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Representing Islam in the age of neo-orientalism: Media, politics and identity

ABSTRACT

The aim of this article is to examine the persistent charterer of orientalist discourse in western mass media narratives by analysing the function of the 'native subject' and 'native attitude' in the constitution of neo-orientalism. While the classical orientalist representational vision has dominated the western media and popular narratives of Islam and Arabs throughout the twentieth century, it is the contention of this article that new forms and formations of orientalist discourse have emerged corresponding with the West's new imperial designs in the post-Cold War era and especially during the so-called 'War on Terror'. The rise of these neo-orientalist strategies in the western media finds its elaborate articulation in the deployment of 'native subjects' as specialists who provide a crucial function in facilitating oriental discourse for the service of hegemonic (military and cultural) ideology. Relying on interpretive discourse analysis, this article will illustrate how a serious engagement with current orientalist media ideology warrants a critical examination of the ways its new strategies have mutated to include the native as a source for its ideological narratives. Whereas in classical orientalist narratives the 'oriental native' had indispensably occupied central status as the 'object' of 'authentic' oriental knowledge, in the neo-orientalist discourse the 'native' becomes the 'voice/authority' of the reorientalized native cultures.

INTRODUCTION

The mass mobilization and wide-spread resurgence of orientalist discourse in the western media in recent years have become an ideological industry deployed in the service of Islamophobia and its deep-rooted cultural and colonial legacy. The endurance and persistence of contemporary vintages of orientalist representations in the western popular media and culture are fundamentally shaped by the entrenched vision that views Islam and Muslim populations as a mortal and moral threat to western civilization and its values. While the classical orientalist mode of representations were fashioned by specialized literary modus operandi *narratives* including philology and anthropology, the new tropes of orientalist discourse have largely become a form of mass-discourse disseminated in public forums and mass media platforms, and function as a masquerade that provides a moral legitimacy for American/western neo-imperial designs in the Islamic world. In further elaborating the representational strategies deployed by the orientalist ideological edifice, Edward Said (1981) prophetically reveals what he considers to be the future contours of the domain of orientalism. While acknowledging that 'We do not … live at the mercy of a centralized propaganda apparatus', Said, nonetheless, asserts that

> For most Americans (the same is generally true for Europeans) the branch of the cultural apparatus that has been [and will be] delivering Islam to them for the most part includes the television and radio networks, the daily newspapers, and the mass-circulation news magazines; films play a role, of course, if only because to the extent that a visual sense of history and distant lands informs our own, it often comes by way of the cinema. Together, this powerful concentration of mass media can be said to constitute a communal core of interpretations providing a certain picture of Islam and, of course, reflecting powerful interests in the society served by the media.
>
> (1981: 43)

It is very clear today that the foundational tropes of orientalism – from romanticization to demonization – remain central to its ideological apparatus and process; however, it is also clear that its representational strategies have also shifted both epistemologically and discursively.

This article seeks both to describe and analyse the shift in orientalist narratives into what will be termed 'neo-orientalism' in media discourse. It is the contention of this article that new media forms and formations of orientalist discourse have emerged corresponding with the West's new imperial designs in the post-Cold War era and especially culminating during the so-called 'War on Terror'. The rise of these neo-orientalist strategies in the western media finds its elaborate articulation in the deployment of 'native subjects' specialists who provide a crucial function in facilitating oriental discourse for the service of hegemonic (military and cultural) ideology. Whereas in classical orientalist narratives the 'oriental native' had indispensably occupied central status as the 'object' of 'authentic' oriental knowledge, in the neo-orientalist discourse the 'native' becomes the 'voice/authority' of the reorientalized native cultures.

To this end, it is not the aim of this article to provide an exhaustive or quantitative account of all native neo-orientalist narratives. Nor is it the goal of this article to adjudicate the veracity of such narratives. Rather, the key

aim is to investigate the discursive strategies involved in the emergence of neo-orientalist vision and the crucial function of native discourse in consolidating its hegemonic paradigm. While there is no shortage of native neo-orientalist representatives or representations to explore, the article will focus only on four figures (Fouad Ajami, Hirsi Ali, Zuhdi Jasser and Irshad Manji) who played a pivotal role in the production and legitimation of neo-orientalist discourse in the western media forums. One of the primary goals in exploring and investigating their function as native neo-orientalists is to illustrate how in spite of their 'apparent differences' (ideological, philosophical, professional, ethnic, etc.) they all converged in their mission to manufacture moral and public outrage against Islam and Muslims for the service of anti-Islam ideological industry. Relying on interpretive discourse analysis, this article will illustrate how a serious engagement with current orientalist media ideology will warrant a more critical examination of the ways its new strategies have mutated to include the native as a source for its ideological declarations.

The article consists of three parts. Part one provides theoretical conceptualization of the 'hegemonic model' of media in which discursive representations are deployed to produce dominant ideologies. This is intended to illustrate how the 'native-expert'/'Native-informant' is utilized by media hegemonic narratives in the service of neo-orientalist ideology. Part two focuses on the rise of neo-orientalist doctrine, both ideologically and discursively. It is the argument of the article that neo-orientalist discursive ideology did not emerge after the events of September 11, 2001 but rather with the end of the Cold War and with the rise of neo-liberal development ideology according to which 'culture' and 'civilization' became the prevailing paradigm for the values of 'democracy', 'rationality' and 'modernization'. Part three focuses on samples of native neo-orientalist media narratives (after the end of the Cold War) as an expression of discursive dominant hegemonic ideology.

1. MEDIA, DISCOURSE AND HEGEMONY: THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This article draws on the earlier literature of discourse analysis in which media is conceived as an ideological mediation that constitutes public ideas and ideals as well as a major source of popular knowledge about the 'self' and 'other'. In particular, I employ the analytic tools of the 'Hegemonic Model' of media in which patterns of cultural representations are deployed to produce what Hall (1997: 76) calls 'dominant representational paradigm'. In this respect, the dominant and hegemonic paradigm principally refers to 'the process of making, maintaining and reproducing … authoritative sets of meanings and practices' through media representations (Barker 2000: 262). The articulation of such hegemonic practices in media conventions, codes and attitudes, in turn, creates hegemonic discourses, authoritative views and common-sense assumptions and idioms. Understood accordingly, hegemonic media discourses do not describe the linguistic expressions of media discourse strictly speaking, but rather illuminate the wider scope of ideological formations that determine and regulate (include or exclude) possible public knowledge production – that is, they assemble ideological attitudes and world-views and provide us with the framework to understand, naturalize and justify those views.

