazing or the way they spoke with her. Faqr added to the Orientalist description that Orientals are doubtful people with questions running in their heads that would traumatize other people. Therefore, Najwa’s personality is depicted as a complicated one and full of twists and turns.

Najwa on her way to London met Andrew, who took physical advantage from her; although she had already been warned about getting involved in relations with strangers, and offering herself in a plate (Faqr 210). Najwa neglected this part and revealed to Andy all her secrets. Though Andy sympathetically pretended to offer help, his bad intentions however brought to light his reality. Najwa’s naivety and lack of religion drove her to make a sexual relation (Faqr 207-208) with a Western stranger, after she spent some days with his mother Jane at home. As soon as his needs were accomplished, he sent her away from home. Faqr drew a filthy picture on Najwa the Oriental girl, in a micro representation of Easterners, as easily reached girls who can make relations even with strangers, with every detail of making love.

Zainab, the grandmother is the speechless female of the novel; she lived along with her daughter Raneen in Amman, because her husband died in war. She was unable to negotiate religious matters with Raneen, and unable to worship Allah in front of her (Faqr 78). In fact, she did the ablutions and prayed secretly, afraid of Raneen’s reaction. Zainab longed for a visit to Mecca, but her daughter prevented the pilgrimage, even though it was not a matter of money to cover the costs. Indeed, Zainab in Raneen’s funeral bought “the cheapest coffin” for her, because her last words were “no Islamic funeral” (Faqr 3). So, out of pity the grandmother took charge of the funeral of her

daughter. Furthermore, the grandmother was behind Najwa's trip to Afghanistan, because she knew the tongues of society would not be merciful on her (Faqr 6).

The next character is Raneen or the "interior minister" (Faqr 32), as Omar would depict his wife, due to the strict rules imposed by her on the house. To put it differently, Raneen was portrayed as a "sulking wife" (Faqr 33), who kept controlling the life of Omar, and her attitudes and regulations can be considered as a reason behind his escaping (Faqr 246). She did not even notice that his belongings were missing one by one, because Omar intended to pack the necessities slowly but surely. In fact, she became an atheist mother, and "took off her veil" after her husband left the house (Faqr 7). She thought that Islamic religion prevented Rahman's family to be a good and solid one.

Raneen was suffering from cancer; however, since she is unbeliever, she did not expect Allah to cure her (Faqr 15). She even hid anything that belongs to Omar away from Najwa (Faqr 7), and let her in darkness and ignorance. This hatred towards Islam and her husband were deeply instilled in the mind of Najwa, who thought that her father is a ruthless man, abandoned father, and a murderer. However, this idea can be oppositely proved since Omar is thought good through several people she met on the way to Afghanistan. Abu-Hani for instance, said that he was "the most honourable of men" (Faqr 47).

Omar Rahman, before being involved in fighting against the Soviet Union, studied nursery with Hani. They used to have dead bodies to examine their corpse, especially those of honor killing (Faqr 18). Faqr's idea is that Oriental women are all harlots, or impure, and ended as victims of their ill-reputations. Hani on the other hand, was a great warrior and he achieved the martyrdom he longed for (Faqr 158). He dreamed to marry an American woman and move away from Amman (Faqr 31), unfortunately, his wish never came true. He was tortured by the secret police, killed then hanged. They were both misguided by a banned Islamic party (Faqr 156), and risked their lives. However, in Omar's years away from the family, he met Gulnar then they got married and gave birth to Amani.

Gulnar changed the life of Omar and brought happiness to him, even in the darkest moment especially the period after Hani's death (Faqr 247). She was a caring

wife, and a great mother who nourished her family with love and passion. Amani on the other hand, is Najwa's half-sister, who was also an abandoned daughter. She detested her presence and referred to her as "nemesis" (Faqir 145), given that Gulnar took Omar away from them, and prevented Najwa from having an ordinary childhood. Accordingly, this family is the "alternative one" as Najwa put it, she felt sorry for herself, because it took only seven years to forget about them and establish a new family (Faqir 148). Anyhow, Gulnar treated Najwa gently, and she was pleased with that. She even bathed her, which her mother did not do for Najwa (Faqir 145). She appreciated Gulnar's behavior towards her after the drone attack. Even with Andy on the plane, she mentioned that her mother prepared food for her (Faqir 167).

Nevertheless, the persona of Omar from the beginning of the novel differs from his qualities at fifty years. He was a good student of nursery, a husband with responsibilities, and the friend of Hani. Though he lived in Amman, Islam was never his faith, he even spent a great deal of time in nightclubs with Hani, drinking beer which was "Sweet and sour" (Faqir 30), and enjoyed watching the dancing girls on the floor (Faqir 31). After a full night of banned activities, he returned home, ignored Raneen for a while then brought some of her favorite sweets as a bribe. The novelist portrayed a disgusting image about Muslim Orientals, who are supposed to pray, worship Allah and be away from forbidden matters. Instead, these two characters seemed to be Western minds in Oriental bodies. Even though Faqir is an Arab writer, she stood with the European vision of Arab Muslims, especially after 9/11.

Omar in fact, was not convinced about Islamic religion, but Hani turned to be a completely different person. He was behind his joining to fight the enemy. From the moment they stepped out of Amman, their destiny took another path. Omar admitted that their decisions were because of extremist Imams and the misguided version of Islam. First of all, they joined an organization aiming to restore back the security and safety period of the Caliphate (Faqir 44); however, it was never attained, and things got worse under the fallacies of the wrong Islam. Hani gave to Omar Abdallah Azzam's book *Join the Caravan*, as a way to fight the Soviet Union in Afghanistan and free the land of Palestine (Faqir 80-81). They both joined the training camp of Afghanistan in 1987, where Omar worked as a medic. After Hani's death, he joined the global jihad.

Another Muslim character is the religious neighbor who lived next to Najwa's house. However, since Raneen was a strict mother, this unnamed neighbor was never allowed to enter their house, or even to speak with them (Faqr 3). Notwithstanding their treatment to her, she was the one who washed Raneen and made the religious rituals in her funeral (Faqr 3). She was the only person who waved good bye to Najwa on the day she was leaving the house in the early morning, and gave her a prayer dress (Faqr 66). Even though Najwa did not pray at all, but maybe she would need it one day. Najwa was different from Raneen because she trusted this woman, and gave her the house's keys to take care of it and of the flowers in her absence (Faqr 66). She even took care of Zainab after the haj later on.