Within this approach, the hegemonic media discourse should not be viewed as a reflection and manifestation of representational manipulation or direct forms of intervention to influence news outcome or shape public

knowledge production. Although such aspects of media practices can be observed within agenda-based media structures (or in overt forms of prop- aganda), hegemonic media discourses operate in a complex but systematic manner as an element of ideology. As Hall maintains, dominate discourses 'are not deliberately selected by encoders to 'reproduce events within the horizon of the dominant ideology', but constitute the field of meanings within which they must choose. Precisely because they have become 'universalized and naturalized', they appear to be the only forms of intelligibility available; they have become sedimented as the 'only rational, universally valid ones' (1979: 343). Therefore, and rather than a singular media narrative with a particular discursive intentional formulation, the ideological media apparatus functions as crucial site where dominant cultural and social representations (myths, essentializations, stereotypes, partial truths) deeply ingrained in the collective discursive practices are produced and reproduced unconsciously. As Mouffe, following Gramsci, emphasizes, 'Hegemonic practices are the prac- tices of articulation through which a given order is created and the meaning of social institutions is fixed' (2013: 2).

Additionally, and although continually evolving and occasionally engen- dering conflicting and multiple views, hegemonic media narratives, through the operation of discursive formation, will always seek to stabilize and regu- late discourse into ideology. This process 'constructs, defines and produces the object of knowledge in an intelligible way while excluding other forms of reasoning as unintelligible' (Barker 2000: 78). While it is true that cultural values, social practices and material objects exist outside of discursive repre- sentations, their meanings and interpretations are provided and assigned through discursive (media) linguistic construction. Said (1981) captures the essence of this operation as he describes the process of how media discursive conventions and ideological codes converge in the production of news when he asserts that

> … despite the variety and the differences, and however much we proclaim the contrary, what the media produce is neither spontaneous nor completely 'free': 'news' does not just happen, pictures and ideas do not merely spring from reality into our eyes and minds, truth is not directly available, we do not have unrestrained variety at our disposal. For like all modes of communication, television, radio, and newspapers observe certain rules and conventions to get things across intelligibly, and it is these, often more than the reality being conveyed, that shape the material delivered by the media. Since these tacitly agreed-upon rules serve efficiently to reduce an unmanageable reality into 'news' or 'stories', and since the media strive to reach the same audience which they believe is ruled by a uniform set of assumptions about reality, the picture of Islam (and of anything else, for that matter) is likely to be quite uniform, in some ways reductive, and monochromatic.
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> (1981: 44)

It is through this constitutive discursive process that 'primary definers' (Hall 1978), preferred meanings, ascendant interpretations and public dominant ideology are produced and disseminated.

Correspondingly, and given that hegemonic practices and discourses continually require maintenance and legitimation, they regulate not only what can be articulated and declared but most importantly who can speak and

under what conditions (Foucault 1977). Key here is the vital understanding that media hegemonic ideology is profoundly premised on the triangulation of power, truth and knowledge. The role of the elite (media 'experts', media 'specialists', 'academics', pundits, 'professionals', etc.) becomes an essential feature in the production of power through the process of knowledge/truth/power dynamics. Media hegemonic interpretations produced by the 'elites/experts' in this regard do not only sanction those interpretations as 'truth-claims', but in fact function also as a source of power that reauthorizes their perspectives as objective knowledge. Hence the cycle of media hegemonic power in which 'Knowledge linked to power, not only assumes the authority of 'the truth' but has the power to make itself true' (Foucault 1977: 27) through the role of the elites. Hall succinctly describes its operation in media structures in the following manner:

> How the broadcasting professionals are able both to operate with 'relatively autonomous' codes of their own and to act in such a way as to reproduce the hegemonic signification of events is a complex matter … It must suffice to say that the professionals are linked with the defining elites not only by the institutional position of broadcasting itself as an 'ideological apparatus', but also by the structure of access (that is, the systematic 'over-accessing' of selective elite personnel and their 'definition of the situation' in television). It may even be said that the professional codes serve to reproduce hegemonic definitions specifically by not overtly biasing their operations in a dominant direction: ideological reproduction therefore takes place here inadvertently, unconsciously, 'behind men's backs'.
>
> (1999: 516)

The symbiotic and interdependent relations between media structures, hegemonic ideology and 'expert-truth claims' provide a critical insight into the process by which media constructs 'objective discourses'. In essence, media institutions authorize the expert (who supplies the truth), which provides the validation for power to create 'objective' knowledge and a priori convictions. The role of the authorized/validating expert becomes indispensible in this operation and in the process of ideological dissemination. The consensus of the elite and dominant classes on key issues provide 'the definitions, theoretical paradigms, agendas and frames with reference points which society gives meaning to subjects if importance' (Karim 2003: 5). It is here where the 'native-expert'/'Native-informant/' is utilized by media hegemonic narratives in the service of neo-orientalist ideology (as will be discussed below). As indicated above, neo-orientalist representational strategies rely on and employ new ideological tropes in which the 'native voice' occupies central status and becomes a willing instrument in the production of hegemonic ideology. It is important now to turn the discussion to the rise of neo-orientalist native subjectivity and the shift from classical orientalism to neo-orientalism in order to illustrate the amorphous and mutating character of orientalist discourse in media narratives.

2. FROM ORIENTALISM TO NEO-ORIENTALISM

In investigating the hegemonic and discursive character of knowledge-power relations in the production of cultural difference (orientalism), Edward

Said (1978) highlighted the structural features of orientalism as a complex ideological system of representation deeply ingrained in the West's will to power as well as the will to dominate. Situating his critical examination of the phenomenon called orientalism within the analytical theories of Gramsci (particularly, his notion of hegemony and civil society) and Foucault (especially his notion of power), Said shows how the West's motivation to 'know' and 'represent' the Orient is fundamentally linked to its desire to master and control it by rendering it epistemologically and ontologically distinct and different from itself (1978: 2). By unveiling the intimate and intertextual affinities between orientalist narratives (annals of literary, anthropological, scientific and theological discourses) and hegemony (or otherness), Said's powerful analysis draws our attention to the organic complicity between knowledge (orientalism) and power (colonialism and domination). For him,

> Orientalism can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient – dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it; in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient.
>
> (1978: 3)

Furthermore, and approaching orientalism as a hegemonic ideology, Said observes the power with which it can create its own reality. The 'orient', according to Said, is a discursive construction and not an expression of an inert truth of nature or a description of the essential and real 'orient'. The Orient, Said contends, 'was Orientalized not only because it was discovered to be 'Oriental' in all the ways considered commonplace by an average nineteenth-century European, but also because it could be – that is, submitted to being – made Oriental' (1978: 5). Orientalist narratives, like media narratives, therefore, 'create not only knowledge but also the very reality they appear to describe. In time such knowledge and reality produce a tradition, or what Michel Foucault calls a discourse' (1978: 94). The Orient, in essence, became the 'real' personification of what orientalist had already created in the orientalist imaginary. It is in these reductive and essentializing discourses that the Orient materializes as the domain of the sensual, unchanging, irrational, backward, violent, mysterious and despotic. Essentially, the Orient, if not exoticized, is essentially a place to be feared, subjugated, brutalized and reformed.