In addition, Edward is a mediator between Najwa and Omar; the man whom she called as the last solution to contact Omar. Though he is a Westerner, Ed was newly converted to Islam by the virtue of Omar. He was portrayed as a good man, who helped Najwa to meet Omar for the first time, suggested to live with his sister Elizabeth who took good care of her and granted her a job as receptionist with him. Ed in his first weeks at prison was lost and traumatized (Faqr 237-238), but due to Omar's reciting of the Quran with the great amount of psychological tranquility in verses from the Holy Book, brought Ed again to life and converted to be a Muslim (Faqr 224). However, these characters moved in specific places as Amman, Pakistan and Afghanistan in different times, swaying between the pages of the past and present.

2.4.2. The Description of the Setting

The novel started in Amman the capital city of Jordan in 2011. The novel is a mixture of events and flashbacks from past to present and vice-versa. Amman is depicted as "bare" in comparison to Peshawar with its greenery, gardens and trees (Faqr 85-86). Even primitive in some descriptions, such as the cars which were outmoded and even causing problems to nature as pollution (Faqr 103). Additionally, a negative image of the city is built through the existence of nightclubs in a Muslim country (Faqr 31). The internet café is another place in Amman that was portrayed as a spot for men only whose purpose is not to obtain knowledge and civilize the self with the outside world, but running after "sites of ill repute" (Faqr 49).

Moving to Afghanistan, Charikar is one of its cities which witnessed different battles, and this is clearly shown in its devastated dwellings with the effect of booming in it (Faqir 104). Omar was in Aybak, another area in Afghanistan with basic surgical tools, he was stuck in blood. The place was in fact, a “hellhole”, due to the high number of injuries, body part amputations, and lack of anesthetic (Faqir 116-117). However, as far as Afghanistan is concerned, the usual representation is found in this novel as a dangerous place with multiple world’s intelligent services (Faqir 140). In other instance it was “the land of the wronged” (Faqir 161), due to the harsh experiences witnessed by its people from oppression, violence and war through which Faqir wanted to capture the pain endures by the inhabitants of the region.

Equally significant, London was “the country of the guilty” (Faqir 161), meaning that it is the responsible for killing innocent victims in Afghanistan like Amani. As soon as Najwa stepped in the ground of London, she was astonished with high buildings and the absence of greenery in the land. She referred to a line from Blake’s poetry which was frequently used by her teacher of English, “Till we have built Jerusalem in England’s green and pleasant land” (Faqir 168), implying that Blake at that time was calling for a political and social reform in London. He sought to create a better society through poetry. These changes can only occur in nature. However, Najwa expectations disappointed her; it is an indication that reality is different from what had been said. yet, on her way to Paddington, England was represented as a green land with its glory (Faqir 173).

In an encounter between Afghanistan and London, the latter tended to have giant buildings, a variety of types of juice, vegetables, luxurious schools, magnificent shops, and great number of hospitals. The former is “poor and rudimentary”, with the absence of the daily necessities of life like electricity and a comfortable apartment, lack of vegetables, no schools for children, stealing the shoes, and no place to deal with injured and sick people (Faqir 179). Faqir provided a very primitive idea and picture about Afghanistan; though there is some reality in it, but it is due to the consequences of the wars. The novel is however a combination of different images about Orientals and their misrepresentations on some occasions by the supposed Arab writer.

2.5. The Orientalist Depictions

Surprisingly enough, Faqir as a Neo-Orientalist writer produced this novel full of the stereotypical images about the Orient, with the use of Oriental and some Western characters. In fact, in the Aftermath of 9/11 attacks, it became trendy to portray Arab Muslims as terrorists, carpet-kissers, extremists, women's oppressors, and filthy Muslims among many other descriptions. Equally significant, it is common in Oriental societies that they react to every matter happening; as the case with Zainab who insisted on Najwa to look for her father, because of the negative perception of a woman living on her own as being a whore (Faqir 6). Therefore, the novel is not devoid from the already tackled representations of the customs and traditions, the depiction of the veil, eroticism, mystery, violence, the significance of number seven, and the complex relation between father and daughter.

Faqir makes use of various Arabic terms as an additional touch to the novel, and in some instances, to present the culture and customs of the East. These words were written in Italics to spot the difference. Zainab for instance called Najwa as "habibti" or dear, as an Oriental custom for declaring a serious conversation between the two (Faqir 6). Furthermore, the use of "Abaya" and the "Yashmak" (Faqir 21), which can be considered as the official Arab Muslim veil in the East. In another instance, when Najwa was working at the hotel, she put "Shukran", meaning thanks, at the end of the letter as a way to humiliate foreign visitors (Faqir 14). Additionally, the use of "Mumarida" (Faqir 18) instead of a nurse, basically because this occupation was only for women, but Faqir used it for Omar. Besides, even women nurses at that time were seen as whores along with teachers (Faqir 18). Moreover, the grandma described women who live alone as "ahirat" or whores (Faqir 28), and she did not want Najwa to be labeled as such.

"Azan" stood for the call for prayer (Faqir 29), "Muezzin" (Faqir 66) was the imam who called for it. Specifically, Edward in a conversation with Najwa about his conversion said that "Al-nafs ammaratun bill su" (Faqir 224), with its explanation, indicating that the Western character has more knowledge about Islamic religion than Najwa who is supposed to be an Arab Muslim.

In the first place, the image of the veil in this novel is misrepresented by Faqir, because its value was harshly distorted. Najwa during her journey was never satisfied or comfortable in putting the veil. She even thought that it is a suffocating dress for women especially with the high temperature of the unbearable weather (Faqir 27). Another point is that this dress is usually worn by the whores, who would hide under its folds to easily accomplish their desires (Faqir 25). It is a very negative depiction of the veil and its association with prostitution. Equally important, in an incident that happened with Omar in his first meeting with Gulnar, when she was asked to bring the clothes of her dead husband, though she put the burqa outside, as soon as she entered the house with Omar, she took it off. During which Omar's sentiments arouse, since it had been years when he came across a beautiful woman (Faqir 142-143).

Furthermore, the Ihram clothes of the grandmother were perceived by Najwa like a shroud (Faqir 54). In fact, this depiction was built years ago by Westerners in describing the Hayek, and it is used to refer to the dress of pilgrimage. However, it can be negatively identified, because the shroud designates the funeral and corpses, therefore the dress they put on makes them dead and ultimately ignorant in the society. Indeed, Najwa seemed to have a psychological complex with the veil because she was afraid of sitting next to "an Arab veiled women" (Faqir 217), thinking that she would be suspicious.