These orientalist-generated anxieties and stereotypes persisted and even intensified in modern and contemporary representations of Arabs and Muslims, albeit more in the domain of media, entertainment and public culture. As a form of power apparatus 'tied to the tumultuous dynamics of contemporary history' (1978: xiv), Said recognized orientalism's new discursive tropes as embedded more in the cultural politics of media and popular knowledge as he was able to observe in later editions of his classic book, *Orientalism* (1978):

> Today bookstores in the US are filled with shabby screeds bearing screaming headlines about Islam and terror, Islam exposed the Arab threat and the Muslim menace, all of them written by political polemicists pretending to knowledge imparted to them and others by experts who have supposedly penetrated to the heart of these strange oriental

peoples. Accompanying such war-mongering expertise have been CNN and Fox, plus myriad evangelical and rightwing radio hosts, innumerable tabloids and even middle-brow journals, all of them recycling the same unverifiable fictions and vast generalisations so as to stir up America against the foreign devil.

<div align="right">(Said 2003)</div>

While for Said, the structure and ideology of orthodox orientalism endured in the western representations of the 'orient', a new discursive paradigm of 'belligerent neo-Orientalism' (Said 2003) was clearly emerging as instantiated in the heightened negative media and popular culture representations of Islam and Arabs. However, Said did not fully or systematically elaborate the phenomenon termed here 'neo-orientalism', nor did he sketch out its representational and ideological strategies beyond describing its recent popular manifestation as a supplement to orthodox orientalism.

Nevertheless, many other studies have refocused Said's investigations of orientalist ideology and illustrated how 'while indebted to classical orientalism', neo-orientalism 'engenders new tropes of othering' (Behdad and Williams 2010: 284). Furthermore, for Behdad and William the phenomenon called neo-orientalism is similarly characterized by the same essential features that characterize orthodox orientalism, and therefore it is 'monolithic, totalizing, reliant on a binary logic, and based on an assumption of moral and cultural superiority over the Oriental other … [And as such], neo-Orientalism should be understood not as sui generis, but rather as a supplement to enduring modes or Orientalist representation' (2010: 84). If the underlying ideological foundations of orientalism are transferred and elaborated in the cultural apparatus of neo-orientalism, its differentiated features from classical orientalism, then, rest in its discursive practices and discursive strategies. While I will return to the main characteristics of neo-orientalism below, the more pressing issue here is the conditions under which this phenomenon has emerged and flourished as this is a vital aspect of the discussion related to contemporary media representations of Islam and Arabs.

The term neo-orientalism was used in the early 1990s by Yahia Sadowski (1993) to identify the rise of new generation of orientalist academics and policy experts such as Daniel Pipes, John Hall, Gellner and Patricia Crone[1] among others who sought to explain the lack of political development in most Islamic societies after the end of the Cold War. Reversing the old thesis of 'oriental despotism' in which 'oriental' polities were conceived as political structures that were devoid of political rights and civil/civic institutions due to weak societies unable to confront strong states, these neo-orientalists have instead argued that the political paralysis and political violence in most Muslim societies rest in the social and psychological structures that harbour deep hostility and resentment towards political authority and political rationality. As Pipe puts it, 'Muslim countries have the most terrorists and the fewest democracies in the world' (quoted in Tuastad 2004: 594). The critical inspiration for such resistance towards political power and political change, accordingly, is Islamic law and its cultural ethos. In this neo-orientalist formulation, and as Sadowski (1993) explains, the lack of western democratic values and virtues is the result of 'weak states' unable to challenge and reform 'strong societies'.

While Sadowski located the rise of neo-orientalism within the shift of orientalist mode of analysis, other studies have focused on the resurgence of neo-imperial role of the West (especially American) in the Muslim world after

the collapse of the Soviet bloc, as well as on the campaigns of the so-called 'War on Terror' after the attacks of September, 11, 2001 (hereinafter 9/11). For instance, Tuastad (2004) associates the emergence of neo-orientalism with the rise of the notion of 'new barbarism thesis', according to which irrational violence, political backwardness and economic underdevelopment become the product, traits and expressions of backward (local) conditions and culture. Delinking colonial, political and economic explanations from 'native' political violence, according to Tuastad, serves the interests of 'people who are aware of the need to produce images of a conflict as one between civilisation and barbarism' (2004: 596). Hence, following Tuastad's contention, 'new barbarism and neo-Orientalist imaginaries may serve as hegemonic strategies when the production of enemy imaginaries contributes to legitimize continuous colonial economic or political projects' (2004: 591). Correspondingly, others have identified the tragic events of 9/11 as the primary event that reconstituted orientalist ideology into its 'neo' phase. Altwaiji (2014), for example, argues that the 9/11 attacks have functioned as a metaphor that enabled an imaginary shift both discursively and geographically in which the Arab world became the site for orientalist ideological and military projections. Therefore, according to Altwaji (2014), the 9/11 attacks

> have been a global symbolic event marked by American retaliation acts, changing East-West relationship, and world politics changes. The result of this symbolic change is the emergence of the neo-Orientalist academia in which the Arab world becomes the center while major classic components such as India, Iran, and Turkey are excluded from the neo-Orientalist map.
>
> (2014: 314)

There is no doubt that the 9/11 attacks and the ensuing 'War on Terror' have mobilized the moral outrage associated with the already existing tropes of latent orientalism in the western societies. However, that event was not, I contend, the turning point and was not the foundational event that contributed to the emergence of neo-orientalist ideology especially in media and popular representations of Islam. I believe that the end of the Cold War and the Gulf War in 1991[2] marked the drastic shift that both shaped and framed the relation of the United States with the Muslim world. It is in the climate of America's new global order and not after 9/11 as some suggest that 'America's mission by example' shifted to 'mission by intervention' on the basis of culture and neo-liberal development, and with that neo-orientalism began to emerge as a doctrine. 'The predilection to define cultures according to their presumed 'essential' characteristics, especially as regards politics' (Mamdani 2002: 768) became the prevailing paradigm through which a perceived 'Islamic peril' was manufactured. It is in the context of the 'cultural turn' and the 'clash of civilizations' that the model of Islam confronting the Christian West policy emerged. America's cultural crusading ideology, in theory and practice, against Islam would follow. Neo-orientalism, in this enterprise, becomes the ideological logic in America's neo-imperial designs and missions, especially in the Arab and Muslim World. Official and unofficial American narratives posited an 'Islamic peril' that was not only a political and security obstacle but a cultural and civilizational one also. Media pundits, Pentagon Scholars, US Policy establishment advisers and neo-conservative (hereinafter 'Neocon') scholars alike seem to 'construct a broad image of 'western civilization' in

epical struggle with oriental barbarism'. Literature and think pieces such as Benjamin Barber's 'Jihad vs. McWorld', Samuel Huntington's 'Clash of Civilizations', Bernard Lewis's 'The Roots of Muslim Rage', Daniel Pipes' 'The Muslims Are Coming! The Muslims Are Coming!' among many others cast Islam, not Islamic radicalism, as the exception to civilization or an outright enemy of it.