In terms of eroticism and sexual pleasure, the novel is full of such images, which is unexpected to be found in a novel written by an Arab Muslim. By the start, she always had doubts about other men and their gazes on her such as the seller who suggested to have a cup of coffee with him and she understood it as an offer to have pass on her (Faqir 22). In other instances, there is a reference to filthy jargon like the conversation with the owner of the hotel and Najwa, who asked for permission to take Raneen to the doctor, and he replied that she will be paid only for the days her "bum" was in the seat (Faqir 15). Furthermore, though Hani did not achieve his dream to marry an American woman and leave the country, he slept with her and Faqir gave an image about their sexual relation (Faqir 43).

However, the most detailed description of sexual desire is mainly between Najwa, the supposedly daughter of jihadist and the British character Andrew, who took

the most precious thing of any girl, and left her the next day as rubbish. Though Najwa was already warned about looking to men's eyes (Faqir 14), she did more than look. It is noted that "her treacherous body welcomed the invasion" (Faqir 207). This description was not put haphazardly by Faqir, rather it is a reference to Afghanistan as a disloyal country who simply stood calm and welcomed the American invaders. They made the act of love twice (Faqir 208), ignoring all the instructions put by Zainab and Abu Baker (Faqir 167).

The elements of magic and sorcery existed in the novel, as the essential ones to attract readers as usual. Najwa listened to a record by Muhal Richard Abrams' "Blues Forever", where the music transported her to another side of the earth, an unpleasant world full of illicit Islamic issues (Faqir 21). This indicated that Najwa was thirsty to drink wine, smoke and dance. Furthermore, in a market on her way to sell the jewelry, she gave the seller a golden locket, inscribed in "Pashto and had confidential and whisper in them" (Faqir 21). In fact, this locket seemed to have magic in it, because even the seller was astonished with it and asked from where did she get it. Indeed, it belongs to the ancestors of the family, so it must be very precious. She even heard "A secret whisper" in the market, but she did not know what is said (Faqir 21).

On another occasion, in the city, wandering again for a market to sell the locket, she first passed by a pool where supposedly nymphs used to swim, then a "shop that sells books on aliens and jinn" (Faqir 26). Faqir finds it impossible to produce a novel without referring to jinns and superstitious elements, which made her believe that such type of misconceptions existed, and she contributed also to insert this idea to Western readers in general and Arabs in particular. Najwa saw magic everywhere, for instance as soon as she got the passport, "as if by magic", the country changed into a bigger size (Faqir 52). Faqir definitely is a great believer of magic and superstition, aiming to take hold of the audiences. Likewise, in the hotel of Sadaf when she met Zakir the receptionist, and she spoke freely with him. The first thing came to her mind is that it was because of the place that Najwa chattered with strangers like him (Faqir 92). So, the place was haunting and had magic in it, with the ability to make people speak with strangers.

Comparatively, Najwa claimed that her grandmother's voice travelled from Mecca to her ears. Though this is impossible, Faqir put it intentionally to inculcate the same idea of magic and mystery of Orientals. First, Zainab blamed her for the mistreatment of Gulnar and Amani, because they took good care for her (Faqir 153). Nevertheless, when she felt guilty about them and decided to be nice, the next morning Amani died in the attack and Gulnar went insane. Second, the voice again travelled "over plains and seas" just to calm her down because when she was enraged by Andy, he was with another woman, which led her to be out of her mind and perhaps to commit a crime. (Faqir 272).

In like manner, it is said that eating sugar would help in sweetening the conversation, and solve the needs. This is exactly what Zainab made Najwa aware of (Faqir 47), and she thought that because of sugar, Hani's parents revealed and cleared the reality of Omar. Truthfully, it is not a matter of sugar or candies but the way to treat people and make them comfortable to control speech and everything would come easily and smoothly.

Additionally, Najwa as a child used to be afraid from sorcerers who were living near them (Faqir 34). The writer aims to convey an idea that witches are accustomed to live with people, however it is rather an image extracted from the universe of *The Arabian Nights*. Regarding the great hatred towards Amani, Najwa wished that she "would disappear puff like magic" (Faqir 146). Surprisingly enough, a drone attack took the life of Amani the next day. However, when readers pass by this incident, they obviously think that it is a work of magic, which is already deeply instilled in their subconsciousness. Frequently, Najwa was worried about her mother's ghost which for instance would be insulted if she converted from secularism to Islam (Faqir 240).

Violence is again put over the shoulders of Orientals, but this time an Oriental writer designed them. Najwa was fed up with the world and society especially with her mission of looking for a father, which made any sensible moment to her to be outraged. For instance, the seller who mistreated her, caused a tic that made her in a shape of "villain" (Faqir 22). In fact, it is not the problem of the seller but with the Oriental's characteristic of being frequently angry in all Orientalists' literary works. The same

feature typified Raneen, when she became angry, the house turned upside down, and Omar in this case found her hideous (Faqir 29).

Najwa again was “gripped with anger”, because she found herself alone, and lost in London with no father to provide help or safety (Faqir 181). She was angry also with her mother, because Najwa realized that Raneen was the first reason who drove Omar away from the family (Faqir 182). Anger reached the level of killing, when Najwa heard a woman’s voice instead of Andy’s; she suddenly transformed to a killer, luckily enough they were not in front of her (Faqir 272). Writers and novelists had the habit to portray the Orientals as such in their works, this violence would ultimately turn to terrorism.

Centuries ago, the use of number seven in novels indicated that it is about Islam and Muslims. It had a symbolic meaning, since there are seven skies, Allah had created the world in seven days, seven days of the week, seven doors of hell and others. As an illustration of the frequent use of the number “Amman was built on seven hills” (Faqir 62). Furthermore, Hani’s dream was to die as a martyr and get a place in paradise with “seven beautiful hours” (Faqir 158). Najwa used to count to seven as a way to reduce stress and speak with confidence (Faqir 170/172). Unexpectedly, even her room in the hotel was number seven, a lucky one as Charles the Indian worker of Eagle Hotel said (Faqir 175). Significantly, the number was used with the intent to mark the importance of this number to Muslims, to attract the attention of Westerners and questioned its value.

The representation of the relation between Omar and Najwa above all these, is a complicated one, since Raneen portrayed a false reflection of Omar, which resulted in a great disgust concerning her father. The idea is that Raneen did not accept the reality of fight for Allah, instead she informed Najwa that Omar left them because of the “ugly thing called religion” (Faqir 11). Najwa frequently wished that Omar was rather killed than being a terrorist, because it is his fate and what he merited after all (Faqir 106), and she would be happy with that. She never missed a chance to name him “the cruel father” (Faqir 65), because she looked at the matter from Raneen’s point of view, a father who left a girl of three years, would surely be labeled as such.