Appearing shortly before the Gulf War in 1991, Bernard Lewis's 'The Roots of Muslim Rage' is credited with inspiring and coining the phrase 'clash of civilizations'. For Lewis, the emerging (and perhaps unavoidable conflict) between 'Islam' and the West (by then, Judeo-Christian) is not parallel to the mediaeval crusade campaigns but a continuation of it as he emphatically declares,

> The struggle between these rival systems [Islam and Judeo-Christendom] has now lasted for some fourteen centuries. It began with the advent of Islam, in the seventh century, and has continued virtually to the present day. It has consisted of a long series of attacks and counterattacks, jihads and crusades, conquests and reconquests.
>
> (Lewis 1990: 49)

The reappearance of the millennial conflict for Lewis, however, is not a simple military or political one to recover lost land or dominate frontiers. Rather it is a clash between irreconcilable values: progress vs backwardness, rationality vs irrationality, modernity vs stagnation. The genesis of Muslim hostility towards the West in modern times, according to Lewis, is rooted in its civilizational and cultural inferiority. It is not the West's armies or its colonial legacy that outrages them; it is the West's superior values that they fear the most: 'It should by now be clear that we are facing a mood and a movement far transcending the level of issues and policies and the governments that pursue them. This is no less than a clash of civilizations – the perhaps irrational but surely historic reaction of an ancient rival against our Judeo-Christian heritage, our secular present' (Lewis 1990: 60).

Lewis's reductive appropriation of culture (understood as religion) as a political category under the auspices of 'conflictual Islamic and Western civilizations' provided a second version of the clash of civilization thesis expounded by Samuel P. Huntington. Huntington's updated version was developed around two basic ideas: 'that since the end of the Cold War "the iron curtain of ideology had been replaced by a 'velvet curtain of culture, and that the velvet curtain had been drawn across the 'bloody borders of Islam"' (Mamdani 2005: 21). 'The underlying problem for the West is not Islamic fundamentalism', Huntington stressed, 'It is *Islam*, a different civilization whose people are convinced of the superiority of their culture and are obsessed with the inferiority of their power' (1996: 217, emphasis added). Islam and Muslims, Huntington argued, were more predisposed to violence than were other civilizations and this inevitably sets Islam and the West on a collision course. To illustrate his point about the incompatibility of Islamic values with western values, and the cultural tensions that underlie them, Huntington 'cites the fact that, between 1980 and 1999, the United States had engaged in seventeen military operations in the Middle East, all against Muslims' (McAlister 2001: 269).

Given the superiority yet exclusivity of the western values, Huntington suggested that the West should abandon its effort to export such values and beliefs as universal values. While America's sense of its 'superior benevolence'

3. For a good discussion on translation and ideology, see Massad (2015).

was always based on its purported universal values, for Huntington these values have little significance for other cultures given their inabilities to apply them to their own traditions, which are plagued with internal stagnation and flaws. But if a 'civilization' such as Islam is incompatible with modern values, irreverent to humanist traditions and unchangeable, yet prone to violence and hostility towards the West, how should the West approach Islam? For both Huntington and Lewis, the solution is unmistakable: 'Islam must be quarantined and the devil exorcized from it' (Mamdani 2005: 24) through force if necessary. However, they, while providing intellectual and policy counsel to American foreign policy establishment, diverged on the approach to this containment of Islam. While Lewis favours an approach where the United States incites and forces change from within Islam (using the 'good' and civilizable Muslims), Huntington prefers a Cold War style approach where the West does not simply wait for change from within, but rather stands ready for inevitable clash with Islam (Mamdani 2005: 23).

Researching the impact of official discourse on mass media in America after 9/11, Hutcheson et al. note how the use of good vs evil binary in 20 major American newspaper editorials increased six times (2004: 27–36). Public, religious and mainstream reception of Islam and Muslims in America, however, would yield even more dramatic images. Public statements branding Islam as an 'evil and wicked religion', and 'bloody, brutal religion', along with popular media stereotypes of Muslim terrorist, Muslim extremist and Muslim militants reveal a profound pattern of anti-Islamic ideology. Certainly, for many the so-called 'War on Terror' is nothing but a clash and a millennial war between Islam and the West (Judeo-Christendom, to be exact). As the famous American evangelist, John Hagee, put it in his 2006 book, 'This is a religious war that Islam cannot and must not win … The end of the world as we know is rapidly approaching … Rejoice and be exceedingly glad the best is yet to be' (2006: 122). Likewise, for Robert Morey, the evangelical leader, 'Islam stands to be the greatest threat against humanity [i.e., the West] that the world has ever known' (quoted in Byford 2004) So much committed he was to this view that he created a 'Crusaders Club', in which followers must pledge to defend the fundamental mission of the club, which is to confront and convert all followers of Islam.

Like the sweeping ideology of America's triumphalist civilizational paradigm of development and modernity at the age of 'cultural talk', neo-orientalism would combine what Dabashi (2009: 102) classifies as typologies of orientalism: 'orientalism of rivalry', 'orientalism of loathing', 'orientalism of fear' and 'orientalism of domination'. The discursive aggregation of all forms of 'othering' in the neo-orientalist vision of the Islamic orient would not be the exclusive field of the formal investigation (academic institutes, research centres, oriental studies), but, under the eruption of technologies of communication (including social and private media), would reach the broader domain of public and popular knowledge production. Public media representations were not only able to cease on neo-orientalists' discursive narrations, but supplied the most systematic ideological translation[3] using the native's own terminology. Under the pretence of neo-orientalism, the 'common citizen' in the West becomes the 'consumer/expert' of orientalism as the media provides him or her direct entry into the true mind and heart of the 'oriental', employing native's own terms in order to re-emphasize exoticization, difference and cultural anxieties. Without any consideration to prevailing social norms in local traditions, terms like 'jihad', 'kafar', 'sharia', 'fatwa', 'Islamic State/ISIS',

'Wahhabi', 'intifada', 'Allah', 'hijab', etc. are disseminated in public discourse as both markers of oriental cultural pathologies and as forms of new ideological lingua franca. Neo-orientalist knowledge production about Islam and Arabs, in essence, became the providence of the 'expert' as well the 'common' as most of the production, circulation and consumption assembled in public (mainly media) forums.

In addition to its media-based character, another prevalent feature of neo-orientalism is the impulse to transform the romantic, sexual, mythological and mystical misrepresentations associated with orthodox orientalism into political designations. Culture in neo-orientalist conceptualization 'has turned religious experience into a political category' (Mamdani 2002: 765). In this vein, a salient trope of neo-orientalism is the redeployment of religious symbols such as the veil as signifiers of oppression (Behdad and Williams 2010: 285), atavism and misogyny. These signifiers, as will be illustrated below, will become the gauge of civilizational achievements against which Islam will be judged and condemned. The politicization of culture and the use of media are two fundamental tropes in the neo-oriental ideological strategies. The use of native narratives and discourse as ideological tools is a third crucial feature, to which I would like to turn now and elaborate at length.

3. NATIVE NEO-ORIENTALISM: FROM MEDIA TO HEGEMONY

Perhaps the most pioneering feature within the neo-orientalist discursive armada is the mobilization of 'native experts' whose vital function is to authorize, facilitate and authenticate neo-orientalist ideology. The native neo-orientalist authority here 'is an experiential form of authority, an authority construed and claimed not only through having lived in the Middle East [Muslim world], but also by having a 'feel' for this particular society as a Middle Easterner, a kind of native sense of the people, their culture, and political situation' (Behdad and Williams 2010: 286). These native neo-orientalists are presented as experts who have the capacity to disclose the essential insights and deep pathologies of their own native cultures and hence their strategic function for mass media narratives. If under classical orientalism, Islam and Muslims suffered from what Gerbner (1972) called 'symbolic annihilation', under neo-orientalist popular mode of knowledge production, native representations of 'Islam' and 'Muslims' are widespread in the western public discourses but chiefly as testimonials that at once reconfirm and disguise dominant orientalist ideological dogma. As Dabashi (2009: 224) confirms, native informants manufacture what he calls, following Leo Strauss, 'a noble lie'. More importantly, however, 'they can feign authority while telling their conquerors not what they need to know but what they want to hear'. (In return, American and European liberals call them 'voices of dissent') (Dabashi 2011: 16). They are primarily mobilized as agents of salvation, whose main task is to 'speak' on behalf of the 'oppressed women' of Islam, the 'human rights' of 'enslaved Muslims' and against 'Islamic cultural degradation'. The strategic significance of the so-called 'moderate' Muslims (native subjects), for example, 'who endorses U.S. Policies is evident in the 2007 RAND report recommending that the U.S. Government cultivate, fund and promote moderate Muslim networks, through NGOs and youth or women's organizations' (Maira 2012: 125).

The insidious use of native subjects in the service of hegemony is not unique to Islam or to this era. From colonialism to slavery, native subjects

4. For a good discussion
   of similar tendencies in
   feminist discourse, see
   Lazrg (2008).

have performed vital roles in facilitating the operations of subjugation and domination. Malcolm X's devastating characterization of blacks who contributed to black enslavement as 'house Negros', or of Indians who supported the British against their own communities in the 1857 rebellion, all illustrate the legacy of hegemonic internalization among native populations. However, and as Dabashi reminds us, 'There is, of course, a fundamental difference between the contemporary version … and their antecedents from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Uncle Tom has evolved into [the] … well-educated and sophisticated enough to disguise their obsequiousness toward their white employers and audiences' (2011: 15–16). In the case of Islam in the West, such diverse figures as Fouad Ajami, Irshad Manji, Walid Shoebat, Ibn Warraq, Ayaan Hirsi Ali, Zuhdi Jasser, Waffa Sultan, Maryam Namazie, Maajid Nawaz, Ali A. Rizvi, Maajid Nawaz, among many others, have all functioned and preformed that role. They all became 'self-appointed spokespersons' in the mass media under the ideological and Manichean canopy of what Bernard Lewis (1990) and George W. Bush called 'good Muslims' vs 'bad Muslims'.

All those so-called 'good Muslims' have contributed, often negatively and harmfully, to the discursive construction of Islam and Muslims through the public and mass media. While the declarations they make and statement they proclaim might capture some of the factual truths in current conditions of some Muslim societies around the world, they in effect dehistoricize, decontextualize and depoliticize the conditions that produced those grievances and actions. Their role in the production and legitimation of such discourse is so vital that they 'all come together to generate and *externalize* a particular mode of knowledge about … [Islam and Muslims], a knowledge that is then *objectified* via its circulation in the mass media and legitimized by the power that announces and enunciates it and subsequently *internalized* as truth' (Dabashi 2009: 229, original emphasis). This is precisely the process through which hegemonic and ideological discourses described by Said, Hall and Foucault, among others, are manufactured and disseminated.

In this regard, the basic neo-orientalist themes that have emerged after 1990 and intensified with vengeance after 9/11 have become the hallmark for 'native-anti-Islamic' industry. The 'subaltern' is no longer silent, nor is he or she engaged only in the glorification of the West and its cultural benevolence, but rather fully and publically invited to 'confess' to Islam's 'failures', 'pathologies' and 'aberrations'. Framing the conflict with 'Islam' as a cosmic struggle of ideas, cultures and values, the native neo-orientalists are mobilized primarily in mainstream mass media to confirm in native vocabulary the basic features of the 'Muslim malaise' as outlined by the neo-orientalist cultural turn. These natives' inclinations to hold his or her personal views (negative or positive) about Islam and the values that sustain it are not the concern here. It is rather 'the demand for their public confessions, the scripted style of their confessions, and the rewards that they carry' (Lazrg 2008) that make their role and function in mass media worthy of interrogation.[4]

Perhaps no native-pundit has contributed to the neo-orientalist doctrine that Islam by nature is vile, violent, backward, sadistic and anti-modern as much as the late 'Lebanese-American' academic, Fouad Ajami (d. 2014). 'Anointed by US establishment media as the foremost Arab expert' (AbuKhalil 2014), he produced over 400 major journalistic articles for newspapers and magazines (Martin 2014) including the *NY Times*, *U.S. News and World Report*, *Washington Post*, CNN, *Wall Street Journal*, *The New Republic*, *Foreign Affairs*, to name just a few, and was a regular media commentator and consultant

(respectively) for CBS, CNN, PBC, FOX, NPR for over twenty years. Between September 2011 and December 2011 alone (four months after 9/11), Ajami was mentioned in over 150 news items (Boehlert 2001), as Mort Zuckerman, publisher of *U.S. News and World Report*, once remarked of Ajami that he is 'the most brilliant authority, with the greatest insight and greatest historical knowledge of the *Arab mind-set*, in this country' (quoted in Boehlert 2001, emphasis added).

Propagating one of the fundamental vitriolic maxims of Bernard Lewis' orientalist dictums, Ajami's 'unmistakably racist prescriptions' (Said 1994: 289) mainly focused on the so-called the 'Arab mind' and its endemic violent 'rage'. Credited with the alacrity to disclose the 'inner precincts' of Islamic secrets, Ajami, testifying before a congressional subcommittee once, declared that the difference between Islamic violence is that 'Sunnis are homicidal and the Shia are suicidal' (quoted in AbuKhalil 2014). Afflicted by 'the malignant trilogy – anti-Americanism, anti-Semitism and anti-modernism – that had poisoned … much of the region' (Ajami 2012), the Arab world according to Ajami is gripped by a culture of terrorism inspired by a deadly rage. This rage, Ajami pontificated on numerous media platforms, had nothing to do with real political grievances. Rather, it was the expression of 'aggrieved nativism … that was overtaken by a fierce anti-[west], a mighty wind of wrath and resentment' (Ajami 2003). Trotting Lewis' and Huntington's orientalist propositions (Ajami 2008), he postulates that Islamic cultural paralysis as well is its defeated civilizational spirit 'led to Arab self-pity and self-delusion as they blamed the rest of the world for their troubles' (quoted in Martin 2014).