Najwa dared to express her abhorrence through saying that she really hates him (Faqir 85), if she was not forced to look for him, she would never reveal that she was wrong. Or even spits on his face (Faqir 169), calling him a coward (Faqir 190), and accusing him for being “strict Muslim” (Faqir 240). It implies that in Najwa’s heart there is no space for loving her father but only loathing. Through Raneen’s words, she shaped a bad image of religion first, then transferred to Najwa a great hatred towards her father.

2.5.1. The Representation of Islam in *Willow Trees Don’t Weep*

It is an important point to realize that, regardless of Najwa and her ill-behaviors in Amman first then throughout her journey from one place to another; the secularism put by Raneen can be considered as a major reason for all these consequences. After all, Najwa grew up in a house without religion or father which led her to be ignorant about many religious matters, as shaking hands with strangers (Faqir 127), offering her flesh to foreigners without a contract of marriage (Faqir 251), and using her body as a temptation to serve her matters (Faqir 169). Therefore, the lack of religion and faith in Allah turned her life upside-down.

Accordingly, Islam was misinterpreted in this novel, adding to it the consequences of 9/11 and its new targeted group of Muslims. Throughout the whole novel, only the unnamed neighbor, Zainab who usually started with “in the name of Allah” (Faqir 45), and Edward were classified as true Muslims. Omar and Hani were both reckless and had no relation with religion. Omar was depicted as “not pious enough” (Faqir 94). However, as soon as he was convinced to fight in Afghanistan, and took hold of Islamic religion, he accidentally took the extremist side of the so-called Islamic faith. Hani, on the other hand ended up as a martyr because he followed a banned Islamic party (Faqir 159). Decisions may lead to unbearable consequences with a strong feeling of guilt.

Assumingly, Raneen was after all the controlling wife, who drove Omar to leave the house (Faqir 116). She was not passionate enough to wait for Omar, instead she raised Najwa in a toxic environment with a total absence of religion at home in addition to her great hatred and reactions towards Islam. Raneen after Omar’s departure, burnt all the books including religious ones, which are depicted as “filth” (Faqir 8). She even

took off the veil and did not grieve for him (Faqr 7). Raneen used to identify Najwa as a “slut” (Faqr 216). Obviously, all what Najwa did is only the consequence of Raneen’s treatments.

A destructive representation of paradise is given by Faqr when Hani and Omar went to the nightclub, and compared the atmosphere of women there as being in “Muslim paradise”, surrounded by houris; the women of Muslims in paradise. Not only that, but one of them asked him to dance (Faqr 31). In another incident, Hani in a camp in Kunduz, the food was served to him by “fair damsels, like paradise” (Faqr 139). Religiously speaking, it is forbidden to look at women unless it is one of the relatives, however this image confirmed that though they are Muslims and fight for Allah, they did not apply religion as it should be. So, they used religion as a way to serve and justify their bad deeds under the umbrella of Islam, which is the inappropriate path of it. In the same vein, Omar compared himself when he was with Gulnar to a medieval poet, who went to pilgrimage not for the sake of worshipping rather for “seducing virgins” (Faqr 143). Faqr put Omar in the same the situation as this poet, in which he came far away to fight invaders and follow the Islamic rules, but he found himself in the cuddle of Gulnar.

By all means Faqr made it clear that Muslims are not allowed to wear any kind of jewelry, however Omar wore gold, which assumingly means that he is not a strict Muslim (Faqr 36). In terms of religion, it is totally forbidden to wear it under any circumstances, even in terms of science, it has dangerous consequences on men’s health. This is a clear point to prove that Najwa is totally unaware of Islam.

Nevertheless, it is mentioned that the second glance on women is considered as a sin (Faqr 38); positively to provide readers with the idea that Islam forbids offensive look on women. Additionally, Muslims were not permitted to eat in public (Faqr 52), because it is improper. This is exactly what Najwa did. Indeed, Najwa was usually warned to hide her flesh and avoid men’s eyes (Faqr 64), but she never listened. Besides, women’s voice is regarded as “awra”, which is prohibition of speaking out loud in streets, but Faqr mentioned that only “strict Muslims” have such conviction (Faqr 101). Smiling outside is also a forbidden matter especially for women (Faqr 102). However, in such way the Westerners would portray a severe image about Islam

and this would lead to difficulties with Muslims everywhere. There is also an Islamic behavior which is to put the right hand over the chest (Faqir 92), though it is not frequently used because Najwa was unaware about many religious matters.

Given that Faqir contributed in devastating the Muslims' image, she mentioned the mosque of Al-Zahrani, but another character interfered and corrected the name as being Al-Zaghrani (Faqir 77). Intentionally, the mosque's name was misspelled to devalue its meaning, a reference to smallness. There is a frequent reference to the word "toothless", as Najwa described the mosque as such. However, it makes a negative allusion to the fact that the mosque lacks power and forceful manner. As far as praying is concerned, Najwa found it difficult to worship Allah and even kind of an insult to bow (Faqir 111). Since she is not accustomed to pray, adding to the misguided ideas instilled by Raneen about religion, this hostile reaction to praying is naturally expected.

Omar's father handed him the Quran as the guide of life and the source of solutions for all his problems, with no other intention. Instead, he laughed and diminished its sacred value. Omar thought that from the moment he took hold of the holy book, his father waited from him to be a true believer and attain the level of martyr (Faqir 82). In fact, from this idea a clear picture constructed, that if Omar took the considerations of his father, he would not end in jail as a terrorist. However, he kept it with him, because as soon as he was in prison, the only relief and sustain was the Quran. He even handed it to Najwa later one (Faqir 270).

Concerning terrorism, Omar and Hani were not aware of the decision taken to join an Islamic forbidden party and ultimately to be in the global jihad (Faqir 39). He was described as having a bushy beard and dressed in Taliban's clothes (Faqir 48), and Hani was holding an arm (Faqir 51); the usual portrait of a terrorist, which was used in all twenty-first century novels about Orientals. In the light of security, when Najwa went to the internet café to look for more information regarding Mazare-e-Sharif; the shrine of Hazarat Ali, the screen went black when she keyed some central words (Faqir 49). This happened as the internet was not secure and it was manipulated by a group of force.

Equally significant, Arab-Afghani people would be jailed for just being a citizen from Afghanistan (Faqir 67). Najwa at the airport witnessed an incident of arresting

and inquiring only those who looked like the Taliban having their dress or long beards (Faqir 73). In fact, they are perceived as a source of danger even if they had nothing to do with terrorism, but the appearances may cause problems with the authorities. Comparatively, the terrorists justified the killing of innocent people as getting rid from the “kafirs” or the infidels (Faqir 94). In terms of religion, Islam did not accept it, because it is a matter of choice to be a Muslim or not, but not through using coercion.