Marshalling a fleet of orientalist medical-racist terminology against Muslims (and Arabs in particular) in mainstream media, Ajami would popularize, with trenchant disdain, such essentialist descriptions as 'Arab pathologies', 'congenital condition', the 'Arab mind', 'Arab psyche', 'affliction', 'disorder', 'malignant', 'cunning', 'rage', 'anger' and 'victimology' (Ajami 2003a, 2003b, 2006, 2011, 2012). These sociocultural pathologies, which are the essential symptoms of the Islamic decline, cannot be left, Ajami argues, to the collective will of the people in the region and are only reversible with the western military's 'emancipating' interventions. Commenting in 2006 on 'what Went Wrong in Iraq' after the American invasion and the death of hundreds of thousands of civilian population, with NPR's 'Morning Edition' host, Steve Inskeep, Ajami, characterizing the war as a gift of reform and dreaming, wondered, 'did we judge the Sunni Arabs would completely turn away from this new war and *reject the gifts* it brought with it?' For him, America's neo-colonial and devastating campaign in Iraq was not to be blamed, but rather it was the cultural attitude of 'Muslim imams' and intellectuals along with the 'fact that the Arab world dispatched into Iraq … its jihadists, its castaways, rejects, its angry children' that was the culprit. 'A foreign power bearing reform and dreaming of it', Ajami lamented, 'had its work cut out for it' (Ajami 2006). Similarly, Ajami 'sang the praises of each of Israel's leaders, from the Likud's Benjamin Netanyahu, with his 'filial devotion [to] the land he had agreed to relinquish', to Labor leader Ehud Barak, 'an exemplary soldier'. 'The Palestinians', Ajami declared, 'should be grateful to such men for 'rescuing' them from defeat, and to Zionism for generously offering them 'the possibility of their own national political revival' (quoted in Shatz 2003).

Ajami's influence on public discourse was truly profound. No Arab figure has appeared on, and written for, American media forums as he did. Ajami's 'background', 'accent', 'look' and in essence his 'authenticity' served him well.

As AbuKhalil puts it, 'he was 'one of them' [Arabs/Muslims] but testifying [publicly] to their brutality, 'atavism' and 'culture of terrorism'. Ajami was willing to express views that Westerners were, at that time, reluctant to say publicly' (AbuKhalil 2014) especially after Said's publication of *Orientalism* (1978). However, beyond his direct media public discourse, Ajami's connections to important and powerful media patrons contributed significantly to his prominence. He ingratiated himself to such powerful individuals such as 'Laurence Tisch, former chairman of CBS; Mort Zuckerman, the owner of *US News and World Report*; Martin Peretz, a co-owner of *The New Republic*; and Leslie Gelb, head of the Council on Foreign Relations' (Shatz 2003). Similarly, his views and beliefs were 'widely recycled by [journalist] acolytes like Thomas Friedman and Judith Miller of the Times' (Shatz 2003) as well as Charlie Rose, Jim Lehere and Wolf Blitzer and Anderson Cooper of CNN – the latter remembering Ajami as a 'brilliant' man with 'a great intellect' who was 'full of grace and compassion' (Erdman 2014). Ajami's greatest contribution, however, was reserved for the Neocon ideological agenda. Painted by his admirers 'as a courageous gadfly who has risen above the tribal hatreds of the Arabs' (Shatz 2003), Ajami diligently helped 'rally support for the United States invasion of Iraq in 2003 – partly by personally advising top policy-makers' (Martin 2014). An advisor and a close confidant of Paul Wolfowitz, then Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld, and then of national security adviser, Condoleezza Rice, Ajami supplied the most ardent justification for war-cheerleading since 1990. In a public speech during the preparation for the Iraq war of 2003, Vice President, Dick Cheney, used Ajami's assured predictions, 'that Iraqis would greet liberation by the American military with joy' (Martin 2014), to rally public support for the war in America.

Although no Arab/Muslim neo-orientalist has generated the celebrity and notoriety like that of Ajami, a generation of vying candidates would emerge especially in the wake of 9/11 as the true 'explainers of Islam' and its 'troubles'. While they all converged on the imputation that Islam inherently and intrinsically inspires violence, misogyny and intolerance, the distinguishing feature among them is whether Islam can be reformed and redeemed from its perilous essence and delivered into modern civilization or not. While Ajami's discourse was endowed by the authority and authenticity of the 'native-expert', the new generation of neo-orientalists largely employed the 'victim-of-Islam' trope to authorize their public interventions[5]. From the self-proclaimed redeemed-Muslim (Walid Shoebat) to the reformed-Muslim (Zuhdi Jasser) to the 'ex Muslim (Hirsi Ali, [Wafa Sultan])' to the 'barely-Muslim (Manji)' – among many others – all claimed to reveal the true nature of Islam (Bayoumi 2010: 80) to the western audiences traumatized by the senseless acts of 9/11 but who were already saturated with anti-Islamic imagery.

Even when some western leaders tried (genuinely or strategically) to distinguish between Islam (as a religion) and extremism, it was the native neo-orientalists who passionately disputed this differentiation. Consider, for example, the Somali-born Dutch-American, Hirsi Ali's almost denunciation of George W. Bush's statement 'that Islam was being held hostage by a terrorist minority', as 'Islam', she insisted, 'is being held hostage by itself … This [9/11] is Islam, and not just Islam, this was the core of Islam' (quoted in Gewin 2008). Flaunting this message on almost every media outlet in the West, from Fox to the National Press Club to the *De Telegraaf* (as Ms Ali was named by *Time magazine* as one of its '100 most influential people' for 2005), she preached that 'it is time to stop kidding ourselves about Islam being a

religion of peace' (Ali 2015), as Islam for Ms Ali is 'the new fascism' and a 'destructive, nihilistic cult of death' (Ali 2014) for which violence is a genuine product of the faith. Professing to her western audience that she is engaged in a civilized 'conversation' to liberate the 'self-enslaving' Muslims from the shackles of tyranny, Ms Ali, in an interview with Reason.Com, proposes that Islam has to be defeated and crushed in order to be saved. When asked whether she means 'radical Islam', she replied, 'No. Islam, period. Once it's defeated, it can mutate into something peaceful'. Perhaps surprised by the genocidal fervour Ms Ali reveals against Islam and Muslims, the interviewer further probes, 'we have to crush the world's 1.5 billion Muslims under our boot?' Ms Ali's response seems even more emphatic: 'we are at war with Islam … There comes a moment when you crush your enemy, in all forms' (Ali 2007). In the misappropriation spirit of 'I have a dream', Ms Ali aspires for the moment when massive Muslim exodus out of the faith would be underway as she declares, 'I picture the defeat of Islam as large swaths of Muslims crossing the line and accepting the value system of secular human-ism. This is not a matter of one religion defeating another, it's a matter of value systems which cannot coexist' (Quoted in Gewin 2008). Ms Ali's incita-tion for violence against 'Islam', however, was hardly original. This was the native-supplement version of a wider western discourse whose essence was the mantra, 'we should invade their countries, kill their leaders and convert them to Christianity', as the conservative journalist-provocateur, Ann Coulter, once proclaimed.

Conveying the same messages, however, from a different rhetorical and ideological strategy is Zuhdi Jasser, a Syrian-American medical doctor. Jasser rose to prominence after founding the 'American Islamic Forum for Democracy (AIFD)', an organization that is purportedly intended to give the Muslim community a 'chance to step from behind the veil of Muslim victimization and address head-on the need for long-overdue ideological reforms'. This is needed, according to Jasser, because 'America is at war with theocratic Muslim despots who seek the imposition of sharia and don't believe in the equal-ity of all before the law' (Jasser 2010). He quickly gained fame among neo-conservative establishment and Christian-right organizations (pro-Israel and right-wing think tanks), most notably the Clarian Project – one of America's most notorious anti-Islamic forums. In addition to funding the highly contro-versial and anti-Islamic film, *Obsession*[6] (2006), the Clarian Project funded the documentary, *Third Jihad* (2008), for which Jasser was the narrator. Casting 'a broad shadow over American Muslims', the *NY Times* (2012) charged the film as 'hate-filled'. Believing that America is infiltrated by radical Muslims, Jasser sounds the alarms that Jihad 'is the true agenda of Islam in America'. The film was so appallingly anti-Islamic that the *New York Times* published a series of editorials critiquing the film and its agenda (see *NY Times* 2012 editori-als, 'Hateful Film'). Furthermore, and after The New York Police Department screened the film to over 1,400 officers as part of its compulsory training in their 'counter terrorism' courses, NYPD commissioner, Raymond Kelly, who cooperated with the film-makers, apologized and regretted his role in the project (Powell 2012). *The Village Voice* reported that one officer who saw the film as part of the training stated that 'it was so ridiculously one-sided … It was straight propaganda' (Robbins 2011).

Under the banner of his 'devout faith', but as someone who could expose its 'pathologies', Jasser became a media sensation appearing hundreds of times on major news networks from CNN to FOX to CBS, ABC, to Sun News to 'The

6. Featuring the now-discredited native informant, Walid Shoebat, and funded partly by Christian conservative financier, Foster Friess, and heavily promoted (sent as a free copy to 28 million Americans in 28 swing states in 2008) by *Aish HaTorah* (right-wing Jewish/Zionist organization – see Goldberg 2008), the film argued that a 'secular dogma like Nazism is less dangerous than Islamofascism is today'.

7. For example, his polemical op-eds appeared in such publications as *The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Times, The New York Post, The Dallas Morning News,* just to name a few.

8. See for example Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee against the hearing at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xXV-Jls6NYE.

9. Manji has been lavished with glorification and recognition by mainstream and liberal media alike, appearing on every major news network form MTV to BBC and from HBO to Aljazeera. Additionally, she has written columns in *The NY Times, the Wall Street Journal, the Times* (London), *Huffington Post,* among others.

10. In her writings, public appearances and lectures she uses inflammatory terms like 'mindless', 'brain dead', 'intolerant', 'narrow minded', 'incapable of thinking', anti-Semite, etc., to describe Islam and Muslims.

Joy Beher Show' (in addition to tens of Polemical op-eds published in numerous national newspapers),[7] mostly to validate the most egregious claims against Islam and its followers, including the refutation of Obama's assertion that 'ISIS is not Islam' (Jasser 2014a). Even military occupations can be explained 'Islamically', according to Jasser. Commenting on the destructive Israeli attack on Gaza in 2014, during which over 2000 Palestinian civilians were killed, he told the conservative Canadian news network (now defunct), Sun News, that the conflict was driven by Hamas's observance of the prophet's hadith, 'kill a Jew behind every stone' (Jasser 2014b), ignoring Israel's devastating occupation, blockade and human rights violations in Gaza. Although lacking the basic formal and academic expertise on Islam or religious studies, Jasser was appointed to the US Commission on International Religious Freedom by then Senate Minority Leader, Mitch McConnell. Correspondingly, he was invited as a central figure in the highly provocative Congressional Homeland Security Committee testimony entitled, 'Extent of Radicalization among American Muslims'. The hearings were called by congressman, Peter T. King (NY), an anti-Islam warrior in Congress. The hearings were boycotted and condemned by many[8] as a forum of 'witch-hunt' against Islam in America. Jasser's testimony largely fuelled the conspiracy theory of a Muslim 'cultural jihad' to replace the US Constitution with Islamic law (sharia). Accusing Muslim organizations in the United States of being treacherous advocates of 'a radical-Islam takeover' as well eagerly touting the spectre of the closet-terrorist Muslim 'among us', Jasser has publically endorsed and 'thanked' (Serwer 2012) the NYPD for the 'NYPD Muslim surveillance program', a project whose main aim is to spy on ordinary Muslims including students in the community.

It would be, however, a gross misrepresentation to suggest that the native-neo-orientalist phenomenon was the exclusive domain of right-wing media discourse ideology. Liberal media's adulation of such figures has been perfusing. No native neo-orientalist has personified this adoration with as much media exposure[9] as Irshad Manji, a Canadian of Indian Muslim background. Claiming religious moderation and infused, like many other neo-orientalists, with what she proclaims 'liberal ideas and ideals', Manji advances that her main goal is to become the voice of 'Islamic reform'. Embodying what I would call the triple-rescue-redemption politics (a *Muslim* liberated from her oppressive traditions, a *Muslim woman* rescued from her Muslim male's/father's misogyny and harem, a self-declared *lesbian* rescued from her 'homophobic fanatic' community), she became a crucial figure/'media entrepreneur' in liberal media discourse in western capitals. She was awarded the Oprah Winfrey's first 'Chutzpah' award for 'audacity', NYU's 'Moral Courage Project', two honorary doctorates, *Ms.* Magazine's 'Feminist for the 21st Century', etc. (www.Irshadmanji.com). Engaged in reform by incendiary vilification,[10] Manji has assailed every basic foundation of the Islamic faith as for her 'Islam has transformed religion into ideology' (Bayoumi 2010: 92) in which Islam's God always fails. Releasing her book, *The Trouble with Islam*, in 2003 – curiously at the height of America's civilizational and military crusade in the Middle East – Manji presents an account 'rife with willful distortions, patent inaccuracies, and self-aggrandizing sanctimony' (Bayoumi 2010: 86) as she compared the prophet Muhammad to Osama bin Laden, accused Islam of enslavement, imperialism, genocide, ethnic conflict, and characterized the Quran as a book 'profoundly at war with itself'. Illustrating the relevance of Manji's discourse to hegemonic ideology, Andrew Sullivan in the *NY Times* writes, 'Reading [The Trouble with Islam] feels like a revelation. Manji … does what so many of us have longed to see done: assail fundamentalist Islam itself

for tolerating such evil in its midst. And from within' (Sullivan 2004). Although full of factual errors as well as anti-Islam hysteria, for Sullivan it is the native's testimony that matters. While Manji claims progressive liberal politics, she in fact has been invited to speak at the Pentagon (Maira 2012: 122) law enforcement agencies, and has been affiliated with some of the most conservative think tanks in the United States.