The supposed fighters of Allah were mistreated by their masters who are full of anger, and insulted them as being ladies because they missed the target (Faqir 96). They even gathered them in a place and obliged them to watch clips of videos regarding Muslims who were attacked by the enemy, to provoke their emotions and increase the guilt of not defending against them. In some of the videos, it was unclear who was attacking the other (Faqir 98); a negative argument to put Muslims as the attackers, ultimately the terrorists. Extremism is part of those groups of terrorists, since Abu-Bakr warned Najwa to “pretend to be extremely pious” (Faqir 101). So, it is not a matter of truly believing in Allah, rather just to be part of them is to behave as extremely as it could be.

Besides, Najwa was a suspicious girl who had an indistinct suitcase, because she was afraid that the authorities would expose its special contents (Faqir 171-172). She even thought that they will arrest her for its contents (Faqir 172) since Najwa was handed SIM and SD cards to give them to Abu Alaa; the representative of the Islamic Deliverance Front. However, she unconsciously became a partner in this mission whether for good or harmful purpose, because it “must not fall into the wrong hands” (Faqir 188).

The sense of guilt in Omar’s mind made him admit that the cruelty around him is no longer bearable, since they are just pretending to be innocent (Faqir 158), but deep-down crimes were committed against blameless civilians. Comparatively, schools and mosques were the most targeted places for explosions (Faqir 176); a Western sign to destroy civilization and attack the Muslims in the mosques. Additionally, as soon as Omar became a member of the IDF he taught others to prepare explosives, but “their minds are saturated with dunia” because they are self-indulgent in corrupted matters (Faqir 192). To put it differently, Omar went further on

an extreme view of religion, because Islam is a peaceful religion, but with their misinterpretation, they turned it into bloody faith and destructed its values and holiness. Nevertheless, Omar felt how much he was far from the starting point, his occupation changed from healing to hurting people (Faqir 194). Religious people tended to be cowards and believers of magic rather than scientific facts as said by Najwa (Faqir 224).

Omar was captured in July 2007 by the police, lucky enough he was not in Afghanistan, otherwise he would be dead immediately (Faqir 211); they found all the evidence for arresting him, even “lectures by extremist imams” (Faqir 212). However, death was easier than torture, because hell began in prison. He was asked to manipulate his penis before they managed to examine it, when he refused, one of the guards did it for him (Faqir 212). They sought to find drugs in his body parts, he was even bullied by calling him “Towel-head Muslims! Carpet kisser! Sheep-Shagger! Wife-beater!” (Faqir 213). Also, the way he prayed was mocked at by white prisoners (Faqir 213).

When he was beaten by one of them and was taken to the hospital, he declared to the nurse there, that he was a medic. The expected reply is that he hurt lives of innocent people more than saving others (Faqir 213). All the more so is that crimes in prison are usually put on the shoulders of Muslims, thinking that they mistreat and harass others in prison to convert them to Islam (Faqir 238-239). He regretted about all the bad deeds he committed before, and confessed that he suffered from schism (Faqir 245), because Omar of fifty-two is a separated version of old Omar. He and Hani “were duped, brainwashed and even exploited by the imams” (Faqir 246), he felt guilty after years of crimes. Though his goal in London was to take revenge from the English, but in comparison to the way he was treated by some English men, he after all blamed himself (Faqir 248).

The expression of screaming Allahu Akbar is recurrently used to refer to Muslims and bombs. When Omar joined the training camp, and they gathered in rows from different nationalities where they shouted “Allahu Akbar”, as part of the daily rituals to motivate the self for fighting. Omar confessed that he “felt imposter”, in doing such ritual (Faqir 96). For more enthusiasm in fight, the clips of videos were mostly of men who repeatedly said “Allahu Akbar” (Faqir 98). In an incident that happened with

Najwa on her way to Afghanistan, while she was with the driver, a sudden attack occurred in the bazaar. All people started to yell “Allahu Akbar”, even women whose voice is banned to be heard (Faqir 106). Faqir put the audience in confusion, because there is a contradiction in Islamic laws about women’s voice. It denotes that Islam is not a static faith, and rules can be broken according to occasions, which is an inaccurate representation. It is also used a sign of surrender when Omar was captured by the soldiers and cried “Allahu Akbar” (Faqir 210); an announcement of great tribulation.

All things considered, the title of the novel is an attractive one, in which experiences and challenges were built upon. Faqir used the weeping willow purposefully to mirror the hardships experienced by female characters and the strength of the trees after strong winds.

2.5.2. The Significance of the Willow Trees in the Novel

The willow trees are generally identified with cascading leaves, along with capacity of healing. These trees are a symbol of renewal, persistence and strength. They are also known for the flexibility of their weeping branches, due to the impossibility to break in facing the strong winds (Merva), so one must not underestimate their power. Moreover, they are mostly found near water, another symbol of purity and restoration. As a whole, the trees are the representatives of peace and tranquility in nature, especially under tough circumstances.

In accordance with the title of novel *Willow Trees Don't Weep*, an interconnection is built between the importance of these trees and some female characters as Zainab, Najwa and Raneen. In an instance, Najwa saw it as a beautiful and free woman with green leaves as long as hair, swaying in the breeze, and banding in water happily, but not sad as it was claimed (Faqir 252). In fact, it is called weeping but to Najwa it seemed to look happy, all depending on one’s mood of perceiving it. Though there are some people who sensed it as weeping and sad (Faqir 252).

To put it in another manner, Najwa and Zainab passed through difficult times together. The grandmother suffered from losing her husband at war, son-in-law and her daughter Raneen. With all these losses, Zainab managed to survive and rebirth with each separation, the grandmother grew stronger. For the case of Najwa, she lost her father Omar at a very young age, she never had an ordinary childhood, adding to it the

strict regulations of the secular house. All these circumstances contributed into making Najwa powerful, challenging and defying the social norms to look for Omar. With each time Najwa faced pitfall, she handled it and found a solution. As regards Raneen, she could not make it and became a prisoner to her own disappointment concerning Omar, where cancer took her life away from the ones who needed her love and care. Ultimately, she was “dried up like a date” (Faqir 16), and could not renew herself after Omar’s departure.

Given these points, female characters of the novel endured hardships which exacerbated their life circles. However, they resisted and fought back the problems in a strong manner. In fact, Faqir likened the strength and resilience of Najwa and her grandmother Zainab with the willow trees. They stayed patient and strong under different situations and never let any difficulty break them. By contrast, Raneen was completely shattered with her father’s death and the sudden departure of Omar, while cancer consumed her body and she could not survive.