Recounting all the accusations Manji charges against Islam in the name of reform is both repetitious and unnecessary given the veneer and unsupported assertions she makes. However, one of the distinctive features of her neo-orientalist discourse is her contemptuous characterization of the Arab defilement[11] of Islam. For her, Islam is the Arab religion, and, as such, reflects the desert culture of Arabia, its barbarity, its cultural sadism and degradation. Exporting the irredeemable 'cultural baggage of desert Arabs' through Islam, the faith is plagued with tribalism, savage honour and inequality as these customs 'posed as Islam proper'. Accordingly, 'it's the desert mindset that manufactured dhimmitude, the systematic repression of Jews and Christians in Muslim lands'. Or 'maybe the desert personality of Islam is why the rape of a woman in Pakistan can be made to compensate a dishonored clan, even if that clan's honor was violated not by her but by someone else'. Following, with much less investigative sophistication, the flawed orientalist thesis of *Hagarism*, Manji claims that 'It was non-Arabs who created the vast corpus of Islamic law up to and during the golden age'. The Arabs, she contends, contributed the best of their cultural essence: absolutism. However, Manji maintains that unlike Hirsi she believes Islam can be reformed and redeemed as a modern religion; 'It just has to become Jewish' (Bayoumi 2010: 88) – where Islam is prone to 'mindless and habitual submission', Judaism (and Israel by extension) is the expression of self-criticism, reflection, tolerance and progress.

Accusing the desert-Arabs of corrupting Islam and by extension non-Arab Muslims, Manji reserves her most atrocious neo-orientalist attacks against the dispossessed and occupied Palestinians, comparing the Palestinians in Gaza to gangsters with 'clan and tribal mentality' [after all, they are Arabs!] who espouse 'uncritical loyalty to the tribe' even when they are wrong (Manji 2014). She cheers in the *NY Times* how she 'came to love the wall' that is not intended to keep Palestinians 'in' so much as to keep suicide bombers 'out' who are ironically, according to Manji, prone to victimology (Manji 2006). Celebrating Israel (and Zionism) as a beacon for western rationality, progress and democracy (with individual and gay rights), the Palestinians inversely are held by Manji as the embodiment of Islamo-fascist irrationality. Manji, in fact, and more proactively, goes on to describe the discrimination against the Arab population as a 'form of affirmative action' (Herzog and Braude 2009: 198). Against this very orientalist and neo-colonial view, Sarah Schulman, in a *New York Times* op-ed in 2011, accused Manji and many others like her of what she calls 'Pinkwashing', which she describes as a 'deliberate strategy to conceal the continuing violations of Palestinians' human rights behind an image of modernity signified by Israeli gay life' (Schulman 2011).

CONCLUSION

The resurgent and bourgeoning industry of neo-orientalism in the western media has unmistakably flourished on the vast trade of fear-mongering and the portrayal of Muslims as the mortal enemy of the West. The revival and success of neo-orientalist ideological media representations has crucially

11. Assigning special status to Arab culture in generating the degradation of orient has been on the rise recently. For example, Fareed Zakria, the well-known media personality and who was a student of Huntington at Harvard, rewriting his much-debated article in the wake of 9/11, 'Why do They [Muslims] Hate US' (2001), wrote recently, 'It's not an Islam problem but an Arab problem'. See his 'Why Do They Still Hate Us 13 Years Later' (2014).

12. So lucrative has the anti-Islam industry become that CNN called it a 'cottage industry' (CNN 2011). In a three-part investigative report titled '"Ex-terrorist" rakes in homeland security bucks', CNN exposed Walid Shoebat's fraudulent past, as self-described ex-PLO/Islamic 'terrorist', and illustrated how the manufacturing of anti-Islamic hysteria has become a money-spinning industry generating $560.000 for Walid Shoebat from speaking engagements alone in 2009.

relied on a class of native informants, whose public/media testimonials served to provide serviceable ideology and popular consensus in the anti-Islamic discourse industry. Furthermore, the rise and emergence of this native neo-orientalist discourse served as a hegemonic strategy that provided a moral legitimacy for American/western neo-imperial and neo-colonial projects in the Middle East. It would be misleading, however, to suggest that these native neo-orientalists were simply used as tools in colonial hegemonic campaigns. At the expense of demonizing over a billion Muslims, these self-promoting and enterprising native neo-orientalists have gained enormously from economic[12] benefits. Manji, for example, commands upwards of $8000 for some speeches to institutional powerbase at very influential think tanks in the United States and Europe, in spite of the fact that she, like most of them, has no degrees or serious scholarship in the field. For example, Ajami (one of the very few academics in this class) was a member of the Board of Directors of the Council on Foreign Relations, a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution, a long time professor at the (conservative) School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University, a member on the Board of Advisors of the journal *Foreign Affairs*, among many other affiliations. Manji is/was affiliated with NYU, Yale University and European Foundation for Democracy, Project Ijtihad. Jasser was/is affiliated with the Hudson Institute, Center for Security Policy, Clarion Project and funded by the Christian conservative financier, Foster Friess, and *Aish HaTorah* – one of the most radical right-wing Israeli groups as well as one of the most fundamentalist movements in Judaism today as labelled by Jeffrey Goldberg of The Atlantic (Goldberg 2008). Hirsi was/is with the Neocon American Enterprise Institute, and a fellow at the Kennedy Government School at Harvard University. These think tanks and their affiliates have profoundly shaped the political discourse, policies and destiny of the modern Middle East. It is not an exaggeration to suggest that these modern neo-colonial institutions and their discursive practices have been performing a function that is no less significant to that of the Mandate System after the end of World War I; however, this time it is being done under the American neo-liberal hegemonic power.

It is admittedly implausible to argue that individuals alone like Ajami, Jasser, Ali, Manji and other native neo-orientalist can fabricate at will the amount of devastation they inflicted on their own communities. In fact, for hegemonic structures with continually evolving interests, these figures are both dispensable and disposable. But what we are witnessing today in the phenomenon of neo-orientalism is that all these native informants are invested in 'drawing a singular narrative account of Islam, where the faith is both a singular system and a singular force in the world' (Bayoumi 2010: 84), and it is a force of 'evil'. They all function as allegories of empire in the age of neo-orientalist mode of representation in which the native voice is needed not only as a tool of authenticity but also as a discursive instrument for power authority.

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