Lipstick in Afghanistan and *Willow Trees Don’t Weep* are a risky adventure to Afghanistan with different goals. Elsa aimed to offer help to Afghanis people, who came across many challenges and was able to survive. Najwa’s journey started with a target vision to find her abandoned father Omar. They both experienced difficulties and each one managed to deal with its in her own. These two novels have certain similarities as well as differences, which will be spotted in the prevailing titles.

2.6. The Comparative Study of the Two Novels

Roberta Gately’s *Lipstick in Afghanistan* and Fadia Faqir’s *Willow Trees Don’t Weep* are overlapped with each other in some common points between them. They both represent an unsafe adventure to war-torn zones under the issue of terrorism in Afghanistan. They share common themes as love, loss, and the pursuit of identity from the females’ perspectives delving into the inner thoughts and feelings. Moreover, both narratives shape the resilience and liberation of their strong females’ characters who seek for empowerment.

Significantly, the two works are written by women writers, in nearly the same period of publishing, dealing with females who endured hardships and challenged the environment to attain self-improvement. These women navigated their journeys in defying the cultural and societal norms, to substantiate the effects of being victims of their societies. Mutually, the two novels tackled the concern of the patriarchal dominance.

In different ways, the two novels are narrated in a distinguished manner with protagonists who came from separate backgrounds and witnessed various incidents on their way to Afghanistan. Even the period when they traveled is not the same, for *Lipstick in Afghanistan*, the novel is set during the Taliban regime. As far as *Willow Trees Don't Weep*, the work was established after their rule. In terms of eroticism, the former presented a slight description of indulgence in the lustful relations which occurred at the level of Western characters.

The latter provides references to sexual pleasure in many instances, mostly concerning Arab-Muslim characters. Regarding the representation of Islam, Gately to a certain extent depicted this faith positively. As for Faqir, the image of religion was completely distorted. In regards to terrorism, Gately managed to portray a positive image about Afghani people, but when it comes to the Taliban even the people of the region were fed up with their strict regulations. However, Faqir described every Muslim character as a terrorist. Additionally, each title of the novel symbolizes hidden meanings and significant messages.

2.6.1. The Similarities

Gately's work is a journey of Elsa a Bostonian girl who aided people in Afghanistan, the last place where she thought that love and friendship can exist. Faqir's novel is an odyssey of Najwa a Jordanian girl who was looking for the abandoned father Omar, who left her since she was three. She found multiple answers to every question in mind, which clarified the wrong image of her father. The two works can be considered as a tough travel to the supposedly most dangerous places, mainly Afghanistan (Gately 54). The trip was a challenging one, since both main characters are females under no governors who would protect them.

There are even a number of common themes including love, loss and identity. Elsa found love between Afghanistan society's members, and even depicted them as "friendly people" (Gately 204). Mike on the other hand, loved Elsa and promised her to complete their lives together as soon as the war would end (Gately 276). Not only dear people but everyone in Bamiyan were upset for her leaving (Gately 280-281). In Faqir's novel, Najwa received love from her last expectations. Gulnar the step-mother treated Najwa gently as her daughter or even more than that by taking good care of her (Faqir 136). Another type of love she experienced with a foreign woman Elizabeth; Edward's sister, who also offered her attentive nurturing (Faqir 256).

As far as loss is concerned, Elsa at the beginning suffered from the death of her niece Diana and her mother Margaret. Then, in Bamiyan many dear people passed away, including Parween who died in fighting with the Taliban and she was declared as "shaheed" (Gately 272). The patriotism towards Afghanistan first and her village in particular derived Parween to sacrifice the self in taking revenge from them. Additionally, Dave the American soldier attracted pity on him from the audience. He longed for a visit to his family, but he died before having a chance to see them. These people were dear to Elsa and were regarded as true friends of her. In the other novel, Najwa also encountered sadness due to the loss of many beloved ones, as Amani who wished to hug her since she was subjected to Najwa's mistreatment (Faqir 161). Psychologically speaking, Omar's departure caused Najwa to experience loss at the level of emotional stability and security.

Regarding identity, Elsa's travel to Afghanistan was after all a self-nourishment, in which she discovered the harsh experiences of Afghani women who struggled to remain breathing under severe circumstances, through which Elsa built her own identity and power. In Faqir's work, Najwa's goal from her odyssey was after all, an adventure of self-discovery, and quest for identity. She was torn between the cultural norms of her society and her own desires for autonomy. All these points considered, these two novels are written by women writers, narrating the journey for independence from a female's point of view and painting pictures about the hardships that women can encounter alone in building the self to resist against the other.

In the light of living in a patriarchal society, the two works pictured the effects of male-dominance in females' lives. Gately's novel depicted the situation of Mariam, who got married at an early age with an old man who already had three wives. Unfortunately, she had no choice but to accept the marriage silently (Gately 84). Ultimately, she experienced merciless physical violence and relentless torture, since she was unable to produce a son to him (Gately 92- 93), because they lived in a society which puts boys at the top of the hierarchy and girls at the bottom of it. In Faqir's novel, the idea can be shown in Amman where women cannot live alone. The grandmother urged Najwa to look for Omar because "Better a man's shadow than that of a wall" (Faqir 6). So, there is an emphasis over having a man as the patriarch instead of living on her own.

Another common aspect is in the representation of the veil. Elsa at the beginning of the novel when she was forced to wear the burqa, found herself uncomfortable in it (Gately 32). In other instances, the veil served as a way to be disguised and hid in its folds, first she wore it in her way to Mashaal (Gately 184). Then, she offered it to Mike to be out of sight from neighbors in his way to Elsa's house (222). Again, Elsa resorted to the burqa in her visit to Sattar (244). Concerning the second novel, Najwa made use of the veil for the purpose of getting information about her father (Faqir 37), with no good intention to wear it as a way to cover her flesh from men's eyes. Therefore, the image of the veil in both works was distorted, and it became a symbol of security and invisibility from other people. In exchange, purposes were attained under the Islamic cloak. Accordingly, the dress is linked to filthy Muslims who are ultimately terrorists as pictured by Gately and Faqir.

The same images were also used for the representation of Oriental characters. In Gately's *Lipstick in Afghanistan*, there are a number of figures who were portrayed as dressing like Taliban with long-beards, turbans in head and holding the Kalashnikov, the outfits of being a terrorist. Even women characters used to dress as men as Mariam did to take revenge from the Taliban who stole her soul. The same idea was applied by Parween to fight against the strict Islamic group (Gately 184). In Faqir's *Willow Trees Don't Weep*, Omar was depicted as a bearded and turbaned-man (Faqir 69), ultimately portrayed as a strict Muslim (Faqir 240).

Similarly, in these two works of fiction, writers based the description of the attacks, bombing, and Muslim's magnification (Takbir), as Allahu Akbar. In Gately's novel, there was a frequent use of this expression especially in the presence of the Taliban on their way to murder innocent civilians (Gately 97). Moreover, the same expression was used in a field of explosions where Parween led a group of Taliban (Gately 107). Equally in Faqir's novel, it was used in training camps in Afghanistan (Faqir 98).

The two novels share the same symbolism in terms of each title. *Lipstick in Afghanistan* is however an allegorical work about a magical tube of lipstick, which Elsa found as a secret weapon to challenge her society and travel alone to Afghanistan, the most hazardous place. The tube was a talisman arm to endure the hardships faced in Bamiyan and persist against it. By the same token, *Willow Trees Don't Weep*, is a metaphor about women who can tolerate the difficulties and challenges even in the darkest moments comparatively as the weeping willow with long leaves as hair that can resist against the strong winds because of its flexibility. Though these two novels have points in common, they still diverge in other important elements.

2.6.2. The Differences

In a separate analysis, Elsa is a Western character who worked as a nurse in Boston and wanted to offer help to those who are in need. From Diana's illness and death, Elsa longed for this occupation and to realize her dream. However, Najwa reached a certain level of education after which she was obliged to look for a job. She worked as a receptionist in a hotel. Therefore, these characters have distinct background and grew up in different societies with specific norms and rules. Elsa had no issue in living alone especially with the death of her mother and niece. But, Najwa though still had Zainab with her at home, she was worried about her to complete her life alone, this is why Zainab drove Najwa to find Omar.

Elsa's character was gradually improved and developed through the novel, where she got accustomed to their traditions and behaviors, in some instances, even respecting the forbidden matters that are legal in her culture, as having Mike with her in home (Gately 225). Moreover, she started acting like them and putting her right hand

over her heart instead of shaking hands with strangers. Conversely, for Najwa, the hatred of religion and her father worsened her personality from the beginning of the voyage. She found herself first participating in an issue of SIM and SD cards which had dangerous information. Then, she was involved with Andy a stranger in London. So, in terms of improvement, Najwa's personality did not witness an improvement for good.

Though it is true that the two novels tackled the issue of terrorism, but the period of some characters' travelling to Afghanistan differs. Truly, it is a worn-torn zone, which experienced a period of terrorism especially with the coming of Taliban in rule. Elsa's journey was during the regime of the Taliban, but at least Bamiyan was safe (Gately 54). Nevertheless, Najwa's journey to Afghanistan was after the period of their rule. As far as the issue of terrorism, Gately presented a neutral image about this group. Presented good Afghani people who had a great hatred towards them, to clarify the idea that the Taliban are not men of religion but rather abusing the faith to accomplish horrific deeds. Even those who fight the Taliban are not terrorists instead they are seen as "shaheed" (Gately 273).

Faqir depicted Muslims as such through the characters of the novel. The hatred started with Raneen who became secular and transferred it to Najwa. She in return, saw every person she met on her way as shaped in a picture of terrorist, even Omar. Omar admitted that all what he had done was wrong since blood was shed at the cost of innocent people, because he and Hani "were duped, brainwashed and even exploited by the imams" (Faqir 246). So, from Omar's angle it was not fighting for Allah rather he hurt people more than he cured (Faqir 194).

Concerning erotic images that are present in these works; within the first novel, the act of making love happened only between Mike and Elsa meaning the Western characters (Gately 225). Even in terms of the diction used, there was a superficial description. When it comes to Faqir's novel, images of indulgence in the senses were frequently mentioned by the writer with a reference to filthy jargon, like the description of a sexual relation between Hani and the American married woman (Faqir 43). Additionally, Najwa and her night with Andy was put in details by the writer (Faqir

207-208). Shamefully, these sexual relations happened to Arab-Muslim characters, which distorted the image of Muslims from the first place.

In the light of distorting the portrayal of Muslims, Islam in these novels was depicted in a different way. In Gately's novel it was depicted neutral to a certain degree, with the use of the usual stereotypes in rare situations. For instance, Parween's fate was unescapable, even Allah would be unable save her. So, the writer put doubt in Allah's abilities to change fates (Gately 79). Otherwise, Gately designated the image of Islam showing that she had knowledge about this faith since she was already an aid worker in Afghanistan. Through the character of Elsa, she proved that as far as she was one of them, Elsa easily adapted to rituals, traditions and Islamic attitudes.

In Faqir's novel, however, things are different from what is expected. The image of Islam was entirely misled through Arab-Muslim characters. Religion was put on a scale equally with terrorism and extremism since the journey from the start was to look for Omar who joined the global jihad (Faqir 39). However, Omar was not even praying before, and when he decided to fight the enemy, he was misguided by the supposed imams (Faqir 157).

Significantly, the encounter between East and West can be identified in these novels. In fact, Elsa is a micro-representation of America, since she is a nurse who wanted to save the lives of Afghani people. As far as the land, Afghanistan is in perpetual conflict and struggle in wars, therefore foreign hands are required to save the situation. America however, is the country who aided Afghanistan, because it is a devastated land. So, the superiority of the West over the East is clarified between Elsa and the other novel with Najwa the Oriental character, who is in need of Western help to get in touch with her father. The dependency of the East on the Western intervention still existed.

2.7. Conclusion

In essence, this chapter was mainly devoted to analyze first *Lipstick in Afghanistan* by the American writer Roberta Gately and second *Willow Trees Don't Weep* by the British-Jordanian writer Fadia Faqir. The analysis was on the level of how these two

writers offered depictions of Oriental characters in the Orient as the setting. Moving to the Orientalist representations of certain images as the image of the burqa, the sufferings of women, the elements of exoticism, mystery and strangeness adding to it the usual portrayal of Orientals as being violent people. Given that these two works were established on the basis of the issue of terrorism, the novels recounted the consequences, the tough time and the horror lived after 9/11 attacks.

All things considered; the last portion of the chapter provided a comparative study between the two pieces of writing. Ultimately, it aimed to study the similarities and to spot the differences between them. Though there are several points in common as having a tough adventure of two females alone to Afghanistan with different purposes and the use of the same image of Muslims with turbans, long beards and a rifle, among other similarities. The two works are still differed in other elements since the protagonists came from distinct backgrounds and live in two different places from each other confronting East and West. From a different perspective the representation of Islam among others is out of the ordinary from Gately's angle then it is depicted in another manner by Faqir.

General Conclusion

As a whole, the perception of the Orient in Western literature is mostly a negative one. Writers, novelists and artists took control over literature to present the Orient for Westerners and for the most part for political agendas. Given that Orientalism is an academic field for those who were interested in studying the Orient, ideas, images, and perceptions were built over centuries by depicting the Orient and its peoples as exotic, erotic, living in a magically splendid world, adding to it the use of violence, fanaticism, to extremism. These portrayals were intensified by the early beginning of the 21st century and the attacks of 9/11 in America. The focus in these representations became predominately over Muslims and Islamic religion. Terrorism turned to be the equivalent meaning with Islamic faith and Muslims.

The first chapter served as a theoretical part for historical facts including the definition of Orientalism and its roots in history, which enabled the West to create the other; adding to it the development of Orientalist images from the 19th to 21st centuries in literature, taking into account depictions from *The Arabian Nights* world, as mystery, magic, exoticism and eroticism. The scope of representation however, changed during the 21st century, as far as terrorism was concerned. Particularly, the use of Afghanistan as the starting point of terrorism in the world. Therefore, the next chapter gave attention to an examination of two novels, the first of which is written by an Orientalist writer Roberta Gately's *Lipstick in Afghanistan*, with another contemporary work by a Neo-Orientalist writer Fadia Faqir's *Willow Trees Don't Weep*.

In the second chapter a deep analysis is given to the two similar and distinct novels. They were examined at the level of how Oriental characters and the Orient as the setting were portrayed. Additionally, an analysis of the Orientalist images starting from the past ones as the frequent reference to Orientals as violent people since they are angry all the time. Moreover, using some pictures from *The Arabian Nights* to transport the reader into a magical realm. Crucially, the representation of the veil is presented within the lines of the novel, by depicting the burqa as a dress that put women on the margin of society under the severe norms of the Taliban in rule. In the first novel, women are the predominant issue, because some Oriental characters were ignored and often received harsh treatment from men since it is a patriarchal society.

However, the novel shows an improvement of the position of women from being house-wife to a level of attacking the enemy and being labelled as lady rebel. From a specific angle, the work demonstrated the traditions and customs of Afghanistan, which Elsa later on became familiar with. Above all these images new ones were added. As a matter of fact, the consequences of 9/11 attacks resulted in a focus over Muslims in particular and represented them as strict Muslims, terrorists, extremists with turbans, beards, dark-skinned and holding an arm. These representations, however, contributed into the destruction of Muslims' picture and be burdened with Islamophobia and xenophobia everywhere.

In the second work, in the same manner elements were analyzed, taking into consideration that this novel is written by an Arab-Muslim writer. The novel encompasses different images in addition to the above mentioned. Moreover, a harsh representation of Islam was put by the writer, since Neo-Orientalism is after all about the Orientals who gladly accepted the images that were conveyed by the West centuries before. This can be showed in the comparative study between the two works.

Though Gately is a Westerner but the way Afghanistan and its people were depicted is quite natural and neutral. Despite the authentic images, reading between the lines can still offer the Orientalist vision towards the other. For Faqir however, there are a great number of falsifications and inaccurate depictions about the Orient, despite of her Arab roots. Hence, in Gately's novel, especially with the representation of Islam, the writer provided positive impression about it with the Afghani traditions and customs. Even Elsa gradually adapted to the way of living, respecting their religion, and became a friend of them. Faqir however, put Najwa the Oriental character in a journey alone with no guardian to accompany her. She was involved in a forbidden relation with a Westerner, breaking Islamic rules, and insulting her father, with no faith to believe in.

While reading Gately, readers may have pity and some depictions would be changed in their minds. But, as far as Faqir is concerned, the audience would have more added negative influences about Afghanistan in particular and the Orient in general. In spite of the resemblances, the points of differences can shape a whole distinct idea about the perception of the MENA regions. By the same token, these novels addressed themes

of struggle, resilience and the quest for identity, under the umbrella of Orientalism and Neo-Orientalism narratives.

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Summary

This research paper endeavors to compare an Orientalist work by the American writer Roberta Gately *Lipstick in Afghanistan*, and *Willow Trees Don't Weep* by the British-Middle Eastern writer Fadia Faqir. Throughout the study, a historical background is provided for Orientalism that led to the emergence of Neo-Orientalism, particularly with the attacks in America of September 11th, 2001. Throughout the Orientalist depictions, the East was represented as backward, primitive, magic and exotic world. Therefore, this dissertation delves into the experiences of two female protagonists who travelled to Afghanistan with different purposes, sharing some stereotypical images about the place and its people. The study attempted to give a micro-representation of how Afghanistan is portrayed through the lenses of Orientalism and Neo-Orientalism narratives.

Résumé

Ce travail de recherche tente de comparer une œuvre orientaliste de l'écrivaine américaine Roberta Gately, *Lipstick in Afghanistan*, et *Willow Trees Don't Weep* de l'écrivaine Britannique du Moyen-Orient Fadia Faqir. Tout au long de l'étude, un contexte historique est fourni pour l'orientalisme qui a conduit à l'émergence du néo-orientalisme, en particulier avec les attentats du 11 septembre 2001 en Amérique. Tout au long des représentations orientalistes, l'Orient était représenté comme arriéré, primitif, magique et exotique. Cette thèse se penche donc sur les expériences de deux protagonistes féminines qui ont voyagé en Afghanistan avec des objectifs différents, partageant des images stéréotypées sur le lieu et ses habitants. L'étude a tenté de donner une micro-représentation de la façon dont l'Afghanistan est dépeint à travers le prisme des récits de l'orientalisme et du néo-orientalisme.

ملخص

يسعى هذا البحث إلى مقارنة عمل مستشرق للكاتبة الأمريكية روبرتا جيتلي أحمر الشفاه في أفغانستان، وأشجار الصفصاف لا تبكي للكاتبة البريطانية الشرق أوسطية فاديا فقير. يتم من خلال الدراسة تقديم خلفية تاريخية للاستشراق الذي أدى إلى ظهور الاستشراق الجديد، لا سيما مع هجمات 11 سبتمبر 2001 في أمريكا. من خلال التصوير الاستشراقي، تم تمثيل الشرق على أنه متخلف، بدائي، سحري و عالم غريب. لذلك، تتطرق هذه الأطروحة إلى تجارب بطلتين سافرتا إلى أفغانستان لأغراض مختلفة، حيث شاركتا بعض الصور النمطية عن المكان وأهله. حاولت الدراسة تقديم تمثيل مصغر لكيفية تصوير أفغانستان من خلال عدسات الاستشراق وسرديات الاستشراق الجديد.